



Transcript of NCSET Conference Call Presentation

High Schools of Authentic and Inclusive Learning: Findings of the Research Institute on Secondary Education Reform for Youth With Disabilities (RISER)

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presented by:

Cheryl Hanley-Maxwell, Ph.D., Co-director
Research Institute on Secondary Education Reform

Bruce King Ph.D., Research Scientist,
Wisconsin Center for Educational Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison; Principal Investigator, Research Institute on Secondary Education Reform for Students with Disabilities

MS. JOHNSON: Welcome, everyone.

Today we are pleased to have Dr. Cheryl Hanley-Maxwell and Dr. Bruce King as our presenters.

Dr. Hanley-Maxwell has been involved in creating and expanding school opportunities and work systems for youth and adults with disabilities – first as a practitioner, then as a researcher and trainer. Her work has included direct service as a teacher, educational coordinator and job coach, pre-service and in-service training for transdisciplinary teams, consultation to school districts and rehabilitation service providers, and research related to curriculum, family involvement, employment issues, secondary special education, and collaboration. She is co-director of the Research Institute on Secondary Education Reform – or the RISER project. In addition to her research and practice-related roles, she is a professor and chairperson in the Department of Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

We also have Dr. Bruce King presenting. Dr. King is a research scientist with the Wisconsin Center for Educational Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and principal investigator for the Research Institute on Secondary Education Reform for Students with Disabilities. His research for RISER focuses on crucial features of instruction, assessment, and support strategies that promote authentic understanding, achievement, and performance for all students. Previously, Dr. King worked with the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools at Wisconsin and its five-year school restructuring study. His research concentrated on organizational aspects of restructuring, including school government, systems of accountability and teacher professional community that contributed to authentic pedagogy and achievement. He has published in leading educational journals and has consulted with schools and

other research projects in both the United States and Australia.

I'm also happy to say that Dr. King and Dr. Hanley-Maxwell presented at our NCSET Capacity Building Institute in July in Washington, D.C., where their information was very well received.

The format of today's teleconference will be a 45-minute presentation, with a question-and-answer period after. We ask that you hold your questions until after the presentation is completed.

I'll now turn it over to Dr. Hanley-Maxwell.

DR. HANLEY-MAXWELL: This is Cheryl Hanley-Maxwell.

DR. KING: Bruce King. Hello.

DR. HANLEY-MAXWELL: We need to further refine the format of today's presentation because we want to do something a little bit different. We will introduce the project to you and tell you about the sites that we worked at, but we will then only provide you with the highlights of the project, or the lessons that we learned from the project. You, then, can choose which one of those lessons you want to go into in greater depth. So once we've gone through our highlights, you're welcome to ask questions or to say, "Gee, tell me more about the role of principals in this particular project."

To start with, I want to tell you about RISER. We are an institute that was developed to expand the current knowledge base related to practices and policies of secondary schools. We were particularly interested in those practices and policies that enhanced learning achievement and postschool outcomes for students with disabilities. However, our total focus included all kids in the schools, not just kids with disabilities. Our focus was on how inclusive efforts worked with or interacted with reform efforts in general education. We used a reform model called Authentic Achievement, which was

developed by Newman and Wehledge and Newman, Wehledge, and Secada.

Our major research question for the whole thing – and I won't bore you with all of our research questions, this was just the major one – was "Could Authentic Achievement be used to restructure school and classroom settings in order to allow students to learn together and to be successful beyond school?"

We worked with four schools, and they had to meet certain key features. We used the key features in our search process to select the most promising schools to match our research focus and our question.

First, we used the criteria of authentic instruction as described by Newman, Secada and Wehledge. This includes construction of knowledge – which is the higher-order thinking skills, disciplined inquiry – with which we looked at knowledge base and in-depth understanding of the subject matter, and elaborated written communication and substantive conversation around those topics. We modified the elaborated written communication to be just elaborated communication, to accommodate those students with disabilities for whom writing was most difficult.

The other criterion under authentic instruction was that there had to be value beyond school in the instructional component. As Newman and Wehledge and Newman, Secada and Wehledge conceive of this, they actually only look at it as value beyond school as applied to current public problems or personal experiences of the students. We expanded this to include the value of activities or experiences in life after school – after leaving these schools. We also added that we wanted to look at issues that we thought were very important to inclusion, which included accommodations and support, personalization, and self-advocacy.

Then we needed to look at the communities in which these schools existed. So we were looking for schools that had strong professional communities, and then had extensive external supports, because the literature has shown that schools with extensive external supports are able to sustain the reform efforts more strongly. We looked for 18 months. And it was very difficult to find schools that fit our criteria.

What we ended up with was four schools, of which only two met most of the criteria. The other two had aspects in their schools or their classrooms that met the criteria, and so we decided to keep them. And we learned some very valuable things from including them, so I'm glad we made that decision.

The first school we worked with is Clarendon Secondary School. And by the way, these are all pseud-

onyms. These are not the real names of the schools. Clarendon is located in an urban setting. They have grades seven through 12. There are 520 students in the school. They have a high minority population. Fifty-two percent of the students were Latino/Latina, 45 percent were African American. Of all the students, 37 percent qualified for Title One, and 22 percent of the students had mild to moderate disabilities. There are three divisions in the school, since they went from seven to 12. We did not study the seven- eight group. Instead, we studied Division Two, which is grades nine and 10, and the Senior Institute, which is grades 11 and 12.

This school is 100 percent inclusive. They use an interdisciplinary curriculum. They require service-learning internships of all students. They use graduation portfolios and exhibitions, and they're a member of a national reform organization called The Coalition of Essential Schools. The student population in that school, in terms of students with disabilities, was mostly students with LD and/or ED. It is possible that there were students with mild CD in the group, but they had not been identified to us.

Our second school was Rothbury High School. This school was a suburban rural school that served 980 students, grades nine through 12. Ninety-eight percent were white. Of those, two percent were eligible for Title One, and 17 percent were students with mild to moderate disabilities. This school is broken into two divisions – nine/10 and 11/12. The nine/10 division is very interdisciplinary and very much the authentic piece that we were looking for. Grades 11/12 were more traditional in terms of their set-up and how they worked with special educators. This has since changed. They have gone toward much more of the interdisciplinary framework across the schools, but that change is not part of our investigation. This school is 100 percent inclusive. They have a service-learning requirement, as well. Students, as part of their requirements to graduate, must have completed portfolios and exhibits. However, they have the traditional ways of graduating on top of that. They are also a member of a national reform organization – The Coalition of Essential Schools.

The students we saw in that school were primarily LD and ED – including some students with Asperger's – but there were also some students that had mild to moderate cognitive disabilities. And these students included students with autism, Down's syndrome and a variety of other unnamed conditions. They also had students with TBI and physical disabilities in that school.

The third school is Mount Adam High School. This is a rural school serving 480 students from grades nine

through 12. They, too, were 98 percent white, and they had about two percent of their population eligible for Title One. Fifteen percent of their students had disabilities. These students were primary LD and ED. They had some students with mild to moderate cognitive disabilities, traumatic brain injury and physical disabilities. This is a professional development school working with a local university. All the students had personal learning plans in an effort to coordinate their school program to plan for life after school. We believe that they've since dropped this because this was spearheaded by one principal that they had, and he is no longer there. They have options for community-based learning. All students with disabilities take those community-based learning opportunities, and many students without disabilities are incorporated into community-based learning. They have varying degrees of inclusion, but primarily the inclusion occurs in the lower-track classes.

Our last school is Seven Hills High School. This is a small city school serving about one thousand students, grades nine through 12. They have a high prevalence of minorities in the school, as well, but they are more typical of the range of minority/majority students. 70 percent of their students are white, 15 percent of their students are Native American, eight percent of their students are Latino/Latina, six percent are African American. 17 percent of their entire student population is eligible for Title One, and 11 percent of their students are students with disabilities. What's unique about this school is that they have several academic courses team-taught by regular and special education teachers, and they are truly equal members on the team.

Twenty-eight percent of the youth with disabilities are wholly included in some courses. However, this includes no students with severe disabilities in regular classes. There is a separate program for those students. All freshmen with disabilities take a study skills self-advocacy course. Their range of disabilities primarily included LD, ED, and mild CD within the integrated portions of the program. There were also some students with moderate CD in the integrated programs in the school. Students with severe disabilities were served in a separate, segregated program.

We learned 11 lessons from looking at these schools. And we looked at them for three to four years. And actually, a week from now, I will no longer be project director, because the project is completely over on the 30th. These 11 lessons evolved from observations; from interviews with teachers, students, and parents; interviews with administrators; focus groups with a variety of people; surveys and records review.

The first lesson that we learned is that inclusion can support high academic standards for all students. Thus, high standards and inclusion are not mutually exclusive. And you often hear the argument that they are. But we found in our schools that they are not mutually exclusive.

The second lesson that we learned was that when provided with instruction and assessment tasks of high intellectual quality, students with disabilities and students with mild to moderate disabilities exhibit higher performance than they do when they are provided with tasks under – of low authenticity. When provided with tasks of low authenticity – and I mean really low authenticity, students with and without disabilities performed equally poorly.

Now, by “low authenticity,” I mean these are much more the traditional tasks that we see in high schools – none of the value beyond school, the in-depth knowledge base and the elaborated communication, as well as the higher-ordered thinking. So these are more like the spit-it-back kinds of tasks.

DR. KING: Just to explain that particular lesson a little further, we did a variety of analyses based on our classroom observations in math, social studies, science, and English language arts. And all our observations took place in classes where students with disabilities were included along with general ed kids. We observed a number of lessons in these subject areas at each of the four schools and we collected assessment tasks from the teachers of these classes. And along with the tasks, we collected the student work on those particular tasks.

In the comprehensive analysis, for example, we looked at assessment tasks and student work that was completed on those tasks from all eight classrooms that we examined at each of the four schools – so 32 classrooms in total. We looked at 78 tasks across these four subject areas, and over 1300 pieces of student work. Twenty-one percent of the work was from students with mild to moderate disability.

What we found was really significant. In classrooms where kids received a high degree of authentic instruction, their performance was higher. And that's true for both students with disabilities and students without disabilities, when we compare those to student performance in the classes with low levels of authenticity. There was a gap in terms of the student performance from kids with and without disabilities, but the important thing for me is that in the classrooms with high levels of authentic instruction, kids with disabilities did better than kids without disabilities in the classes with low levels of authentic instruction. A lot has to do with

teacher expectation, and that expectation relates to both students with and without disabilities – a very significant finding, I think.

DR. HANLEY-MAXWELL: The third lesson we learned is that internal school-wide – and I want to emphasize internal school-wide evaluations and standards – that utilized universal design elements can support authentic intellectual work and inclusion.

When we speak about universal design elements, we're talking about three aspects. One these elements – of these elements is negotiation with the advisor or advisory/evaluation committee on the task elements and the targets for completion by each student. The second element is the repeated opportunities for feedback and revision. And the third element is that there's a common process and experience for all students, but there are varied outcomes and content that are covered by the students. Universal design overall increases the meaning of the tasks that the students are doing and the inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular classroom. The strongest, most consistent finding is that the authentic schools with formally articulate internal assessment end up being the most authentic schools.

The fourth lesson that we learned was that external standards appear to have no meaningful influence on authenticity or equity. So all the standards that we're all working under within the public schools didn't have influence in these schools, on what happened in terms of who got what and the quality of the instructional tasks. However, external assessment – those that are high-stake assessment like the graduation tests – do increase the likelihood that students with disabilities are included in relevant instruction. But the sad part about this is that the instruction then changes in its quality and the use of authentic pedagogy dramatically goes down. So while the assessments do increase the prevalence of kids with disabilities in these classes, the overall quality of the classes is reduced.

The sixth lesson we learned was that students without disabilities and students with mild to moderate disabilities in our schools appear to have better school outcomes when compared with other national samples. This is particularly true in the areas of attending postsecondary education or program, participation in social activities and community groups, and obtaining paying jobs for students without disabilities. For students with disabilities, there was no difference in whether or not they obtained paying jobs. However, I want you to remember that within this finding, the students with disabilities had higher rates of enrollment in postsecondary education or programs. So we have an increase in one area and

little effect on the other.

Schools of authentic and inclusive learning also incorporate career development, self-determination and postschool planning for all students. In schools with more authentic practice, these aspects become embedded in the entire curriculum. Thus they become part of the entire school experience, including the graduation requirement. In schools of authentic and inclusive learning, current students talk about what they value that they're getting. And we talked to graduates about what they had at their former high school. We found that they valued the help that they got from teachers and counselors, the classes that they took, and the community experience they had in helping them make the career decisions they made.

The ninth lesson that we learned was that a school-wide commitment to specific academic learning goals and to inclusion and the focus in sustained programs to address that commitment appear to be critical to the success of efforts to become an inclusive school that has a high degree of authenticity. In other words, you had to have the commitment to the specific goals and to inclusion, and you had to have mechanisms to sustain that commitment in order to have both inclusion and high degrees of authenticity.

The 10th lesson we learned was that – and this one's not new to most of you, but we did find some interesting things with this – general education and special education teachers need ongoing support to help them work collaboratively. We found the schools that used ongoing formal and informal mechanisms to promote such planning appeared to be more successful in providing learning experiences that have a high degree of authenticity to all students and providing these experiences in fully inclusive settings. Many of the techniques that these schools used were adapted from the Coalition of Essential Schools or variations on their own school philosophy. And they had a variety of ways to keep the teachers learning and to keep the teachers' efforts at reform and inclusion going.

The last – the 11th lesson is that schools of authentic and inclusive learning – particularly those high in authenticity – use planning and problem-solving groups for students and teachers. And these planning and problem-solving groups are highly valued and part of the overall structure of the school. The last lesson we learned is that it is not necessary to have a principal as the leader of inclusive and reform efforts. In a highly democratic culture, where teachers are determiners of their own fate and the curriculum and the overall practices and policies of the school, they do not need a principal as a leader.

However, a principal that is opposed or obstructionist to inclusion and reform, or a school that does not have a highly inclusive or a highly democratic culture will find it very difficult to move forward without a strong principal as leader in those schools.

Now, what do you want to hear more about?

MS. JOHNSON: Anyone who has a question or a comment for Cheryl or Bruce, please introduce yourself and the state that you're calling from.

MS. SIMONELLI: I'm at the Center on Disability Studies at the University of Hawaii in Manoa, and I was wondering if you would talk a little bit more about your point number four, which is about the external standards having no impact. And that was all I wrote down. So if you could speak a little bit more about that it would be helpful.

DR. KING: We interviewed teachers and we also conducted school-wide surveys of the whole staff. Included in those surveys were questions regarding external standards and assessments. And across the four schools, generally speaking, teachers said that the standards that were in existence in those four states generally were supportive of their work, but they didn't feel that they had direct or very meaningful significance in terms of how they thought about their curriculum or their pedagogy. There was a general sense that there was – that their curriculum was well aligned with state standards, but they didn't feel that the standards were compelling them in a good or bad way to do anything differently.

MS. SIMONELLI: OK.

DR. HANLEY-MAXWELL: And only one of our schools actually aligned their curriculum to the standards...

DR. KING: Purposefully.

DR. HANLEY-MAXWELL: Yes, purposefully. All – the other three basically ignored the standards or just checked to make sure they were in the ballpark with the standards.

MS. SIMONELLI: OK. Thank you.

MS. STATMAN: Oh, hi. I'm from The Arc of Texas, in Austin, Texas, and I'm interested in hearing more about the self-determination aspect of how – and also the planning and problem-solving groups with students.

DR. HANLEY-MAXWELL: So you've actually got two questions there, and I'll start with the self-determination question.

Students in three of these schools were expected to do postschool plans. And to do those postschool plans, students in two of the three schools were given training experiences – cumulative experiences that helped build their advocacy skills, that helped build their planning

skills within the curriculum and the tasks that were done in the classroom. They were also given guidance in self-evaluation on all the tasks that they did in their classrooms. So little by little, they gained those skills. By the time that they were juniors, they had to do these graduation plans. And I'm going to talk about Clarendon and Rothbury here, and then I'll back up and talk about Mount Adam's personal learning plan.

Clarendon and Rothbury expected students to do what was literally a transition plan for themselves. But they didn't call it that. They called it the post-graduation plan or post-graduation portfolio. The kinds of things that were covered in the post-graduation portfolio at Clarendon were postschool high school living arrangements, post-high-school employment and education and training, and post-high-school community and citizenship. They had to complete this plan before they entered the Senior Institute. And then it was continually updated and revised while they were in the Senior Institute. It was the first requirement and also the last requirement considered when looking at graduation. They had to actually demonstrate that they had growth in competence and intellectual understanding as a worker, as a citizen, and as a learner.

They also included in their post-graduation portfolio at Clarendon the idea that students had to have an understanding of what skills that they had learned or experience they've had that they should put forward for employers. So not only were they taught to make plans and to act on those plans, they were also taught to reflect and to be able to self-advocate on the areas that they found most relevant to the jobs that they were seeking. I don't think I need to go through all of the practical skills that students in that had. But I do want to mention a couple things. They were taught how important voting was. They were given all the tools that they needed to go and actually register to vote. And then they discussed political issues in the classroom, so that they were encouraged to vote. The planning and problem-solving was also part of the portfolio process at Rothbury.

They did their personal learning – or their post-graduation plans – through a series of problem-solving activities. They would look at what they wanted to do post high school. They would research what they wanted to do post high school. And that could be either library research or an interview process, but they had to interview at least one person in the field to find out if that was truly what they wanted to do. They also had to figure out what courses would be related to their postschool outcome intentions. They had advisors that worked with them in advisory periods every single day from their

freshman year and that helped them go through the problem-solving process. Furthermore, when students were faced with challenges in schools, instead of having disciplinary action placed on them, or instead of remedial action placed on them for academic issues, they problem-solved those issues with their teachers and with their advisor. In fact, the disciplinary arm of Rothbury was the community council, of which 50 percent of the council members were students. So students essentially worked with other students to develop disciplinary procedures and actions, especially when a single student was involved. Every student in that school had a say on what went on.

The second thing that you asked about was ...

MS. STATMAN: Planning and problem-solving was the second thing.

DR. HANLEY-MAXWELL: But you wanted to know about the teachers, right?

MS. STATMAN: Yes, I'd like to hear about that, also.

DR. HANLEY-MAXWELL: The teachers in – oh, I forgot about personal learning plans, but I'll skip them for now. The teachers at both Clarendon and Rothbury use a variety of ways to do planning and problem-solving. At Rothbury and Clarendon, in grades nine through 10, they used cross-disciplinary teams and they also used within disciplinary teams to plan the curriculum, the experiences, and to problem-solve for issues related to student problems. Particularly at Rothbury, they spent a great deal of time in these interdisciplinary groups, which included the special educators, in pre-planning for problems that might come up with the curriculum or the experiences they had planned. So they anticipated problems that individual students would have. They planned the curriculum and the experiences to accommodate those problems, and then as they went along, they would problem-solve as needed when students weren't succeeding and make the changes that they needed to make in order to make sure that all students in the classrooms were successful.

In grades 11 and 12, at both Clarendon and Rothbury, there's a much more traditional approach to the planning and problem-solving, mostly within disciplinary groups. There was nothing really overly unique about that, except that at Rothbury, the special educators were considered a vital part of the planning process. At Rothbury, they also used the Critical Friends Groups idea. I don't know if you're familiar with that, but I'm sure a few of you aren't, so I'll explain it. It's a group of people that are assigned to work together on continuing professional development. Some of the groups at

Rothbury chose to pursue specific topics for further knowledge. So they would all learning about a topic, such as the infusion of practical experiences in science. Other groups chose to use their Critical Friends Groups as purely problem-solving groups.

A teacher would bring an idea about what they were going to do in the lesson, and they'd present the lesson to the group of peers. They'd describe the students that are in the classroom and what the needs were of those students. They would discuss the accommodation that they planned for to help those students meet the curricular intent, and they would also discuss any other issues that they felt made this a unique or exciting lesson. Their peers then gave them critical feedback. The first time I ever saw this, it was an amazing experience because they truly give critical feedback, but it's in a very trusting atmosphere. All of the teachers felt that when they got that critical feedback, all of it – all that feedback helped them improve their lesson-planning and their pedagogy. The teacher would then go and teach the lesson, and would be expected to come back and describe what worked and what didn't work. And then the group would problem-solve on why things didn't work and what could be done in the future, and whether or not the practices that did work could be sustained for the teacher. So that's ...

DR. KING: I would like to add – in regard to – there's been a lot of note in the general reform literature about professional communities. And what Cheryl has just been describing about what Rothbury teams and critical friends group epitomized – the notion of professional community, where teams got together and used inquiry and professional dialogue to further everybody's understanding and knowledge and skills – and a lot of it had to do with how to appropriately include kids with disabilities in general ed classes.

DR. HANLEY-MAXWELL: And I might add that what's really stunning is working with the general ed teachers in those kinds of Critical Friends Groups or that are in the lower divisions that are very interdisciplinary. They know a lot about adaptation and accommodation. And they are not relying on the special educator for just that piece of knowledge for kids with disabilities. They're actually using that knowledge and those special educators for problem-solving around problems that kids without disabilities are having, too.

MS. JOHNSON: I have a question. On lesson number three, could you talk a little bit more about internal school – incorporation of universal design?

DR. KING: There's been a lot of emphasis lately on external assessments and high-stake testing. What be-

came really apparent in some of these schools – and not all of them – is that the most meaningful assessments to their teachers and their students were the ones that they worked on and developed collectively. And that is what “internal” refers to.

Cheryl has mentioned portfolios and exhibitions, both in terms of Rothbury and Clarendon, and those were the best examples of schools that had over the years developed an internal assessment system that was consistent with their mission, that showed a high degree of authenticity, and that held both teachers and students accountable for high levels of learning. And this applied across the board to all their kids.

DR. HANLEY-MAXWELL: And what made it universal was that teachers would work with students so the students could plan their learning experiences to meet their needs. So if they did better reading, they would spend more time reading. If they really, really needed to talk in small groups and negotiate knowledge, that’s what they would do. If they needed guided practice, that’s what they would do. So the learning experiences were tailored to the students. Although they were held to the same standards in the end, the way you got the knowledge was tailored to the student – so was you enter a point that is best for you.

The second part of that, though, was that when you had to produce a product or show that you knew the material, you were allowed a variety of ways to express your knowledge. Some students would write papers. Some students would do videos. Some students would role-play. Some students put on a play. Some students sang or did poetry. Every student had a choice of how they wanted to exhibit how they knew what they had to learn in that particular lesson or that particular task. So it became highly individualized to each of the individual – each student. What’s universal about it is there are no preconceived notions as to where you should enter and how you should enter, and no preconceived notions as to what constitutes an acceptable outcome in terms of the performance, but the standards stay the same.

MS. JOHNSON: OK. Any other questions for Cheryl or Bruce?

MS. SIMONELLI: Yes. This is Shannon Simonelli again, in Hawaii. And I may have missed this, but how can we get access to this study either in part or in full?

DR. HANLEY-MAXWELL: There is a Web site. It’s <http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/riser/>.

MS. SIMONELLI: Excellent. Thank you very much.

DR. HANLEY-MAXWELL: On that Web site, we have a number of briefs that we’ve published. However, most of the data is not out there. Some of it’s out there,

but most of it isn’t. We in fact are in the process of putting together a book and a series of articles that will come out in hopefully some of the journals. The other thing is we’re going to finish some of the briefs that include this data and put them on the Web site, even though the project is ending.

MS. SIMONELLI: Great. So where will the conference proceedings be posted?

MS. JOHNSON: They’ll be posted on the NCSET Web site under “Events.”

MS. SIMONELLI: Thank you.

MS. JOHNSON: Any other questions for Cheryl and Bruce?

MS. OSTRANDER: This is Angela Ostrander, from the Department of Education in South Dakota. And my question is, we have a High Schools that Work process program, and I was wondering how this kind of fits in with the “No Child Left Behind,” when you’re working with disabled students.

DR. HANLEY-MAXWELL: I’m not sure what the High Schools that Work project is.

MS. OSTRANDER: Well, it is a project that is with junior high and high schools that is a consortium within – mostly it started in the southern states and South Dakota has become one of the first in the Midwest, I should say. And it – I was just wondering, you’re doing some authentic assessment to get disabled students’ grades in to help meet the “no child left behind,” and I was just wondering maybe if you could expound on that.

DR. HANLEY-MAXWELL: Actually, I think that Rothbury and Clarendon are really good examples of “No Child Left Behind” – and from two aspects – not from the just no child left untested aspect, but from no child left out of the curriculum aspect. The students in these schools learn huge amounts of information and are exposed to curriculum that is extremely challenging. The kids with disabilities do things with that knowledge and are capable of learning volumes of knowledge that I have never seen in kids in other settings. So they’re clearly not being left behind in the curriculum. In terms of the testing, only one – Clarendon – has to take the graduation test right now.

DR. KING: Out of the four schools. Although Seven Hills has been in a state environment that keeps threatening to have a graduation test, and then they keep pulling it after they pilot it and find that, you know, only five percent of their kids would pass it.

DR. HANLEY-MAXWELL: I believe, though, that when Clarendon looked at the graduation test, they – that was mandated, they felt that their students would

do just fine on it because it aligned with the curricular content what their students were working through. The only thing that they were concerned with was the format of the test because the format of all these tests is terribly inauthentic and the students might have difficulty dealing with that kind of rote format.

MS. OSTRANDER: Thank you very much.

MS. STATMAN: I just wanted to follow up on that, because I'm from Texas and we've had testing in Texas well before "No Child Left Behind" for all students. And it's – as you describe – not authentic at all. And so, I mean, how do you – I mean – I mean this – what you're describing is, like, totally not happening in Texas anywhere, as far I can tell. I mean, at least not in public schools.

DR. HANLEY-MAXWELL: And thus our difficulty in finding even four schools.

MS. STATMAN: Right. And so how do we as advocates and – I mean, how do we convince schools to move in this direction? And how – what do we provide for them? How do we train them? How do we get them to do this?

DR. HANLEY-MAXWELL: I think one of the most important points that we found in this study is that our two most successful schools were basically recreated from the ground up. So they were – they were created to do the authentic stuff and to be inclusive. That was ...

MS. STATMAN: But our schools have to take these tests. I mean, they don't have a choice. It's a state law. So they have – they would have to be involved in the test at the same time as trying to recreate their school.

DR. HANLEY-MAXWELL: Right. Yes, it's a big challenge because I don't think that our leaders and legislators understand what's meaningful testing.

MS. STATMAN: That's definitely true.

DR. HANLEY-MAXWELL: One of the – one of the things that is a happenstance of our project is that Clarendon was actually the model for Rothbury. And Rothbury learned how to do what they wanted to do by visiting Clarendon and finding out what worked and what didn't work there. But again, they were not under the constraint of having to meet graduation tests or those grade-level tests that seem to be popular. I honestly don't know what we're going to do with all of these tests that are out there. I think they have a dramatic effect on what is taught in the classroom, as well as how it is taught. We found that in this study. The more testing you do, the less authentic the learning experience is. You do get kids with disabilities in the classrooms, but they're not authentic classrooms. I don't know where we're going to go with it.

MS. JOHNSON: Well, I'd like to thank Dr. Cheryl Hanley-Maxwell and Dr. Bruce King for presenting with us today. And I'd also like to mention that the conference proceedings from our July 8th Capacity-Building Institute are on the NCSET Web site. So if you'd like to read more about Cheryl Hanley-Maxwell and Bruce King's work with RISER, that is available to you. Thank you.

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Contact us at:

National Center on Secondary
Education and Transition
Institute on Community Integration
6 Pattee Hall, 150 Pillsbury Drive SE
Minneapolis MN 55455
(612) 624-2097 (phone)
(612) 624-9344 (fax)
ncset@umn.edu (E-mail)
<http://www.ncset.org> (Web)

