

FOURTH ANNUAL



# Ohio Family Engagement

— LEADERSHIP SUMMIT —

Setting the Table Together:

**JOY** and  
**POWER** in  
**PARTNERSHIPS**

SEPTEMBER 22,  
**2023**

Hosted by the Ohio Statewide  
Family Engagement Center



**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

CENTER ON EDUCATION AND  
TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT





# STUDENT VOICE MATTERS:

## Best Practices for Engaging Students in their Special Education Journey

Prepared for the Ohio Family Engagement Leadership Summit



Department  
of Education



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
CENTER ON EDUCATION AND  
TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT



# TODAY'S FACILITATORS



**DR. GABRIELLE JOHNSON**  
Ohio Parent Mentor Project Director  
Licensed School Psychologist



**MONICA MCCAIN**  
Parent Mentor  
Toledo Public Schools



**DEE MARKS**  
Parent Mentor  
Dublin City Schools



**SUSAN SWEENEY**  
Parent Mentor  
Clark County

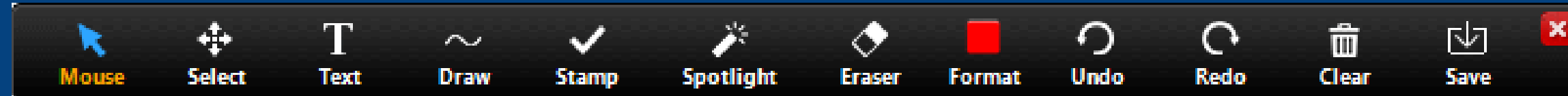
- Understand the role of student voice in effective engagement of families navigating special education
- Increased awareness of barriers to the engagement of students with disabilities in their educational journey
- Articulate practical strategies and opportunities to enhance student participation in major milestones of special education (e.g., eligibility, IEP, and transition planning)



# Annotation Test Screen

While viewing a shared screen or shared whiteboard, click View Options then Annotate at the top.

You will see these annotation tools:



On a scale of 1 to 10, how was your week?



1

5

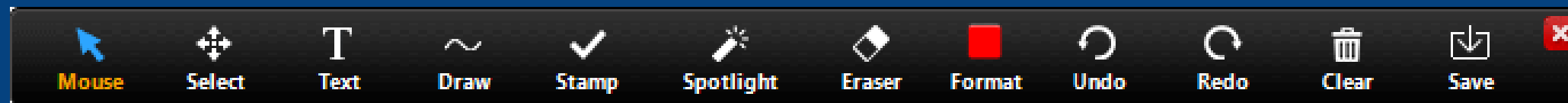
10



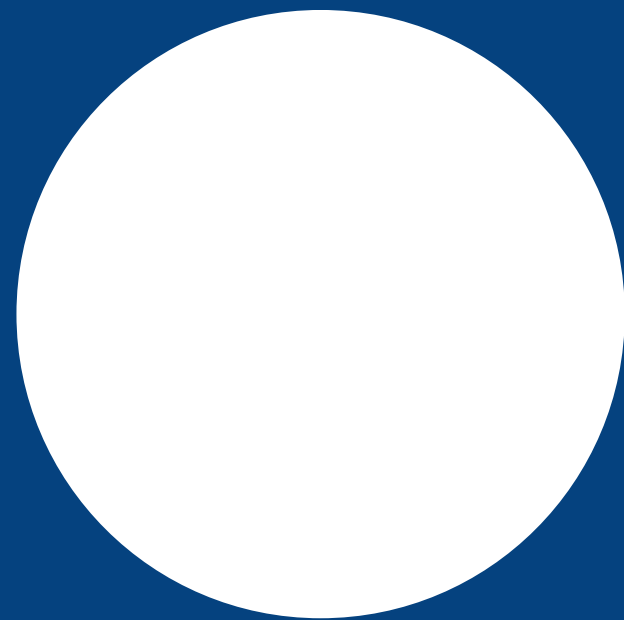
# Annotation Activity

While viewing a shared screen or shared whiteboard, click View Options then Annotate at the top.

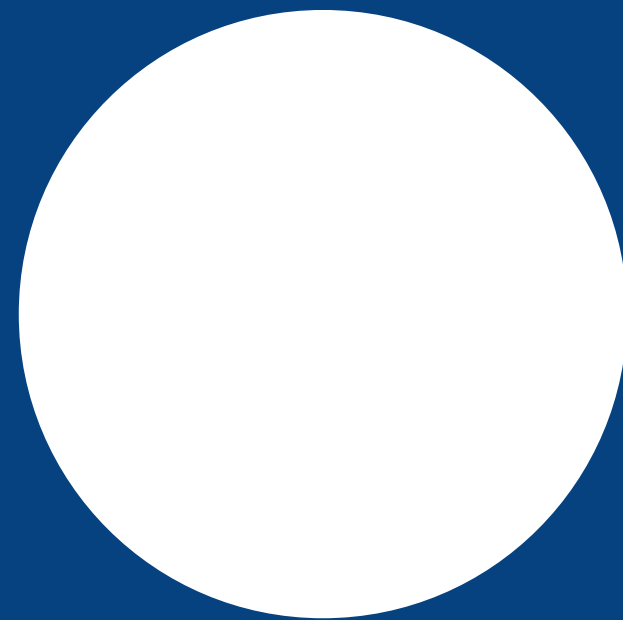
You will see these annotation tools:



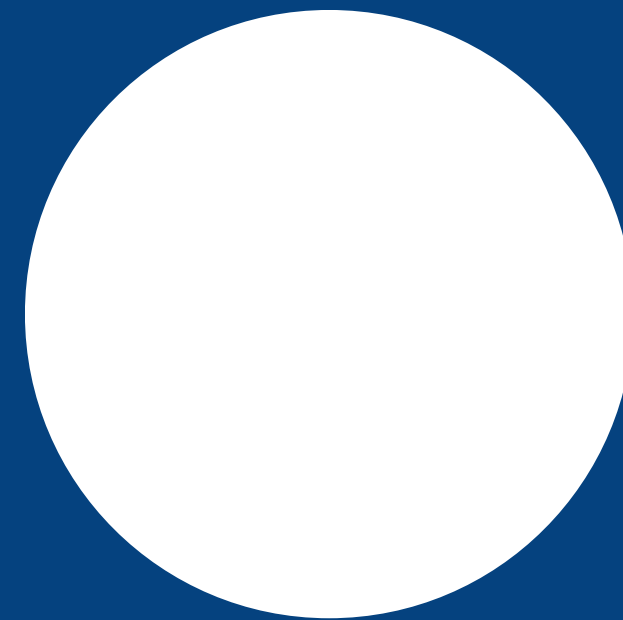
How involved (or included) are your students in their special education journey (e.g., seeking student input and feedback, evaluation team meetings, IEPs)?



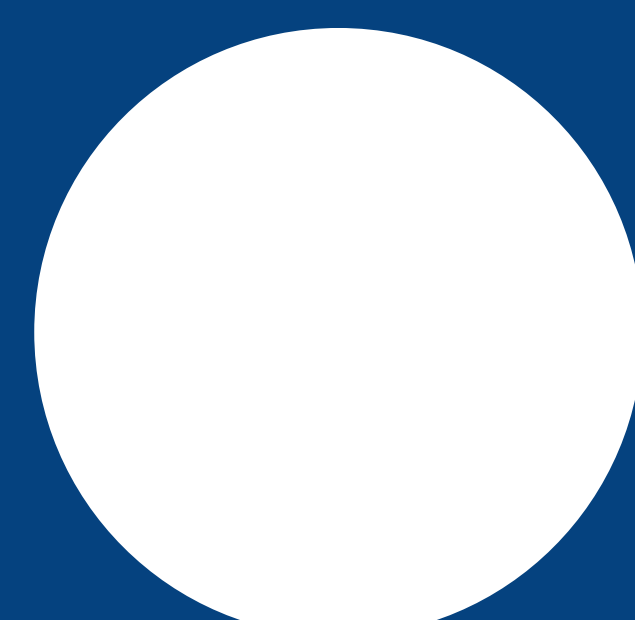
**BARELY AT ALL**



**SOMETIMES**



**OFTEN**



**ALMOST ALWAYS**



## Partnering with Families Through Special Education

Research-based Strategies for Special and General Educators

Developed for the Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center  
Kenyona Walker, Gabrielle Hicks, Kyanna Johnson, Barbara Boone



## RESEARCH BRIEF

Special Education requires schools, communities, and service providers to come together as partners with families to provide tailored services, supports, and instruction for their children.

Brief summarizes strategies and recommendations for engaging families of children with disabilities

- Findings of 30 research studies
- Practices from three, widely accepted frameworks for family engagement
- Recommendations based on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

**Strategy 6: Support children and youth in their family engagement**



# STUDENTS ARE ESSENTIAL TO FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

## The Dual-Capacity Framework for School and Family Partnerships

- Necessity of building the capacity of both families and educators and their partnership to positively impact student achievement

## Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler Model

- Ultimate outcome is student self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, and self-regulation skills

## Sunshine Model of Trusting Family-Professional Partnerships

- Highlights how families and professionals in educational settings rely on one another to foster belonging and resilience for students

## NAFSCE Core Competencies: Collaborate for Learning

- Competency 5: Co-Construct Learning Opportunities with Families



# BARRIERS TO STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

## ADULTS

General educators have limited knowledge of disability/student's needs

Meetings are conducted from a deficit perspective

Parents are not confident in their role and special education law

Cultural differences/language barrier

Lack of training on how to engage families and student

Misinterpretation of why there is a lack of participation

Lack of time

Previous negative experience



## STUDENTS

Lack of awareness of their disability and how it impacts their learning

Lack of knowledge regarding the purpose of meetings

Role in meetings is assumed to be passive

Struggle to identify with their disability and refuse needed services

Previous negative experiences

Cultural differences/language barrier

Peer pressure

Missed class time



# STUDENTS AND SPECIAL EDUCATION EVALUATION

How do we prepare students for ETR Process?

Start with the basics

- Student friendly conversation ✓
- Conduct a student interview ✓
- Avoid jargon ✓
- Use visuals ✓

Based on their level of understanding introduce  
the team players

“These are the people you’ll meet...”

“These are some of the activities you’ll work on with them...”

# STUDENTS AND THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)

## Information is Key

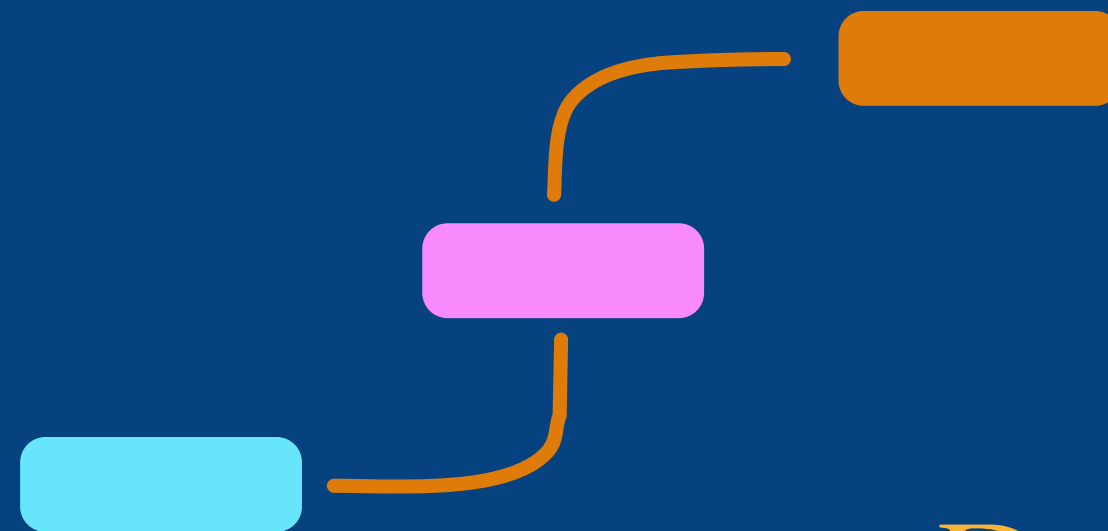
Builds confidence

Supports their innate  
motivation to learn

Builds self advocacy skills

Links their learning to the IEP

Builds the parent's  
capacity for supporting  
student success



Ownership

CONFIDENCE

Perception shift



## **STUDENTS AND THEIR INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN (IEP) *continued***

### **Make sure student feels included prior to their annual IEP meeting**

- Visual of the IEP Team and their roles
- Ask questions during the meeting directed to the student to make sure they understand

### **Ask the student for their input on what helps them**

- What skills do you want to work on this year?

### **Make sure the student understands their IEP**

- Provide examples or visuals of suggested tools and resources (e.g., graphic organizer)

**KEY: Engage students in a way that meets their developmental needs**



## PREPARING STUDENTS FOR TRANSITION

It starts with a conversation

***“Identify and hold high yet appropriate expectations for students to create long-term goals that focus on improvement and independence, to the extent possible.”***

Walker, K., Hicks, G., Johnson, & Boone, B. (2022). Partnering with Families through Special Education. The Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center.

“I really enjoy.....”

“How can I....”

“When I grow up I want to be...”

“My favorite subject is...”

“I wonder if I could ...”

“What’s really important to me is...”

“Can you help me learn more about....”



## EMPOWER STUDENTS, EMPOWER FAMILIES

**Ensure the student understands** the IEP as it relates to their strengths and needs so that they can identify why it benefits them.

**Cultivate a school-wide culture** which empowers and values the student and parents as equal team members.

**Allow the student to engage** in a way that is developmentally appropriate for them

- Encouraging them to make suggestions, ask questions and participate in goal development
- Share these items with the team in a manner in which they feel comfortable





# PRACTICAL STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT



## SCHOOL-WIDE SUPPORTS

**Schedule meeting at time that best fits  
student's schedule**

**Strategic marketing of school opportunities**

**Develop plan for including student in  
meetings**

**Culture of inclusiveness across all  
environments**

**Focus on the ability instead of the disability**



## INDIVIDUAL STUDENT SUPPORTS

**Prioritize gathering relevant student data on  
interests, strengths and preferences in timely  
manner**

**Training on acronyms, meeting purpose and  
student rights**

**Hold practice meetings**

**Natural peer supports; peer modeling**

**Support student in creating notes or other  
ways to present their perspective**



# QUESTIONS





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THANK YOU FOR WATCHING!

[OhioFamiliesEngage.osu.edu](http://OhioFamiliesEngage.osu.edu)



Ohio Statewide  
**Family  
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—at The Ohio State University—



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