>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: All right. Well good afternoon and welcome to the RespectAbility webinar for October 5th 2021. My name is Philip Kahn-Pauli. I am the Policy and Practices Director of RespectAbility. We are a national nonpartisan nonprofit organization dedicated to inclusion and advancing opportunities for people with disabilities. And it's really that practices piece of my title that I'm going to be focusing on today with my lovely guests from the great state of Tennessee. As the title of this webinar suggested, we are talking about emerging best practices: lessons on virtual pre-employment transition services from Tennessee, or Pre-ETS to use the acronym. Pre-employment transition services has been a huge topic in the workforce development space for the last several years. Coming out of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Pre-ETS has really redirected, realigned a lot of funding, a lot of resources and a lot of supports. Some states have really struggled to provide these types of services to transition age youth with disabilities and other states are really blazing ahead. And that was all before COVID, all before the pandemic and the associated economic crisis. And it's been really interesting in my role looking at states as they reacted to the past months, reacted to the economy, reacting to the plague and really figuring out what works and what doesn't. And so I am really excited to shine a light on a state that has really dug in, really learned critical lessons and is really willing to share their knowledge, share their experience with you today. And for our audience, how this is gonna run: we're gonna -- I'm gonna finish up my introductions. Blake and Triniti and Jessica are gonna run through some slides that really dig into the details on what they've been doing around Pre-ETS. And then after that we're gonna have time for questions and answers. Questions can be -- you can drop them in the chat box, you can use the Q&A function on the bottom of your screen. If you need any accommodations or accessibility -- you have any accessibility issues, you can just message me or Eric Ascher, our tech guru. But otherwise, let me do some quick introductions of our speakers and then I will be turning it over to Blake and company. So to start off we've got Jessica Awsumb, PhD, who is a research associate in the department of special ed at Vanderbilt university. Her research focuses on successful transition of youth with disabilities, really fascinating work around independent living and post-secondary education. She has really leveraged great deal of experience. She is an author of many different articles on this core subject. She works with VR, she works at the Department of Ed in two states, and is really in the thick of things and really, you know, bringing clarity to complexity. Likewise, we have Triniti Holden who is a pre-employment transition services supervisor for Shelby and Fayette counties in Tennessee. She works with the largest school district in the state as well, which is also, interestingly enough, the 25th largest school district in the entire country. She's graduated from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville with a BA in education, and is originally from Memphis with strong ties to the communities and its stakeholders. And she really brings that perspective and that energy to her work with the transition services team, the department of human services, the department --division of rehabilitation services, and has been progressively promoted as she has gained more responsibility and done greater work. And she has her master's degree in public health administration from East Tennessee State University. So she is also really in the thick of it, really brings a lot of great work experience. And I hope you will pester her and Jessica as well as Blake with a lot of great questions at the end of the hour. And then, you know, turning it over. Blake Shearer is the VR transition director with the Tennessee department of human services. He has a passion for improving post-secondary outcomes of students with disabilities through collaboration and cooperation. He joined VR in 2019 but before that he worked in a variety of different roles across the educational system, from being a classroom teacher to being a direct supervisor to being a paraprofessional. So he has done it all. He has worked on Project Search, he's worked on transition grants. And so Blake, I'm going to go off my microphone, turn it over to you and let's dive into our slides and learn our lessons from the great state of Tennessee.

>> Blake Shearer: Excellent, well thank you so much. Thank you very much for having us and hosting us today. We're excited to be here and share maybe some of the things that we've learned in Tennessee. I'm looking for thumbs up that the screen is sharing correctly from those that -- okay. And so yeah. So definitely glad to be here and you getting to hear the, you know, in Tennessee or any other meeting, we typically don't start with bios. So getting to hear Jessica's bio again and Triniti's bio, I'm going, wow I'm so fortunate to work with people like this who bring such a wealth of knowledge to the field that we work in. So it's really -- I'm glad that you'll all be able to hear from them as well. So we're going to jump right into this and kind of give a quick overview on what Tennessee looks like, so you can have that context, and then talk about what we've done amidst COVID-19. And so again, welcome. I'm glad you all are here. So what we first want to talk about is our -- explaining our VR and transition Tennessee partnership and that's where Jessica Awsumb comes into play is -- our partnership with Transition TN. And so we'll go into a little more detail of that at the end. We want to talk about how Tennessee provides pre-ETS because each state is doing it a little bit differently. So we want you to have an understanding of what it looks like in Tennessee. And then also the impact of COVID-19 on our service delivery. You know, put in here that we're going to look at the proactive responses to the impact of COVID, but in all honesty, everything was reactive, right? We didn't know that was going to hit. I didn't know in March of 2020 that we were going to go home and I may, you know, work from home now for quite a while. I've been in Nashville three or four times since March of 2020. And so yes, we did try to take a proactive approach once we knew a little bit about what we were dealing with, but it was all very much reactive amid the onset. Then we'll talk about some of the resources that can be used for those virtual and in-person instruction, talk about the strategies that have been helpful to our providers. And lastly Jessica is going to take us through a little bit of the Transition Tennessee student website, which is a great resource that is free for all to use, so I definitely want to make sure that's available and that you are all aware of that. So a little bit about the partnership real quick on Transition Tennessee. It actually became -- it was a partnership between the department of education within Tennessee and Vanderbilt Kennedy Center back in 2015. And so it was -- the goal was let's get on time real professional development to teachers and educators who need that transition training. They need resources. They need to go to one place to find as much as they can on how to improve the transition and post-secondary outcomes for students with disabilities. And so quickly the site gained state attention, obviously, but then it went out into getting national attention. And so now we've got thousands of registered users. That last bullet point down there as of 9/29 there was over 11,500 registered users on Transition Tennessee. So I'm really excited to see that site grow so quickly. But in 2017, the Tennessee VR -- [coughs] excuse me -- partnered also with Vanderbilt Kennedy Center to develop a portal for providers. And so -- providers of pre-ETS services. And so now the website has provider portal, and it's got an educator portal or blueprint on how to provide these services. It's also got a student site to it, and building out more and more a family and parent side to it as well. So that's a little bit about our partnership. Now within Tennessee, the way we provide pre-ETS primarily -- now there's always exceptions to this and we do have those -- but primarily it's through our community rehabilitation providers, our CRPs, and then also our transition school to work contracts. So we have 58 -- let me flip that. We have 28 CRPs that we contract with to provide pre-ETS across the state. And then we also contract directly with 58 school districts -- I think it's actually 60 this upcoming year -- where we contract directly with the school system through transition school to work, and they get to go ahead and hire their own transition case manager and workplace readiness specialist, and their goal is to provide pre-ETS and to coordinate those services and to find students and get them referred to VR, so that if they need that service after high school we can make a more seamless transition into that. So between those two entities, all 95 counties in our state are able to have pre-ETS provided to them through our CRPs and our TSWs. Now we do use our own staff to do so as well, to provide services. We've got 23 Pre-ETS specialists that also can and do provide services, and we even have some other VR partners that do that as well. But primarily it is done through our CRPs and our TSWs. So we wanted you to understand that. And then get an idea of what that looks like this past year. Now this slide's a a little difficult to see, so I'm going to enlarge it so hopefully we can see the numbers. But this takes a look at how we kind of went from September of 2020 until June of 2021. So you can kind of see the trend of where we started about 3,100 back in September and then steadily increased. And we typically see a decrease in May and then in June as summer hits. But that was kind of our trend line of the number of students that we were providing services to each month. And so you -- I just wanted you to kind of see that growth that we did see amidst the ongoing pandemic. And then also I wanted to break it down a little bit differently as well and let you see our quarters. And so we peaked in 2019 in quarter three at 7200 students within that quarter receiving pre-ETS. When you get into quarter four of 2019, which is that April, May and June -- of the program year 2019, so that's actually April May and June of 2020, when the pandemic was starting, you can see a drastic decrease, about 2,000 less students. And then when we got into the the summers where we really saw it even going even lower down into quarter one of 1715 students. Now the reality is -- there was one month that we were below a thousand students, so we -- that was really I think the eye-opening call to say we've got to do something differently. We have gone from over 7,000 students receiving services to now, we're less than a thousand. And we know the purpose of special education and what we're doing is prepare students for that life after high school and for further education and for employment. We've got to do something to get the services to them. And so then you can see in our quarter two, it picked up to 4,271. Quarter three picked up to 5,100. We don't have quarter four yet but when we get that I expect to see a continual increase there as well. So we're not back exactly to where we were, but we are really gaining a lot of traction to getting back to providing services to students. So a little bit about how we did this. So on the screen right now, if you can't see it I've got a series of shapes -- it's a circle, kind of a triangle, rectangle -- different shapes. And what this represents is a kind of a metaphor of when we were provided pre-ETS and guidance is like, okay, we you need to provide pre-ETS. And so we developed a way of saying well how do we do that? And so we took all this information we were getting, we said you know what, the way to provide pre-ETS, metaphorically speaking, is through a car. And we built a car with all those shapes, right? And what COVID did is it said you know what, you've got the same information now. You've got everything that we all have, but you really can't always use a car. You need to think about different ways to get services to students. Providing only in school during that eight to three time may not work for everybody. So we came back and said okay, we've got the same information, and maybe now we use that information we say we could do a car, we could also do a train. Maybe train's a different way we could provide service, again metaphorically speaking. Maybe that's virtual. And then come back to the table again, same information, and go how can we do it differently, maybe all that you put together, now it's a sailboat. And so it's all the same information of what we were given but now we've got to think about it and reimagine it differently. And so what we thought is this is the way you provide pre-ETS, COVID said no, that's not the only way. Let's think about different ways to get services to students and reimagine what we can do. So what we did is we developed a virtual best practice guide for our providers. And so that was a partnership between Tennessee VR, Transition Tennessee and Jessica Awsumb and their team really helped out tremendously on that, building out this virtual best practices guide. And we got that out available to providers to say here's some resources and strategies and tips, and Jessica will go in that to a little bit more detail so I'll stop there. We also required providers to submit proposals to us to say how they plan to provide pre-ETS virtually, how they -- make sure that each student had equitable access to it. We also developed a memo going out to all of our providers talking about the different flexibilities that we wanted them to know of so they could continue providing services and have those continuity of operations. For example, where we once may have required a wet signature we began providing the option to have a digital Adobe pro-type signature where they could be signed electronically. So that was some of -- some new things. We also put in a key operational goal to increase pre-ETS access through virtual services. So at one point we had about 17 of our providers providing pre-ETS. Our goal was to get up to a half of them providing pre-ETS virtually. So about 40 -- I think my math may be off here -- but about 42 43 providers was our goal. We ended up having 80 of our 86 providers were able to provide pre-ETS virtually. So what this did is it resulted in at any point in time 50 to 60 percent of pre-ETS were being provided virtually, which says at least 2000 or more students each month were providing pre-ETS virtually who would not have received pre-ETS had that not been the case -- had that option not been available. So if you're interested in seeing the virtual pre-ETS best practice guide, I've got a link on the slide that will be shared out. I've also got the click path to where if you go to tn.gov/humanservices you can see what the different clicks are you need to take to get to that site. And then I think -- yeah, I'm going to review this just real quick. On your screen right now is scrolling through what our proposal form looked like for pre-ETS, where they would send us in their proposal on how they plan to provide pre-ETS virtually. They would have to tell us what their curriculum was, how they planned on using it and their organization's approach to it to make sure it's going to be individualized and accessible, if they were providing all five of the pre-ETS, if they were using their current curriculum or if they're going to use a different curriculum. And so they would go through this submission process, but they would also go through a curriculum review guide that was developed by Dawn Roe -- some of you all may be familiar with Dawn Roe part of NTACT C, but she's also a professor at East Tennessee State University. So she has had created a curriculum, a review guide of being able to go through it and identifying the strengths and weaknesses. So the providers would do that, and then we on our end would also review these and do a curriculum review guide of what they had said they were using as well. So that's just a quick snapshot. This will also be in the attachments that get sent out to you if you're interested in seeing this as well on how they were submitting those proposals for virtual pre-ETS. And with that I think I'm going to pause and stop for a little bit and turn it over to Jessica Awsumb.

>> Jessica Awsumb: Yeah absolutely. So just to dive a little bit more into what the virtual pre-ETS guide was sort of made up and why we did it was -- I know Blake covered that a little bit -- but we really wanted to make sure that providers had this practical information to be able to do this work. It is quite a change to go from going into the classroom or taking your students into the community to all of a sudden having to do this remotely and collaborate and do all of these different pieces. So that was what we were really trying to do with this. And we really wanted it to be a guide, not a directive of this is what must happen. So with those two pieces in mind, we kind of move forward by saying okay, it's always important that you start with the definitions. We hope everyone knows the definitions of pre-ETS, but let's always start there. So we defined pre-ETS in the guide, and of course what eligibility must look like for students. But then we kind of really dove into the meat of what we wanted to include. So how do you do collaboration with schools virtually, particularly if you're trying to get into a new school this year maybe, or you have new administrators in the school and as they're scrambling as much as they were in the beginning of the pandemic. So just simple tips of start from the very beginning. Set up a zoom meeting. On that zoom meeting, make sure that you guys are setting up a time that works for everybody to meet. So really really simple concepts, just to remind folks as they were you know very stressed and had so much pressure on them during this time period. And so with the foundation of what collaboration can look like, we moved into virtual platforms. So starting with the basics of synchronous versus asynchronous learning. So synchronous: are you going to do direct instruction with your students? Or asynchronous: are you going to maybe record a video of yourself doing a lecture and have your student do an assignment along with that? Are you going to do some combination of those? So in the guide we lay out not only the definition of these, but also the pros and cons of using each of them, and what situations they may be better than others, and some examples of, you know, virtual activities that they can do. How -- you can do e-mentoring, you can do virtual job shadows, so some examples like that, they're in there. We wanted to give a few examples but we also -- again, because I said we didn't want this to be like you must decide to do this with your students, we only gave a couple examples because we didn't want to lay out a lesson plan for folks. We wanted them to be able to plan their own content. And the next piece of the virtual guide was the virtual curriculums piece. So most of them are not developed to be used virtually necessarily. There are a handful, but we really did want to recommend a few that we think are easily adaptable to virtual learning. So you can see a number of those within there. I will -- I'll show you one as we go through our Transition Tennessee website here in a little bit. But so a lot of ideas around how to adapt your curriculum for your students. And then tons of resources, of course. You have to have all the resources. We did local resources, national resources, but all the places that they could learn beyond what was actually in this guide. So that's kind of what it looked like, and Blake, if you want to go to the next slide. So I know this is a lot we're gonna -- we're happy to send these slides out to you but we wanted to have this in one place just for you to see. But these were some of the additional resources that we showed them -- are actual things that they could use with their students. So I won't go through all of these but I'll go through a couple just as examples. But Kahoot, for example, is a great resource that we've had fun with both students and adults alike. But it can be set up as a game with multiple choice questions that students can say, as an example, you know, answer questions in a race about job applications, so they can learn lots of different information. But students tend to like it because there's that competition aspect of it that's not too serious though, but there's the competition aspect, and there's lots of fun music -- you can put your own music in. So you can tailor that to each of your students. So that's a great resource that we have found that students have really enjoyed using. And some of these other ones are just very practical. Of course you can do polls with Poll Everywhere. I definitely, you know, Remind is a fantastic one for communicating with your students or your families. But Padlet's one that we've also had a lot of great luck with, particularly -- not only just students but even adults. But so it's just trying to show how these are useful for your students, but how they are useful in different situations. So for example, we used Padlet recently with some adults to have them put together different notes, which is what Padlet is. You go there, you can put a prompt and then you can click on the --there's a plus sign there that will pop up like a sticky note that you can actually go and everyone can type in their own sticky note. So we had folks go there and talk about connecting to outside agencies, and what was one small step they would do to actually begin to connect to an agency. And it provided a space where folks could go back to that. They could see what agencies others are trying to reach out to. If they've already reached out to them, they can connect with each other, so you can do that with adults or with students. But those are just a few resources that you'll be able to find if you go to our virtual guide. And I believe we're going to turn it over to Triniti now to talk a little bit about what all of this looked like on the ground.

>> Triniti Holden: Yes! Thank you Jessica so much. So for those of you who are not familiar with Shelby County, picture Memphis. I know it's famous for Beale street and the pyramid and all that, but Memphis is really rich in culture. It's rich in education, and we have a host of different schools that we provide pre-ET services to. As Philip mentioned earlier, Shelby County Schools is the largest school district in the state of Tennessee, but we also have six municipal districts as well, as well as about 10 charter networks. So you can just imagine how many students that is. Shelby County School district houses about 110,000 students alone. This map right here gives you -- kind of a general idea of where they are geographically and how they're positioned. We have Millington school district, Bartlett school district, Lakeland school district, Arlington, Germantown and Collierville, and then our charters are scattered all across the city. And Shelby County schools has a 90 percent minority enrollment. So when the pandemic hit, you can imagine not only were our students facing safety barriers, you know, but just general barriers as well. Poverty -- 17 percent of our citizens live below the poverty line. And if the pandemic taught us anything, it taught us how to be intentional and how to be aware. You can go to the next slide, Blake, thank you. So just piggybacking off of the different challenges associated with the pandemic, of course, you know, we are being concerned with safety. And we are coordinating all of the different barriers these each school districts are facing. But also at the school level as well, you know, one school district may have 10 to 20 to 30 different schools, and that is something that my team and I had to basically figure out. What is the pre-ETS going to look like? I'm the supervisor of Shelby and Fayette county, I have a team of five. And it was a lot, you know, just being transparent and being honest, it was a difficult mission. And one thing we had to make sure we communicated to our providers as well as our transition school to work members is to be fluent, because we have to be cognizant of the school's barriers, the students' barriers as well as the parents. So a couple of the challenges that we saw at the school level are communication barriers. You know, a lot of our students rely on proximity. So when the school was shut down, that was a huge barrier that we had to overcome, because across technology, those students were not able to see the teacher face to face, you know, they were not able to be given those commands in that manner. So just be aware of that as we navigate this new school year and all that it encompasses, as well as the practicality of instruction, right? Our students in our population that we serve -- they require the same supports in person as they do virtually, so we have to make sure that we are still giving them those accommodations. A lot of the school districts in Shelby county, when the pandemic first hit they went all virtual, but some of them instituted a hybrid model. A lot of them wanted their special population to be in person, still get those same accommodations, because the learning loss was so significant that it just required the proximity. And then access to technology. We were fortunate enough in our area that Shelby County schools was able to utilize some of the CARES Act money given by the government to give each student in the district a device. So they have a one-to-one ratio of students with technology so that was huge for us and it really allowed pre-ET services to transcend at home. We were very very concerned, because prior to the pandemic providers were going into the building, you know, they were face-to-face with the students, they were in the classroom. So because they were able to have those devices and that technology, we simply, you know, supported our providers with setting up Microsoft Team meetings or Zoom meetings or whatever specific platform that they were utilizing within that district. A lot of times we also assume that our current K-12 population -- they're rich with technology. And even though a lot of them are tech natives, a lot of them are not. So consider a student's prior access and their interactions with virtual technology and platforms, because it can be daunting. I know as an adult I get rather exhausted on the many various Zooms and Microsoft Teams meeting. They will too, so just make sure that you're being patient with them and you're providing them the same supports that they require in the classroom as they do virtually. Next slide please. So, as Jessica mentioned earlier the pre-ETS guide is a huge wealth of information. It has so many good resources for anyone to implement, whether, you know, you're at the school level, the district level, it is just a great guide to show you how to implement pre-ETS and how to do it virtually. Some strategies to consider are different asynchronous blend: having a healthy balance of synchronous instruction and asynchronous components can really not only give the students a break, but can also promote independence, because we want them to be comfortable utilizing the technology that they have and navigating those virtual platforms and environments. Utilizing the platform features: I know that -- they're all pretty much the same. All of them have a chat feature, they all have breakout rooms, emojis, create buy-in, you know, utilizing those features so that students can become familiar with them, and it also allows for teachers to check for understanding fairly quickly. If you're asking your students, hey, give me a smiley face to let me know how you're doing today, or not. You know, show me how you're doing today. That's a great way for your nonverbal students to be able to communicate if they're able to use that chat feature or an emoji to quickly express, especially now during the pandemic because we are so concerned with their social and emotional health and it being severely difficult to assess that quickly without being in close proximity with your students. And lastly, having some autonomy over their assignments. I think a huge lesson that the pandemic taught us also was to trim the fat, you know? During the pandemic we learned what was important and what was not important. Things that could still get done virtually that were not -- that were not necessarily necessary, you know? So give students the opportunity to explore their interests. Give them an opportunity to make those decisions. That's how we form healthy advocates. That's how we build leaders, if we're allowing them to make those purposeful decisions regarding their education, their transition, their health. They need to be involved in that process. And if we give them the platform and the ability to probe and explore, they're going to thrive, they're going to flourish. And it's also going to give them just a general healthy overall outlook on their experience education wise and transition wise. Next slide.

>> Jessica Awsumb: All right so I'm going to jump in. I'm actually going to jump off the slides. I'm putting in the chat the link to the website that I'm going to walk through with all of you now. Let's see. Blake, if you want to end your sharing -- perfect. Then you should be able to -- can you all see this this website? Okay, great. So let me just move us out of the way here so I can go through this with you. So this is Transition Tennessee or transition TN we often call it. So we really started out, as Blake mentioned earlier, as a -- collaborative to serve educators and then eventually serve providers, but to help prepare them to serve their students with disabilities that are transitioning into adulthood. What we've added most recently is this student piece that we're really excited about. So I'm going to go through a little bit of the website with you in our remaining time, and then I'm going to show you the student website, because I think that that's really exciting and was certainly very useful for folks during this virtual learning period. So I'll focus on our provider side, before we go into the student, but I just want to say that the educator side really mirrors the provider side or vice versa, because they're both covering transition services. So what the educator side is for the educator perspective, while the provider side is for the provider perspective, and those services are called different things. But they overlap and are ultimately all just transition services done differently. So you can click into our provider website on this gear, or you can click into it up on this part of the website. You can see what will pop up are all of our course offerings here. Same would be for our educators - all the course offerings, our student work and education path, family resources and some information about us. But I'll go into that as we go through the website. So I've already opened the tabs just to save time with the web pages loading. So if you would click on providers you would land on this page where you'll see a banner that will have information about us, but also any upcoming events or webcasts that we may have. As you can see we have one coming up just next week on work based learning which is perfect, because that's what I'm going to talk to you about here for a minute. But you can learn a little bit about us on this front page. You can see each of the courses under these picture tiles that you can click into. So you do have to register -- I should say you do have to register for our website, but it is free, so feel free to register yourself and walk through it. But -- and I do encourage you to explore it. But, you know, if you're on either side of the website you'll see what we've done in response to COVID-19. So a lot of virtual resources that we created during the pandemic. You can learn more about us as Transition Tennessee. You can see our virtual events - like I said, webcasts, conferences, trainings, we held some virtual transition fairs. So we really try to record everything and put it live on the website for everyone to use. But before I go any further, I want to go into a couple of our resources. So I want to show you our assessment database, our curriculum database and our family resources. So I'll go into the assessment database first. And so once you get into the assessment database, you'll see, of course, an introduction. Just see this great video about some tips for selecting and using assessment, so if it's something you're unfamiliar with you can learn more about it. And it's really really helpful. But as you scroll down, it's a searchable assessment database. So if you're on this side of the website, the provider side, you'll see it is searchable by pre-ET category. If you're on the educator side it'll be searchable by transition domain. But again, those obviously overlap because transition services are transition. So right now what I want to do is just search -- I'm going to search work based learning, but I want you to know that you could also search by the focus you were looking for for the assessment, if it was, you know, students strengths or needs that you really need to learn more about, assessment approach, so if you're wanting to do a direct observation or a survey or questionnaire you can look for those specifically. If you need a specific language, you can see what some assessments offer. You can check out the cost. If you -- do not want it to have a cost, you can click no. And then you can check who completes it, because sometimes it's the student, sometimes it's a family member or the teacher. Today we're just going to do work based learning. We're going to have this employment focus as I walk you through. And so once you click that and search, you'll see all of these different assessments that come up that really focus on work based learning. So I'm just going to click on this employability life skills assessment, which I already have pulled up. So when you pull those up -- so say you don't know anything about these. Well when you click on them you can learn a little bit more. This one is a 24 item checklist that rates an individual on how often he or she accurately and efficiently engages in work-related behaviors. So that's fantastic and that would be probably what you're looking for if you were looking for something based around work-based learning. There's also some quick facts down here. Their transition domain will be here, their pre-ETS covered, the focus -- so this one is going to focus on students strengths and needs. You can link out to the assessment so you can actually go and get the assessment. Who completes it, the approach, if there's a cost -- which there's not with this one which is great. The year it's published if we have that information available. Language that it's available in, if it says how much time you need to allot to complete, as well as if there's different versions, psychometric properties, and if it's connected to a curriculum. So that's just the assessment database. I definitely encourage you to go and check that out for yourself. But under resources we also have our curriculum database. And this is very similar to the assessment database in its setup. There's the introduction, of course, to the curriculum database. A video -- speaking of Dawn Roe who we mentioned earlier -- but a video of tips to actually choose curriculum -- particularly based on your students needs and evaluate how useful that curriculum will be for you. If you scroll down this is also searchable, like our assessment database. Less categories of course, but there's pre-ETS category, payment type, and who it's accessible for. So we'll stick with work based learning here. And you can sort this, and as you go down you can see on the curriculum database it'll tell you the price, the payment type, when it was released and then what pre-ETS each of these cover. So you can see a number of these as you're scrolling down. And today I'm going to click on T-Folio. This is one that we identified for the virtual guide that is really great to use virtually or in person with students. So like the assessment database, you can see obviously a larger description of what T-Folio is and offers. And then it has those quick facts again so you can link out to get even more information. So that is our curriculum database. One other thing that is really important is our family resource page. Yes?

>> Blake Shearer: I'm sorry my microphone wasn't pulled down, I apologize. I just wanted to make a quick comment on the curriculum database, how important that was to me and to the pre-ETS team as far as a state agency is concerned when it came to the providers and school districts submitting proposals to provide pre-ETS virtually, because they would do a review of the curriculum they were using. It would be very difficult for one person to go and review 80 different proposals, curriculums and say okay does this meet -- but this allowed me to come into one spot and say okay, the provider has said this curriculum covers all five services. And I would go well yeah, that's what we're also seeing as well from the research that you all have done through Transition Tennessee, and -- or be able to say, you know, this isn't as accessible as as what you may think it is, and here's why. And so you'll be able to provide that type of ongoing feedback to our providers to say this will be really good for these three services and for students with more high incidence disabilities, but you're going to need to explore additional curriculum to reach students with varying levels of cognitive abilities or different types of sensory disabilities. So that really was helpful to us as a state agency and I feel like there's other state agencies on the call or just in general people who are wondering what's available through a curriculum, can really give them a lot of good feedback and a quick snapshot. And finding that research if it is research based what and how is the research used. So it's just a quick comment on how helpful that was for us.

>> Jessica Awsumb: Yeah, and it's something initially that we had heard a lot from providers that they needed more support actually accessing curriculum or knowing what to choose. So that was part of why we put this together the way that we did it as well. So okay. Okay fantastic. So our family resources page we put together for a similar reason. We heard from families from all different parts of the state that there's too many resources, they're in language that they don't necessarily understand, because we're talking about post-secondary this and post-secondary that. And it's confusing if you're a family member, often. And they also would have to go down all these different rabbit holes to try to find what they needed. And we thought let's just try to put some really great resources in one place for them. So we created this family resource page. First thing we did was we created a downloadable form that they can actually keep track of where they've been, so hopefully they don't get stuck in those rabbit holes. But we wanted to really listen to what they said, and they said they needed resources around finances and benefits, family and caregiver supports, social networking and community supports, postsecondary education, independent living, health care, and employment. So I'll show you what it looks like when you click into one of these tiles here in just a second. But we really wanted to make sure we put resources in all of these categories. In addition to that, just below, we have some general transition guides and websites that we either partner with or that we really think are very useful for everybody. In particular we've just added these -- these are family tip sheets that we've created. They cover diploma options, pre-employment transition services, supported decision making, vocational rehabilitation adult services, SSI benefits and work incentives, and then employment and community first choices. So just some plain language one pagers that families can have to learn a little bit more about each of these different pieces of the transition process. And we're creating more tip sheets all the time. Another one is this Tennessee disability pathfinder that we partner with. They are a fantastic organization and you can find any resource that you need there, locally across the state. So like I said, I would click into one of these tiles to show you what it looks like. So I'm going to stick with our employment theme and click into employment. And so this is what it looks like when you go in. It's very simple, we didn't want it to be overwhelming. But there's a PDF downloadable version of this. But you know, we have just immediately right off the bat an overview of vocational rehabilitation. They are partners, they provide adult services, and we want to make sure that students are being connected to them when they need those services. But parents can also come down and see some tips for helping their youth build work skills for job success, learn about disability disclosure and a number of other things. So each of these only has a handful of resources. We know that these aren't the end-all be-all to resources. But we just wanted to put a handful of really good resources in each of these categories for families. So the last thing I'm going to do -- actually, you know, for time's sake because we're just a few minutes behind, I'm going to skip. If we have time I can come back to it, but I want to go straight over to our student website. But as I do that I just want to tell you what I was going to go over is one of these courses. I was just going to show you our lessons and activities. They're all video based lessons. They're very useful, please go check them out. And also under this guide for pre-ETS, this is where on our website you can find the virtual pre-employment transition services guide that we developed. There's also other guides for pre-ETS there. So please check those out. But I'm gonna jump over to the student website here which is something that we launched in July of 2020, so just a little over a year ago now. But this is really a space where students themselves can come or they can come with the support of their parents or their instructors to learn more about their own transition process, so -- help prepare themselves for life after high school. There's an introductory video they can watch here. And there's two pathways that they can go right now. They can choose to say that they would like to go to work and learn more about what that transition process looks like, or I want to continue my education and learn about what that process looks like. They can of course click on those up top here as well. There's an instructor guide that I'll show you, but we're going to do the work pathway today. So when you click in here you have two course options right now. So students can learn more about how they can explore their work options. And so you'll see there's lessons under here on self assessment, labor market and types of employment, and benefits of going to work. We're not going to explore that today. But we are going to explore under what are my needs rights and responsibilities at work, how students rights and responsibilities change after high school. So obviously there's disclosure in the workplace, and communication in the workplace. But just things that students so often don't know about for themselves, right? So we're gonna go into rights and responsibilities change after high school. So I'm gonna pull this down just a smidge here. Okay.

>> Voiceover: So what are my needs rights and responsibilities at work?

>> Jessica Awsumb: So this is a role play that just automatically starts playing as you go in, so this is a role play scenario that students can go in and actually learn a little bit more about rights and responsibility, choose different pathways to see how those different decisions would impact what their outcomes are. So I'll just play a slide or two for you.

>> Voiceover: Brian is a high school student and hoping to find a job starting in the summer. The last few months he's spent some time looking with his teacher and pre-ETS provider at job postings online for a few different jobs he thinks he will like.

>> Jessica Awsumb: So you know we meet the student that's the focus of each of these lessons

>> Voiceover: He applied, interviewed and then was offered two different jobs: cashier at GameSource, grooming assistant at Pete's Pets. He needs some help deciding what job to pick. Next.

>> Jessica Awsumb: I believe in this next one -- yep. So he can start to discover what his PINS are, his preferences, interests, needs and strengths are.

>> Voiceover: Preferences: he wants a job that involves talking to people.

>> Jessica Awsumb: So you would keep clicking that and -- your students can keep clicking through to learn more about Brian's process. But so as they learn about how their rights and responsibilities change, they can also go and do this get involved game. So I -- if you click on that you will see that you have a couple options that pop up here. There's --well first of all there's vocabulary flash cards for students, there's some games that they can play that are just short five ten fifteen minute games. But they can learn about school-based activities that they could do. So in this one students are asked -- and it's defined of course for them -- but students are asked to create an infographic showing the difference between their rights and responsibilities in school and in the workplace. So that's based on what they've learned, they've got downloadable information here to support that for them. They can also -- will also have a community-based activity, so in this one students are asked to complete an informational interview and look for similarities and differences as you interview the manager of a business and someone who works in your school. So that's just like another way that they can learn a little bit about how their rights and responsibilities change. So once they've done that they can also go into this portfolio. And this portfolio is a place where they can actually enter the information that they've learned. So this email is really important because we don't collect student information. So if it's your email, the teacher's email, the pre-ETS provider or theirs, it will go to that person and that's the only record of it. However as they're going through, they can actually write in here what they learned or they can write in here with support what they've learned from this lesson. So for example, at school who can give me help when I need it. So they would have that information. But if they scroll down they can also do that for at work. Who can give me help when I need it? So just really great resource for students. And this instructor guide that's here --this is the last piece before we'll hand it over for questions -- this instructor guide is a place that anyone can go, the instructor or parent again can go to learn a little bit more about how to engage your students in this work. So this page has information for all lessons, but it also has the lessons broken down then. So okay, so with that activity you needed help supporting your student in the rights and responsibilities activity. So if you click on that this will actually pop up. It's a short two-page document. It will tell you how much time is recommended for the activity, downloadable resources you need, materials you may need. So this one needs art supplies. If there's vocabulary that you should review, that's here. And then things that your students should be thinking about, and then how to play each of the games, so what you should discuss with them, what needs to be explained to them, what they should be practicing, same for community based. And some options for differentiating too, right? Does your student need to have the questions read aloud? Does your student need to have the information downloaded and printed out versus on a computer? So just some options there. I know that's a lot of information, I'm happy to connect with anyone about any questions about the website. So I'm gonna stop my share and turn it back over.

>> Blake Shearer: Jessica, I had a question, you may have mentioned it and I missed it, but can you speak to a little bit about the registration for the educator provider versus the student, or did you already cover that? I'm sorry if I missed it.

>> Jessica Awsumb: Yeah so it's all -- what if you're a provider or an educator or an adult, it's all one registration across the website. Students don't have to register for the web -- for the student website. The student website is the one place that you don't have to have a login. You only have to have a login for the instructor guide to download that piece, so we just didn't want students to stumble upon that and, you know, have any confusion, so -- but it's all free.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Well that's certainly the best price, right?

>> Jessica Awsumb: Yeah, of course! [laughs]

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: All right. Well now we've officially hit the Q&A portion of today's webinar. I know I have a lot of questions and I will certainly exercise the moderators -- the hosts privilege of asking each of you some questions. But for our audience you can pitch in and get your questions answered by either dropping it in the chat box or by using the Q&A function on the bottom bar. But I'm -- as I said I'm going to exercise, until we get some more audience questions, I'm going to exercise my privilege and just say thank you so much everyone for being here. And actually Triniti I want to go with you first, and I think you touched on a really important piece - the idea of kind of the tech gap and the idea of -- I can say this because I'm getting older there but, you know, thinking about the youths as, you know, being tech savvy or tech natives, but that kind of assumption really papering over the very serious issues of gaps and access to technology and gaps in hardware and resources. And so Triniti -- I'm curious, can you talk a little bit about -- kind of that, how you develop hybrid models, how you responded to making sure that -- students from diverse backgrounds -- students who -- come from -- underprivileged backgrounds can have access to services and supports and the technology they need to succeed in this -- weird world of COVID and virtual learning?

>> Triniti Holden: For sure, yes. That is a great question. Like I was saying earlier, you know, we were lucky enough that our largest school district was able to give each student a device from Pre-K to grade 12. So that was a huge huge thing. But I think anyone who is from Memphis are familiar with the education system here. Depending on where you are in the city, you will see distinct disparities regarding the students and the different barriers that they face. And I know one thing that I've -- I guess I found was we have to stop equating a student's geographical location with the type of instruction they receive, you know? Just because you're located somewhere does not mean that you're not getting the same instruction as another student. Now it does mean that you have different barriers. It means that you have different resources. It means that you will go through different experiences as another student. But the level of support you get from your teachers is just as significant, and that's a huge thing, you know, how we support them depending on where they are and things like that. So it was definitely something that we had to learn, even as adults, that students are not -- yes they get on the computer every day and they do intervention on a specific, you know, application but, you know, can they take care of device, you know, is that something that they're familiar with? Are they okay with logging into Teams and turning in assignments or chatting and is that comfortable for them? So it was a learning curve for everyone. And I think now -- I think a lot of people thought that since this year, you know, everyone's kind of back in person that some of these things wouldn't exist, but they they still are. They're still there, so we're still learning.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Absolutely. And more than that, you're sharing the learnings and lessons that you've dealt with, you know, with a wider audience, and I really appreciate that. I don't see any Q&A box questions yet, but that's okay. We've got a few minutes. So actually Jessica, I want to go to that piece you brought forward about kind of figuring out the balance between synchronous and asynchronous learning. I thought that was really interesting and I'm -- I really have to say I like the very interactive piece on the transition website that you've developed. I think those are all really wonderful pieces of, you know, resources. But in addition to that I am curious and this is because this is an issue which weighs on me is especially with transition age youth family support is part of your workforce strategy, you know. So getting parents to -- especially parents of students with more significant disabilities to kind of understand, you know, that they can become independent, they can earn an income. So I'm curious Jessica -- what resources do you have specific to the family support piece of transition age youth?

>> Jessica Awsumb: Yeah, so you're so right that it's -- that's such a complicated issue. But one of the lessons that we actually developed was about connecting with families as well as employers, but really learning those strategies to get families involved and help them understand that their students can work. And one of the ways that we do know that we can help families understand that is by showing them that. So starting with some of the school-based activities, slowly transitioning their students into the community, so really in this -- in the same way that we approach most everything else, small things instead of -- just very like aggressively telling families like -- we just have to do it, we just have to try it. Just let them see, well, what is it like if your student works two hours a week? What is it like if they start with volunteer, and they have a job coach and we can see that that's safe? We hear safety issue a lot from families. But so really starting with those pieces is sort of how we try to help providers and educators begin to connect with families. And that -- just that collaborative model of working together.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: Gotcha thank you Jessica. A quick shout out to Kimberly Clayborne from our audience who already extended a hearty thanks for all the valuable information. And Triniti already got back to her to express our gratitude for sharing, thank you for being on top of that. So Blake, obviously, you know, I really appreciate the slides you had about kind of enrollment because that provided kind of the context. And I totally understand not having your quarter four data yet, because -- how far are we into quarter four, right? But that being said -- that enrollment piece -- makes me really think about kind of the big question of -- and this is I think a good takeaway since I don't see any other external questions because they're -- our audience has clearly been awed into silence by your wonderful content. But you know, I'm really curious -- as you look to the future, because the future -- the future is digital is a phrase we've heard for 30 years at this point. But really -- what do future plans around transition services look like because training people virtually is still how a lot of jobs are going to be handled nowadays. Not a lot of office spaces. You know -- A lot of companies have transitioned out of office space even -- as vaccines rolls out, even as people start going back into work -- there's a lot of people who just like the flexibility of working from home. So I'm curious how do you see -- a future, how do you plan for a future where you may need to have virtual training, you may need to have virtual services but you need to balance that with -- getting your services and -- getting people back connected face-to-face. So what does the future look like for your wonderful programs?

>> Blake Shearer: Right, so I mean I still believe and I've yet to have my mind changed on this, because, I think, of the 15 years I spent in education that in person, that human connection, you know, face-to-face type is the way to go. I think we get our biggest return on our investment by doing so. But to say the others aren't useful because of that just isn't accurate. So I definitely want us to continue to move forward offering these options of a in person and virtually asynchronous and. synchronous. So having that -- those, all those different abilities to be able to reach a student wherever they are and to reach a family where they are is going to be, I think, critical moving forward. And we are -- we're certainly extremely proud of the number of students that we're able to serve and the services we're providing, but as a Tennessee pre-ETS program, one of the big things when we're thinking future planning ahead is how is that impacting ultimately the outcome of that student? We just did an activity with our team where we we're like, all right, what do we want to start, stop and keep going forward? What's going really well and what do we need to just get rid of that's not going well? What do we want to continue? And the biggest thing that came out was we want to make sure that we start collecting that outcome data for our students, so that we know how it's impacting them as far as their referrals, as far as their employment outcomes. Because right now we don't have a great data collection system for that. But that will also tell us as well the type of services that have been provided to them, did it have more of a significant impact if it was in person versus virtual? So just being able to use the data to support the decisions that we make going forward would be a real critical piece for us.

>> Philip Kahn-Pauli: All right and that gets us exactly to 2:30 eastern time. And not seeing any chat box questions and no Q&A questions, we are going to draw the webinar to a close today. Dr. Awsumb, Triniti Holden, Blake Shearer, I really -- all of you I really appreciate all of your time and attention today, really sharing the lessons that you've learned. Your hard work is so evident. For everybody in our audience we're going to be emailing out a copy of those slides, and I really hope that, you know, even if you're not in Tennessee -- especially if you're not, if you're in the 49 other states and the other territories, you know, take a look, because I think there's really valuable lessons to be learned in terms of, you know, thinking through how do we provide services, how do we provide supports, you know, how do we reach audiences of -- diverse youth, youth from very diverse backgrounds, and how do we -- work together to really get more transition age youth with disabilities successfully placed into the workforce, especially now as we look to the recovery, as we look forward to the rest of the month of October and National Disability Employment Awareness Month, we all have a piece of this work and we're going to take this forward we're going to learn we can. Thank you everyone and have a wonderful day.