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JFK CENTER  
WEBINAR-VOICES FROM THE FIELD: TRANSITION AND THE ARTS

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>> Okay. Hello everyone. Welcome to the final October installment of our VSA webinar series which comes to you from the John F. Kennedy Center for the performing arts and addresses topics related to the arts and special education. I am Emily Thiell, the program coordinator at the special education Center and I will be your webinar moderator. Today's webinar is part of our lightning talks series, voices from the field, transition and the arts. If you would like to view live stream captioning of this webinar you can follow the link you see on the slide and in the chat box of the control panel located on the right side of your screen.

Before we get going, I'd like to take a brief moment and introduce you to the Cisco WebEx platform. Broadcast messages such as the screen filling and links to live stream captioning are in the chat box. You can use a control panel in the right-hand side of the window. If you need to leave the webinar early you can leave it by clicking in the X at the upper left-hand corner. And a recording of the webinar will be available afterward, so you can catch up on any parts you miss, you can connect to the audio portion of your webinar through your telephone or through your computer's microphone and speakers. Select the option that works best for you, using comments, questions or answers using the Q&A option. Which you can select from the top panel. Please note that this is different from the chat box and allows moderators to view your questions. Please make sure that your question is directed to all panelists. I will monitor the screen throughout the webinar.

If you prefer to speak your input rather than typing it, please click on the raise your hand icon which can be found in your view on the participant panel. I will touch base with you and mute your microphone at the appropriate time. Much of today's presentation will be conducted over screen share. If you would like to adjust your view by zooming in or zooming out, you may click on the magnifying glasses and also expand your view to full screen.

At the end of today's presentation there will be an opportunity to ask questions about the material. Given the very limited amount of time available to us we respectfully ask

that you avoid questions about individual students and focus on those broader implications of Emily and Elijah's work. During this open-ended question and answer time please raise your hand if you wish to speak or type your question into the Q&A box.

Within a week we will send out a follow-up email with a link of the recording and today's presentation. A copy of the PowerPoint and a copy of the webinar transcript. This means you can go back and watch the recording and review supplemental materials in addition to any notes you take during the webinar itself. Our November webinar, strategies for creating an inclusive dance experience will take place on the 29th at 3 PM. A link can be found in your chat box. If you are active on social media I invite you to connect with us using hashtag VSA webinar. On Facebook we are VSA international and twitter we are VSA INTL. We would love to engage with you and with that I will hand it over to today's presenters Emily and Elijah.

>> Thank you, Emily. I'm going to just get this shared. Okay and I will just introduce myself very quickly. I am deputy director of School Talks and I am here with Elijah, one of our youth leadership specialists. Not going to spend a lot of time talking about exactly what School Talks is given the short amount of time we have together today but you can go to the link that I have provided to check out the organization.

Elijah and I are here today to talk to you about School Talks great jobs created [inaudible] we developed this curriculum out of the need that we have identified and that most people in transition recognize that youth with disabilities experience significantly poorer postsecondary outcomes related to their nondisabled peers. And specifically around employment. Some of our work focuses on supporting youth in [gate] and DC summer employment program and we recognize the need for intensive curriculum around helping students to get to know themselves, set postsecondary education goals and also figure out how to navigate conflicts in the workplace and that is the foundation really of what the curriculum that we are in the still in the process of developing is all about.

The curriculum is very interactive and it is arts-based in order to help differentiate instruction and it is specifically designed for transition age youth with disabilities, age 14 to 21 and like I said before it is designed to address conflict in the workplace.

The project is funded by the JAMS foundation and the ACR initiative for students and youth. That is a hyperlink, so you can go see the other projects they funded and other funding opportunities they have. Both organizations are conflict resolution organizations and the specific request for proposal that we responded to was focused on specifically around conflict resolution related to youth with disabilities.

So as such the curriculum is grounded in secondary transition. The part of special education that is really focused on helping youth with disabilities transition from high school to adult life. Conflict resolution, which is a lot of the work that school talk does as

well as arts-based learning as I mentioned to help differentiate instruction and engage learners.

We use universal design for learning principles in order to support youth with the right range of disabilities and also to design a curriculum so that it can be delivered in diverse settings. Part of the grant with the ACR JAMS foundation required us to develop a curriculum that can be delivered in schools but also in a wide variety of community-based settings so that we can get at the largest section of youth with disabilities. And help people access the curriculum in multiple ways.

We did include a pretty extensive evaluation process in our curriculum design process. After we designed the first round of the curriculum we sent it out to a panel of experts outside of our organization. Some of them from the Kennedy Center actually reviewed it and we also have other arts educators review it as well as special education and some national experts in the field of secondary transition.

We also have done part one of a two-part UDL review so we had an expert review the first round of edits that we did. So we first ran a curriculum then we sent it out to our experts for review, did one round of edits, send it to the UDL reviewer who sent us back a report where we did some more edits. And then this past spring and summer we had a pilot sites both here in DC and a couple of national sites that piloted parts of the curriculum. We had the DC schools that piloted a majority of the curriculum as well as community-based sites here and at other national locations.

Following that process, or as part of that process, we also had an outside reviewer from George Mason University coming into engage both of us to help design the curriculum as well as the instructors at the sites, to help understand how well youth were accessing the material and also the usability of the curriculum itself from the instructor standpoint. One of the challenges of designing a curriculum that works both in the schools and community-based settings is to design it in a way that helps instructors that are coming into it and interacting with it with different levels of experience. So we have a very seasoned special educators interacting with the curriculum as well as folks who are working in community-based settings who may or may not have any instruction or background in teaching.

Following the pilots from this summer and the preliminary information we've gotten from our evaluator we are now looking at moving the activities and the curriculum into more of a toolkit that has specific pathways that folks can follow based on what they're learning objectives are for the population they are working with.

The entire curriculum is grounded in conflict resolution so there is a conflict resolution 101 pathway where youth can learn the basics of conflict resolution and how they might use it in their lives.

We are also including a job readiness pathway. This includes some career exploration components, helping youth become more aware of the world of work as well as

goalsetting, postsecondary goalsetting and conflict in the workplace. And depending on students' readiness for this they might also, for an example of how people might use the curricula, a constructor might decide to do the job readiness pathway but recognize that students also need a conflict resolution pathway so they might do these in conjunction with one another.

We also have a youth leadership pathway which going to let Elijah speak about briefly. Elijah works with School Talks, in School Talks youth leadership position and in part of that work he spends a lot of time in DC schools helping them develop their own youth leadership skills. He's used the curriculum in that capacity. This particular pathway includes youth leadership 101 kind of explaining what it is. It includes a section on awareness of self and others. There is a disability awareness lesson. Self advocacy toolkits as well as conflict resolution 101. Elijah do you want to share an example of how you use it and engage with it?

>> We use the self advocacy workshop in the school and it worked out really good. The kids are advocating about the things they want to change around the school. They weren't really many things but definitely kids want different in school and I could see them actually taking time and writing of different details to help them set up one final outcome that they want to change in the school. I did see them take that and use it and work with it so I feel like this is a more serious topic we could put more time into it and make it more in-depth and working well for the students

>> To really engage them to work toward advocating for something?

>> Yes

>> Great, thank you, Elijah. We are also building on the self-determination pathway. Very similar to the youth leadership pathway, it has awareness of self and others, goalsetting disability awareness and self-advocacy but there's also a goalsetting section so that helps a determination similar one to the job readiness pathway. Finally there is a creative expression section and it's not necessarily a pathway but there are a series of heavily arts-based lessons that help the youth understand themselves and we are going to write up some ways that we think that these could be used for youth to explore their own identities and communicate what they learn about the in IEP meetings in various different ways with family and friends, members of the community, other people who are advocating for them.

In terms of next steps, we are in the process of finalizing the pathways. We are developing some additional supporting content to go with those pathways. Once we have done that we will conduct, send it out for the second and final UDL review and then we are hoping to do a second phase of piloting. With a pathway specifically at different sites across the country. And anyone who is listening who is interested in participating in the pilots can contact myself and we will get this information out to you.

So I will turn it back over to you, Emily, With a couple minutes to spare. Are there any questions?

>> Thank you all so much. Let me pull up my... great. All right so we have now reached the question and answer portion of our webinar. If you haven't already, now is the time to enter a question into the Q&A box or raise your hand. To get started, I know that Elijah touched on this briefly, but what is the impact of the program on students and how do they react?

>> They were very very excited about it. They interacted pretty good. When we did the workshop it was, at first it was kind of slow but then as we worked through and gave them more ideas to work through they started getting more intrigued in it. But the disability awareness part really did come out in the activity.

>> That's awesome. So, one person asked where is a good place to start in preparing my high school students to secondary transition?

>> Well, at school talk we advocate for as soon as possible. [Laughter] if you're talking about in terms of age we subscribe to at minimum 14 years of age that you should be working with youth to start thinking about who they are and how they are going to figure out what their interests are and how that's going to drive them toward their post secondary goals. And provide them opportunities and spaces to experiment with what they think they are interested in and see if their interest and preference is kind of aligned to what they want to achieve after school so we say as early as possible. I'm not sure if that is answering that question or not.

>> Great, and then briefly when developing the process of the program do you have any advice on helping navigate the process for people doing something similar?

>> The evaluation of curriculum development/

>> Yeah.

>> Yes, you have to, my advice would be you have to build that process in prior to starting the curriculum development itself. So, we worked with the evaluators specifically at George Mason to identify what our end curriculum goals work and work with her to have a clear evaluation plan that included her work as well as the external review and the UDL review.

>> Fantastic. Thank you all so much. With that, that concludes today's webinar. I'd like to ask you, our webinar participants to keep your window open following the webinar where the survey will generate on the screen. Your feedback is always appreciated. Thank you for joining us. For any questions or comments I can be reached by email at [ECThiell@KennedyCenter.org](mailto:ECThiell@KennedyCenter.org) or by phone at 202-416-8742. Have a nice day.