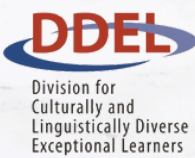


DDEL Voices



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Presidents Corner

WE ARE FAMILY: SUPPORTING MARGINALIZED AND MINORITIZED FAMILIES WHOSE CHILDREN HAVE IEPs

Christopher J. Cormier
DDEL President



Dr. Christopher J. Cormier, a graduate of Fisk University (an HBCU). HBCU's are operated as a "family" which is a unique model among institutions of higher education.

The importance of supporting the families of students from marginalized and minoritized backgrounds who are served in special education programs gets little attention. For example, I have seen parents go along with decisions from Individualized Education Program teams that were not in their child's best interest because. For example, families that were undocumented they were afraid to ask for too much. Furthermore, documents about the rights of school children that are supplied in IEP meetings rarely go into detail and often are written only in English. Parents rights are hardly ever fully explained so students from both marginalized and minoritized backgrounds

cont. p.2

who often may not have access to attorneys or advocates may not understand what rights they are entitled to as districts often find it more convenient to control this information. The individuals who work with our children are not always ethical. I saw this as a parent when one of my daughters was not yet speaking at the age of 2. I contacted the local regional center to have her evaluated, and the director asked me to sign an Individualized Family Service Plan. I said I could not, as my daughter had not yet been evaluated for services. It was an illegal practice aimed at securing government funding, and the type of practice that may be one reason why Black children such as my daughter are overrepresented among children with IEPs. I am unusual among parents, and especially among minoritized parents, in that I knew she had to be evaluated before such a plan could be formulated, and in fact her evaluation revealed she was ineligible for services. In light of such common disadvantage, those of us who are ethical need to make sure minoritized families whose children have IEPs receive support to counteract school representatives who are not.

In this issue of DDEL Voices we are highlighting stories of families and the ways that in our practice as schoolteachers or university professors we can listen to those who have stories to tell about their experiences navigating the IEP process for their children. My experiences as a parent showed me that my professional experience and training in special education cannot substitute for hands-on, personal knowledge of facing the system as a parent or student. However, being a teacher where I was faced with often being required to be a gatekeeper for services and a parent who wanted to get their child tested for services, I have seen both sides of the issue. What I have learned is that even though there are laws that govern the IEP process and that parents are supposed to have rights to protect their children, these are often not followed particularly those families who are seen as most vulnerable to not having the economic or even social capital that would almost ensure that the process is being ran in a fair, legal, and equitable manner.

Overall, I hope that from reading the journeys described here you can begin to rethink your engagement with marginalized and minoritized families and the important knowledge as well as unique stories that they can provide that offer crucial information as you support their children.

Christopher J. Cormier, PhD
President, Division of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners (DDEL),
Council for Exceptional Children

Mission, Vision, and

Core Values

Mission

To improve, through professional excellence and advocacy, the education and quality of life for individuals with exceptionalities from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic communities.

Vision

DDEL is an education organization renowned for its leadership in advancing knowledge and practice, and shaping policy to enhance the quality of life for diverse individuals with exceptionalities.

DDEL's commitment to forging partnerships results in solutions to persistent and emerging barriers to social justice. DDEL is recognized globally for its expertise and advocacy.

Core Values

Diversity, social justice, equity, and inclusiveness

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MULTIPLE VOICES



Disability, Race, and Language Intersections in Special Education

One of the many benefits of your DDEL membership is your *Multiple Voices* journal subscription.

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Editors

Kathleen King Thorius, PhD
Cristina Santamaría Graff, PhD
Seena M. Skelton, PhD

Managing Editor

M. Nickie Coomer, PhD

Journal Announcement:

For Author Guidelines and Submission
Information Visit:

<https://meridian.allenpress.com/DocumentLibrary/DDEL/Author-Guidelines-7-09-20.pdf>

Multiple Voices: Disability, Race, and Language Intersections in Special Education Editors' Note

New Journal Issue Available

Check out the current issue of Multiple Voices! Volume 22, Issue 1 Spring/Summer 2022 is out and accessible for subscribers on the journal's website multiplevoicesjournal.org. DDEL members should also receive a hard copy mailed. If you are not a subscriber and would like to register for a subscription, please email ncoomer@coloradocollege.edu.

Multiple Voices
Great Lakes Equity Center
Indiana University School of Education-IUPUI
902 W. New York Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202, United States
Office: 317-274-6806 Fax: 317-278-5073
Email: myjourn@iupui.edu

Research to Practice

CENTERING FAMILY VOICES IN PROFESSIONAL TRAINING FOR EDUCATORS

By Terese Aceves and Cristina Santamaría Graff

As scholar-educators who are committed to preparing future leaders in education to become more culturally responsive in working with Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) families of children with disabilities, we have both been engaged in using Family as Faculty (FAF) approaches for teaching in university classrooms. For background, FAF is a healthcare model adapted for special education teacher preparation and school psychology training programs. FAF approaches value families' expertise of their children and centers their knowledge as contributive to educational decisions impacting the child/individual with disabilities within PK – 12 schools. As a result of our ongoing commitment to engaging in parent-centered scholarship and practice, we briefly provide some framing and actionable steps for those interested in FAF in educational professional training programs.

FAF Framing

Over the past six years, Cristina has expanded upon FAF research by Patterson et al. (2009) to intentionally locate BIPOC and other families as co-educators and co-researchers in FAF projects. Translated to practice this means that family members of children with disabilities work alongside university faculty/instructors to inform curriculum and instruction and to teach course content. Cristina integrates FAF approaches in special education courses focusing on families so that preservice special education teachers (PSETs) have opportunities to learn from rather than about families.

Consistently, two important actions emerge as observed through mixed-method data collection/analysis: (a) PSETs demonstrate movement from deficit- to more asset-based understandings of students with disabilities and their families, and (b) family members develop a greater sense of agency as they observe their positive impact on PSETs and teacher preparation programs.

FAF "In Action!": Beginning Steps

- Start early! It's never too early to plan for classes. Discuss the FAF framework with your program director and determine which course might be a natural starting point for this work. This could include courses in special education foundations, law, disability studies, or collaboration/consultation. The summer term, if not part of a faculty's course load, is a great starting point when faculty are contracted separately to teach courses beyond the academic year. Determine and discuss in advance how units will be shared with your co-instructors.
- If you choose a course during the academic year, then consider hiring a graduate student at your institution who is also a parent/family member of a child receiving special education services. The position could be funded using graduate assistant or graduate researcher funds. Alternatively, faculty can work with their Dean to advocate for other funding streams to engage in community-based, DEI, and/or mission-oriented instruction.

cont. p.6

- Identify potential parents/family members you’ve established a relationship with through previous work or begin building relationships with local parent-to-parent organizations. Consider identifying multiple parents who can represent different experiences, perspectives, ethnic/cultural and/or socio-economic backgrounds.
- Discuss the course and syllabus with your families. What perspectives and resources do parents/family members have related to the content? How can you integrate their knowledge, experience, and strengths into the readings and assignments that would allow parents to take the lead?
- Once the class begins, allow parents to introduce themselves at the start of the term, so students are aware of “their story”. This can include an introduction to their journey, their experiences with schools and a descriptive or picture of their child. You can loop back to the parent’s initial narrative and experiences throughout the course as appropriate.

Moving Forward

The FAF framework is ideal for professional training in higher education as it creates rich opportunities for families to contribute to ongoing critical professional skill development including identifying professional bias, shifting deficit-based thinking, and recognizing parents as experts. Typical teaching methods and course assignments that briefly involve family members as interviewees or guest speakers add great value to exposing

preservice candidates to the importance of families in our work, however, alone these practices fall short in truly shifting well-established routines in schools, that leave family members without a voice or choice in their child’s education.

As we reflect on our 45 collective years of teaching educational professionals in higher education, no other approach has served to provide more consistent conversations around the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse families. FAF has the potential to not only center families’ voices, but also to integrate families’ knowledge and knowledge-making as integral to special education practices impacting PK-12 students, specifically those with intersectional identities.



Terese (Tisa) C. Aceves, PhD
Loyola Marymount University
Professor, School Psychology
Program



Cristina Santamaría Graff, PhD
IU School of Education at IUPUI
Interim Assistant Dean of Student
Support and Diversity
Associate Professor of Special
Education, Urban Teacher Ed.

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Voices from the Field

FAMILY AS FACULTY INTERVIEW

CONTRIBUTED BY:

Debra Evans, MiIsha Reid, and Taucia González



Debra's husband, John Anthony Evans (left) son, John David (JD) (middle) and Debra Eileen Evans (right).

Debra Eileen Evans is a dedicated advocate and leader of programs and initiatives benefiting children of all abilities and their families in the arts, education, religious settings, and the community. In the area of special needs and educational advocacy, Mrs. Evans is the founder of MNO Southern California, a support group for over 500 families of children with special needs. As a parent of an amazing son with exceptional needs, she has worked tirelessly to support equal access for people with disabilities in schools, religious settings, and in the community. Click [here](#) for Debra Evan's full bio.

On Monday, April 25, 2022, MiIsha Reid and Taucia González interviewed Debra Evans about her experience participating in a Families-as-Faculty (FAF) teaching model (see the Research to Practice section of this newsletter for additional information on the FAF framework).

Mrs. Evans, a mother and community advocate in the Los Angeles area, discussed her experience collaborating with Tisa Aceves to teach future practitioners in a university classroom. We have drawn excerpts from our interview with Mrs. Evans to better understand her role, as a parent-co-instructor, in this FAF framework.

Mrs. Evans' Background

Mrs. Evans' advocacy for families started with the birth of her son, J.D., who is currently in the seventh grade. She explained, "He's very complex, very very sweet bright loving boy, and I am his biggest fan and also his strongest advocate."

MiIsha & Taucia: What was it like working in a FAF model in a university classroom?

Mrs. Evans: I wanted to be able to help others as well, and then I shared with [Dr. Aceves] that I was a graduate student and that's when a bell went off, and she was like '[collaborating with you] would be wonderful'. Then, based on my experience, she was like 'I don't want you to just sit in the corner and grade papers. I want you to teach content.' So, that's where we started to work together, and in that working together we began to see the students really come alive in terms of a better understanding of special education and working with families

cont. p.8

Last semester I had the great privilege of collaborating with Dr. [Aceves] as her thought partner, as a graduate teaching assistant in a course called Student Diversity and Exceptionalities, and we'll be working with her this summer co-teaching a course on collaborating with families, and then I'll be back with her in the fall.

Milsha & Taucia: What can parents contribute to higher education courses for future practitioners?

Mrs. Evans: [The students are] fresh you know, new and they're kind of deer in the headlights, not completely understanding what their roles and responsibilities are, and obviously a very important role and responsibility is collaborating with families. And, that can be very challenging for a variety of different reasons. And, I thought to myself, this is a tremendous opportunity to affect change.

[Parents can contribute] real life personal experience. You know it's not just you're reading about a case study in a textbook, but you're actually engaging with a parent. In my case, I also shared my son's IEP. I also shared a lot of background information that you would not necessarily get from a textbook. Also having someone who has the experience that I have with my child, they could ask me questions on the spot. They could talk about things that they may need clarification on, or may want to explore in more depth than what they might again read in the textbook.

I definitely felt their appreciation and gratitude for the time that we spent together. I was just very honest with them. This is something you might

read in the textbook but it doesn't really have as much weight unless you know the importance of including the family as a partner. I know that there are laws that say that the parent is an equal partner. They're all in theory, but understanding how to connect with a family member, and having a real live person there and talking with them and practicing it with them.

Dr. Aceves would have them do these exit [slips] where they would ask questions or respond to something in the reading, and so then she would also ask me to respond and of course, she would respond. So you get two perspectives, and obviously most of the time we were always in sync. But it just enhanced the experience and education of the students involved.

Milsha & Taucia: How did the students respond to the FAF teaching model?

Mrs. Evans: It was really wonderful to see that, and how easy and interested they were in learning more about J.D. and his progress. And, how this affects and the kind of questions that they were asking [in class] really gave me a greater appreciation for the field. It just reminded me [that] everybody starts somewhere. What a great opportunity, I told them all the time, 'you are so blessed to have you know Dr. Tisa,' because her view and her perspective on this field is, I don't want to say unusual, because obviously there are a lot of people out here who have the heart that she has, but this is an opportunity I'm hoping that they are soaking up everything that she's sharing with them, and helping understand how to work with families that they may not have ever encountered before. How important it is that they consider the voices of the parents, the families as voices of competence, voices of expertise that no matter how many degrees you have,

you will never have the insight and the access to what the child is dealing with, what the child's experiences is without engaging the parents.

Milsha & Taucia: What advice do you have for others interested in a FAF teaching model?

Mrs. Evans: I think it's more meaningful when there's a collaboration, and there are ongoing conversations. Tisa and I would have regular meetings, and we would talk about how she was going to approach something and how she needed me to be involved. She would ask me and include me in some of the decision-making like 'Well, how do you feel about this? Let's brainstorm some ideas where we're doing our mock IEP. How do we want to do it, or what portions of the IEP do we want to share? Do you feel comfortable sharing?' That kind of thing, I think, is really important.

So having the students be exposed to People of Color who are professionals who have expertise in a certain area [and who] are parents is really important, because they get a different perspective. There are a lot of [university] students who have no exposure at all to [diverse] people. Los Angeles is a very diverse community, but [the students are] coming from all over the country. To have a diverse group of people... Not only, you know, racially and ethnically, but also economically, and education lines, and also [their child's] diagnosis.



Milsha Reid, PhD
Carlow University
Assistant Professor of Special Education
DDEL Newsletter Editor



Taucia González, PhD
The University of Arizona
Assistant Professor of Special Education
DDEL Publications Chair

Research and Professional Issues

THE KIDS ARE NOT ALRIGHT...PARENTS AREN'T GREAT EITHER!

CONTRIBUTED BY:

Allison Gunter

"I literally had to go to war for my son to get services. When I say I had to go to war, I had to go to war. Like I'm in there arguing with this lady and I'm getting upset cause she's like "we can't justify that."

-CLD/E Parent Communication, 2018

Much of my research focus is on children and families, specifically, culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) children with exceptionalities (CLD/E) and their families. In this work I have discovered that CLD/E families struggle with systems navigation primarily because the education system is broken and was not designed to facilitate seamless transition. Under the Individuals with Disability Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), 2004, there is an expectation of parent participation and parent and professional collaboration. From fighting to gain academic access for their child to including children with disabilities in the general education setting with their non-disabled peers, parents have faced many barriers to opportunity and access to education (Winterman & Rosas, 2014). Despite the protections put into place by laws such as the IDE(I)A and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), parents have shared feelings of being considered as secondary contributors or outside supporters as it relates to the needs of their child with a disability (Burke & Sandman, 2015) by professionals in both education settings (Burke & Sandman, 2015) and non-education settings (Jansen et al., 2016; Sharkey et al., 2014). Despite the protections put into place under IDEIA for children with disabilities, equity concerns remain. In my research, I have discovered there are three main barriers to systems navigation: bureaucracy, location, and accessing school services. Historically CLD parents have not been happy with the services they received in K-12 after transitioning from early intervention. This year I have had the pleasure of being in schools and supporting school-based teams and in my observations, not much has changed since I conducted research with CLD/E families years ago.

Frustrated, fearful, concerned, and lost are a few adjectives used by parents this year to describe their feelings over this academic year. In the years prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, parents of children with exceptionality were already struggling to navigate systems designed to support the needs of their young children. However, since the world lockdown, coming back has turned what many felt was a gap in meeting and serving the needs of children with exceptionality, into a gaping chasm. This chasm is big when we think about our children and families who identify as culturally and linguistically diverse.

cont. p.11

Navigating the special education system can present many challenges. Parents are expected to inherently know a lot about a system they have never engaged with. Because a huge part of being able to navigate the special education system boils down to resource availability and accessibility, the Research and Professional Issues Committee would like to share some recommendations for parents, educators, researchers, and policy makers in supporting systems navigation.

1. Researchers need to make their projects more accessible to increase diversity in voice. CLD parents feel their voices are not being heard, and strategies and interventions are not necessarily designed to address the diverse challenges faced by their children. Increase representation of CLD people in research studies.
2. Professionals with the knowledge of the law, specifically special education and disability rights law, need to provide services to empower CLD parents in better understanding policy and their rights and responsibilities as it pertains to the acquisition of services and supports. Schools in collaboration with community organizations and Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) can provide legal clinics for parents to enhance their knowledge and be partners in the work.
3. IHEs need to be more active participants in the community and create mandates which focus on serving the community, specifically providing opportunities for marginalized people to obtain knowledge. IHEs can do more to be in the community and support early interventionist and K-12 teachers in gaining a better understanding of how to support the needs of CLD/E children and their families.
4. Teacher preparation and other professional preparation programs should focus on serving the needs of culturally diverse communities and being more culturally responsive in their practice.

Over time, development of the child is impacted when their basic needs are not met and access to resources, knowledge and opportunity are constrained and/or denied. If, as a community, we are committed to supporting the needs of our CLD/E children and their families, we must focus on both the academic and the non-academic factors, work in a collaborative manner and maintain open lines of communication. This means when it comes to identifying and implementing effective practices for CLD learners with exceptionality and empowering families home, school, community, and IHE collaborations are more critical than ever. In our current state of affairs, the children are not alright and they will not be okay until we get out of our individual silos and work as a system. We missed our first opportunity when schools were closed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; however, it's not too late.

The above recommendations do not represent an exhaustive list of ways we can move in the right direction. No schools should be “going to war” with parents. Instead, our focus should be on centering families and doing what is right for the child. Boutte (2012) stated, “it is a question of whether collectively, as educators and a society, we have the will and vision to educate all children” (p. 517). When the message is presented from the professional perspective, it often explains what needs to happen in the way of policy and education reform, viewed through a medical model (Lalvani & Polvere, 2013) and oftentimes a deficit mindset (Owens et al., 2016). The result of receiving such a critical message from the professional perspective alone (Lalvani, 2015; Lalvani & Polvere, 2013) oftentimes results in silencing the voices of the stakeholders most intimately knowledgeable about the child—the parents (Gillborn, 2015).

Based on information provided by researchers who have come before, in order to move towards a system of understanding, collaboration, and effectiveness, we must include all voices involved in the life of the child in a meaningful manner.



Allison Gunter, EdD
Chair of DDEL's Research and Professional Issues Committee
Founder/Lead Consultant
Perspectives Educational Consulting Group, LLC

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STATE CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

State subdivisions are a great way to build and work together. Please contact these subdivision presidents and organizers to get involved. We meet at least twice a year to share plans, ideas, and strategies.

NY DDEL sponsored a webinar:

Examining Disproportionality in the Declassification Rates of Students of Color

Dr. Bility shared his research, "Is Special Education a Life Sentence? Examining Disproportionality in the Declassification Rates of Students of Color in an Urban School District". This important research examines the relationship between perceptions of race and ability and disproportionate declassification rates in an urban school district.

New York	Rene Parmar, President, parmarr@stjohns.edu
Nebraska	Anne Marie Boose, aboose@lps.org
Arkansas	Kimberly Davis, kimberleydavis@astate.edu
Colorado	Melinda Rossi, melindaarossi@gmail.com
California	Anna Villalobos, annamariavillalobos@gmail.com
Washington	Rebecca Ray, rray2@uw.edu
Virginia	Mary Margaret Hughes, mmh2y@virginia.edu
Illinois	Wendy Gonzales, wendygonzales2823@gmail.com
Michigan	Precios Armstrong, precios.armstrong@jcisd.org

STATE PRESIDENTS IN THESE STATES ARE WORKING ON SUBDIVISIONS

Pennsylvania	Brooke Lylo, blylo@bloomu.edu
Louisiana	Keita Wilson, krone1908@gmail.com

*Subdivision Chairs Let us know what's happening in your state by contacting DDEL's Membership Chair. The Membership Chair should also be contacted if you are interested in forming a subdivision.
Membership Chair Tammy Ellis-Robinson tellis-robinson@albany.edu*

MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

Welcome New Members!

Please welcome new and rejoining DDEL members. We are so pleased to have you join the Division of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners (DDEL) community and look forward to getting to know you better. We invite you to reach out and get involved with one of our committees.

Professional Development
Governmental Relations
Research and Professional Issues
Membership and Subdivisions
Publications

New Member Highlight



Ann Narcisse

School districts requiring bilingual supports and evaluations have a strong advocate in Ann Narcisse. Narcisse, serves at Putnam | Northern Westchester BOCES' Guidance & Child Study Center located in Yorktown Heights, New York as an administrator for Bilingual Education, Counseling, and Assessment. As such, she is charged with supervising professional development, as well as overseeing the BOCES evaluation site that serves districts from Westchester to Sullivan County New York. Completing over 1500 evaluations annually, the center provides initial and re-evaluations for students with or suspected of a disability. Seeing herself as a problem solver, she is committed to increasing opportunities for professional development, embedded support, and regional learning communities related to English learners with disabilities.

cont. p.15

New Member Highlight cont.

Her areas of interest include improvement science, multi-tiered system of support, and culturally responsive practices. Narcisse has been a special education leader, trainer, and mentor. She has worked as a literacy coach and bilingual speech therapist. Ann holds an MBA, in addition to advanced certification in educational leadership. As a new member of DDEL, Anne is looking forward to connecting with the DDEL community and collaborating to support practitioners, families, and learners at the intersections of disability and cultural and linguistic diversity. Below are some potential goals for that collaboration.

- Providing professional development and consultative services to school districts looking to improve stand-alone and integrated English as a New Language (ENL) programming as well as dual-language programming
- Providing professional development and support to bilingual clinicians and educators in order to improve assessments and instruction
- Developing a professional learning community for monolingual leaders, chairpersons, and faculty to better understand the CSE process for ELLs
- Our evaluation center conducts over 1500 bilingual evaluations a year. We are interested in partnering with scholars who may be interested in research opportunities with the express intent to improve the quality of bilingual evaluations.

Anne Narcisse can be reached at anarcisse@pnwboces.org

The Amazon Smile logo features the word "amazon" in black and "smile" in orange, with a curved orange arrow underneath "amazon" pointing towards "smile".The Project 20/20 logo features the word "project" in a brown script font, followed by "20/20" in a bold sans-serif font where the first "20" is red and the second "20" is blue. Below this, the tagline "Creating a vision of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in all of CEC" is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

"We pledge to uphold the vision of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and to support all of our members, volunteers, and staff as well as the infants, toddlers, and students with exceptionalities and families we serve, especially those differentially impacted by systemic racism."

More information about taking the pledge and getting involved in Project 2020 below.
<https://exceptionalchildren.org/get-involved/engage/project2020>

CHILDREN'S ACTION NETWORK & GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Federal Policy Updates

UPDATE #1

OSEP Fast Facts: Race and Ethnicity of Children with Disabilities Served under IDEA Part B

- The U.S. Department of Education released Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Fast Facts to offer a new key summary of data related to race and ethnicity of children with disabilities served under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part B. [Hand In Hand for OSEP Fast Facts: Race and Ethnicity of Children with Disabilities Served under IDEA Part B](#) also provides questions that help parents and family to engage in the OSEP Fast Facts.

[READ MORE ►](#)

UPDATE #2

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services issued new guidance on Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B services for students with disabilities placed in private schools by their parents

- The U.S. Department of Education released new guidance on the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part B services for children enrolled at private schools by their parents. This guidance helps families understand the legal requirements of state educational agencies, local educational agencies, and other local stakeholders. This guidance newly includes questions and answers related to issues of preschool children with disabilities and state-funded school vouchers and scholarship programs.

[READ MORE ►](#)

UPDATE #3**New OSEP Fast Facts: Students with Disabilities Who Are English Learners**

- The U.S. Department of Education released an OSEP Fast Facts on students with disabilities who are English learners served under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. According to the new OSEP Fast Facts, 1.6% of students enrolled in public elementary and secondary schools are dually identified as having disabilities under IDEA Part B and an English learner.

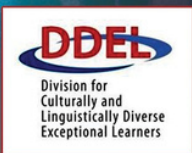
[READ MORE](#)**UPDATE #4****National Disability Rights Network (NDRN)'s federal policy update on restraint and seclusion**

- The National Disability Rights Network released a federal policy update on restraint and seclusion. This policy update includes the major federal policy developments on restraint and seclusion since 2012. This policy update also offers parental legal rights and resources.

[READ MORE](#)

Thursday,
February 23rd, 2023

3:30PM PST-4:45 PST
6:30PM EST-7:45 EST



Scan QR code
for registration



Dr.

CAMILLE

BYRD O'QUIN

Dismantling Inequities in K-12 Systems.

CEC-DIVISION FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

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