

Credit Flexibility: Working with Gifted and Special Education Audio Transcription

**Wednesday, March 24, 2010
1:00 – 2:00 p.m. EST**

Jennifer: Good afternoon everyone. My name is Jennifer Reed with the Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center at Learning Point Associates, and I'd like to welcome you to today's web conference, Credit Flexibility: Working with Gifted and Special Education hosted by the Ohio Department of Education and Great Lakes East. We'll begin the web conference in just a moment, but first there are a few logistical items that I'd like to cover.

If you are participating today using your cell phone, please make sure that you are not using the speakerphone option. It will cause an echo effect for everyone on the call. Your lines have been muted to help cut down on background noise. There will be several opportunities for participants to ask questions during the web conference and there are two different options for asking questions. To verbally ask a question, participants would click the raise hand button on the bottom left hand side of your screen. Prompts will be given at the appropriate times on how and when to un-mute your line. You can also submit a question or comment through the chat box in the lower left hand side of your screen by typing the question under chat with presenter, then hit send, and the facilitator will be notified.

Over 125 people have registered for today's webinar and in order to more effectively meet the needs of all participants within the time this afternoon, we are asking that when you ask a question you keep your questions global and not post questions directly related to specific student situations in your district. This web conference is being recorded.

This web conference is the second in a series designed to provide information related to the local implementation of the Ohio Credit Flexibility Policy. The series will discuss the recently released guide and will connect participants with Ohio schools, districts and organizations that are currently working through the policy implementation. An archive of the previous webinar, Credit Flexibility and Highly Qualified Teacher Requirements is currently available on the Ohio Department of Education's website. This web conference, as well as future web conferences will also be archived on Ohio's site as well. During today's web conference on Credit Flexibility: Working with Gifted and Special Education, you'll be hearing from Ohio Department of Education staff, Sarah Luchs, Associate Director for Student Success; Tom Lather, Associate Director, Office of Exceptional Children; Beth Hahn, Consultant, Office of Exceptional Children;

Chrissy Cline, Consultant, Office of Exceptional Children. I'd now like to turn this over to Sarah Luchs, Sarah.

Sarah: Thanks Jennifer. And Jennifer is at Great Lakes East, and Learning Point our federal comprehensive support center and I want to thank them for their support in helping us host this web conference series. Today's topic as you know is gifted and special education as it relates to Credit Flexibility and we have our topical experts and our guidance documents on the website.

The purpose of today, just in a nutshell, we want to increase your overall understanding of what's in those guidance documents. We want to recommend a few approaches and we also want to respond to your specific questions; if you have anything that you didn't understand in the guidance or maybe something even above and beyond the guidance, what it covers.

I do want to look over a couple of items that are on the website to make sure folks know what's available right now. The first item actually on the main page of the website, if you search Credit Flexibility you'll find all the guidance documents, case studies, and the web conference series. On Monday we're going to release the dates of the upcoming conference and you'll see those later on, but there are going to be four more web conference dates in the month of April, four new topics, and we'll continue that on probably on through May as well. So right now, these are the guidance documents that are available. As well, the case study sites, many of you may have already referenced those. If you haven't, there's a lot of good information and artifacts. There are web links on these case study sites, so please check those out.

Then we're just going to move right into our content today. So I'm going to turn it over to Beth Hahn and Tom Lather to kick us off with gifted education, Beth, Tom. Beth and Tom? Are you muted? We don't have any sound. I'm going to cover for Beth here until we get audio, because I'm not sure what's happening. Essentially there are ...

Beth: Sarah.

Sarah: Yes, are you there?

Beth: I think we're here now. We had our mute button on, on the phone and it didn't seem to come off.

Sarah: Okay. Go ahead then.

Beth: Good afternoon everyone. Basically I'm going to share how Credit Flex has made the gifted community very happy. We already had some existing policies that we used for gifted students, but they are beneficial.

Some of these, particularly the educational options, are very beneficial to all students. So [we] are happy to see that those are becoming part of the Credit Flexibility Policy. Acceleration is a policy also that we have instituted in the state of Ohio. All districts are required to have an acceleration policy for students, gifted students as well as other students. There is a procedure that districts are following based on approved plans, policies that we do have here at the state department. So basically the acceleration policy states that districts have to have an acceleration evaluation team to evaluate students for potential acceleration. So that policy can work in conjunction with Credit Flexibility to allow students to advance through the high school curriculum.

One example of that might be a student might skip Algebra I, say possibly in middle school they're evaluated by the committee, acceleration evaluation committees do not award credit, but they can advance students to placement in a higher level. So basically the student would skip Algebra I, then start their high school math progression with Geometry. Then the student might test out of Algebra II, enabling them to go on to Calculus and maybe some college mathematics.

Educational options are another policy that we have instituted for gifted students in the gifted operating standards and basically gifted students have been taking advantage of these, but often without credit. So now with Credit Flexibility, the students are enabled to take educational options for credit. Some examples of educational options might be internships, field studies, independent studies. Another option that gifted students can take advantage of now with Credit Flexibility is the testing out option. That had not been possible for gifted students in the past and now with Credit Flexibility it is. Basically by testing out, what the Credit Flexibility Plan states is that students may test out in three ways; one is with a paper/pencil test; one is through an assessment developed by the district that shows the student's capability to develop a product or create a performance and then the other is for the student to show through a project or performance that they have mastery of content. So again, this is a new option for gifted students and one that I think we'll take good advantage of.

Gifted students are also very likely to design multidisciplinary projects or make multidisciplinary plans in which they institute some project or performance that covers multiple disciplines and the credit can be awarded in multiple disciplines. One example on a multidisciplinary credit that would involve, not necessarily an HQT teacher at the high school, but a content expert, might be an internship that a gifted student would participate in say at the Metropolitan Ballet Company. That internship might look something like assisting with instruction which would involve knowledge of dance content and then also assisting in the business office and learning something about economics, how business works in the community and some more business oriented content that would possibly come through social studies standards.

Also, multidisciplinary credit can be partial, full or a combination and that depends on how thoroughly the standards are covered within the project or performance that the students are doing and an example that I would like to use here is biomechanical engineering, which we've had the question from some of our career centers about how that might look for credit for students and one example that I think sort of illustrates that is if the student is on a team creating a knee joint replacement apparatus, they might be studying anatomy and would have then science content standards, they might be studying physics, mathematics, and even language arts if they're presenting say at a conference related to their development of the apparatus.

Again, going back to how the Credit Flexibility sort of plays along with policies or personnel actually that are already in place for gifted students, gifted coordinators are in a very good position within school districts to provide that certified educator role in helping students create their Credit Flexibility Plan. The gifted coordinator can often act in concert with a content expert from outside the school district to certify that students are meeting standards to the level that would be worthy of credit.

Another way that gifted coordinators can help gifted students is by articulating the measurable outcomes in their student Credit Flex Plan, helping the students articulate those, so that the standards are rigorous enough for that student's high ability. So the gifted coordinator can help serve as that function. Some considerations for gifted students and really for other students, being sure that gifted students that are aware that if they are student athletes, they do need to check with the Ohio School Athletic Association and the NCAA from time to time, the requirements for those two organizations change for student athletes. So it is advisable for students to check on those policies as they create their Credit Flex Plans for high school.

We often get, in gifted, the question about how students might take advantage of private lessons and one way that we have thought of is that with the memorandum of understanding, a district might contract with a local organization to provide private lessons or even group classes, maybe the instructor from the organization could even come to the high school to provide instruction. So there are ways to arrange for students to get access to private lessons.

Advanced Placement becomes a question for gifted students quite often as well. Basically [for] Advanced Placement, the College Board does require that there is seat time in order for the course to be on the transcript. However, colleges do accept AP tests as completion of credit. So students can receive credit for a class and then potentially receive higher placement in the college based on having achieved completion of a high school course through AP. Online options are also quite often used for gifted students and are particularly helpful for students in rural areas or students with niche interests. I believe that covers the slides. Are there questions?

Jennifer: If participants have questions at this time, you can either do them through the chat with presenter feature of if you'd like to raise your hand by clicking the raise your hand button. We did have one question that came in earlier regarding multidisciplinary teams.

The question was: *Will multidisciplinary teams replace the current use of intervention assistant teams or will this be an additional team in each school?*

Beth: Yes, we don't see that the roles of those two entities are the same. We think that there is need for both the multidisciplinary planning team and the intervention assistance team.

Sarah: Great. Thank you, Beth. Jen, other questions?

Jennifer: I'm reading through some of the chat. As I mentioned before, if you'd like to raise your hand ask a question verbally, just click on the raise your hand. Another question that we had that came in earlier was: *Are we responsible for providing services during Credit Flex time, for example if a student has a reading or writing goal and chooses to do Credit Flex for language arts, are we responsible for those goals/objectives and are we required to provide accommodations?*

Sarah: Beth?

Beth: I think Tom's going to address this one.

Tom: That really sounds almost like an IEP, special ed question, but that's going to be addressed coming up. But the short answer is yes, and it really depends on if it's in the student's IEP. But we're going to come to that Sarah.

Sarah: Okay, great. Let's just go ahead and move into special education then because we do have some time later on where we can take questions on any of the content. So we'll move on to Chrissy Cline and Tom, obviously chime in as is necessary. Go ahead please Chrissy.

Chrissy: Hi, good afternoon. This is Chrissy Cline and students with disabilities can have a Credit Flex Plan, as can any student. This is not just for gifted students. It's not just for students with disabilities. It's for all students and basically what I believe the legislature had in mind was to maximize student abilities and minimize student disabilities.

As with what Beth was talking about, athletics and memorandums of understanding would also apply to students with disabilities and those concerns would also be of concern for students with disabilities. In a student's Credit Flex Plan, we want to pre-identify and agree on things, just like we do in an IEP, very specifically, so that everybody, the parents, the student, all the partners, all the

people that are going to be participating in this plan are absolutely certain of what's happening and how it's going to happen.

To start writing a student Credit Flexibility Plan we want to look at learning outcomes and the academic content standards. We want to look at those indicators and determine when we've got an activity that we're going to discuss, what indicators in the academic content standards can be addressed in this Credit Flex Plan. Those indicators should be identified on the plan and then we need to think about what credits can be earned. If a student is meeting part of the academic content standard indicators for math or for science or for speech or for English and language arts, they can earn partial credit or they could earn complete credit depending on what the activities were and how they were designed. The student could also earn dual credit. So a student might be able to earn history credit and art credit at the same time, depending on how the plan is written.

How will the credits be earned? Is this going to be done through activities at a job site, like a landscape business? Is it going to be done through someone in the community watching the performance of the student at a job site? Is the student going to do projects? They could be video projects or audio projects, they could be art projects. Is the student going to earn credit by doing some kind of presentation? Is he going to keep log books? Are we going to have rubrics or some other way to determine that the student has met the criteria of the plan is actually in fact earning the credit and learning the things that we set forth in the plan?

The issuance of the credit is going to be locally determined by the highly qualified teacher that is involved with this plan. It could be a highly qualified intervention specialist. It could also be a highly qualified math or science teacher that's working with the intervention specialist to make sure that the student is actually learning the things that are in the indicators. These multidisciplinary teams can be all sorts of people. Certainly with a student with a disability we would want the IEP team to be involved. But, we might also have gen ed teachers, we might have people from the community, we might have a business leader. There could be all kinds of folks; if the student is artistically gifted it could be someone from the Metropolitan Art Museum or a dance instructor.

The next bullet on this slide says full or partial credit in one or more areas may be granted and we've kind of already talked about that, but it has to be absolutely specifically documented in the plan, what credit the student is going to get, how is he going to earn it, is he progressing in meeting the goals to meet those indicators and to earn that credit.

Students can also test out. As you know there are students with disabilities who are twice exceptional and they may be very gifted in math or science or some other area, art, music, but have a reading or written expression disability. So they may be able to test out of Algebra I, but may struggle with reading and written

expression and so forth. Those students may be able to test out at some point, and Beth talked a little bit about test out provisions for gifted students and those would apply to students with disabilities. Also, as the common core and the academic content standards are revised, there will be in two or three years, an assessment portion for end of course exams that could also be used as test out provisions.

Considerations: The IEP is the guiding driver of all of this. The IEP trumps everything. Federal law operating standards supersede Credit Flex. So anything that the student has goal and objectives for on their IEP must continue to be met. The Credit Flex is layered on top of the IEP. Most students that have disabilities are actually more able than they are disabled, but many times they need to show that ability in different ways. We want to be able to use this Credit Flex in a way that allows students to earn credit to show what they know, to demonstrate mastery, in ways that may not be a paper/pencil test. The plans that we're going to be writing with the IEP's share responsibility.

The parent has some responsibility, the student has some responsibility, the highly qualified teachers have some responsibility and in some cases business partners or other community members may be involved as well. As far as the IEP goes, we want to document Credit Flexibility on the transition plan and that is on the transition page near the top where it talks about courses of study. That would be a place where you would want to document that the student was earning some credits through Credit Flexibility. Also then, the plan could be attached to the IEP or it could actually be a part of the IEP. For example, if the student is going to be earning some science credit by taking some seat time class in science, but he's also going to augment that with some time in a landscape business or working in another science field, that would be documented in the IEP as far as where services are going to be provided.

Anything that is on the IEP that the student needs, accommodations, aids, transportation, related services are also needed in a Credit Flex Plan, if the IEP determines that that's necessary or appropriate. So if the student has a difficult time sitting in a class and needs an aid to be in a seat doing what he needs to do, but when he goes out to work in this landscape business, he doesn't need an aid because he likes being outside and he likes being able to move around. Those are things that the IEP team then can say, well we don't think he needs an aid to do that because he's able to perform and function appropriately without an aid in that type of setting.

But those are all IEP team decisions and the multidisciplinary team should also have some input into that as to what does the child need to be successful in this environment, just like he would, consider any other setting for an IEP student. All of these things should be documented on the IEP and/or the student Credit Flex Plan. It could be just attached to the IEP or they could actually be included in the IEP, whatever the team determines is appropriate. Questions?

Sarah: Thank you Chrissy, that was great. We have several questions. Apparently I didn't pause long enough earlier, because they all came flooding in through the chat.

One of the questions Chrissy is: *If a student has an aide noted in their IEP and the team decides the aide is not needed in the Credit Flex environment, is the IEP modified to note that change or how is that handled more generally?*

Chrissy: It would probably be a part of the Credit Flex Plan, but it could also be noted in the appropriate part of the IEP. Then if at some point the student is not being successful in the Credit Flex area, the team may need to re-meet and determine again, is an aide what we need to support this child to make him successful in this area.

Jennifer: This is for both Beth and Chrissy: *What about twice exceptional children? What's the best way to handle students that are twice exceptional?*

Beth: Again, I think it goes back to looking at the goals for the student and determining which goals meet which need and writing the written education plan to reflect how the needs are being met and then noting what the IEP and the Credit Flex Plan, how the goals are being met for the student.

Chrissy: And I think it's really important to really focus in on the student and think about what are his abilities, what are his disabilities, and how can we support the disabilities so that he's able to be successful.

Beth: And then enhance the abilities to the level that the student is capable of performing.

Tom: I know you're going to bring this up in your big idea slides that are coming up, but I do want to reinforce one point here about special education. In the notion that special education is predicated on a federal law known as IDEA and Credit Flex is a great thing and we want it to be a positive experience and we want folks to be creative in thinking outside the box. But when all of these ideas come up about let's try this and let's try that, we all need to keep in mind when those situations come up and we're thinking about working with our special ed population, we always need to recall that we need to go back to the IEP team, sit down and make sure that everybody is on the same page because unfortunately the first time we don't do that, then we have potentially violated federal law and then there are things of rights that have been violated and then Credit Flex unfortunately becomes a bad experience for people in a district, etcetera and that's not what we're looking for.

We want this to be a positive experience for the district, for children, etcetera. So everybody, this needs to be a group effort, especially when it comes to both twice

exceptional kids and especially students with disabilities. We just need to keep hammering that home. There's been a lot of questions about, do we need to do this, do we need to do that, when we're dealing with this population, we need to bring as many people back to the table, especially the IEP team, and make sure as Chrissy said, that this is documented, documented, documented about what we're going to do here.

Sarah: Thank you Tom. We've gotten a lot of questions kind of what plan takes precedence or what's the lens that folks should look at this and is the IEP the precedent and the Credit Flex is attached to that, is the WEP or the WAP, how should folks be thinking about that.

Chrissy: I think Tom just said very explicitly, federal law, IDEA supersedes everything. So an IEP team must be involved in this if it's a student with a disability and the Credit Flex Plan is a way to support the student in learning and meeting his IEP goals and objectives. The IEP is absolutely the king or the queen here and federal law and the operating standards in Ohio for children with disabilities is absolutely the overriding control. So Credit Flex can be a wonderful thing for students with disabilities, but it can't override the IEP and the procedural safeguards that children with disabilities have based on federal law and the state operating standards.

Beth: Basically when we create plans for twice exceptional or when we advise districts in creating those, we always say that the IEP, the WEP must fit within the IEP. So the WEP comes basically after the IEP. The Credit Flex Plan for a written education plan, to me they work in tandem more than a precedence situation.

Sarah: Okay. Just a couple of general comments just reading through the chat questions. Credit Flex is for high school credit only, you could have a middle grade student who qualifies to take high school level coursework and therefore earn high school credit, but typically we're talking about high school credit. So if that's the governing notion. In other words, right now it's not a K-12 provision. It's a high school credit provision.

As well, there's some questions [around] sort of this individual planning notion and for those of you who participated in the highly qualified teaching webinar that we had last week, I just want to reiterate that what was recommended there is that you work with experts and somebody asked kind of what is a content expert. In this case, from an HQT lens, it's a certified teacher that meets the definition of HQT. But you're accessing additional experts that might exist in the community or in an online environment. They might be housed in a nonprofit, they might be reached through a Chamber of Commerce, but what mechanism you want to use there with an individual student's plan is a memorandum of agreement with the organization, if you're going to engage lots of students with those kinds of content experts, Beth mentioned the Metropolitan Ballet as a potential organization, if it's

an individual expert, it was recommended last week that you not contract and not put that individual on payroll because then they would have to meet HQT. So, if you're using a certified teacher and ideally an HQT teacher in a core content area, that teacher is helping to plan the learning, they're monitoring the learning and even though they may not be delivering all of the content and skill development, they're assessing at the back end and they can assess in collaboration with the other experts that were utilized. So that's the notion of the quality planning.

Those concepts very much were taken out of what the design team, the group that put this provision together when the board adopted it, what they found in research from students with disabilities and from gifted students. So they kind of looked at who along the continuum of students were being served with customized notions and they said oh, that looks...

An IEP is kind of a wonderful idea, in fact lots of students could benefit from that kind of a mechanism. So the emphasis on individual plan and the quality of the plan and the teacher still playing a foundational role here is really echoing what we know out of gifted and special education. So it's not outside of it, it's actually kind of leveraging what's been learned there. So I just wanted to be really explicit about that to kind of close the loop on some of your questions. There is one related to that which is for Beth.

Beth could you repeat the role that a gifted coordinator might play in planning the test out and as well, could a gifted coordinator play a part in a Credit Flexibility team or individual student plan that was for a student beyond just a gifted student?

Beth: Basically in answer to the first question, I think the coordinator could help facilitate, help the student find out about the test out situation and I think as time goes on the gift coordinators can become a part of the conversation with the performance and product development. Obviously the paper/pencil test is probably more of a content expert role, but I think the gifted coordinator fits more into the product and performance development and helping to coordinate different aspects of that like location and getting the committee together, getting a review committee together, those kinds of things. So I think the gifted coordinator can play roles there. As far as serving on committees for other students, I don't think we have anything that says the gifted coordinator couldn't do that. Again, the state monies are provided for gifted students, so just bearing in mind limited time.

Sarah: Thank you Beth. Chrissy, there is a question that came in:

If an IEP team approves and implements with the student, is there any other approval needed? So essentially, is the team's decision the last stop?

Chrissy: On a Credit Flex Plan you mean? So the IEP team has gotten together, the parent and the student and the multidisciplinary team have written this plan and now the

IEP team is looking at it and are they then the last stop. Am I understanding that correctly?

Sarah: Yes, that's correct.

Chrissy: Yes, they would be, understanding that there's a district representative and an HQT and an intervention specialist and a parent and the student are all part of that IEP team.

Sarah: There was also a question related to kind of how long do students have to demonstrate their proficiency or their mastery of the standards or the goals that are in the IEP or in the gifted plan. The notion here is that there isn't necessarily a deadline, it really depends on what the student needs, how much time they need. So that's a bit of a negotiation based on the teacher's understanding, the student's understanding, probably the parents understanding to the extent that many parents are involved and sign off in these plans. So there's no guideline here about how little or how much time. It's really a notion of the amount of time that's necessary for a student to be successful.

Chrissy: And that's absolutely an IEP team decision. The team knows that student better than anybody else in the building. So they are the ones that will then sign off and say this is going to take three semesters to do this or he can do it in one semester, but they are the ones that are going to sign off on the amount of time that it takes. Certainly, the notion of extended time is very common when we're dealing with students with disabilities, that they often need longer to meet the requirements of the indicators.

Sarah: Great. Thank you. There were some questions about coding and EMIS. Right now there are no special codes. You're not looking for credit flexibility per se in EMIS. You're simply using the mechanism for which you're already planning the student learning. So in most cases that's an educational options type mechanism, so you're coding according to that mechanism. Wesley had a nice chart in his guidance on HQT, how you can make those determinations when HQT applies, but he mirrored the language that's found in EMIS and this is very similar here. You would use the coding that you already use that's in place. There's not a special Credit Flex coding at this time.

I don't know if we mentioned this and I don't know if it's in the big ideas or not, but the Senate bill does provide for the fact that these Credit Flex courses and credits earned are transcribed in the same way that seat time classes would be put on the students transcript.

Jen, I understand we have a caller question as well.

Jennifer: We do, Susan Whitten, if you would like to ask your question you can press STAR 7 to un-mute your phone and ask your question.

Susan: This is a clarification about HQT. In answering the question about outside providers such as Ballet Met etcetera being content experts, you said ideally the teacher would be HQT as well. Now, my understanding was from the HQT web conference that the teacher had to be HQT if a child was doing dance at BalletMet, you would have to have somebody that was HQT in dance, which would be a dance or a PE teacher, in order for that child to get credit.

Sarah: The recommendation in the last webinar is that if you have a student that's learning in a core content area, that you utilize an HQT teacher in that content area. For areas outside of the core, and in cases where it might be a course that maybe you don't even provide, then you're looking at a certified professional which could be a gifted coordinator, a principal, a counselor, a foreign language teacher, so you're trying to have a certified professional there to oversee that learning. Your Ballet Met example could be a PE teacher or a fine arts teacher or it could be another certified professional.

Susan: So the HQT requirement, and it is a requirement, do I understand that the teacher of record be HQT in core areas?

Sarah: That's correct, in core areas.

Susan: So even if the person is working with an engineer or biologist or whatever, they have to have a teacher that's HQT in those areas at the school in order for the child to have credit.

Sarah: If I'm wanting to learn science and I'm utilizing a Credit Flex plan to learn science, my HQT science teacher in my school would help me plan, monitor and evaluate my learning, but I might be tapping expertise that's coming from the Environmental Protection Agency or from Batelle and the person that I'm getting additional expertise from is not necessarily having to meet HQT requirements. Those have already been fulfilled by my teacher of record who is overseeing my learning. So that person who is overseeing my learning, who already carries the HQT certification in the core area, is essentially saying yup, this is good learning even though they're not delivering absolutely every minute of the learning.

Susan: I guess my question to that is then why isn't HQT required in all areas, not just the core?

Sarah: In this case we're using the precedent of dual enrollment, and that's why the memorandum of agreement is part of what's being recommended and so that precedent is what kind of gives us some flexibility to tap a whole range of expertise and that's something that Wesley did consult with USDOE around.

Tom: There's been a couple questions centered around sort of financial responsibility in the special ed arena around Credit Flex Plan and then some sort of outside Credit Flex Plan or program or project is arranged and then who is responsible.

In every situation it's a little bit different. I don't want to be too specific, so I could go to each one and the answer for each one could be yes, the district is responsible or yes, the district and the parent could be responsible or there are scenarios on the website where the district and the community could come together and form a partnership. I hate to use the term sort of, thinking outside the box, but there is some amount of creativity here that the districts need to look at when they try to think about these situations. There's one question about horseback riding for students with disabilities, could that be used for PE credit. I think Chrissy brought up the notion of students with disabilities possibly working for a landscaper and getting science credit, same sort of thing could apply there. Could they get PE credit doing horseback riding and could they also do some work inside the barn or at the barn, there's different ways of looking at things. It's not always about who's ultimately responsible to pay the bill.

Sarah: Great, thank you Tom. We are going to have a specialized finance topic and that date is going to be April 9th, so that is actually the next one in our line up of web conferences. So those of you that have additional specific finance questions, that would be a way to get additional information. Go ahead Chrissy.

Chrissy: One of the other things I think that the legislature envisioned when they were discussing this was that schools would start to build relationships with businesses and community members so that there would be opportunities for students in the community and in businesses in the community and that those relationships would benefit the student, the school district and the business and the community. So those kind of relationship buildings can also cut down on some financial obligations. If we've got students who are working in the stable and learning about taking care of horses and then they get free horseback riding because they've earned it through the work they've done, those kind of partnerships can really strengthen this kind of initiative as well.

Beth: Then sometimes say in the case of interns, they might... I had a student who offered, was an intern and was able to do some of the accounting for the business that they were interning with. So there was a financial benefit to that organization even though the student was learning a lot as well.

Sarah: Great, thank you. We're getting close to the end of our time, so I just want to move to summarize our big ideas and give folks a notion of where we're headed here. Actually all three of you, Chrissy, Tom and Beth, mentioned notions about customization and the customization is what Credit Flexibility is all about here.

So again, I mentioned that the design team really looked at what's happening with gifted students, how are they being served within the system, what's happening

with students with disabilities, how are they being served in the system and how are we going to get all students to be successful, what's that going to take and in some cases it's about more time and in some cases it's about diversity of learning modality, accessing additional resources, creating different learning environment. So that's really the spirit of what's being discussed here really across the entire series. But a lot of the best practices were drawn out of gifted education and were drawn out of students with disabilities.

Again, you heard Chrissy and Tom in particular speak to the federal law and the operating standards, they still apply. Nothing is being waived there. Those requirements are in place. Credit Flexibility and any extended services or reinterpretation of services really are to support the learning goals of students under those federal and state requirements. So Credit Flexibility is helping students meet and exceed the expectations that are in the standards and the key to doing that is really the quality of the plan and developing quality plans for students is going to be one of the topics in our series in April.

You'll see that in a minute. But teachers again are, playing a role in the front end planning, the middle monitoring, and oversight and certainly the back end evaluation. I think Chrissy and Tom and certainly also Beth, really expressed this notion of, you don't absolve any responsibility if a student requests or if you advocate on behalf of a student to exercise Credit Flexibility and the cornerstone to that again is the quality plan. So you're working in collaboration, maybe with a business or nonprofit partner, but certainly between the district, the parent and the student.

Why you would manage quality, folks who call the department all the time express this as a concern and an interest; your diploma from your institution means something and the quality of learning that you want to engage kids in means something. So you're protecting your brand here. As well, Chrissy and Tom mentioned decisions are being made as a team, especially in relationship to the IEP. You can renegotiate those terms as they evolve over time and whatever the circumstances might require.

There's an opportunity here, and everyone spoke to it, to advocate on behalf of students, because maybe you know what their interests are, what kind of learning conditions they perform best in, so it's really an opportunity to partner on behalf of ensuring their success. And increasingly the expectation for success is being raised. So having every student graduate college and career ready is what we're all aiming for. Those are some pretty high expectations. So ensuring that students have the conditions that will increase the likelihood that they can meet that standard is more important now than ever.

And of course, it's not really new, we've been using that option since the 80's and many districts have had some version of a test out or placement policy. Certainly we've been working with individual IEP plans and gifted plans, things like

acceleration, these notions aren't new, we just didn't use this term necessarily. And then I already mentioned that any kind of individual planning really is the mechanism for customization. So while there's lots of ways that can look and there's no one right way, again, focusing on the individual plan is key here. I think I saw, Chrissy, the other day that about maybe 80% of all students with disabilities are on an IEP, don't actually have a cognitive disability.

Chrissy: That is correct.

Sarah: That tells me, from what I read in the achievement gap literature that lots of students get identified even for things like disciplinary problems or something that isn't foundational to their learning. So being able to reengage students or engage them differently becomes a pretty key opportunity here. We do have some time left. I do want to give the opportunity to our three speakers to offer anything following the big ideas.

Beth: We're here, we're just trying to formulate some thoughts.

Sarah: You don't have to. I just wanted to make sure that if there was something there...

Tom: Our contact information is there. We're available for questions, questions will come up. Ask questions. It sounds corny, but think creatively. I think there's a lot of opportunity out there for a lot of kids and ask the questions, because there are no bad questions or stupid questions when it comes to this. I think there's just an awful lot of opportunities for a lot of kids. So ask the questions and whatever we can do to help, we're here.

Sarah: I want to chime in on what Tom just said. In our chat box today we tried to address as many as possible as well as take your calls. You can continue to ask questions and we can track those and respond to them, so I encourage you to do that. As well, I want to let you know that we do have an evaluation and in our first round of evaluation we've already started to make some changes. Folks said they wanted more time for questions and we did have more time today. They wanted the chat to be available to be viewed by all. I'm not sure if that was able technically to be provided today or not, but it certainly will be in the future and we are now answering questions, as many as we can, in the chat box, and that's under ODE Credit Flex.

This is the upcoming conference series. I mentioned a few of these dates. April 9th is the finance, teacher led initiative especially emphasizing technology on the 15th, a couple of highlighted mastery based assessment models on the 22nd and on the 29th we kept emphasizing this notion of what's in a quality plan, that would be the focus of the 29th. Again, you can find resources on the ODE website, guidance case studies, and on Monday registration for the April topics will be available. So you can visit the site on Monday and register on Monday for those.

I think that covers everything actually and we're a little bit early. Jen, were there any remaining questions? If not, we're going to wrap up.

Jennifer: Actually no, no additional questions have come in.

Sarah: There are the dates. Someone asked if we would please repost the dates and the topics. Again, that will be in the superintendent's newsletter Ed Connection on Monday and the registration will be open on Monday. Last week's webinar, those of you who are interested in the Highly Qualified Teaching, the link is on our website, you can listen to that. There will also be a short summary and again, we're following up on any questions that weren't answered last week.

So please utilize the chat box or any of the contact information. It takes us about a week to turn these around, so this topic will be available probably next week and you can expect that as we move through the months here of spring.

Thank you all for your participation today and to our presenters. This Credit Flex opportunity I think is an exciting one to serve students better and to meet the vision in Ohio of graduating every student and ensuring they're college and career ready.

Thank you all, good bye.

End of Web Conference