October 9, 2026
KSDE Special Education Administrators' Webinar
Agenda

Agenda Item	Presenter
Welcome	TASN Coordination
KSDE Special Education Director Updates	Lindsey Graf
Personnel Categorical Aid	Evelyn Alden
Indicator 8: Parent Involvement	Josie McClendon
Early Childhood Special Education: Indicator 6, Indicator 7, Indicator 12	Angel Spann
Kansas Assessment Program (KAP) Text-to-Speech Application	Julie Ewing
Upcoming TASN Professional Learning & Resources	Kevin Davis
TASN Kansas Teacher Retention Project- eMSS (eMentoring for Student Success)	Julie Jameson Bowers
KASEA Updates	Angie Karraker

Teacher Licensure-Waivers

- **Deadline for waivers** this semester is 11/1
  - Be sure the area and grades match what the person is doing and what is claimed (these **should** be the same thing).
  - Form 16-Accreditation Licensure Waiver is the application.
    - This includes Extension of Days waivers
      - Extension of days waivers are not available for staff with only limited / restricted licenses OR staff with "extended emergency substitute" licenses (the printed license says "Valid only for USD XXX")
    - Waiver questions go to TLALicense@ksde.gov (785) 296-2288

Changes to Indicator 8

Josie McClendon

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District Tools

- District Tools- Login page
- Family Engagement Survey (FES) is on District Tools
  - Same location as the SY25-26 survey
- Special Education Directors can have access to aggregate data in real time
  - Once each district has at least 5 responses
- All Special Education Directors should already have access to your district(s)
  - If you need assistance with access, please reach out to me!

Distribution

- All parents in all districts will be receiving the Family Engagement Survey!
  - This means responsibility is not solely on Special Education Directors and your teams
  - Communication to Superintendents and other district leadership has been to make sure Special Education and Title are at the table for conversations regarding the Family Engagement Survey and its distribution
  - Many LEAs are choosing to distribute the survey to parents during the Spring semester
  - With all parents receiving the survey, there is no longer a requirement to send distribution information to Josie at KSDE

Other Information

- Indicator 8 letter- we are working on an **optional** letter that can be sent to parents
- Please loop in your MIS clerks that changes have occurred
- Roxanne and I are working on creating a training for all district/LEA administrators



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Early Childhood Special Education

KSDE Special Education Administrators Webinar

October 09, 2026

Angel Spann, Early Childhood Special Education Coordinator

angel.spann@ksde.gov

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Updating Early Childhood Special Education Contact Information

- The Early Childhood Special Education Part B Contact List for Indicators 6, 7 & 12 supports local agencies' collaboration when families move between districts.
- Please review to confirm your agencies' information is up to date, and email changes to angel.spann@ksde.gov.
- Please respond to the email sent about your user lists for OWS if you have not done so.

Indicator 6:
Preschool Environments

Indicator 6: Preschool Environments

- **The Projected Indicator 6 Report is available for review in SPEDPro**
  - To request individual support in reviewing data or planning to improve, contact angel.spann@ksde.gov or 785-296-8965
  - **See the KSDE TASN site: Indicator 6 for resources.**

Indicator 7:
Early Childhood Outcomes

Missing Entry/Exit Report

- This report is an extra resource but should not serve as your primary method for making sure COS forms have been completed and entered for students entering Part B or exiting Part B
- I encourage each district to have procedures in place to ensure all preschoolers entering kindergarten in the fall have been exited in OWS prior to the beginning school year

Friendly Reminder

- Make sure your district is completing an organizational exit if a student transfers to another district in Kansas.
- Make sure a permanent exit is completed if a child withdraws from your school district and is not attending another school in Kansas.

Indicator 12:
Part C to Part B Transitions

Indicator 12

- The window for indicator 12 will open October 19th
- Communication was sent regarding the date change for the window to open.
- Please continue to reach out if you have any questions:
  - Angel Spann, angel.spann@ksde.gov or 785-296-8965

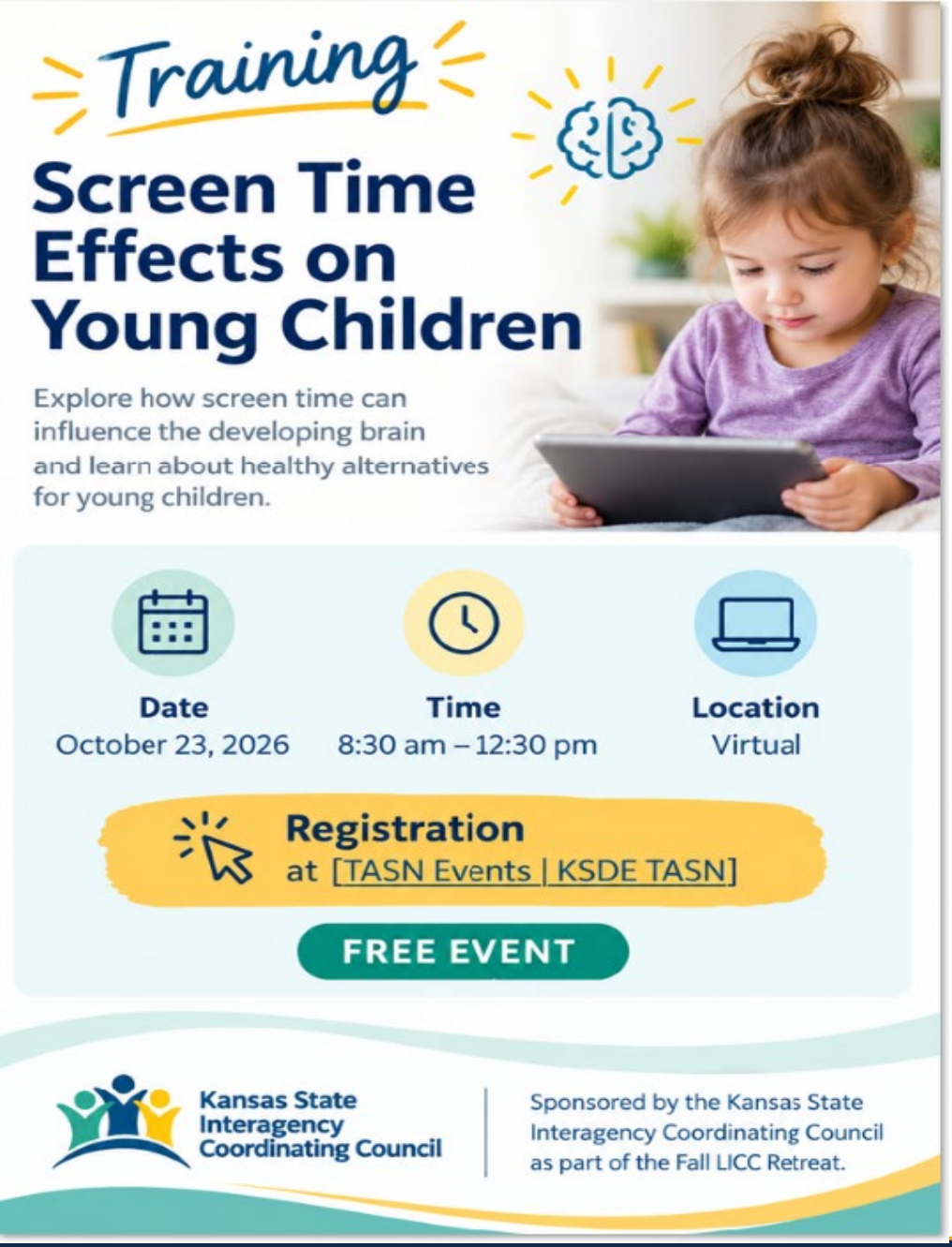
New Resources Posted on TASN

- EI Hub formerly CBER Resources
  - CBER Dashboard Power Point
  - Video Tutorial of EI Hub

Upcoming Events

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Upcoming Training

- Great opportunity for anyone interested in the effects on screen time for young children.



Save the Date

- Great opportunity for early childhood teachers, special education early childhood teachers and related staff to attend.



Angel Spann
Early Childhood Special Education (619) Coordinator
Early Childhood
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Angel.Spann@ksde.gov

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Kansas Assessment Program (KAP) Text to Speech Accommodations

Julie Ewing

Assessments

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Text-to-Speech (TTS) Options

Embedded Text-to-Speech (TTS)	Available to all students?	Is PNP required?
TTS Directions	Yes	No
TTS Science	Yes	No
TTS Math	Yes	No
TTS ELA Questions and Responses (6th-10th IEP, 504, or EL ILP)	No	Yes
TTS Passages and Graphics (all grades)	No	Yes, AND requires KSDE approval

Text to Speech (TTS) Criteria Update

- Added a question to indicated Blind or Visually Impaired
- PAR Criteria
  - Student must score a 75% or higher comprehension score either on grade level or two grade levels below.
  - This means that the score is in the Green on the PAR and uPAR.
  - Protocol for accommodations in reading (KS copy uPAR Stories fall 2024 pdf has multiple choice questions for each passage for use with the PAR)
- Purpose
  - Ensure that students are using the most appropriate accommodation.

Text to Speech (TTS)

- TTS Passages and Graphics
  - Applications due to KSDE by January 31.
    - DTCs must submit all applications.
  - Must be marked in PNPs by February 26 to complete the approval process.
  - Only mark if you have an **approved** TTS Passages and Graphics application from KSDE.

Text to Speech (TTS) Cont'd

- SC-35
  - Only allowed for disapproved applications submitted **before** the January 31 deadline.
  - Must be requested **before** the testing window opens.
  - Student shows as not tested and counts against district participation and subgroup participation.

Text to Speech (TTS) – Synthetic Voice

- Synthetic voice available in Kite Student Portal
- Plays audio files that correspond to the content on the screen
- Content sections highlight on the screen as it is read by the synthetic voice
- **Available as a Universal Feature on Math and Science tests.**
- Appears at the bottom of the screen for the directions and on available tests.





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Upcoming Professional Development and Resources

- 2026 Tri-State Regional Special Education Law Conference – Omaha, November 12-13
- Ninth Annual Vision Symposium – Wichita, October 23
- Special Education Administrator Policy to Practice- Virtual & In-person
  - Virtual Dates: November 2, December 1, January 5, March 23rd
  - In-person dates: February 22 and April 13th
- IEP Training-October 21- Information and to Register
- 100 Day Checklist from October-December

Upcoming Professional Development and Resources- Continued

- Sign up for the monthly KSDE TASN email for upcoming events – Sign-up Form
- KSDE Special Education Administrators' Monthly Webinar September 2026 - May 2027 - Information and Registration
- KSDE ESEA Programs Administrator Webinar Series September 2026 - May 2027 - Information and Registration
- KSDE Federal Fiscal File Review Office Hours Series September 2026 - March 2027 - Information and Registration
- KSDE Dynamic Learning Maps Webinar Series August 2026 - April 2027 - Information and Registration
- KSDE EL Connections Webinar Series September 2026 - May 2027 - Information and Registration
- KSDE Secondary Transition Tuesday Webinar Series September 2026 - May 2027 - Information and Registration

KANSAS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SYSTEM NETWORK

eMentoring for Student Success (eMSS)

Supporting Beginning Special Education Teachers

eMSS is an online mentoring program designed to provide ongoing support for teachers beginning their careers in special education. The program is implemented across Kansas and is an approved outside mentoring program under KSDE guidelines.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

eMSS serves special education teachers with five years or less of experience, including those holding:

- **Waiver licenses**
- **Provisional licenses**
- **Initial licenses**
- **Professional licenses**

PERSONALIZED MENTORING

- **Matched one-on-one with an experienced online mentor**
- **Mentor shares your special education endorsement and grade-level experience**
- **Ongoing guidance, encouragement, and professional support throughout the school year**

A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT

Join Our Place, a small online community where beginning teachers:

- **Connect with peers at similar stages in their careers**
- **Collaborate, ask questions, and share ideas**
- **Solve problems together**

Participants are asked yo log in and/or communicate with their mentor **at least twice each week.**

EXPLORATION LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

eMSS offers Explorations - structured six-to eight-week professional learning experiences focused on high-impact topics in special eduacation.

Teachers:

- Complete one Exploration during either their first or second year in the program.
- Choose from four Exploration topics offered each fall.
- Engage in guided discussions centered around a **Plan & Prepare →Teach & assess → Reflect & Analyze cycle**

Explorations are designed as collaborative learning experiences rather than traditional online courses.

VIDEO OBSERVATION & FEEDBACK

Participants complete three online vidoe observations with their eMSS mentor. eMSS provides:

- **An iPad**
- **A secure video observation platform**

After successfully completing the third observation, participants are eligible to **keep the iPad!**

WHY eMSS?

- Individualized mentoring
- Practical classroom support
- Collaborative peer network
- Professional learning opportunities
- Feedback that builds confidence and strengthens instruction

Helping beginning special education teachers succeed—and improving outcomes for students.

Interested in Joining eMSS?

KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

KANSAS TEACHER RETENTION PROJECT (eMSS) 2026

The **Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE)** collaborates with **Pittsburg State University** to administer the **Kansas Teacher Retention Project (eMSS)**. The project provides ongoing online mentoring to early-career special education teachers through the e-Mentoring for Student Success (eMSS) program. In Kansas, new special education teachers are required to complete a 2-year mentoring program to earn a professional license. Mentors, who are highly qualified educators across Kansas, undergo a rigorous training process to ensure mentees receive quality mentorship. The mentoring is provided at no cost to districts.

During the 2025–26 school year, 69 special educators from 21 Kansas school districts, 7 special education cooperatives, the Kansas School for the Blind, the Kansas School for the Deaf, and an itinerant teacher of the visually impaired from Greenbush Southeast Kansas Education Service Center participated in the mentoring process. The 30-week program included weekly communication, goal setting, professional learning, observations, and a virtual community. Of the 69 participants, 65 completed all program requirements, averaging 88% weekly participation across the school year.

Of the 69 early-career special educators who participated in eMSS

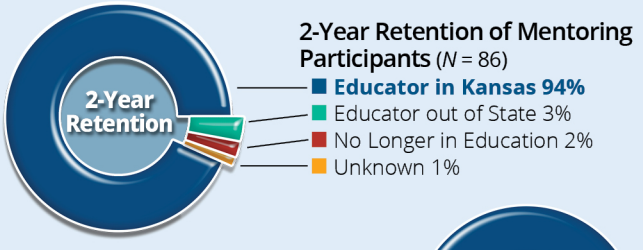
29 (42%) held or previously held apprenticeship licenses (i.e., LTAP, LAL, or LRL)

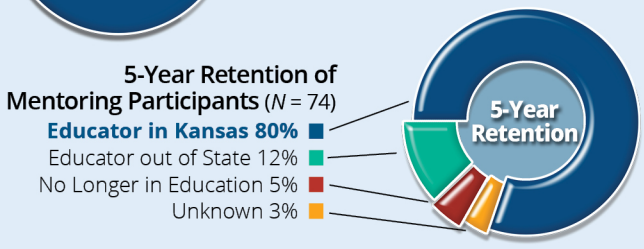
Over 95% of mentees and **eMSS** alumni **agree**

teaching is the right career for them!

Mentee retention is tracked 2 and 5 years after program completion. Within the 2-year cohort, 97% of participants continued to teach in 2026, and within the 5-year cohort, 92% of participants were still educators in 2026. During the 2025–26 school year, these educators were employed by 51 Kansas school districts and 13 cooperatives/interlocals.

RETENTION OF MENTORING PARTICIPANTS



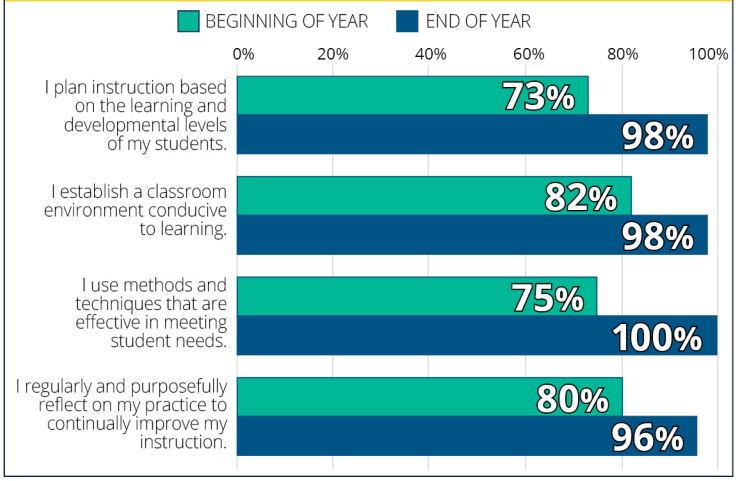


Each of the 20 mentors is a highly skilled Kansas educator. Annually, mentors participate in an institute (15+ hours) to expand their mentoring expertise. Mentors provided weekly individual support, facilitated a collaborative learning environment, observed and provided feedback on mentee's instruction, and monitored mentee's proficiency.

Each of the 65 eMSS completers participated in one or more Explorations—self-paced, facilitated learning experiences that guided mentees through planning, applying, and reflecting on their instructional practices. Explorations during the 2025–26 school year focused on developing IEPs, applying self-regulation strategies to support student success, and supporting students with autism or other complex behavioral or learning needs. Of the 57 mentees who responded to an end-of-year survey, 95% reported that they implemented the practices learned during the Explorations, and 88% agreed that the Explorations impacted their students' learning.

> "The encouragement from my mentor was refreshing, especially when you're overwhelmed and begin to question if teaching is the career for you. THANK YOU ALL for your support and encouragement."
>
> — eMSS Alum

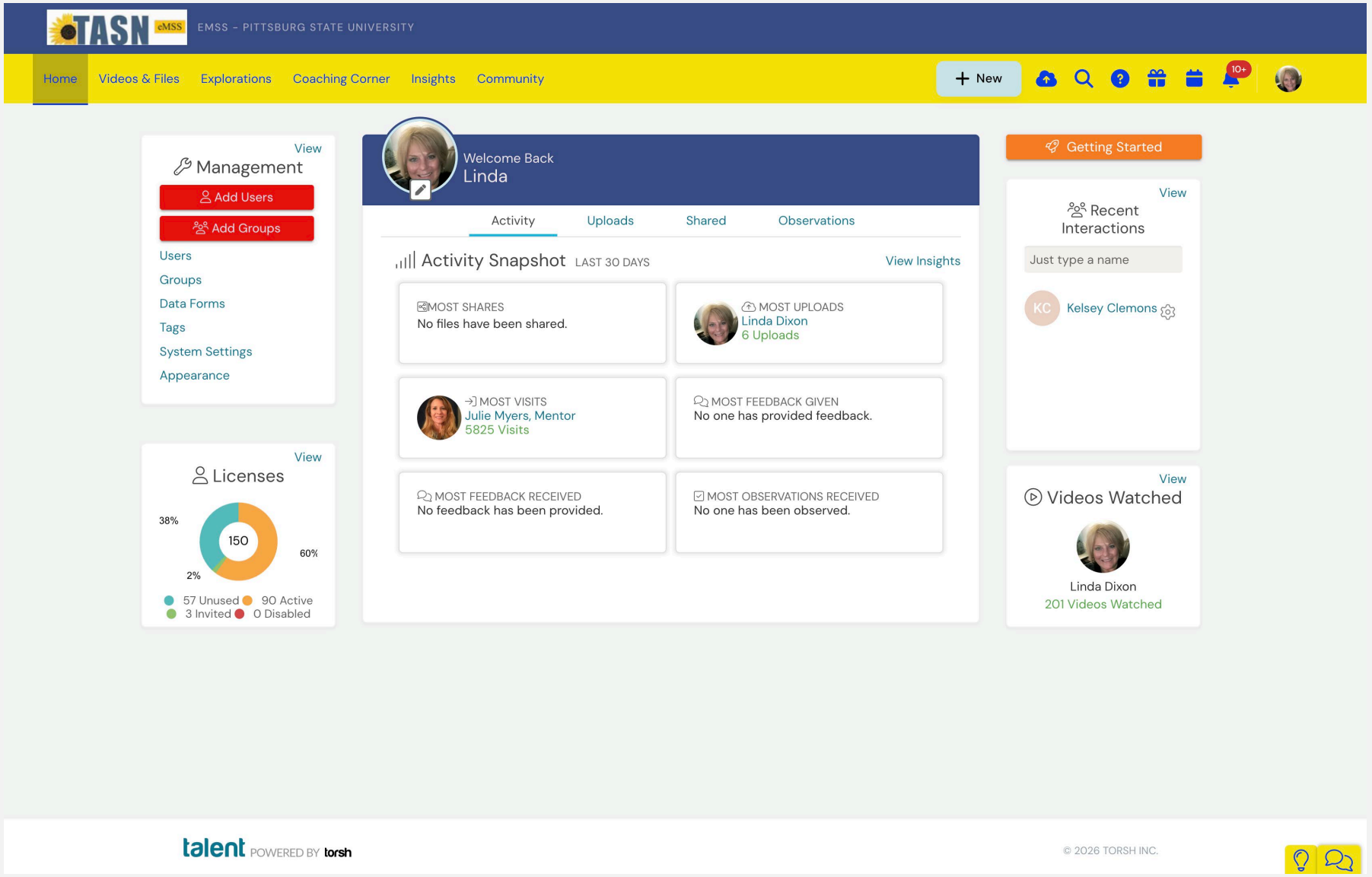
PERCENTAGE OF MENTEES SELF-IDENTIFYING AS *Proficient* OR *Highly Effective* AT THE BEGINNING AND END OF THE SCHOOL YEAR (*N* = 56)



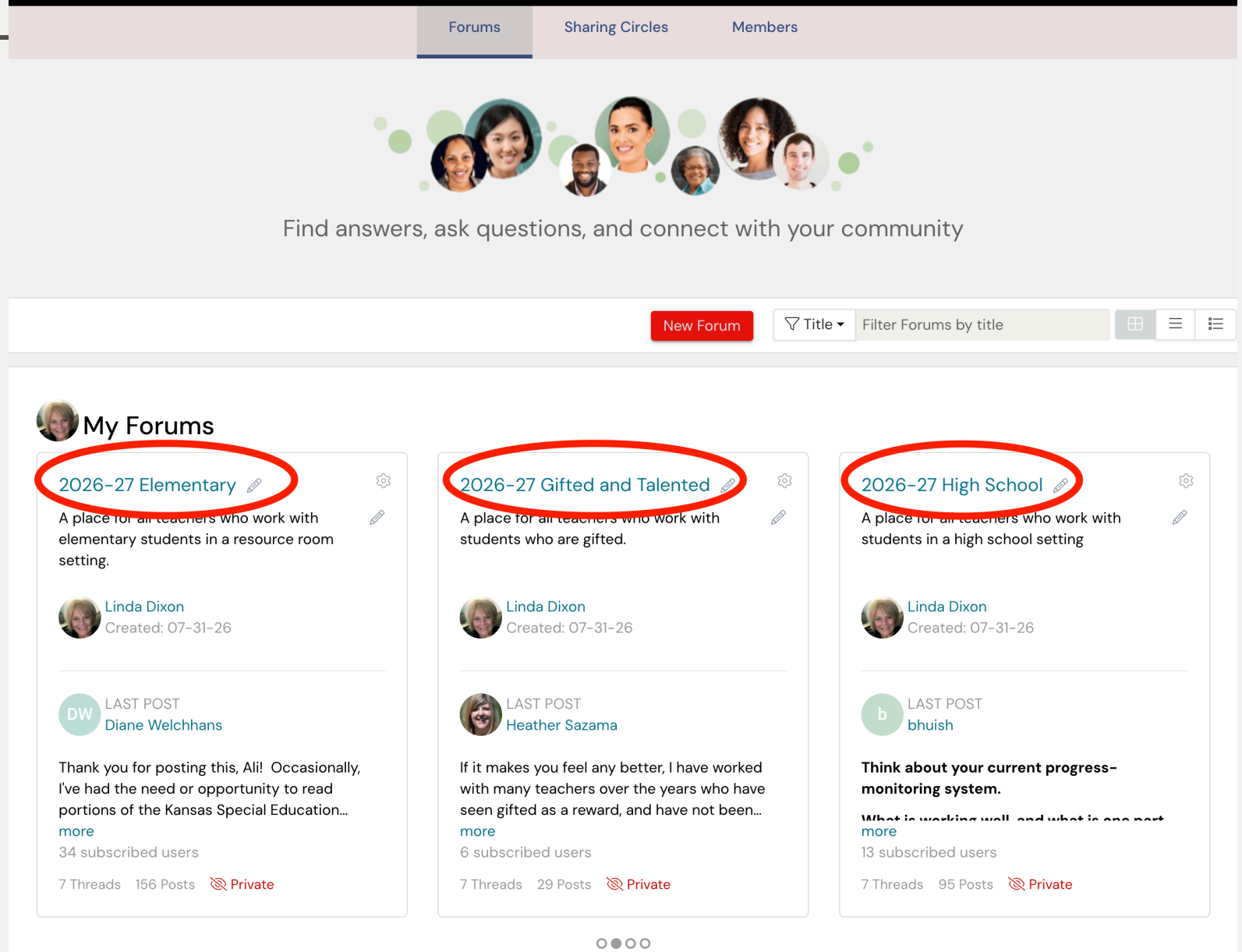
Mentees shared two or more videos demonstrating their progress toward proficiency in instructional practices. After each video submission, the mentor met with the mentee to analyze instructional proficiency and determine areas for continued improvement. Mentees also reflected on their instructional growth from the beginning to end of the school year. Overall, the mentees achieved growth in each practice.

> "e-Mentoring hasn't just benefitted me but has also benefitted my students. I have so many new tools to help them succeed at school."
>
> — eMSS Mentee

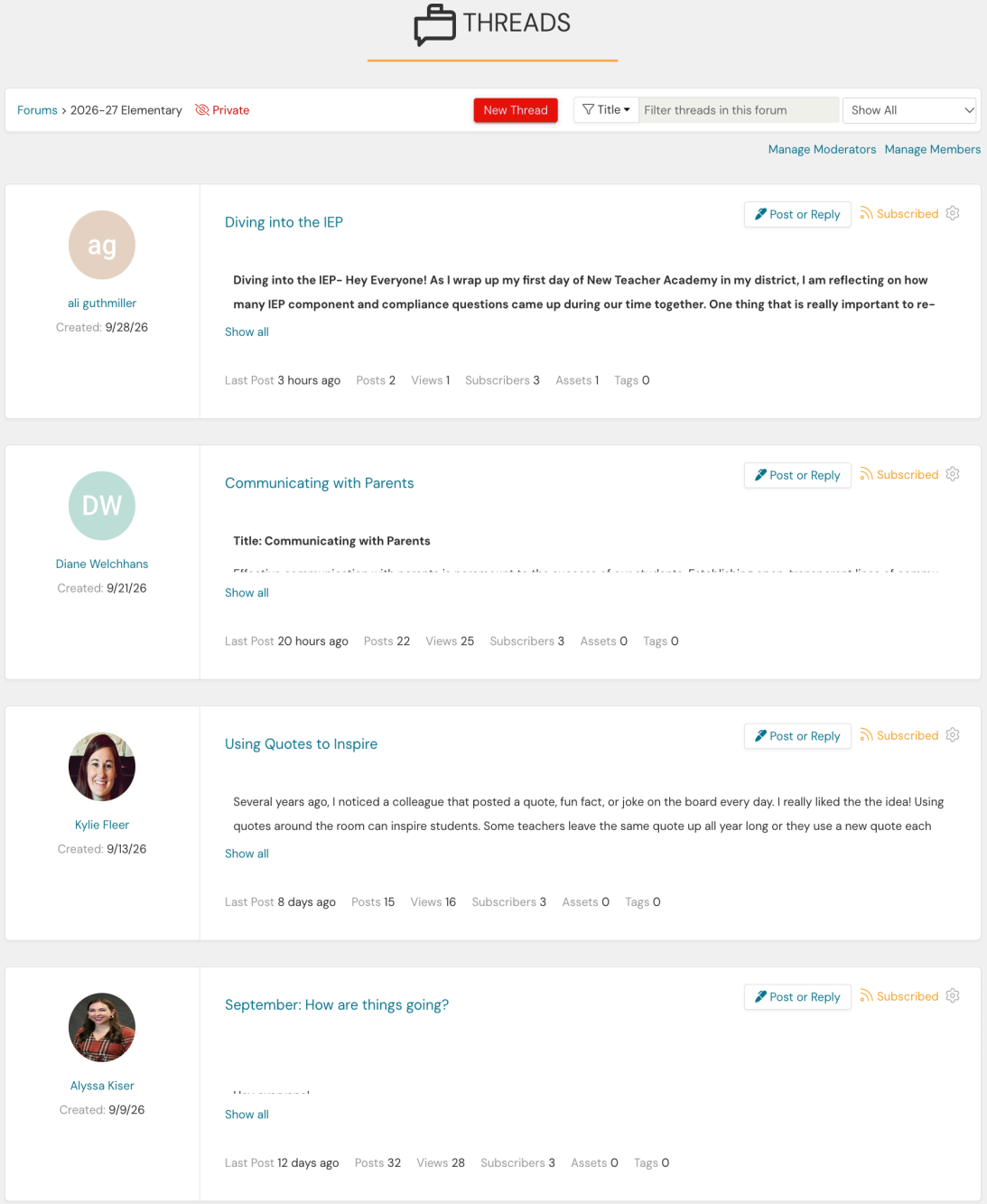
Glimpse at the Platform



My Forums


Forums
Sharing Circles
Members
Find answers, ask questions, and connect with your community
New Forum
Title
Filter Forums by title
My Forums
2026-27 Elementary
A place for all teachers who work with elementary students in a resource room setting.
Linda Dixon
Created: 07-31-26
LAST POST
Diane Welchhans
Thank you for posting this, Ali! Occasionally, I've had the need or opportunity to read portions of the Kansas Special Education...
more
34 subscribed users
7 Threads
156 Posts
Private
2026-27 Gifted and Talented
A place for all teachers who work with students who are gifted.
Linda Dixon
Created: 07-31-26
LAST POST
Heather Sazama
If it makes you feel any better, I have worked with many teachers over the years who have seen gifted as a reward, and have not been...
more
6 subscribed users
7 Threads
29 Posts
Private
2026-27 High School
A place for all teachers who work with students in a high school setting
Linda Dixon
Created: 07-31-26
LAST POST
bhuish
Think about your current progress-monitoring system.
more
13 subscribed users
7 Threads
95 Posts
Private

Threads


THREADS
Forums › 2026-27 Elementary
Private
New Thread
Title
Filter threads in this forum
Show All
Manage Moderators
Manage Members
ag
ali guthmiller
Created: 9/28/26
Diving into the IEP
Post or Reply
Subscribed
Diving into the IEP- Hey Everyone! As I wrap up my first day of New Teacher Academy in my district, I am reflecting on how many IEP component and compliance questions came up during our time together. One thing that is really important to re-
Show all
Last Post 3 hours ago
Posts 2
Views 1
Subscribers 3
Assets 1
Tags 0
DW
Diane Welchhans
Created: 9/21/26
Communicating with Parents
Post or Reply
Subscribed
Title: Communicating with Parents
Show all
Last Post 20 hours ago
Posts 22
Views 25
Subscribers 3
Assets 0
Tags 0
Kylie Fleer
Created: 9/13/26
Using Quotes to Inspire
Post or Reply
Subscribed
Several years ago, I noticed a colleague that posted a quote, fun fact, or joke on the board every day. I really liked the the idea! Using quotes around the room can inspire students. Some teachers leave the same quote up all year long or they use a new quote each
Show all
Last Post 8 days ago
Posts 15
Views 16
Subscribers 3
Assets 0
Tags 0
Alyssa Kiser
Created: 9/9/26
September: How are things going?
Post or Reply
Subscribed
Show all
Last Post 12 days ago
Posts 32
Views 28
Subscribers 3
Assets 0
Tags 0

Posts

POSTS

Forums > 2026-27 Elementary > Communicating with Parents

New Post | Oldest | Newest | Unsubscribe

Content Tags Click the pencil icon to add tags to this thread

Communicating with Parents

DW

Diane Welchhans
Posted 9/21/26
Posts 19

Title: Communicating with Parents

Effective communication with parents is paramount to the success of our students. Establishing open, transparent lines of communication builds trust and partnership between home and school, ultimately leading to better outcomes for our students. One key strategy is to initiate regular communication channels, such as pieces of happy mail, emails, or phone calls, to keep parents informed about their child's progress, achievements, and any challenges encountered in the classroom. This ongoing dialogue ensures that parents are actively engaged in their child's education and can provide valuable insights into their child's strengths, needs, and preferences.

This **article** provides 4 tips for better communication with parents and some tech tools to support that communication.

Parent-teacher conferences coming up? Here are some helpful **tips and resources** in an article from Edutopia.

For Discussion:

What is your best tip when communicating with parents?

What piece of advice from the articles do you want to incorporate more in your communication with parents?



Sherri Nelson 8 days ago
I think that it is very important to always start with a positive. In the same hand, it is just as important to be honest inyour communication. It is a fine line to walk to make sure that you are on this journey along with the parents to help the student be as successful as they can be. I would love to see student led conferences at all levels. Here we only do them in the upper grades and I love attending them as a parent. I think this would be great for elementary also.

DW

Diane Welchhans 8 days ago
Thank you for highlighting the importance of starting with a positive. We can always find at least one authentic good thing to share about one of our students, and it means so much to parents to hear positive feedback!

Reply

j

jenniferbeech13 8 days ago
When communicating with parents, I try and sandwich the information about their child struggling in between opening with strengths and closing with strengths. It helps, it really does. I know that as a parents, when I get hard to hear phone calls, the buffer of hearing a few good things makes it easier. The advice from the articles I want to incorporate more is communicating struggles from the beginning. Parents do not like to be blindsides, so it helps if they are hearing the information that their kiddo is having a hard time, from the time is starts to happen. It keeps them updated as to what is going on, and how they can help.

DW

Diane Welchhans 8 days ago

- **High-Quality IEP Elements and Alignment 2026-2027**
  A strong IEP narrates a clear story: who the student is, what they can do now, what they need to learn next, and how the team will support them in getting there.
  This exploration will sharpen your professional judgment so that every IEP you write tells a consistent story from student data to goals and supports.

- **Special Ed. Paperwork: Your Roadmap for Instruction and Support 2026-2027**
  There is no single perfect way to organize paperwork. Instead, there are core principles—such as consistency, clarity, and accessibility—that you can apply whether you use paper, digital tools, or a hybrid approach. This exploration will guide you through those principles and help you translate them into practical routines that work for PK–12 students, in both self-contained and resource settings, with various caseloads.

- **Strategies for Effective Teacher–Paraprofessional Teamwork 2026-2027**
  New special education teachers sometimes feel unsure about how to lead paraprofessionals because they may be older, more experienced in the building, or have strong relationships with students already. Seeing paraprofessionals as instructional partners rather than just extra hands helps you build a more respectful and productive relationship.

- **Strategies for Fostering Resilience 2026-2027**
  In this exploration, you will explore how stress and safety show up in the body, how your own state affects children, and why simple regulation tools can make such a difference in a classroom or caregiving environment.

- **The Consultant's Role in a K-12 Setting 2026-2027**
  In this exploration, you will learn to clearly describe your consultant role, map who owns which responsibilities, and communicate these boundaries in a supportive, relational way. Because you may work across multiple schools or districts, you will encounter different expectations, cultures, and assumptions about what a "special ed consultant" does.

- **Understanding Hearing Loss in K-12 Learners 2026-2027**
  Throughout this exploration, you will learn to translate audiological information into practical classroom decisions that increase access to instruction across grade levels. Learning to interpret key parts of educational audiograms and reports allows teachers to collaborate more effectively with audiologists and families.

- **Anchoring ECC in the TVI Role 2026-2027**
  Rather than viewing ECC instruction as something that only happens during isolated pull-out lessons, this exploration positions ECC as a thread that can be woven throughout the student's entire day.

- **The Roadmap for New Teachers 2026-2027**
  In your first three years of teaching, you are building habits, beliefs, and routines that will shape your entire career. As you move through this exploration, you will be asked to analyze scenarios and reflect on your own beliefs so that you can intentionally shape the kind of teacher you want to become.

- **Progress Monitoring and How It is Used 2026-2027**

Progress monitoring is the bridge between what you teach and what students actually learn. In this exploration, you will learn the foundational concepts of progress monitoring and how to set up straightforward systems that fit into your limited time while still giving you meaningful information.

- **Reading Disabilities and Early Interventions 2026-2027**
  Reading disabilities in grades 2–5 often emerge when foundational skills such as phonological awareness, decoding, and basic sight word recognition have not developed as expected.

- **Building Positive Learning Spaces 2026-2027**
  In this exploration, you will explore how to prevent common challenges like off-task behavior, defiance, and chronic disruptions, especially in public school classrooms with diverse learners. You will also reflect on your own beliefs and preferences as a new teacher, so you can align your daily practices with a clear vision for a respectful, productive classroom community.

Contact Information

TASN Kansas Teacher Retention Project (eMSS)

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Linda Dixon
ljdixon@pittstate.edu

Thank you for Joining us today!!!

The next webinar is scheduled for November 6th 2026