

Interviews with Exemplar States
Kerry Smith – Clip #4 Transcript

Kerry: Creating Agreement is a conflict resolution training that was put together by a broad-based group of constituents, the stakeholders. The process was facilitated by CADRE and the IDEA Partnership, and it purposely involved all the different perspectives of constituents involved in special education. And that's what I think gives it great credibility with participants, that it's not just a training designed for, by and for parents, but parents and educators and the whole, whole realm of people involved in conflict resolution. Well, we've been presenting Creating Agreement Training for I guess about two years. We've trained about 2000 people at this point, and I really have considered it to be, up to this point, a grassroots effort, which is great. There are three trainers in my office that, that go across the commonwealth and train people, but we really have to build capacity and we really need to expand it. So we have a couple of different initiatives related to Creating Agreement going on right now. One thing that we're trying to do, or that we are doing, is taking the Creating Agreement training and expanding it, pretty substantially, to meet our state's requirements for continuing education credits for administrators. Right now, it meets the requirements for teachers, but it doesn't for administrators. And our hope is that by creating a very expansive project, getting that certification for administrators, that they will, in turn, help build capacity within their own districts by inter-training, training others. We're also working with a university professor to evaluate Creating Agreement in Pennsylvania. That's a piece that I think has been missing, frankly. We do the training, we do a post-training evaluation, but I'm interested in a more systemic, long-standing evaluation of the process. So we're working on that and, and what I, I always term the final frontier, I think we're actually getting there, and that's higher education. We're working with higher ed representatives to figure out how to get the Creating Agreement training and concepts into not only in-service for teachers, but also pre-service, that's college students and we're having some, some good progress there. So, Creating Agreement is alive and well in Pennsylvania. It's still being done at the grassroots level, but these initiatives that I talked about are really trying to take it to a new level.