>> I will introduce us. My name is Heidi Kleinman, and I am the assistant director for dispute resolution at the Ohio Department of Education, and with me today, I have Heather Clingerman and Kelly Walker. Heather is the coordinator of mediation facilitation and dispute resolution, and Kelly is the coordinator of due process. All three of us write complaints, and so today, we are really excited to talk about lessons we've learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, specific to systemic complaints. So this session, I am letting you know, this is ... We have a lot of information to get into. We could go for hours on this, so we have packed information. We're going to include our e-mail addresses in the chat, so if you have questions or you want to follow up with us after this meeting, we're more than happy to get to you. And if you have questions, go ahead and put them in the chat, and we will try to answer them during the session or if we have some time at the end. But if we don't get to your question, then we will respond directly to you after the ... we're done speaking today. And so with that, we are going to go ahead and start. I'm not sure, Heather ...

>> Heidi, just before you get started, I wanted to pull this over and just let you sort of see. It looks like we do have, so far, most people are coming in are a complaint investigator at one of the SEAs or other SEA staff.

>> Right, and this should be really helpful for you, especially if there are systemic complaints ... if you're seeing a lot of systemic complaints in your state right now. And our objectives today are to gain insight into investigating systemic complaints efficiently and effectively, as well as discovering new methods and procedures for reviewing documentation. Also, to get ideas to work collaboratively within the team when you're writing letters of finding for systemic complaints and then learning about additional corrective action or skills from corrective action for systemic complaints. So let's move to the next slide. If you would like to take a quick moment to vent about impact on complaint investigators for systemic complaints, how that makes you or your staff feel when you are working on and then finally completing systemic complaints, feel free to vent or not to vent. What I will share with you are the top feelings that ... or impact that our team has had when writing systemic complaints. So one of the things is exhaustion, physical and mental exhaustion from working on systemic complaints. Another word that we ... or phrase that we would say would be time-consuming. It's very time-consuming to write systemic complaints, especially large ones. And then finally, it impacts other work duties for our group. So we have seven complaint investigators or eight? Seven ... I lose track, but we all have other duties. So as an example, Heather, who coordinates mediation and facilitation, when she's working on a systemic complaint, it impacts other duties that she has, and the same thing with Kelly. We have backups that help with these things, but it impacts your other job duties as well. So this is ... We did the math, and we double-checked it. We could not believe it. We anticipated when the ... when COVID started that we were going to see a jump in complaints. We did not anticipate that we would have a jump in systemic complaints, but that fact is we have had a 284 percent increase in systemic complaints between March 13th of 2020 until May 1st of 2021. I'm going to move to the next slide. So systemic complaints that we dealt with before the pandemic, they would be assigned to one person. One complaint investigator would look at them, and we were in the office. Since March 13th, we have all been working remotely, so we are not in the office. When we were in the office, the documents that we would get were largely paper. So we were doing a paper review, and also the systemic complaints were about specific issues, or it would be a small group of students or a very defined group of students that maybe were in a certain grade, certain disability category or even a certain school. Now what we've seen ... And we say after the pandemic, and I've heard people referencing this yesterday because the pandemic is still going on, but since the pandemic began, what we have done is now we're assigning complaints to two to three complaint investigators, and our review is done completely electronically. And also, our issue ... the issues that the systemic complaints about are much more vast. So they are ... They could be multiple schools or an entire district, and they're much larger than what we were seeing before. And then this is ... You should all have access to our PowerPoint today, and there is going to be a lot of times, and this is one of them where we are going to refer you back to look at things so we can move forward with the content, but these are some examples of systemic issues that we have seen during the pandemic. And then, we are going to start with our first lesson, and Heather is going to talk about web-based collaboration.

>> All right. So our first lesson was that, with the pandemic, everything that was going on, just the change in our process and the change in the way schools were operating, was we had to really make sure we had a good web-based collaboration. So this meant making sure we used electronic files for letters and documentation instead of previously. We were using primarily a paper-based review system. Districts would send us information. We would take that information and look at it in paper form. We realized real-time collaboration was really important, and you would think being in the office and in-person that we would have had a really great real-time collaboration, and what we had was good, but we weren't as involved in each other's cases as we are currently because now, we have the ability to sort of log in and look at everything together at the same time, and we actually had that ability before, but in the office, it didn't occur to us to do that, and so we learned that real-time collaboration and we found that actually improved our investigation efficiency. We use electronic systems on our share drives. This is sort of an example of what we would set up for a systemic case. We would have a centralized location for each district that we're investigating where we keep track of our letters and information about the students, the parents, the staff and everything that we're going through. And this allows the two or three different investigators to all review this information when it's convenient for them or to review it all together, and it's easily accessible. We also have sort of once you break it down further, so we're into the district, and then, we go into the student information. One thing that we learned is, with these particularly large complaints, we're not looking at just one small class of students. So we're not looking at eight kids. We might be looking at every student with a disability in an entire large district, and so then we're looking at that sample, and there may be 100 or more kids involved, so we give them an identifier early on. We want to make sure that we can collect all of the documentation and data for each individual student. We have them identified by something that is going to maintain their confidentiality. All of our letters are posted publicly on our website. So we wanted to make sure that we are able to maintain their privacy. So early on, we give them some kind of identifier and collaborate that way, where we can collect all their information with their identifier, instead of using just their name. This is where we put any student-specific information. Then, we would do a similar thing with staff documentation, and I know Kelly will talk to you about this a little bit later when we start getting through the roles and how each one of us operates through this investigation. But what we would do is have an area where we keep track of the questions we're asking each type of staff member, what their responses were and all of that. And again, this all just improves that efficiency and make sure that every single person on the investigation team is able to access everything at any moment. And with that, I will turn you over to Kelly Walker to talk about lesson two.

>> Thank you. All right. Well, if you all love Oprah Winfrey, you will love assigning roles because everybody gets a role. You get a role. You get a role. This is really, I think, a great change that we made to the systemic process. So what will happen is when we are assigning roles, we'll have a primary contact, a parent contact, a district contact, a documentation coordinator and a corrective action gatekeeper. So the primary contact is going to contact the complainant. They're going to contact the district once we initially receive the complaint and is going to set up those initial meetings. They're also going to lead team meetings, introduce investigators to the parties, coordinate and communicate with the internal team, and they're going to work to select representative sample of the students. They're also going to assign the team roles and collect background information. The parent contact is going to create a systemic notification letter that will go out to parents, letting them know that a systemic case has been filed and that their student is subject to that systemic complaint, and they are going to be the primary contact for parents. They're also going to coordinate interviews with the parents, and they will schedule the interviews and also assign colleagues to assist with sitting in on those interviews and taking notes and things like that. And then for the findings letter, they're going to synthesize all of that interview information, and it'll incorporate it into the letter of findings. The district contact does a lot of similar work. They work with the district. They'll lead the interviews. They'll assign a colleague who's a notetaker for each interview. They'll ensure that the questions that are asked during the interviews address the allegations, and they'll get impact or ... I'm sorry ... input from team members. And then, they will, again, synthesize all of that information from the interviews and incorporate that into the letter of findings. The documentation coordinator, they will create those collaborative web folders that Heather just showed you examples of. They'll organize documentation within those folders, create spreadsheets to highlight required student information, and they'll organize and add tabs to those as needed. And then, they will synthesize information from the documentation reviews and the spreadsheets, and they will incorporate that into the letter of findings. The corrective action contact, also the gatekeeper of corrective action, there's a little "Ghostbusters" Sigourney Weaver reference there for you all on this Halloween weekend. They will review the findings with the parties. They'll inform the internal group so their colleagues of the status of corrective action. They will monitor the completion of the corrective action and communicate with the district about that. They will handle any extension requests from the district, and they will draft and send out the closure letter once the corrective action has been completed, and they'll notify the internal team that the complaint has been closed. So some examples of cases, systemic cases that we had. You'll see they mention early engagement, and we'll go over a little bit about early engagement with you all here in a couple of slides. These are just some examples we had with Toledo is the first one. You'll see there on the left-hand side where we completed a full investigation of the allegations that were made. We had early engagement with the district on this complaint, and through this hyperlink, you should be able to access the letter of findings to view that letter and see how we organized all of that information. Columbus City Schools in the middle there, they partially acknowledged the allegations, so we didn't have to investigate all of the allegations that were made. There was an early engagement on the part of the district, although they did engage with us. It's just there was an early engagement from them, and again, you can see the letter of findings is available through that hyperlink on our website. And then Dayton Public Schools, that final one, they fully acknowledged the allegations in that systemic complaint and submitted a corrective action plan, and this was a ... This letter eventually will be

available on our website. It hasn't been posted yet.

>> So the lesson three: engage early with the district. So that term, what that means for us is that when we engage early with the district for a large systemic complaint, what we try to do is get the names of students or staff before the actual letter of allegations goes out. And so, by doing that, that expedites documentation for the investigation. So we can ... If we have that information, what we're able to do is reach out to the parents earlier and let them know that an investigation is going on and that it also allows us to know which staff are linked with students, and so we're able to set up staff interviews sooner. So early engagement, we always contact districts no matter if it's a systemic complaint or just a regular complaint with one student, and ... But with the systemic ones, when we get that information as soon as possible, it helps move things along. So on the next slide, we kind of have just an overview of what these complaints look like. So if we get a systemic complaint that comes in, first thing we do is create the team of all the roles that Kelly had explained, and then what we do is we set up a call with the complainant and the district, and we introduce the team to both groups, and then, at that point, we determine what the class is. So what's the group of students that we're going to want to investigate, and from there, the district provides us the information of all the students that are fitting into that class. So it could be 500 students, or it could be a large number of students, so we just have the names, but then, based on the amount of students in the class, we are able to create a sample. And so then, what we do is in our letter of allegations, which we have an example of here is we explain to the complainant and the district gets a copy, and the parents get a copy is that we engaged early with the district, and what they did was they provided us names upfront. That's how we have these names to move along in the investigation. The next one is if we don't have that early engagement, it's similar, but there's an extra step. So we create our team, and then we contact both parties and introduce who is doing what within the investigation, and we determine the class. From there, if we don't have those names, we create our letter of allegations, but we put two due dates in there. One due date is an earlier due date that has ... that requests all of the names and contact information of the students and their parents, and then we have a second due date that then requests for the corresponding information based on the students. So that's where we create the allegations with the two due dates. Then, the district provides names for all students in the class by the first due date, and then we may have to get a sample based on that information, and then they provide the additional information based on that second due date. And so also, lesson four is defining a representative sample. So this can be really tough, especially with large systemic complaints. If you ... Columbus City Schools ... Columbus is the largest district in the state, in our state, and we had a complaint that you all have the link for that was ... It was during the pandemic, and it was from March 13th, 2020 until about March or February of 2021, that students, all special education students in the district weren't getting specially designed instruction. They had also carved out ... They had facts that led it to ... We were not able to narrow it down into a tiny group. So what we did was you have to make sure that you have a representation for each type of building, so elementary school, middle school or high school, and we had types for each disability category that we had in the sample. Each placement was represented, and that we also had a sample that included students that were getting related services from all of the different related service providers, so it can be tricky. And so what happens ... If you think about the chart from a few slides ago that we went over, what we would do is if we had early engagement from a district ... So they would give us the names of all students that are fitting into the sample or into the similarly situated students. From that ... And they would have the names, and they would have what schools that they were attending.

So we would pick schools, again, representing elementary, middle school and high school. From those schools that we picked, the district would then provide us the names of all of the intervention specialists that work at the schools we selected. So from that list, what we would do is select again, making sure that there was a sample of intervention specialists from each school, and we would get that back to the district. From there, the district would provide us all students assigned to the intervention specialist be selected, and then from that, we would select a random sample, and then that's how the district would provide us information about those specific students in the sample. So you can see it can get ... The process can be very involved if there is a large group of students, and this is why it's helpful, and it's not a mandatory ... It's not mandatory, and it just really depends on the situation, but it is helpful when we have that early engagement piece with the district. And this is one that I will leave you all to go back and read. This is language that we used in our letter of allegations and really, what it's doing is communicating to the complainant or the district or the parent about how we selected the sample and the dates that we did that so the complainant, especially the complainant, can see that this work was being done. That's how we came to this group of students. So if they're not engaging early, that's fine. It just ... it may be a little ... It just takes a little bit longer to gather that information. So as I said before, you're going to request two separate dates for documentation. You definitely want to get the names of the students, so you can start working on creating that sample before you get the rest of the documentation. If you wait for everything to come at once, then it's going to take ... It's going to add on time to that investigation. And so, as I said, first date is the list of contact information, and second is all of the needed documentation related to the students in your sample. And then, this is example language that we have pulled out for you to go over at your leisure, talking about that we need those two different dates. And then, the one thing that we have here is this is a district that ... and Dayton was our example, and we are working on that resolution letter, but what this district did was they acknowledged the violation and that they were going to submit a corrective action plan. What we did was we requested their corrective action plan with very specific points that they needed to include in the corrective action plans. So it was kind of in the same vein as a letter of allegation where they had to provide us with documentation and steps of their corrective action plan, and then we review that corrective action plan, and we will create a resolution letter that outlines their corrective action plan and if there's additional things that they need to put in it based on our review of that plan. And now, we are back to Heather.

>> Okay. So the other thing we sort of came to as we were working through this, and we sort of been honing this skill as we moved along, is the importance of consistency. In addition to making sure all of our investigators are collaborating and agree on the process and the findings, we want to make sure that that process is neutral and consistent, no matter who sort of the lead on the investigation or which part of the investigation is being conducted. So we've sort of gone through that a couple of different ways. One thing is consistency with parents in making sure that we're preparing the interviews in a neutral way but also consistent way despite whoever may be conducting that. So the person who is the parent contact that Kelly discussed with you earlier is drafting some questions that are going to be brought up to the parent. They're going to make sure that that is approved through our whole complaint team. Everyone who's investigating that team is going to look at that. We're making sure these questions are the same for all of the parents, within reason, of course. If someone has a speech service and another student does not, we're not going to ask them questions about that. But we also wanted to make it accessible for parents. So we typically do phone calls, but if they're not comfortable with that, if their time does not allow, then we also will allow them to respond to the questions via e-mail. This here is just sort of a sample of the letter we typically send out. When Heidi was talking about that early engagement piece, this is one thing that is really improved. If we had that early engagement because we can get this letter out to the parents right away and let them know a complaint was filed. Your student was identified as one of the students involved in the systemic complaint, and the district is cooperating. It does a couple of things. It lets them know it's happening, but it also lets them know their kid is not the problem. Sometimes, parents will get a cold call from us, and they'll think, "Oh, no. My kid is in trouble. What happened?" So we don't that to be the circumstances. So sending them this letter lets them know that the complaint is against the district, and that we may be reaching out to them and that they can also reach out to us. And so this is sort of something that goes much more smoothly if we have early engagement because the parents can get this letter with a little bit of lead time before we start reaching out to them. We have a variety of different sorts of questions that we would ask. Here is just sort of an example of things that are fairly common in our investigation. If we're looking into the services, for instance, during COVID, when we were looking at services provided during our school building closures, we're asking things like, "How did the intervention specialist communicate with you? Was the work that your child was doing during that time individualized? If your child is supposed to receive related services, did they get that? Did they have the technology they needed, and did you receive any IEP progress reports about that?" All of these are going to be, of course, tailored to the investigation, but we want to make sure whatever we're asking is consistent among all of the parents. The same thing is important to manage with district staff. Again, we mentioned, with early engagement, we've got to schedule those interviews quickly. The other thing that we like to do with district staff is schedule those meetings sort of in a block. So we may do 10 district interviews one morning and 10 the next morning or whatever. This allows the district to get proper coverage for classrooms and things like that because we are pulling a lot of their staff so that we can have these conversations, and so we want to be mindful that we're still making sure that they're able to get class coverage and if so if we have early engagement, we can get these interviews done quickly because we have that list and the sample of the class really early on. If we don't get that until later on in the investigation, it is a little more difficult to arrange these interviews, so that's another reason why we really push that with districts to try to make sure you get us information if you're capable of doing that. We also sort of discovered

through this process it tends to be best if we have one person who is the consistent interviewer throughout the district interview process. I know early on, we sort of would have a couple of us may be taking on that role to try to make sure everybody's time could be used wisely, and we found that it was really best to have one consistent person asking those questions, and then the rest of us who are part of that investigation team will sit in an assist on that. We want to make sure that we're also organizing the questions for staff in a way that is specific to the staff's role. There's certainly going to be some overlap in terms of one of our early complaints addressed, "How were you notified of how your ... what your responsibilities were?" That's sort of something that's going to be more across the board for the gen-ed teacher and the intervention specialist and the occupational therapist, but as we get into questions about delivery of services, those are all going to be organized specific to the staff's role. So here is sort of again, a sample of the types of questions that we would ask in a district interview. Did they provide you training on how to provide remote learning? That one was a big one with the pandemic. How are you providing specially designed instruction? How did you track progress? How were you communicating progress information, but just generally any sort of information about the student's special education needs with parents, and were those progress reports completed as they were supposed to be, and how were they provided to families? We want to make sure when we're drafting these district interviews that these questions stick to the issue. It's really easy with these really broad complaints to sort of get down into the weeds, so we always need to make sure when we're drafting these questions that the team remains on point to the issues that we are investigating and that we're making sure that they're differentiated for the staff member we're interviewing. All right. Kelly Walker is going to talk to you about lesson six.

>> Yeah. So I'm talking about lesson six. I also saw there was a question in the chat about SDI. So if Heather or Heidi wouldn't mind addressing that, I would appreciate it. So lesson six, keep calm and review with purpose. You're going to select your specific documentation that will help you find the information that you're looking for. You want to try to stay linear because you're going to have a lot of information coming at you from all different directions, and the more linear you can keep that and placing that within your investigation, the easier it'll be for you. And then the ongoing review with your team is also really important. Checking in with the different contacts and things like that is another really important piece. For the documentation review, like Heather said, you're going to pick specific areas of focus. You should be as concrete as possible. You want to meet with the other reviewers before beginning to review documentation, to make sure that all of the expectations are the same and have ongoing discussions about trends that you're noticing during the review, and what ... Does the documentation reflect what you heard or the interviewers were hearing in the parent and staff interviews? So this is an example of a spreadsheet and how you can sort your information. The change to us to digital platforms was so beneficial because here, we could have documentation that was in multiple locations and modalities and put it all in one spreadsheet, and you can have additional tabs if you needed them. And you could have quick reference answers to questions, just a simple yes or no, which would help you determine a violation, and you could ... It was easier for us to spot trends, and you can embed these spreadsheet into your letter of findings. They were just really beneficial in helping determine corrective action as well. So you're going to see that compliance may vary. You're going to use a range, and it's going to ... You'll see here, in the next couple of slides, you'll determine different variables that will help to decide whether or not a district is in compliance. And this range will help districts understand the why of a violation, kind of the overall reason and also to pinpoint specifically areas as well. And it allows you to acknowledge that although a district may be out of compliance, that there were staff members or areas where they were compliant, and then it'll also help you better tailor the corrective action. You can really individualize corrective action to the needs of the students involved in the systemic investigation. And it will provide a blueprint for districts to be able to review their own files, which can be helpful with the corrective action, if they need to go back and look at other students as part of the corrective action.

>> I'm going to cut in on Kelly for a second and just say one of the things that we sort of realized early in on this process, particularly given the circumstances surrounding the COVID closures, was that even the best district doing the hardest work, it was really unlikely that if we were investigating every student in the district, that they were going to be 100 percent in compliance for every single kid. And so being able to use this range really helped us be able to say, "Yes, you're in violation, but these staff members, all their students were covered" or something like that and sort of, in many ways, it kind of took some of the sting out for some of the districts who felt like, "But we worked so hard, and our teachers really tried to do the right thing," and this was a good way to make sure that we are acknowledging the areas of compliance and that we're not just doing a blanket corrective action when some staff did get everything right.

>> Right. The approach that we like to take is we don't want to sit there and just wag our finger at the district. We want to hold their hand and walk them through whatever they may need in order to get back into compliance. So how does compliance vary? You'll have different kind of number of variables or variants in each investigation, and that number of variables that you have will place you in a position where you're seeing that documentation is reflecting compliance, that it's reflecting ... Some documentation may be reflecting compliance or interviewers reflecting partial compliance and then documentation and interviews are just not supporting the district was in compliance. So setting a score to the variants. So again, you're going to have different ranges of scores. So here, in this example, we had nine separate variables that we were looking at, and that ended up with three different levels of compliance. You had three separate ranges, so seven to nine, four to six, zero to three, where districts would fall within the compliance range. And then this is an example of language that we provided to districts to demonstrate whether or not they were in compliance. So it kind of broke down for the district how we determined what was the green range and what points fell underneath each of those ranges. And again, you can go back and look at these in more detail at your leisure. I say leisure like we all have so much time on our hands, but if you're ever like, "I wonder how Ohio did that," you can go back and look. So this is an example of student record review, and really, so much of this ... 100 percent of this I'd probably say is the brainchild of Heidi. She's just a genius, and this changed the game for us. It really did. I see her nodding no. I'm sorry to embarrass you, but this really changed the game not just for us as investigators but also for the parties who are reading the letter of findings. So here, the B11, B12 and on, those were the student identifiers. You'll see on the left-hand side documentation of SDI documentation of student contact. Those were all the different variables that we considered for this particular complaint. There were nine, and then when you look across the board, let's say the top here. Documentation of SDI for student B11. N for no, and we'll see an example on a slide coming up here in a little bit. But all of these Ns are no. That means that that variable does not apply. There was a yes for student B19, so it did apply, and then down at the bottom at total, you'll see the range of variance that we had for these students. At one, two, three, four, and B19 was the only one with nine. And so you'll start to see these trends, and you'll look at this, and you'll say, "Oh, I bet B11, B12, B13, they probably all had the same intervention specialist," let's say for the documentation of SDI, and B19 must have had this other intervention specialist that we've noticed have better documentation. So this is really, really helpful not just for the complaint investigator but the reader as well. So here, these are examples of the variances that we used, yes and no. If there was a yes, they were given one point to work towards that total possible number of nine. If there was a no, they got zero points. From items that were marked not applicable, we gave that point to the district. And so it was important for us explaining this process to our districts. If something didn't apply, go ahead and give yourself a point because we did have districts or one district, I think, who was counting that as a zero, and when they went back, and they were doing their own documentation reviews.

>> Right. And we didn't want them ... If a student, if we were looking at did the related service provider's document services, we didn't want them to get a zero for students who didn't have related service providers because they weren't non-compliant on that issue.

>> Right, right. The range, really, it allows for flexibility, but it captures the areas of compliance as well. So this is an example of language that we used in our letter of findings to explain the various levels of compliance that we found during our investigation. And again, as you choose, you can go back and read this language. And I'll pass it on to Heidi.

>> Okay. So this is our last lesson, which is about corrective action, and this has really been another big lesson for us. We worked collaboratively, but we found that, especially with these large complaints that corrective action is really all hands on deck. The first thing that we do when a letter of finding comes out is we schedule, within a week, a debrief with the district. And so all of the people that investigated the complaint are at this meeting with the district staff, district administration, and they have that opportunity to ask questions about the findings, how we came to our findings, and we go through it with them. And then we, up-front, set expectations with them. So one of the things that we know is that communication if there's trouble, or if there is something that's going on where there was something not anticipated that has come up, and they're not going to be able to make a timeline for corrective action, we let them know it's really important that they tell us that up-front. One example I will tell you is if we look at the Columbus complaint when that ... When those findings came out, it was the summer. I think it was late June, and so when we wrote the corrective action, we wrote it, but they were going to incorporate corrective action throughout the school year and potentially the following summer. And so as we got going, we realized we were having ongoing meetings with the district after we debriefed that we didn't anticipate, that COVID would still be an issue that it is. And not only that, we also did not anticipate that there would be the amount of staff shortages that there are. And so when we had them reviewing records and setting up meetings to communicate with parents about services that were lost, we found that we couldn't do it. It wasn't logical for the district. The district is very burnt out, understandably so, and they did not have the staff, so we really had to come back to the table. So when you put those expectations up front, it makes the district feel much more comfortable about coming to you with problems. Also, we use internal and external resources as much as possible. So within our office, we have a supports and monitoring team. If we were investigating a district, regardless if they're systemic or not, but it's very helpful with systemic complaints. If supports and monitoring is already in there, we have that person that's kind of embedded to help with the corrective action. We also have an urban supports team. So the urban support team in our office works with all of the large districts, urban districts, and they are in there at least monthly, if not a couple of times a month. They are a great liaison for kind of getting a check-in on how the district is doing. If the district anticipates problems, they can talk to that urban person, and then the urban person may come back to the corrective action contact to say that, "I think there's going to be some struggles here. We may need to look at this." So really, we're utilizing multiple people. Also, for training, we use our state support team who provides excellent training. So corrective action determination. Size matters. So really, it just depends on the size of the district, the size of the class of students, and that really makes a determination one way or another about how the corrective action will be decided. Also, one of the things with the chart that Kelly went over, we did a sample. So that was an issue, that was a district-wide issue, and we did a sample. And so what we did was, in our corrective action, we requested that the district to determine comp ed or who needed comp ed, but they use the review the same way that we used our review, and we discussed this in the debriefing. We went over, "Here are the things that we reviewed. If you have a student that is there were no issues, comp ed would not be required. If there was a student that there was no evidence of SDI, then you would determine 100 percent of the minutes would be provided, and if they were in that middle area, then half the minutes." So that's as an example. We are not able to go through an entire district. Columbus has 9,000 students with IEPs. We would not be able to do that review, but we can set that up and then work with the district about teams within

their district that can do the review. And then training and review. That's where I had talked a minute ago about we assign our state support team to provide training, and sometimes, we will even use other agencies within the state that are well-known if it's specific issues. We even will use different people within the department. So for instance, if it's about transition planning and there's a significant need about transition planning, we may have somebody from the department that oversees that piece provide the training.

>> The other thing that sort of came up was the complainant was concerned that we were assigning, essentially for the district, to audit their own files and determine where they fell if they had ... were in compliance, partially compliant or whatever. So part of what we did was assign them to do that, but then we've been sort of reviewing and ensuring that they're following that to the same level that we were.

>> One other thing that I wanted to point out that's so interesting is so Toledo, which that was our full investigation. We use that chart that was a few slides ago. We use that with Toledo. It was the whole district, and we had the sample, and we did that. Columbus ... because our letters are public. So our letters of finding are public. Columbus read that letter and decided that's not a bad idea for us to look and see if we've been implementing IEPs during the pandemic, and then a complaint was filed with that issue. There were two issues with the Columbus complaint. So when we got together with Columbus, they said we've been using this tool that was in the letter of findings with Toledo, and we've been going through on our own, and we've seen that in fact, yes, there are students that are falling into these ranges. So our investigation was a sample, and we had ... We were able to use their findings and compare them to our findings, and we were on largely on the same page. So it was a pretty cool thing to see that they took that tool and they were implementing it in the same way that we implemented it with our investigation.

>> And this is where Kelly said earlier that they were actually being a little more harsh on themselves than we were by giving themselves no credit for students who didn't have that, and that's how that came up was in there, a sort of self-review prior to us even being involved.

>> And we also ... Again, this is a lesson that we learned that districts, when you're rolling out corrective action, especially with compensatory service, that there are certain group of students that should be prioritized. First of all, students that are graduating within the school year. Those are students that should be reached out to first because they're going to graduate, and ... but they need to have the opportunity that if they want the compensatory services that they get them. The other thing that we noticed was that students with behavior issues when we were investigating large systemic complaints, we found that students with significant behavior issues were in the groups that were not getting services for a variety of reason and same thing with students that were immunocompromised or had significant disabilities because it was not possible when everybody was learning from home for some of those services to be provided in the home. And some other pointers that we have are use of check-ins. So you will see in our corrective action that we would put a check-in so that we would request a monthly meeting or a quarterly meeting with the district and the corrective action point person to discuss how things are going, and we may review records during that time. We may talk about barriers or how things are going, but we definitely put that in our corrective action. The other thing is that we may assign ourselves corrective action. So one of the complaints that we have is involving ESY. And so the ESY services have not been offered. And so when we went back, we realized that ESY is not recorded in the states electronic data management system, and so, as a result of this letter, we are now having that added to our ... the state's electronic data system so that we will be able to see that. The other thing is use trusted resources. So we said this before. We trust our state support team. We have monthly meetings with them. They are experts, and then if we need to have somebody with a very specialized expertise, there are certain agencies that we frequently use that we will refer to. And again, really, very important, and it has given us a lot of success is to encourage that open communication. So if they ... districts are open with their communication, it allows us to be more flexible, and the goal here is not just to check a box and make it so that they've checked off their boxes and fixed things. We want to make sure that we're ... kids are getting what they need, that we're providing thoughtfulness into the corrective action and the training, and if it means that things have to be moved around a little bit to get there, we're willing to do that. And so I think we have some time for questions.

>> I did want to pop in. Somebody had asked about where we can find the complaint findings, where they're posted, so I was going to pull that up, just so everyone can kind of see where that is, so we do have them. They are on our website. The link is in the chatbox, but you can see when you click on here, you can either see our complaint findings or our due process decisions, and you can search by a variety of ways. So you can sort of search by which one of us investigated it if you want. You can search by the district name, or you can just search by the findings state, and it'll show you all of that information.

>> I want to say maybe 30 minutes ago, I misread. I thought we were done at 2:00, and I had a mini panic attack. I thought we're not going to get this done, but we do have a few minutes.

>> One thing I'd like to mention real quickly too is we had one of our systemic complaints involved. The translation of documents and interpreters and provision of interpreters. So that was another investigation where early engagement was important because we needed to find out which parents were non-native English speakers and get the systemic notice translated, the letter of allegations translated. Get interviews scheduled not just with staff, but for us, find time to schedule interviews with parents using an interpreter service. As you can imagine, those interviews took a little bit longer. So that was kind of an interesting systemic complaint that came about that had an extra component to it and getting everything translated and getting interpreters, making sure they were available for interviews.

>> And it looks like we have a question in the chat about, "Did we have situations where parents were resistant to participating in the investigation or didn't want their students' records reviewed?" And I would say this absolutely happens every time we have a systemic. I know not any of these large ones, but in a smaller systemic, in years past, I had parents that actually called and said, "I absolutely don't want this with the district. How do I make it stop?" And so the short answer is we can't make it stop. So we do still have to move forward. If you look at the systemic letters, you will see we did not end up speaking with every parent. We contacted them all with the letter. We reached out to them through e-mail or phone, but if they don't respond or don't want to talk to us, then we, unfortunately, don't get the information from them. But we do ... We've had pretty good luck with getting at least a decent amount of those parents to be responsive. In some cases, I had a smaller systemic where I think I spoke to all but one of the parents because they were all really responsive and wanted to share, and so, yeah, it really just depends.

>> And then there ... I see another question in the chat about using the team approach for all systemic complaints. Yes, we do now. We were not doing it, and we kind of started at the beginning, and then it kind of morphed into yes, we team up regularly. We have a small systemic complaint right now with nine students, and we have three people that are on that. And again, it just makes ... It helps with the timelines. It helps with the writing, and we're able to edit as we go. We have a review team that ... and it's the same three or four people that are in this review team, and it helps with the review team too because we're writing it together as we go.

>> I would say for any of you that do investigations, you'll know you sort of get in there, and you're in the zone. And when you have even just 10 students to look at, it's hard to sort of get caught up. And so it really does help to have a full ... a couple of other people to bounce ideas off of when you're looking at those documents.

>> Hi, this is Kelly Rousher. I just wanted to let you know that there's about 3 minutes or so left of your session. Thanks.

>> Is there any other questions? Any? Hopefully, this was helpful. If you have other questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. We are more than happy to share resources or anything like that, and ...

>> Yeah, reach out to us. You can e-mail us at any time. We're happy to share information because I know this had a real learning curve for us to figure out the best way to handle something so large.

>> Okay.

>> All right. Well, everyone enjoy the rest of the conference.