Mathematica
Progress Together

Pursuing a Secure Economic Future for Youth with Disabilities—Lessons from PROMISE

Speakers
January 2023

David Emenheiser, U.S. Department of Education

David E. Emenheiser, Ph.D, has been with the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the U.S. Department of Education (ED) since 2010. His portfolio includes discretionary grants, contracts, and workgroups on secondary transition, parent centers, rural, poverty, juvenile justice, school leadership, educational choice, and project evaluation. Prior to employment in ED, he worked for 16 years with adolescents with disabilities, mainly emotional and behavioral disabilities. He held every special education job from paraprofessional to high school principal during those years. He earned his doctorate in special education and disability studies from The George Washington University, researching, *Relations Between Academic Achievement and Self-Concept Among Adolescent Students with Disabilities Over Time*. He lives in Annapolis with his husband, Eric, and two pooches, Tommy and Duncan.

Catherine Fowler, National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative

Catherine Fowler, Ph.D., is co-director of the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: the Collaborative (NTACT:C), funded by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. Dr. Fowler is also an adjunct instructor of courses in transition methods and collaborative service delivery at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and supports technical assistance and research on other ED funded projects related to transition services. Her career as a practitioner included early intervention service coordination and classroom teaching of students with autism and intellectual disabilities. Her work focuses on the successful, respectful, and meaningful integration of individuals with disabilities in society. She lives outside of Charlotte with her husband, daughter (when on college breaks), and three big dogs.

Ellie Hartman, Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

Ellie Hartman, Ph.D., is the Department of Workforce Development (DWD)'s Workforce Data Integration System (WDIS) chief evaluation officer where she coordinates the DWD's WDIS learning agenda, evaluation plan, and Longitudinal Workforce Database. In addition, Dr. Hartman wrote and provides leadership and evaluation consultation for the Rehabilitation Services Administration Disability Innovation Funded Wisconsin

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Career Pathways Advancement Initiative. She also provides external evaluation support for NTACT:C. Previously, she was the project manager for the Wisconsin Promoting Readiness of Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE) grant, and project manager for Competitive Integrated Employment (CIE), a Wisconsin inter-agency effort to increase CIE via Act 178.

Jeffrey Hemmeter, Social Security Administration

Jeffrey Hemmeter, Ph.D. is the acting deputy associate commissioner in the Office of Research, Demonstration, and Employment Support at the Social Security Administration (SSA) where he helps design, conduct, and oversee research, evaluation, and policies related to disability and return to work. Dr. Hemmeter's research focuses on transition-age youth and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and he has worked on several SSA demonstrations, evaluations, and studies, including as the SSA lead on the PROMISE evaluation. He received his doctorate in economics from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Karen Katz, Mathematica

Karen Katz, M.A., is a senior managing consultant at Mathematica. She specializes in the management of data collection and research projects involving people with disabilities. She has directed or managed numerous projects for the SSA and the U.S. Department of Labor, including PROMISE and Youth Transition Demonstration. She holds an M.A. in public policy from the University of Chicago and is a certified project management professional.

Gina Livermore, Mathematica (moderator)

Gina Livermore, Ph.D., is director of the Center for Studying Disability Policy and a senior fellow at Mathematica. She is an expert in evaluation research and design and employment policy and health insurance for people with disabilities. Her work focuses on improving the economic well-being and self-sufficiency of transition-age youth and working-age people with disabilities. She is the director of the national evaluation of the PROMISE demonstration. She has also extensively researched the quality of national disability data. She holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and an M.P.H. in epidemiology from Tulane University.

Ankita Patnaik, Mathematica

Ankita Patnaik, Ph.D., is a senior researcher at Mathematica who studies employment and family support programs and policies, particularly those geared toward families with low incomes and people with disabilities. She specializes in designing and conducting evaluations that can provide reliable evidence on the effectiveness of such programs in improving participants' lives. She currently leads studies of several workforce-related programs including the PROMISE evaluation, where she oversees the impact and benefit-cost evaluations; the Research Support Services for Employment of Young Adults on the Autism Spectrum Project; and the Evaluation of the Refugees with Disabilities Vocational Training and Employment Demonstration. She also leads the impact study of the Retaining Employment and Talent After Injury/Illness Network Evaluation. Her work has been published in the *Journal of Labor Economics*, *Evaluation Review and Family Relations* and cited in press publications such as *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*. She holds a Ph.D. in economics from Cornell University.