



Presenter Biographies

Joe LaBelle
Director of Programs Impact, Family Network on Disabilities

Joe La Belle is a pioneering figure at the intersection of AI and education, serving as the Director of Programs Impact at Family Network on Disabilities. In Florida, he oversees four key programs and lends his expertise to OSEP-funded Technical Assistance centers, enhancing support for students with disabilities through technology.

Notably, Joe has played a crucial role in advocating for AI's role in education, engaging with the Secretary of Education, presenting to the US Department of Education staff, and sharing insights nationwide. His efforts focus on how AI can personalize learning and increase accessibility, making him a respected voice in the field.



Michael McSheehan
Owner and Lead Consultant, Evolve & Effect, LLC

Michael McSheehan is a systems-thinker and implementation specialist. A leader in the field of MTSS and inclusive education, he assists schools and districts to braid multiple initiatives and build coherent approaches to teaching and learning. Michael co-led the Center on Inclusive Education at UNH and helped establish the SWIFT Education Center. Michael founded Evolve & Effect, LLC to collaborate with schools and districts who are asking hard questions and seeking significant change in the education of all students, especially those with disabilities and those who have been historically marginalized.



Marc Purchin
Owner, Purchin Consulting

Marc Purchin's goals, education, experience, achievement, reputation and vision combined to prompt the establishment of Purchin Consulting in 1997. Beginning some two decades before that, Marc has personally conducted more than 3,000 mediations, mostly through contracts with the California Special Education Hearing Office, the Department of Developmental Disabilities, several public school districts and numerous non-profit organizations. In addition to that work, he has developed Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) programs for Special Education Local Plan Areas (SELPA) in partnership with Community Advisory Committees (CAC) throughout the state of California.

Marc earned his bachelor's degree at Southern Illinois University, majoring in Speech Communication with an emphasis in Interpersonal Communication and Theatre. He then completed the distinctive Master's in Business Administration (MBA) program in Non-Profit Management offered by American Jewish University (formerly University of Judaism.) That program added him to its faculty in 1996 and has taught courses such as "Conflict Resolution and Negotiation" and "Organizational Development and Leadership". Marc has also taught a "Collaboration" course in the School of Education at Cal State Dominguez Hills.



Christi Kasa, Ph.D
Professor, UCCS Department of Teaching and Learning



Christi Kasa, Ph.D., is a Professor for the Department of Teaching and Learning and the Director of the Office of Inclusive Services at the University of Colorado. Her passion guides her teaching, research, and consulting to create successful, inclusive schools. Christi's expertise is in Universal Design for Learning, best practices for inclusive schooling, and inclusive post-secondary education. Christi began her career teaching in the public schools of California as a general and special education teacher. She now spends time in schools all over the country, working to end the segregation of students with disabilities.

Shayna Laing
Community Engagement Manager, IN! Pathways to Inclusive Higher Ed

Shayna Laing, the Community Engagement Manager for IN! Pathways to Inclusive Higher Education, is a dynamic advocate for students with Intellectual Disability within postsecondary settings. With a Master's Degree in Special Education and a Graduate Certificate in Disability Services in Postsecondary Settings from BSU, she is dedicated to increasing access to and preparation for inclusive higher education pathways throughout Colorado.



Debi Grebenik (presenting at UCCS)
Founder and CEO, Trauma Training Institute



Debi Grebenik is known for her expertise in healing child trauma. She provides engaging and enthusiastic presentations on healing for children, families, teams, and systems. Her education includes Masters' Degrees in Social Work and Religious Education; and a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership and Innovation. Debi is the Managing Director of Healing and Belonging for Alia, a nonprofit focused on innovations for people and systems impacted by trauma. Debi's mission is for everyone to experience an "aha" moment about trauma's impact on their lives. She is known for loving her 8 grandchildren, the color pink, and Starbucks plus her nonstop energy.

Jae McQueen, LCSW (presenting at UNC)
Assistant Director for Mental Health, Cherry Creek Schools



Jae has diverse experience focused on meeting social, emotional and behavioral needs of children, youth and families. She is a proud social worker who began her career providing intensive in-home therapy to families involved with the child welfare system. She also directed a child placement agency and residential treatment center. Jae has also worked as a child protection school social worker within a school district, a unique partnership between a school district and a county department of human services. She is a skilled presenter, teaching social work practice at the University of Denver and presenting on various topics at national conferences. Her most recent work includes implementing social emotional learning interventions guided by equity-based, trauma-informed practices.

Emily Harvey
Attorney, Disability Law Colorado

Emily Harvey graduated from George Mason University School of Law in 2013. She joined Disability Law Colorado in March of 2014, and after pursuing an opportunity to work as an attorney at the Office for Civil Rights with the U.S. Department of Education in 2020, Emily returned to DLC as a Team Leader in 2021. Emily is a co-founder and the board president of LIM359, a nonprofit that provides activities-based support for people with limb loss and limb difference in the Denver area. She also serves as LIM359's youth camp director. Emily is the author and illustrator of a children's book series called The Girl with the Robot Leg. In her free time, Emily enjoys walking, reading, jigsaw puzzles, and spending time with her husband, dog, cats, and the horses at Zuma's Rescue Ranch.



Sara Pielsticker
Attorney, Disability Law Colorado

Sara Pielsticker joined Disability Law Colorado as a Staff Attorney in 2021. She graduated from the University of San Diego in 2016 with a degree in Education and Nonprofit Management and from Syracuse University in 2020 with a dual degree. She received her law degree from the Syracuse University College of Law with a curricular focus in Disability Law and Policy and a Master's of Science in the Cultural Foundations of Education with a Certificate of Advanced Study in Disability Studies. Sara is originally from Colorado and has spent most of her life working for nonprofits that promote inclusion for people with disabilities. In her free time, she enjoys photography, jigsaw puzzles, and being outdoors as much as possible.



Presenter TBD
Early Education

Presenter will cover how early intervention through universal pre-k programs promotes inclusion.



Rebecca Pauls
Executive Director, Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN)



Lisa Pagano served as Policy Specialist for the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). She contributed to multiple policy initiatives, including OSEP's 2022 guidance on discipline. Lisa also led OSEP's Customer Service Team in responding to inquiries from parents and others about the IDEA, including parent rights and procedural safeguards. Before joining OSEP, Lisa directed IDEA complaint resolution activities and supported the mediation and due process systems at the Maryland State Department of Education. She received her Master of Social Work degree from the University of Maryland and her law degree from the University of Baltimore.

Tracy Gershwin, Ph.D., BCBA-D
Professor, University of Northern Colorado

Dr. Tracy Gershwin is a Professor at the University of Northern Colorado where she teaches undergraduate, masters, and doctoral level courses in special education. Tracy's specialization and research focuses on building equitable and trusting family-professional partnerships, including conflict prevention and alternative dispute resolution, educator and family well-being, special education law, applied behavior analysis, and interventions for children and youth with challenging behaviors.



Erin Camper, RN, BSN
Parent Advisor, PEAK Parent Center



Erin Camper is a mother to a child with an ultra rare genetic condition who requires significant support related to his multiple diagnoses as well as two teen daughters, one typical and one gifted. Erin has served as a Parent Advisor at Peak Parent center for just over two years. Erin is also a Registered Nurse of nearly 18 years who has worked in a variety of settings that have given her first hand experience with the medical side of disability. She was Pediatric ICU nurse for 12 years and has also worked as a school nurse, a pediatric urgent care nurse, a Neonatal ICU nurse and currently as a private duty nurse for a family with a large number of medically fragile children, as well as providing infusion nursing for patients with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. Erin serves on the Special Education Advisory Committee in her local school district as well as the Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee, which serves the entire state and reports to the Colorado Board of Education. Erin is passionate about inclusion in education and all areas of life and has watched her son thrive both academically and socially by being meaningfully included in his general education classroom since he started school. Erin is eager to share the ways she has partnered with Colton's team to foster friendships in the context of Colton's significant support needs.