1. A brief description of the content that will be presented

**Equity, Inclusion, and Opportunity in Special Education**

- “Our state department of special education has identified my district as one that has disproportionate representation of black students in the ‘emotional disturbance’ category.”

- “The state says we have a significant disproportionality in our suspension rates. Hispanic special education students are being suspended more than students of the other racial/ethnic groups.”

- “Our district needs to implement strategies to improve the 3rd-grade reading proficiency of minority students.”

These examples represent a difference or “success gap” in educational outcomes among particular groups of students. Students who are members of racial, ethnic, or linguistic minority groups often face barriers and challenges in the educational system. When those challenges or barriers are not effectively or efficiently addressed, students may be identified as eligible for special education services when the real problem might be with the educational system rather than the unique learning challenges of an individual student. Racial/ethnic disproportionality in special education has been considered a longstanding problem across the United States, historically affecting minority students with regard to identification, educational environment, and discipline, leading to poorer outcomes for these groups of students.

In this webinar, we first will discuss the requirements in the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) related to disproportionality, describe methods for calculating disproportionality, and present data, both at the national level and for the state of Tennessee. The second part of the webinar will introduce a research-based guidance document and self-assessment rubric designed to help schools and districts identify the root causes of "success gaps" for some groups of students, thereby helping to improve and equalize results for all students.

2. A brief bio sketch on the speaker (it could also be on the IDEA Workgroup)

The IDEA Data Center (IDC) is funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs to provide technical assistance to build capacity within states for collecting, reporting, and analyzing high-quality IDEA data.

The speakers for the webinar are members of IDC's Disproportionality and Equity Workgroup.
Amy Bitterman, Westat, is a state liaison and TA specialist for IDC. She has worked on a number of special education studies, including the Pre-Elementary Education Longitudinal Study (PEELS) and the Design and IDEA-related Analyses for the National Assessment (DIANA). She also worked on the Data Accountability Center, focusing on analysis of disproportionality data.

Cesar D’Agord, WestED, is a TA specialist for IDC. He is a national leader and expert in the areas of education policy, data analysis, equity, race/ethnicity disproportionality, and fiscal issues. His work spans from shoulder-to-shoulder work with Part B data managers on very specific and technical matters related to their IDEA Section 618 data reports to assisting state directors of special education with complex decisions involving their State Systemic Improvement Plans.

Julie Bollmer, Westat, is Deputy Director for IDC. Her research areas and interests primarily focus on children with disabilities, special education policy, and issues related to the mental health of adults and children. She has provided TA to states and others on racial/ethnic disproportionality in the identification, placement, and discipline of students with disabilities through her work on projects such as the Data Accountability Center and the Data Quality Initiative.

3. Learning Objectives.

- Explain success gaps, especially as they relate to special education and students with disabilities.

- Discuss IDEA requirements on disproportionality, methods for calculating disproportionality, and national data trends.

- Discuss the factors in the general education setting that contribute to equitable success for all students.