

Leading the Shift to Accessible Digital Learning under ADA Title II

JENA FAHLBUSH: I do want to welcome you to our session today. As somebody who is very passionate about accessibility for our students with disabilities and those that maybe have yet to be diagnosed, I'm actually really thrilled to be hosting this webinar and conversation with two incredible leaders in accessibility from the great state of Nebraska.

My name is Jena Fahlbush, I'm a Technical Assistant Specialist with NCADEMI. And if you, too, are working to advance digital accessibility in your state or in your school district, you are in the right place, and we're glad that you found us.

I am welcoming you to our session today titled, Leading the Shift to Accessible Digital Learning under the Americans with Disabilities Act, or ADA, Title II.

To support your webinar experience today, we have our fantastic program assistant, Natalie Cardenas, in the room. So please reach out to her if you're having any technical difficulties. You should find captions and a transcript available to turn on in the Zoom toolbar. And we do have interpreters here from 5 Star, so thank you for being here.

Today's slides and resources can be found at a shortened bit.ly, and that's bit.ly/leading-access. And we'll get a link to those slides, put in the chat for you, or you can scan the QR code on the right-hand side of the screen to get to that resources page. And on that resources page, we will get a recording posted within the next 24 or 48 business hours.

If you have any questions today, please use the Zoom chat or by using the React button in the Zoom toolbar to raise your hand, which will let us know that you have a question. For our conversation today, we will take questions that fit naturally into the discussion.

So if you have a quick clarifying question about what's being talked about, we'll take that question as it fits in. Otherwise, we'll return to any remaining questions at the end of today's session, and at that point, we'll have stopped the recording as well to allow for a little more open dialogue.

So before I introduce our two special guests that you'll see on our screen with their cameras on here, I do want to invite you all to use the chat to introduce yourself. Please share your role and the state that you're in today so we can get to know you a little bit more.

And as those start coming in, I'll introduce our two special guests, again, from Nebraska. And they're part of the Nebraska Department of Education, or NDE, that you'll hear used throughout the webinar. With us, we have Dorann Avey and Brian Wojcik.

Dorann is the Digital Learning Director of Teaching, Learning, and Assessment at NDE, and Brian is the Education Program Supervisor and an assistive technology specialist with Nebraska's Assistive Technology Partnership, or the ATP.

So I'm just looking over here at introductions. So we've got some few people from Washington and Ohio. North Dakota. Hey, I'll say hi to somebody new I met, Charles, and in Nebraska as well. And Michigan. New Hampshire. So it's great, we've got lots of states represented today. Thanks for sharing those introductions, and keep those coming.

So in our conversation today, Brian and Dorann will be framing how they have put the digital accessibility requirements into perspective and into play for their schools and districts in the state. They're also going to talk about how they've built momentum through cross-department collaboration. And, really excitingly for NCADEMI, how they've been using some of our resources to shape their tools and their guidance for school districts.

And from today's conversation, we hope that you leave the session with three different takeaways. So firstly, we hope that you leave with an understanding of the impact of the ADA Title II digital accessibility requirements on the educational materials and technology provided by schools.

We also hope that you leave with the ability to describe at least one systems-level change or action that your organization can take to improve digital accessibility.

And third, to be able to identify where to find continued support. And spoiler alert, I bet you'll find that it's within NCADEMI.

OK, so to get us ready for our conversation with Dorann and Brian, we want to review a little bit just to make sure we're all starting with the same foundation today.

So we're talking and starting with the two pathways to provide accessibility. So when a student needs accessible materials, the first pathway is to provide digital materials that are produced to be accessible from the beginning. So we're talking here about digital accessibility that's prioritized agency-wide throughout your professional development, maybe job responsibilities to your budgets, your procurement, and all, really, of your workflows.

The second pathway is to provide accessible materials that are rendered in accessible formats, such as Braille, audio, large print, for our eligible students with disabilities. And to ensure equal access to materials, each pathway is supported by distinct accessibility laws.

So when we create and procure materials to be accessible from the beginning, we're talking about the Americans with Disabilities Act, or ADA Title II. And maybe more familiarly for our special educators in the room, when we're talking about converting given materials into an accessible format or formats for eligible students, we are referring, on the right here, to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA.

Because today's conversation is going to focus on what our guests are doing related to Title II of the ADA, I'm just going to briefly highlight a few key updates. And those updates include-- ooh, somebody's giving me some clicks here, which is great. So those updates include to web content and mobile apps.

And when we think about web content and mobile apps, we're talking about websites, social media posts, your learning management systems, slides, PDFs, videos, the whole gamut. And those updates provide a new technical standard for conformance, which is Level AA of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, or WCAG, WCAG 2.1.

And it also sets deadlines by which that new standard must be met. So these deadlines take effect later this month for districts that serve a community with a census population of 50,000 or more; and in April of next year, 2027, for districts serving communities of less than 50,000, again, based upon that Census data.

So now we want to hear from you, and in a moment, we're going to launch a poll. How are you feeling about the upcoming deadline for your agency, whether that's in just a few weeks or next April? So let us know in this poll if you're feeling confident, optimistic, concerned, uncertain, or maybe overwhelmed, because it can feel a little overwhelming on this journey. Or if you're feeling another way about the deadline, you can put that in the chat, too.

All right, I'm going to end the poll and share those results. So, we have one person in the room who's feeling pretty confident, which is great, but we have the majority feeling optimistic, so that's also very encouraging. There are some other that are feeling concerned, about 24%, 16% feeling uncertain, and 11% feeling overwhelmed.

And we do know that this is, like I mentioned, a journey, and we're going to experience different feelings along the way, but we hope that the conversation today helps shed some light on some new actions that you can take and supports that you can get to improve your actions and the work that's being done so that you can feel more supported.

And just a little bit more before we get into this. I just want to point out, the overall impact on pre-K to 12, it's really important to think about the impact on both state and local education agencies, or SEAs and LEAs, as well as educators and the teams that support them.

So when we're thinking about SEAs and LEAs, it's important to remember that this work requires changes to general education, or GenEd, policies and adoption standards for curricular materials.

It also means embedding accessibility into the training and support resources provided for everyone involved in the process of selecting, creating, and using curricular materials because unfortunately, we know widespread awareness, and for that matter, training hasn't really been in place for very many years in the way that many of us probably wish that it had been.

There's also a clear risk assessment and compliance piece due to the new specifics of conformance. So think about the fact that this involves assessing your risk, engaging legal counsel and your leadership, and sharing that information to plan your next steps.

And because so many of the curricular materials and related resources used throughout an entire system do come from third-party vendors, we have to look into and revise procurement processes to include accessibility very clearly and intentionally from the start, not retroactively after that contract is already in place.

And at the same time, because we know educators, paraprofessionals, and other support staff are creating and selecting additional materials to supplement the curriculum they're using, we must ensure that they're getting the training and support needed to embed accessibility into those materials that they're creating and curating.

And now I will hand it over to NCADEMI Director Cynthia Curry to lead our conversation with Dorann and Brian as they share some really exciting insights from their accessibility work in Nebraska.

CYNTHIA CURRY: I wanted to thank Brian and Dorann for joining us today. As you can imagine, as we've been-- as NCADEMI has been providing targeted and universal technical assistance on the ADA Title II Guidelines, we've been looking for places where there has been early work that we can help others better understand, if this is working in one state, maybe it'll work in another state. Or what can I learn from it? What can we start disseminating about some of the early practices that are coming out of states and districts?

So we want to thank Brian and Dorann for their volunteering to come and share what's happening at the Nebraska Department of Education.

And we wanted to start by asking the two of you, because you're both technology leaders at a state education agency, one working in general education as a digital leader-- that's Dorann, and then Brian as an assistive technology leader under special education, tell us a little bit about your partnership. How do

you partner at NDE, and how does that contribute to the accessibility of technology provided to students across Nebraska?

DORANN AVEY: Yeah, thank you. I was going to say thanks for having us. We're glad to be here and share on our journey. For Brian and I, the journey has actually been a little bit longer than the recent ruling.

So I've been with the NDE since about 2017, and at that time, the NETP, the National Ed Tech Plan, was released, and in it was the words "universal design for learning," and I had never heard of that in my role-- previous role, so that's where I started. And then Brian joined us I think 2019.

BRIAN WOJCIK: And my role is a little bit different. So I work in our Assistive Technology Partnership, which is our state Assistive Technology Act agency, and that is housed within our Vocational Rehabilitation Program, which is housed within the Nebraska Department of Education. However, the particular program that I work with in partnership with NDE is funded through our Office of Special Education and focuses on building capacity around assistive technology, and now it's expanded into the area of accessibility for birth through three, as well as school-age programs throughout the state of Nebraska.

So when I joined in 2019, Dorann and I actually connected over something-- I needed access to Moodle in order to start putting things out there. But that had spawned a whole series of conversations about the role of assistive technology where accessibility fits in, and that was before we even started going down the path of ADA.

So it has been a conversation that has been happening in a variety of different venues for a while, and it was a very natural partnership. We're both technology folks, we both are thinking about how, do we use and leverage technology? And part of leveraging that technology is ensuring that things are accessible from the get-go and making sure that students have access to the types of things that they need to have access in order to engage in learning. So this has been a long-term conversation.

DORANN AVEY: Yeah. And I and I think the diversity of that has been great because our audiences are often different people. And so therefore, we're able to cover more of the state voice and getting things out there because Brian, like you said, works a lot with special education and ATP, and those leaders and voices in our state are not often in the audience I have with school librarians, district technology directors, and school district leaders. And so it was nice because we could capitalize and spread the message a little bit better.

CYNTHIA CURRY: Thank you. That's provides a terrific backdrop that I think a lot of people in our audience can appreciate when you're collaborating and getting to know other people's roles, because we know, in order for accessibility to become more than an initiative, it really needs to be that cross-functional, cross-disciplinary relationships, essentially a team that comes together intentionally to make progress.

And I love that UDL, Universal Design for Learning, was your entryway into this work. I come to this work as a general education teacher-- I was a science teacher in middle school and high school.

And then when I started learning about accessibility, it really became clear to me that you can have universal design for learning without accessibility, and that happens a lot, but you can't have accessibility- - or you can't have-- you can have accessibility without UDL, but you can't have accessibility with UDL. I'm sorry. I should have written that one down before I put it in the chat.

But it's so important to make sure that UDL incorporates accessibility whenever we're practicing. UDL actually is part of the-- it came out in the 2024 NETP very strongly. So even more so than in 2017 where UDL was introduced in the National Education Technology Plan, it's even more prominent in the 2024 National Educational Technology Plan. So accessibility is so important to make sure as part of any UDL work that's happening at the state or the local level.

OK, next question. So there's a lot of fantastic results from the poll saying that there's a lot of optimism, there's a smidgen of confidence about the ADA Title II requirements, and that's great to see. We have an audience that is taking up this work and probably has started this work long before joining us for this webinar.

But people have been approaching the ADA Title II requirements in different ways. Sometimes it's overcompliance, sometimes maybe it's a little bit of undercompliance in terms of helping people really understand what the obligation is. So explain to us how the Nebraska Department of Education is framing those requirements, both internally and when you're communicating with school districts about the final rule.

DORANN AVEY: Yeah. So the way that we started this-- I started really talking about it in 2024. We have an annual conference called the Future Ready Conference, and that was June. So the ruling had come out in that April, and I had known about it-- I had taken it to some leaders at the Department of Education, our technology director and our communications director, and let them know that I had seen and heard about this, and that we probably should start meeting and having conversations about this.

At the same time, at the Future Ready Conference, which is given out to all Nebraska educators, but really focuses on those areas of UDL, accessibility, digital citizenship, those kinds of things, I introduced it to the K-12 school librarians as well because I felt like they were a really natural point of entry into starting to get the information to districts.

So I think early on, the way we started this is Brian and I shouted from the hilltops to anybody who would listen to us or that we had partners with, if I'm honest. That's how it started.

BRIAN WOJCIK: Very much. And even prior to the ADA Title II rule coming out, there were discussions-- so the future-ready work existed before the ADA Title II, so there were some natural conversations with state and district leaders to begin entering into those conversations about accessibility.

I think the ADA Title II really became a catalyst for engaging in those conversations at deeper levels.

There was a little bit more of a timeline associated with it, heightened awareness.

And as Dorann said, I was-- a lot of this came about for me-- I'm a member of something called the State Leaders of Assistive Technology and Education, and there was a presentation by one Cynthia Curry to talk about the proposed rulemaking that was going on.

And a lot of that information was brought back, and one of the first people that I reached out to within NDE was actually Dorann, and so this became a conversation. And then from there, we began expanding out on that. Oops. We're fighting over clicks.

[LAUGHTER]

DORANN AVEY: You can click, Brian. I'll let you.

BRIAN WOJCIK: OK.

DORANN AVEY: Yeah.

BRIAN WOJCIK: And so with that heightened awareness and that heightened focus on ADA-- and Dorann had-- and sat there and said, hey, folks, we really need to get together and start having some discussions. And this was a very organic group of individuals.

And we're breaking up these efforts between what happened at the Nebraska Department of Education internally versus what happened with regard to districts. So talking about what happened at NDE internally first.

It was bringing together folks thinking through NDE leaders. We were able to bring in legal, our procurement team. And then also having some discussions with various staff, but that also got into some discussions with our educational service units.

Educational service units are not part of the Nebraska Department of Education, but they exist as a regional units that support districts and work in partnership with the Nebraska Department of Education. Is that a fair way to describe it, Dorann?

DORANN AVEY: Yeah, absolutely. Many states have them. Mm-hmm.

BRIAN WOJCIK: And above that sits the Educational Service Unit Coordinating Council, which is the master governance structure for all of the ESU. So we had some discussions in partnership with them. And we began starting to bring things out in order to start getting the ball moving.

So back earlier this year, we had had some access to funding where we-- and Dorann brought in WebAIM to do some staff training at NDE to begin raising awareness. We had some funding through our AT Act, and that was able to fund people to go through a CAST accessibility course. And it was that start and that awareness level of some of the requirements that were coming about.

DORANN AVEY: Yeah, absolutely. And when we designed some of this, you'll see, as we go to the next thing, this is when a transition started to occur, is that I brought WebAIM in and planned for two days of training. And it was specifically designed that way for both internal NDE staff, and then a day that was external for any school district and ESU staff that could attend.

And so we started to see that the agency is very much a Microsoft Office. So we use Microsoft products and that's ours. But our districts are very much a Google Suite product. And so what we did is we had a day for anybody who needed the Microsoft lens, and then a day of Google lens. And we had lots of districts who came.

So I recommend thinking about this if you can because I was able to take funds that I had secured and actually share them both internally as a resource and externally as a resource, and that led to that.

At the same time, like Brian mentioned, we had brought a committee together, and it organically grew to include VR staff who worked in this space, it started to include our training and HR staff. And so others started to come together, and we quickly saw that we could start to leverage the expertise of others, Brian and I could, to help start to share out in a way that wasn't so overwhelming for just Brian and I, we could actually start to hand off some of the cognitive work to others.

And so what ended up organically happening is that our communications team and our HR team took over the responsibility of training Nebraska Department of Education staff. So they've taken that off of our shoulders and are leading with Brian and I as advisors to that group.

And then Brian and I have been focusing on our audiences and relationships through digital learning and the ATP Office. And so it's helped us to divide and conquer a little bit, and it's worked out well in that when we can share resources, which we totally can-- and we'll show you some of the resources here in a minute, but when we can, we do.

But human resources are tight in supply, and so we have divided off some of the components to other staff members internally as well.

How did we get there? The SEA Roadmap that NCADEMI shared with us. That was-- we had started to work on that, and that really helped us realize our path. Go ahead, sorry, Brian.

BRIAN WOJCIK: No. And to add on to that-- you were going exactly where I was going. The NCADEMI Roadmap really helped give us a bit of a foothold, figuring out where we needed to be, who needed to be involved. And that really led to some really key activities that are ongoing at the NDE.

One focused on procurement and contract language, understanding that we needed to have some specific language in our contracts that addressed areas of accessibility and conformance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version 2.1, Level AA, and making sure that was incorporated universally in those contracts.

Also, understanding the scope and what digital content needed to be audited to determine the degree to which it was a conformant with those guidelines, and what changes needed to be made.

And thinking through what needed to be archived, what needed to just be taken off because it was no longer usable, different things along those lines, and balancing that with different requirements that we have as a public agency for ensuring that information is archived in a way that is still accessible and so forth.

And then we ended up also working a lot to identify different professional learning for NDE staff. And our HR department and communications team have put together some professional development. We are also providing a list of supplemental professional development and starting like a community of practice around accessibility within the NDE as well.

And then finally, a lot of the job of this leadership team is also just identifying, advocating for those resources to support the infrastructure for accessibility, what needs to happen. As we're looking at internally developed applications, as we're looking at website development, and other content development, do we have the tools that are necessary for assessing and building in the accessibility features that are necessary?

CYNTHIA CURRY: And this is Cynthia. If I could just interject there, Brian. I think what you're really highlighting is the need for the state education agency and school districts to understand that, yes, ADA Title II has obligations on the government entity, but a lot of times people are developing-- or agencies are developing policies that impact, say, the public-facing website for the state or the district. But they're not thinking about all these other components that really are front-facing for students with disabilities and parents with disabilities and community members with disabilities that are very education-specific, so thank you for calling these out.

BRIAN WOJCIK: And some of the things this has impacted is like, for example, NDE has a branding guide, that branding guide has been revised to go ahead and reflect different pieces of accessibility that weren't in there previously, which matriculates through the types of things that are being prepared and shared with our districts and so forth. So it's thinking through those types of things as well.

And then we can look at-- and this is where Dorann and I spend a lot of our time, is working directly with our education partners and districts. And so Dorann, did you want to talk about some of the things that you've done through digital learning?

DORANN AVEY: Yeah. So through digital learning, we did move away from Moodle-- Brian mentioned Moodle. We do actually have a Canvas consortium in our state for both our schools, but also the state has a Canvas instance, and we do have a catalog instance.

So we've really been focusing on the importance of using multiple modalities to share information and communication, and that includes something like this where we're trying to provide training, we're trying to provide resources.

We do in-person-- Brian and I have done probably hundreds of those presentations over the last two years in-person. We have online resources, we have synchronous, we have asynchronous. We really try to reach all educators across the state on our digital learning platforms, including OER, as best we can because that does, again, spread the wealth.

So I've partnered a lot with our ESUs and our ESUCC. We have shared in splitting the cost of some of these. I mentioned, I brought in national speakers and then shared those with districts and ESU staff and NDE staff. ESUs and the ESUCC have done the same. We've had CAST come in and provide additional training opportunities. We've done hybrid. We've done face-to-face.

We continue to make it a focus area of our annual Future Ready Conference, and NCADEMI will be at our conference. And it is a hybrid conference, and it is free. So it's not just for our state. Anyone who wants to come is welcome and encouraged to come to learn about AI, UDL, accessibility, all of those wonderful things.

So we have the conferences that we share, we have online professional learning, and we'll link you to that. That is, again, on our catalog. It is free and open to anybody who wants to take it. It is very much based on in NCADEMI's Essentials that they have, and you'll see some other resources, when we get there, look very much like those.

And so you'll see, we've done lots of that, and then I'll let Brian get into the Targeted Improvement Plan and the work we have there.

BRIAN WOJCIK: And just to reiterate before we go into the Targeted Improvement Plan, some of the activities that have happened, and these have truly been-- when we sit there and say it takes a village, it really does take a village, as it took a village within NDE to start looking internally at our accessibility, but it definitely takes a village as we're thinking about how do these requirements and how does this initiative for accessibility really get implemented throughout the state of Nebraska.

And so partnerships was very important. And some of the activities-- for example, Dorann had mentioned the Canvas Consortium. So that there's been a number of trainings that have incorporated accessibility components with developing courses in Canvas.

And there has also been specific trainings focused on accessibility. And the ESUCC has put together-- and we're going to share this in a bit, resources that can be used in order to help support the development of accessible content. So it's really been a partnership.

Our job in a lot of this has been to share information and be that brainstorming partner, and engage in partner activities where those partner activities made sense.

Within special education, we have a process called our Targeted Improvement Plan, and this is part of our state's Systemic Improvement Plan, or our SSIP. Each district in the state is required to go ahead and develop and submit a Targeted Improvement Plan.

Last year, we did some softball talking about accessibility and assistive technology in accessible formats and accessible digital materials. This year, there were questions that were put into the plan to get districts

to think about in terms of how they were working with students to improve reading outcomes, what was the role of assistive technology, accessible formats, and accessible digital materials? Or accessible educational materials is how we framed it.

But we talk a lot about and we've provided resources to talk about assistive technology, as well as providing accessible formats, and having processes in place in order to provide that, and then thinking about accessibility first through accessible digital educational materials.

And that has led into not only supports for the Targeted Improvement Plan, but also additional supplemental regional and district professional learning that the Assistive Technology Partnership Education Program has really delved into in providing supports for thinking through providing accessible formats, what does that look like when we're thinking about curriculum adoption and procurement? How does accessibility fit into those processes and so forth?

So really taking a multi-tiered look at supporting from very broad to very specific areas like the Targeted Improvement Plan.

CYNTHIA CURRY: OK, so this is Cynthia speaking. That was fantastic. You covered so much ground, Dorann and Brian, with that. I'm going to go back one question here, sorry. There we go.

So if I could just summarize briefly all that encompassed the answer to that question, you really started with looking at-- within your own-- where you sit at NDE, each building your connections to identify who are those people that should be part of the conversation, part of the planning to improve accessibility, build on the work that had already started within NDE.

You related to the priorities that NDE has. You distributed ownership across and delegated some of these responsibilities across departments.

And what I love most is that you were thinking about school districts. You're thinking about, yes, as an agency, we need to conform to these requirements, but we know our school districts need help, we need we know that students need accessible digital materials, and this is an opportunity to help our school districts build their own guidelines. And so you provided some resources.

And you're leveraging those resources that are available. The freely funded technical assistance centers like NCADEMI, as well as additional resources and using some of your-- allocating some resources toward that.

So in the interest of time, because we do have a lot more questions, maybe there's just-- if you could just share one common misconception about the ADA Title II requirements that you have heard over and over again, perhaps, within Nebraska?

DORANN AVEY: Yeah. I'm going to say, too, these are my two biggest-- and they become pet peeves, right? They start as this. But the first one is, at first, the misconception was just about fixing the web page. That the law said web page-- in fact, I even had to have somebody change it and it says, no, it says web content, not web pages, so that's a misconception.

The other one is that an accessibility checker will make everything 100% right. Those are the two that drive me crazy, that I always really stress with folks, like, no, that's not that's not all there is.

BRIAN WOJCIK: Well, and I would sit there and say from my perspective-- and I work a lot more deeply in the special ed circles, is understand the relationship and the differences between accessible digital educational materials and accessible formats.

And this misconception that if we go through the process of ensuring that our materials are accessible from the get-go, that that somehow removes the-- or somehow impacts and the provision of accessible

formats. And understanding that even though when things are accessible, we still may have to go ahead and change that into a format that is needed by an individual student in order to meet the requirements under IDEA.

CYNTHIA CURRY: Thank you both. This is Cynthia speaking. That's a great segue into the next question, because at NCADEMI, we really put a lot of effort into separating those two.

We call them our two pillars for technical assistance accessible, digital educational materials under ADA Title II, while at the same time, ensuring students who require accessible formats under IDEA as part of their IEPs also receive those. These laws are not in competition. They both need to work in parallel to ensure students have access to the general education curriculum.

So would you share a couple of examples of guidelines and resources that you have developed for use by school districts? And some of these, I know, incorporate NCADEMI resources kind of repurposed, as you've already mentioned, as well as some others.

DORANN AVEY: Yeah. So the first one here-- and I'll put the link also because you'll see it on the slide, is our Accessibility Essentials Course. This course is free and open, so anybody can go and take it.

The way that was designed was around the NCADEMI 9 Basics Components, but the way we built this out is we discuss each of the nine pieces, but we also provide hands-on video instruction for how to do and check for these things in Microsoft products-- so PowerPoint and Word, how to do them in Google, and then how to do them in Canvas.

So there's videos. The videos are optional, so you get to pick which ones you want to watch because different people use different tools, but the course goes through all nine of those topics.

And then the second thing there that I shared is our ESUCC friends built this out, again, with the NCADEMI-- in fact, if you opened it, it would look very similar as you go down with the nine cards similar to NCADEMI, which is an open resource-- NCADEMI shared it openly, so you can use it, too.

And we built out-- in addition, you'll see some other additional links and resources that we share out with our districts, and we use this-- both of these things quite regularly when we're out face to face and sharing where they can find resources. We have some others, but those are the ones I'm sharing here.

BRIAN WOJCIK: And then we had gone ahead and put together a resource to help school districts develop AEM and AT-related processes. And so-- and this is a lot of resources that we've put together as an annotated list. But we leveraged a lot of the resources from NCADEMI as part of this. We're going to talk a little bit in a bit about the quality indicators that have come out, but also a lot of the process documents.

So understanding what does it mean to coordinate with the NIMAC? What does it mean to-- what does it mean to have a process for determining eligibility, and what do accessible formats mean, and so forth.

But then also, what does that mean when we are engaged in curriculum adoption processes or acquiring digital educational materials? And how does accessibility fit into that? So we leverage a lot of that, and we've shared this very widely in order to help districts have some areas that they can go ahead and key into and have some footholds. So this has been a really powerful document in the work that we're doing within our Targeted Improvement Plan in particular.

DORANN AVEY: I want to say, as we go to the next question, Cynthia, because I know we're in a hurry, I want you to know that that second site, that ESU, Canva Brisk site, we know it's not accessible. We actually have a contract with a company who's working on that because this was built out, and then we're

building it in an accessible format soon, so that'll come out soon. Don't want you to think we talked about it and then didn't do it.

CYNTHIA CURRY: Thank you for-- thanks for being transparent about that, Dorann, and I think that's really valuable for everyone, that reminder that as we're creating content related to improving accessibility, that needs to model accessibility, and also obviously needs to be conformant under ADA Title II.

And I love how, as you're talking about these resources, you're tying them to the types of initiatives that Nebraska already had going on. So you're tying these resources to whatever the initiatives may be or the priorities of the state and, and what your expectations are and your hopes for school districts. So let's get right into how NCADEMI's resources informed Nebraska's resources.

DORANN AVEY: These were essential for us. So like I said, we knew about this in 2024 before NCADEMI was sharing, but it was really organic, and we were trying to do it between meetings with our attorneys, our procurement-- and it was really hard to get people together to move and be actionable. But once we got the roadmap and we really started to see and organize ourselves, and then when we started to see-- we could break down things into the first step is, let's cover the basics with everybody, because if we can get everybody there, we're more than halfway to what we want to see people creating, and then we could just continue to refine and start to do-- identify roles.

We're not-- everybody's doing the basics, but not everybody needs to know detailed ways to make PowerPoints because not everybody in our agency ever makes a PowerPoint. And so then we could start to define out, everybody should know the basics when you're doing emails, when you're doing social media, when you're doing documents, everybody needs that. But maybe not everybody builds complex tables.

And so to Brian's point earlier, we've pulled out supplemental resources that are job-embedded, specific for certain people. And I would say the roadmap really helped us define that and get there.

CYNTHIA CURRY: Great. And I'm sorry, just to clarify-- this is Cynthia speaking, what's on the screen now is the More to the Myths and Facts document and the NIMAS and NIMAC resource that NCADEMI has put out. I think on the next slide is the roadmap, so just wanted to clarify. And there's a link to the ADA Title II Roadmap in the chat, as well as More to the Myths and Facts, which I assume probably Brian will discuss.

BRIAN WOJCIK: And I'll sit there and say that I routinely refer to a lot of the resources on the NCADEMI website as I'm working with districts, but also within the context of the work that is happening at NDE. And the More Myths and Facts document, as well as the NIMAS and NIMAC, what SEAs and LEAs Need to Know were really two very good documents leading us through understanding what types of things needed to happen, and more importantly, they became good foundational documents for districts to begin thinking about or to continue thinking about refining their processes related to the provision of accessible education materials, and in the case of the NIMAS and NIMAC, the accessible formats.

And so I reference those two, but I also-- sorry, I'm trying to move forward. As Dorann said, the Roadmap, the NCADEMI Roadmap for State and Local Education Agencies for Meeting the ADA Title II Web and Mobility Accessibility Requirements was a foundation for us in our work as we began to think through what needed to happen at NDE.

But this was also a resource that we shared out-- I know Dorann shared it out, I shared it out, other entities within NDE shared it out, and that permeated and trickled across Nebraska to provide some really

good steps for districts to go ahead and take to begin their own process for thinking about how they are meeting the ADA Title II Web and Mobile Accessibility Requirements.

That also led into-- we have a number of districts who are in various processes related to curriculum adoption, adopting different digital educational materials. And that really-- and the Procurement Guide, which is also listed on this slide, for including accessibility in all components of procurement is also a good foundational document.

It has allowed us to put together some ideas and trainings around this, but also is a good foundational document to share directly with districts in this area.

We even have even more NCADEMI resources, and this gets into the quality indicators. So some of the things that we're beginning to ask districts to do-- and I'm going to talk specifically in our Targeted Improvement Plan process, is to begin to gauge, where are as they are on these journeys to provide accessible digital education materials, as well as accessible formats?

And using the indicators as ways to self-evaluate where they're at on their journey, and use that data to then determine what the next steps are has been a really crucial part of this process. And districts-- this is the first year that districts-- they just came out, but-- well, they've been out for a while, but they came out this year. And this has been the first year that districts are diving into this area and really looking at these two areas.

And so I'm excited to see where they are on their journeys, but it has also created a lot of great discussions and opportunities for professional learning to sit there and say, OK, we're identifying our strengths here, we're identifying these as potential areas of need for focus, for improvement, how do we go forward? And that has opened up a lot of doors to conversations to really think through, how do we focus on these accessible aspects?

And then finally-- yes, even more NCADEMI resources. And the NCADEMI Accessibility Fundamentals Course we've recommended very widely as a means of developing accessibility skills in individuals who are creating materials-- the Accessibility Basics for the same reason-- in the area of providing accessible materials, looking at the resources regarding prioritizing accessibility from the beginning, as well as providing accessible formats. Those are also really wonderful resources that we've provided out to districts.

Including Accessibility in EdTech Decisions has been a piece that has opened up some conversations outside curriculum adoption to look at what are the other areas that we are thinking about purchasing. So other digital educational materials such as educational technology, and how does accessibility fit into that?

And then a nice overview in thinking about Voluntary Product Accessibility templates and Accessibility Conformance Reports and how that fits into our procurement processes within our schools. So these are just been a number of different resources that we strategically share out. It's not just a blast, but oftentimes we're picking and choosing these as the conversations come up and as districts are ready to engage in these conversations.

CYNTHIA CURRY: Great. Thank you so much, Brian and Dorann. Again, how you're connecting those resources to meaning and intentional planning and strategy. Out of the interest of time, because if we have a couple of minutes for folks to ask questions, we want to give them that opportunity.

So I'm going to pass it over to Jena who can share with folks some of the-- kind of reiterate the NCADEMI resources, how we can provide technical assistance to guide-- if you don't have a plan, the way Nebraska has thought out the use of these resources.

We're here to provide you with free technical assistance to support you under our US Department of Education funding, so we want to make sure we have time to share that with you, and hopefully a minute or two for questions.

JENA FAHLBUSH: Thanks, Cynthia. So we have a few opportunities for you, and the first one here is Access Point LIVE! This is a brand-new offering that just launched at the end of March for pre-K to grade 12 educators and teams. It occurs on the fourth Wednesday of each month.

And what it is is an hour-long session that starts with a short 10-minute recorded accessibility spotlight that highlights an accessibility skill or a concept that you can use to advance your accessibility work right away.

And one reason to join this is because it gives you an opportunity, then, after that 10-minute recording, to share your successes and challenges and your accessibility work, and to get your accessibility questions answered live during a time that's not recorded, again, where we have that open communication and give you the opportunity to get those questions answered, and to share your successes and challenges along the way.

We also provide some support for implementing the quality indicators that you heard Brian talking about. So on the left here, you'll notice that we have some independent opportunity for you to watch a webinar series called Powering Digital Accessibility Through Systemic Action.

And that series is a six-part series that will just provide the framework and the why behind the importance of digital accessibility, it'll walk you through the quality indicators, and actually set you up with some action steps for using the implementation tools with your team to start the implementation work independently within your own agency, whether that's at the state or district level.

Then secondly, if you maybe even start with that webinar series and then decide you'd like some more targeted support, you can join our Professional Learning Group for states and schools. And this Professional Learning Group includes one year of targeted technical assistance within NCADEMI.

So you'll come on with other states and school districts and work together to solve problems of practice and share those successes and challenges with one another so that you can really learn from those out there doing this work in the field. This group does meet on the second Thursday of each month virtually on Zoom. And you can learn more about these opportunities at the link shared in the chat.

And one last opportunity is coming up at the end of this month, we have another webinar titled Digital Accessibility Starts with the Tools We Use. So that link will be shared, and you can click on that to learn more about that webinar opportunity, which we'll talk about three different ways that EdTech reaches students, and again, give you some practical strategies to improve access for students as soon as the next day.

So, if you have more questions, I know that there's at least one question we haven't gotten to in the chat yet, and it's almost 2 o'clock. Please know that you can email us at ncademi@usu.edu. Follow us on LinkedIn. Give us a call or a text at 435-554-8213. And sign up for our newsletter to get all of our latest offerings sent straight to your inbox.

And with all of that, we will take any questions if we can fit them in.