

# Ensuring Equity

## Unpacking Disproportionality in Speech-Language Services

*If you are able, please join from a computer to save PDF files and links from the presentation.*

*Participants may use the Zoom meeting controls at the bottom of the screen to customize settings*

*Live captioning via automated speech recognition is enabled for this meeting.*

*This event is being recorded and will be available on <https://www.asha.org/events/town-hall/> -*

*A certificate of attendance will be provided in the chat at the end of the meeting.*





# Town Hall Participants are Expected to:

- Be respectful
- Listen actively
- Be collaborative
- Respect diversity, including communication differences
- Handle disagreement constructively
- Act fairly, honestly, and in good faith with other participants

All forms of bullying, discrimination, and harassment are prohibited. Abiding by these guidelines helps ensure that all individuals have a positive experience





# Agenda

- **Define** significant disproportionality and **highlight** ASHA resources that address the topic
- **Share** strategies and ideas to:
  - Address **assessment practices**
  - Examine **cultural considerations**
  - Recognize language **difference** from language **disorder**
- **Answer** questions



# ASHA's School Services Team

Provides professional consultation and information on school speech-language pathology practice issues to school-based members



(Left to Right) Tiffany White MEd, CCC-SLP, Senior Director, Lauren Arner MA, CCC-SLP, Associate Director, Lisa Rai Mabry-Price MS, CCC-SLP Associate Director, Stacey Glasgow MA, CCC-SLP, Associate Director, Aruna Hari Prasad MA, CCC-SLP, Associate Director

**Contact us: [schools@asha.org](mailto:schools@asha.org)**



# Aruna Hari Prasad, MA, CCC-SLP (she, her)

Associate Director, ASHA School Services in Speech-Language Pathology



## Financial Disclosures

- Salary from ASHA

## Non-Financial Disclosures

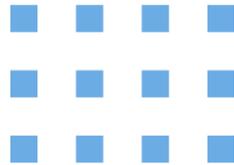
- ASHA member





# Greta C. Robinson (she, they)

PhD, CCC-SLP



## Financial Disclosures

Salary from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

## Non-financial Disclosures

Chair of L'GASP: The LGBTQ+ Caucus of ASHA



# Megan-Brette Hamilton (she, her)

PhD, CCC-SLP



## Financial Disclosures

- ASHA employee
- Receives royalties from recorded Medbridge course

## Non-financial Disclosures

- ASHA member
- Former school-based SLP, researcher, assistant professor
- Presents on culturally responsive practices



# Catherine J. Crowley (she, her)

J.D., Ph.D., CCC-SLP, BCS-CL, ASHA Fellow and Honors



## Financial Disclosures

Professor of Practice at Teachers College Columbia University

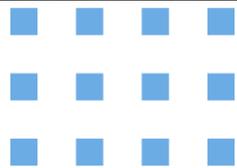
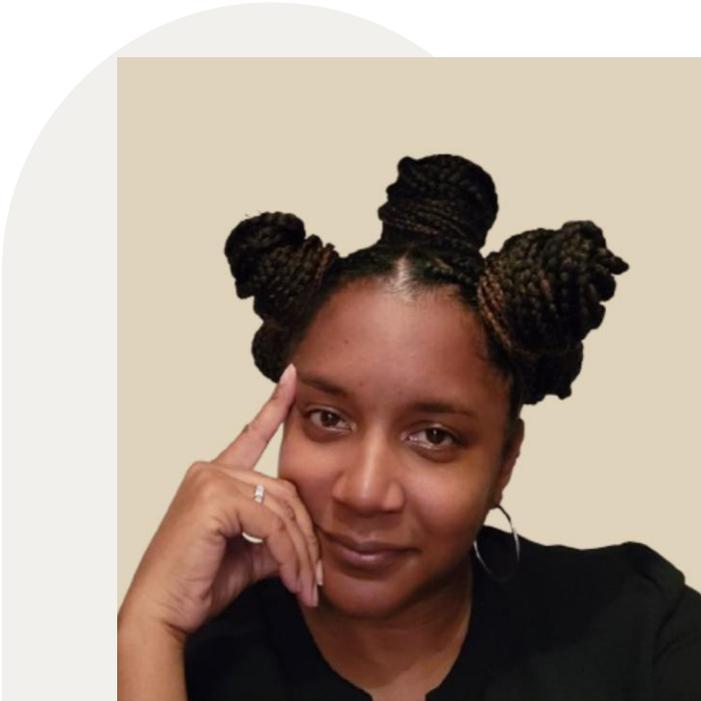
## Non-financial Disclosures

- Director of the [leadersproject.org](https://www.leadersproject.org) website
- Member, Smile Train Global Medical Advisory Board
- Member, BCS-CL



# Dionna Latimer-Hearn (she, her)

PhD, CCC-SLP



## Financial Disclosures

None

## Non-financial Disclosures

Founder and administrator of the following organizations:

- Respect the Dialect: an online community with an associated website promoting awareness of AAE.
- The Culture We Speak: a podcast hosted by Dionna Latimer-Hearn examining the intersection of culture, language, and education
- REACT Initiative, Inc.: a 501(c)3 organization advocating for equity in education and providing continuing education for professionals across settings. *Affinity U*, an affinity group under REACT, provides support and mentorship for Communication Sciences and Disorders students of the global majority.



# Michelle Woodcock (she, her)

M.S.Ed.



## Financial Disclosures

Employed by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction

## Non-financial Disclosures

Board member of the State Education Agencies Communication Disabilities Council (SEACDC)





# Learning Objectives

1

State the **three main factors** that lead to significant disproportionality.

2

Identify **one way to modify assessments** to mitigate significant disproportionality in special education.

3

**Promote equitable service delivery** with interprofessional education and practice.



# Potential Collaborators for Ensuring Equity and Addressing Significant Disproportionality Issues

- ASHA School Services in Speech-Language Pathology Team
- Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA)
- Government and Public Policy (GAPP) Federal and State Teams
- State Education Agencies Communication Disabilities Council (SEACDC)
- State Departments of Education
- State Educational Advocacy Leader (SEAL)



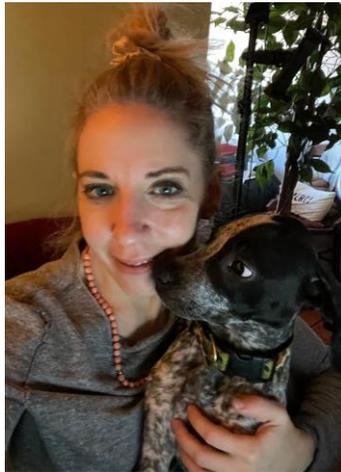
# Office of Multicultural Affairs



**Megan-Brette Hamilton**  
Chief Staff Officer for  
Multicultural Affairs



**Karen Beverly-Ducker**  
Senior Director



**Andrea "Deedee"  
Moxley**  
Associate Director  
(she/her/hers)



**Samantha Moore**  
Associate Director



**Andrea Pluskota**  
Associate Director

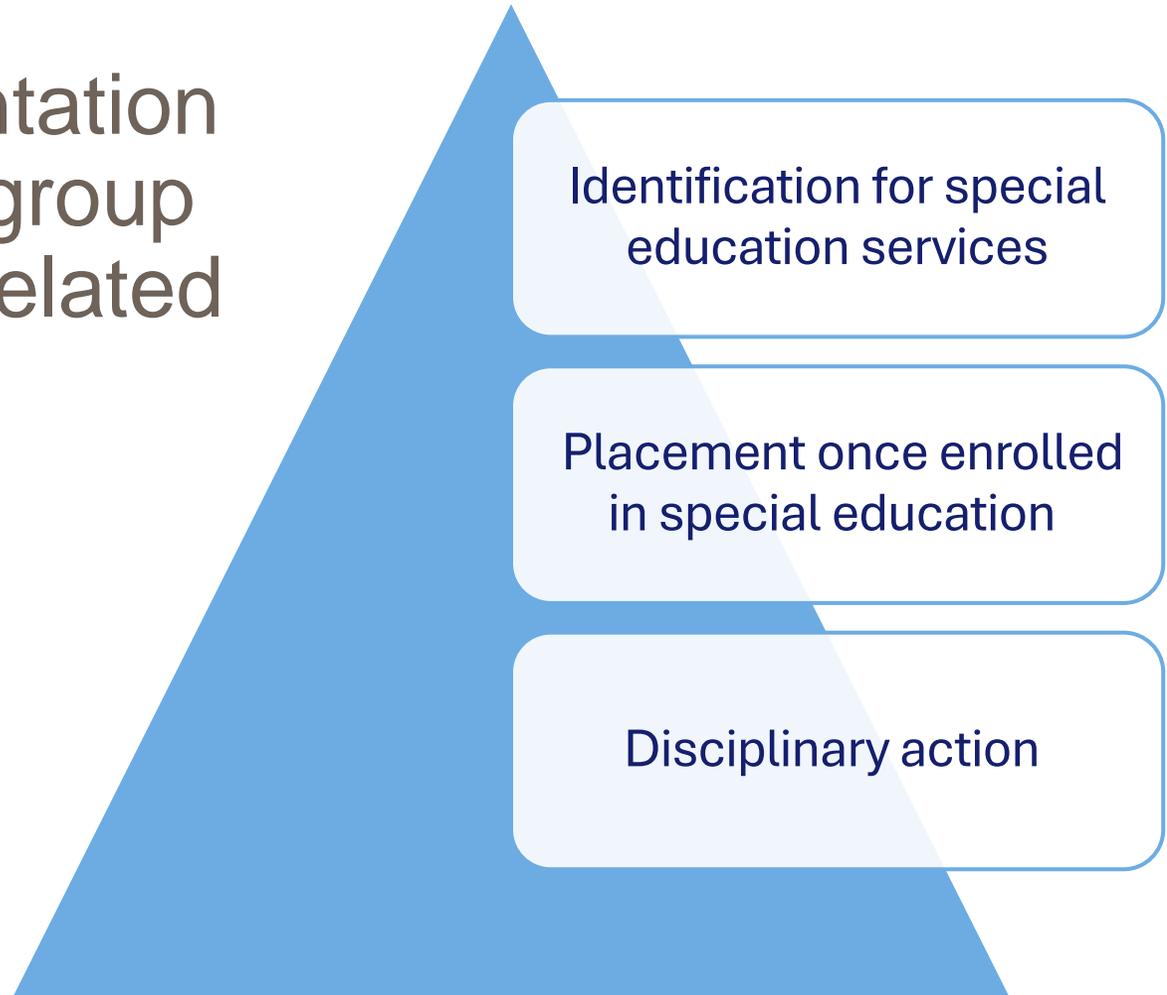
**Contact :**

**[multicultural@asha.org](mailto:multicultural@asha.org)**



# Let's Define Significant Disproportionality

The trend of overrepresentation of a specific racial/ethnic group in special education and related services





# 1st Factor

- 13 disability categories under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- Over or under-identification can occur in any of these
- Significant disproportionality data gathered on seven of these
- Speech or language impairment is one of these
- SLPs play a critical role in evaluation and identification of primary or secondary diagnosis

## Identification for Special Education



# 2nd Factor

- Free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE)
- LRE = being educated with children who do not have disabilities “to the maximum extent appropriate”
- Significant disproportionality data gathered on two criteria
- Evaluations should consider academic abilities across tasks and settings

**Placement**  
Once Enrolled in  
Special  
Education



## 3rd Factor

- Significant disproportionality data is gathered on five criteria
- Consider gender, race, ethnicity and student's academic needs
- Find out rationale, nature, and severity of disciplinary action
- Need to advocate for vulnerable youth

## Disciplinary Action



# What might look different in every state regarding significant disproportionality?

- Definition
  - Risk ratio thresholds
- Calculation
  - Years of data
  - Reasonable progress
  - Reasonable minimum cell size
  - Reasonable minimum n-size





# What is the same for significant disproportionality in every state?

- Annual determination
- If significant disproportionality is identified the district:
  - conducts a root cause analysis;
  - identifies action steps; and
  - uses 15 percent of their federal special education funds



# Why does significant disproportionality matter?

- **Stigmatization and perpetuation of harmful stereotypes** for entire groups of students
- **Reduced self-esteem, self-confidence, and motivation** (Hale, 2015; Mueller, 2019; Salinger, 2020)
- **Higher dropout rates** (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023)
- **Isolation from peers** and a reduction in opportunities to develop friendships and social skills
- **Limited access to standard curriculum**

(Bitterman & Bivens, 2024)



# What SLPs Can Do

## Examine Current Assessment Practices

Review standardized test normative data

Use a variety of measures

## Gather Information from the Classroom

Conduct observations

Analyze work samples, report cards

## Use informal Assessments

Dynamic assessment

Caregiver/teacher interview

Language samples



# Examine Current Assessment Practices

- Review populations used to establish norms in norm-referenced tests
- This data supports the reliability and validity of a measure
  - Reliability = if the test consistently measures what it is intended to measure
  - Validity = if the test measures what it claims to measure
- Consider multiple measures to assess



# Use Informal Assessments



## Dynamic Assessment

Alternative assessment approach  
"test-intervene-retest" format  
Emphasizes learning process



## Caregiver and Teacher Interview

Highlight relative successes and difficulties  
in educational, social, and vocational  
activities



## Language Sampling

Provides information across language  
domains including articulation, utterance  
length and complexity and comprehension



# Gather Information from the Classroom



Classroom observation



Review of work samples and report cards



Review of performance on state and district standardized assessments



# Examine Cultural Considerations

SLPs should consider their own:

- cultural competence
- cultural responsiveness, and
- cultural humility





# In Assessment This Means

Weigh cultural sensitivity of assessments

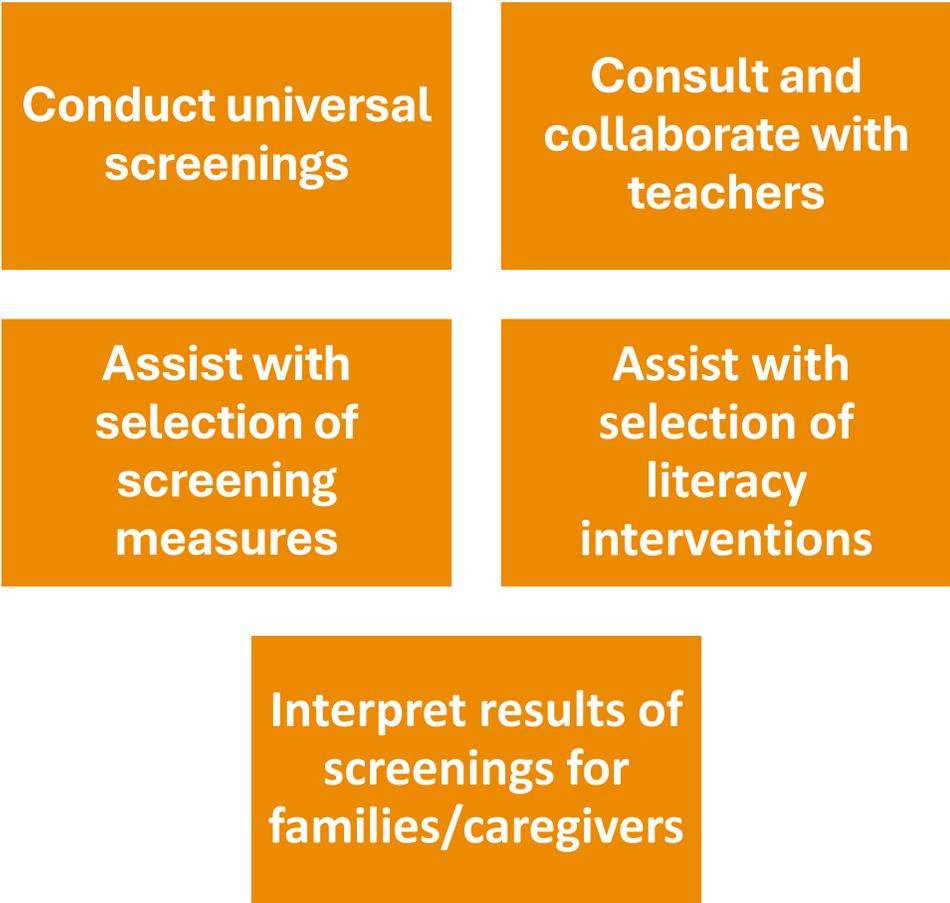
Identify/eliminate components that may lead to bias

Consider communication profile, including language(s) and dialect(s)



# Implement Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

- Response to Intervention (RTI) is one example
- Can provide services and interventions to struggling learners at increasing levels of intensity





# Consider Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

## Five Categories of SDOH

1. Social and community context
2. Neighborhood and built environment
3. Health care access and quality
4. Economic stability
5. Education access and quality

## Examples of ACEs

- Experiencing economic hardship
- Navigating a divorce of, separation of parents
- Having a parent who served time in prison
- Witnessing adult domestic violence



# KEY TAKE-AWAYS

---

Examine current assessment practices

---

Gather information from classroom

---

Use informal assessments

---

Examine cultural considerations

---

Implement MTSS

---

Weigh impact of SDOH and ACEs

---

# Let's hear from our panelists.

**Our panelists have volunteered their time to share their experiences and lessons learned with you.**

**Your registration questions have been used to inform their responses.**

**Enter your questions in the Q/A tab at the bottom of your screen. We will get through as many as time allows.**





# Your Personal Action Plan to Ensure Equity in Speech-Language Services

**What is one resource on significant disproportionality you want to explore?**

**Are you familiar with your state's data on significant disproportionality?**

**What is one action step you can take to ensure equity in your practice?**

**Who could you collaborate with (School Services, OMA, Dept. of Ed.)?**

**What are your next steps?**

# 2024 Virtual Town Hall Series: Topics in School Based Practice

[www.asha.org/events/town-hall/](http://www.asha.org/events/town-hall/)

**March 6:** Compensation Conversation-What SLPs in Schools Need to Know About Negotiating Salaries

**May 15:** The Road Ahead-Postsecondary Transition Planning for Adolescents

**August 28:** Workload Management Strategies-Implementing Service Delivery Models in Schools

**October 16:** School Safety-A Town Hall for Educational Audiologists and SLPs



# Thank you for joining us!

## Questions?

Email us at [schools@asha.org](mailto:schools@asha.org)

Recording and resources  
[www.asha.org/events/town-hall](http://www.asha.org/events/town-hall)

