

January 21-24 2025
DADD Convention
Clearwater Beach, Florida

Dear Dr. Frahm, Dr. Overholt, The TEPS Committee, CTA Website (Mike Thomas):

First, I'd like to thank Dr. Frahm and the TEPS committee for allowing me to attend this extremely valuable conference. These days were filled with an abundance of valuable information that I can implement immediately into my teaching, curriculum planning, and IEP writing. The sessions I attended included information on executive function coaching, Transition Supports Across the Lifespan, a transition program called Be Ready Be Well that focuses on the mental health of young adults with disabilities and their families, a panel of adults with Autism focused on independent living, and many others.

Although all the sessions were informative, the two of my favorites that will impact my instruction immediately are as follows:

Opening General Session: Kareem Thompson

Dr. Thompson is the past President of the CEC and his focus was on Compassion, Collaboration, and Commitment- Pillars that Strengthen Inclusion.

- Compassion moves beyond sympathy to action
- Compassion teaching improves engagement by 32%
- Shared goals among educators, specialists, and families lead to success
- Schools with strong collaboration see a 45% improvement in IEP goal achievement
- Reflect on what you will commit to today to strengthen inclusivity

Dr. Thompson was inspiring and helped me to remember why I began teaching special education.

He ended with a quote from Maya Angelou, "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better"

I vow to do better!

Bridging Gaps: Transition Supports Across the Lifespan for Autism and Developmental Disabilities.

This session explored aspects of transition across the crucial life stages from birth to adulthood. It emphasized early partnership with local agencies, fostering inclusion in our schools and equitable opportunities for all. The discussion revolved around the idea that for successful transitions educators must understand law, policies, procedures, and practices, respect all cultures, use teaming and collaboration, prepare students early and ongoing, and partner with families and community agencies.

Again, Thank you for this opportunity.

Dayna Taylor/Special Education Teacher CHS