

SAC Shining Lights Podcast: Episode 2 Transcript

Intro: Welcome to the SAC Shining Lights S-LP Schools podcast. I'm your host, Dr. Lisa Archibald from Western University. As you know, many speech-language pathologists in Canada are employed in schools. Their job is to support children with communication disabilities in accessing the curriculum and achieving their academic and personal potential. It's a challenging job. So many schools, so many students and not many SLPs. Across the country, S-LPs are finding unique solutions to providing the best possible services to the students and school teams with whom they work. In this podcast, our guests describe their innovations in school-based speech language pathology. Thanks for listening, as we shine a light on some brilliant projects.

Lisa Archibald:

So here we are today, welcome to our podcast. And Melinda, I'm going to ask you to introduce yourself please.

Melinda Hinch:

Sure. My name's Melinda Hinch. I'm a speech-language pathologist with the Greater Essex County District School Board, and that school board consists of the city of Windsor, Ontario and within Essex county.

Lisa Archibald:

Nice. Very good. How long have you been with that board Melinda?

Melinda Hinch:

Oh, I've been with this board for 27 years. And prior to that, I was a couple years in the Halton school board and in between I did some little stints in some community agencies, preschool agencies.

Lisa Archibald:

Great. Oh, great. So can you tell us about what the sort of compliment of your speech and language services, folks in your department, generally your service model there?

Melinda Hinch:

Sure. We're considered like a middle size board, we're a very diverse board. We have many different languages many different socioeconomic areas as well. So we have nine full-time speech-language pathologists, and we have one and a half communicative disorder assistance. We did lose two positions prior to the pandemic and we feel that we're trying to, to get those positions back, rally them back. And that's just the nature of working in a school board system.

Lisa Archibald:

Yes. Two speech-language pathologists, that was?

Melinda Hinch:

That's two complete positions, right.

Lisa Archibald:

Right. Yes. And then, and what, who, what's your avenue for rallying there? Who, what where do you guys have to go?

Melinda Hinch:

Well we talk to our, at our trustee meetings, we light fires under parents that will go forth and they do go forth. We speak at the special ed CAC meetings as well that have some trustees as well as agency representatives and that that's how we're going forth.

Lisa Archibald:

Right, right. Very good. Thanks Melinda. So you know, I know this might be looking backwards now, but thinking about what were some of the major challenges that you guys have noticed that might have sparked a change in what you're doing? So what was happening in your service delivery?

Melinda Hinch:

Sure. Well prior, you know, before, I guess before 10 years ago and I guess it would be like other school boards as well. We were working within a medical model within a clinical model in schools and the referrals would come to us from teachers or through parents. And there might not have, it might not have been necessarily an appropriate referral. It might have been a referral that should have been done earlier. We were working in isolation and we noticed that the generalization of language goals wasn't happening. And we also noticed that with vocabulary and language that we needed to be having more contact with the educators in our schools and connecting more with what they were teaching so that we could help our students progress.

Lisa Archibald:

So at that time was that then like fully consultative where you were doing like, sort of full assessments on the next person on the referral list?

Melinda Hinch:

We would, we would do an assessment on speech and, and there was probably more articulation back then that we did as well. We did full assessments on speech and language, and then we also did therapy as well.

Lisa Archibald:

Oh, I see. Right.

Melinda Hinch:

And we did it all the way through, like, from it, there was no grade limit at that point.

Lisa Archibald:

Ah, right. How many, so how many schools would you have been working in at that time?

Melinda Hinch:

At that time maybe about... I started before our school board's amalgamated. So our, our Windsor and Essex did come together. So that's a hard measure, but you might have six or seven schools.

Lisa Archibald:

And I, I didn't ask you this earlier, but, at that time, when you were doing the intervention, you would've been doing it yourself, would you have had CDAs at that time?

Melinda Hinch:

We did have some more CDAs...

Lisa Archibald:

Oh, you'd had some more and they might have been supporting that intervention piece. I see. Okay. And then you were noticing when that you would turn out probably your assessment reports and that, that was a disconnect, I think, is that what you, there were...

Melinda Hinch:

They were beautiful reports that we wrote, they were lovely and full of a great deal of data and full of lists and lists of recommendations that again, wasn't an alignment with what we're doing now and seeing the improvement, what we're getting.

Lisa Archibald:

So you saw that wasn't really impacting the classroom though, that approach.

Melinda Hinch:

Now it does, it did work for articulation and it did work for some very early syntactic morphological types of interventions. Absolutely, but it didn't work on that classroom based vocabulary and language development.

Lisa Archibald:

Mm-Hmm <affirmative> yeah. I see what you mean. So that, again, those sort of individualized targets and that's always this big sort of tug of war, isn't it? Because as we can increase our classroom impact, we can impact more kids, but then it's harder to get at those individualized goals.

Melinda Hinch:

Right, right. And we also like I would say over 10 years ago, we didn't see as many of the multi complex students that we're seeing now. The students that, we do transition students in, from agencies into kindergarten and we go into their, we go into their preschools and we observe them to support the transition in September. It's most notably that these children are coming in with far more complex needs than what we've seen in the past.

Lisa Archibald:

So around that time Melinda, you, you decided to take another look, you were looking for something that would help you get that classroom impact. Is that right?

Melinda Hinch:

Exactly. And it started off reading some literature coming out of Michigan being in Windsor were a border city and going to some workshops over there and reading about the, this would've been about 13, 14, 15 years ago, reading the research, coming out about the RTI models for literacy.

Lisa Archibald:

Right. And so that's the response to intervention.

Melinda Hinch:

Exactly.

Lisa Archibald:

Yeah. So Melinda, can you talk, talk about that, what you learned about that and what really hit home for you...

Melinda Hinch:

Right. RTI it's, it's a theoretical model that basically states that if educators are doing are using research based interventions and doing them with fidelity that approximately 85% of the students in that, in their class and their program will succeed the benchmarks for whatever they're teaching. So whether it's literacy, whether it's we talk about math, whether it's behavioral. And most recently, I mean, we looked at some vocabulary and language as well. So if the educators are doing that, then that means 15 to 20% of the students will need some extra support. So then we look at okay, 15% of those students, in addition to that great teaching that those educators are doing are going to need to have some more individualized program. In addition to the tier one that is more precise, more intentional it could be individual, could be small groups, but you're looking, then you're gonna look at the frequency, the length, and the number of students in those groups.

Melinda Hinch:

And then we have 5% of those students that are gonna need even more support. They're not going to get enough to reach those benchmarks. And theirs becomes quite

intensive and quite precise. And then we have probably just less than 1% of those students that are like the multi complex students that we've talked about previously, that we know right away, we're not gonna tier those students. We're going to fill out the consent process. And typically in September, those are the first kids that we, we dive into because they need support right away.

Lisa Archibald:

Yeah. Nice. So we had that, like you said, that strong base educational approach, right. That tier one, right. That strong program in the classroom. And then that tier two, being those extra supports, more frequent of what's going on in the classroom and perhaps some individualization, correct?

Melinda Hinch:

And then, and it's all that is within the classroom. The tier two is within that classroom environment. Okay.

Lisa Archibald:

And then the tier three may be kids who need something even different as well, as more as well. And some of those kids might go straight to tier three, which is, you know, which is an interesting piece. Right. We often get this worry that RTAs just wait to fail in a different way, that you have to go through tier one and tier three, but you've got some mechanisms for kids to move right to tier three.

Melinda Hinch:

Checks and balances. Exactly.

Lisa Archibald:

Yeah. Mm-Hmm, <affirmative>, mm-hmm

Melinda Hinch:

For sure.

Lisa Archibald:

Yeah. And so was that something that you were looking at within the speech and language services or as a whole board?

Melinda Hinch:

Well, it started off as a whole board because there were some ministry, money bombs back then and one was called, one was called the code project, and one was called OPA through Ontario Psychological Association. So our chief psychologist, back, when he wasn't chief, he was my peer. He's still my peer. He and I were selected to to lead that team with a special education coordinator. And we provided PD in some pilot schools. And at that time we used DIBELS as the universal screener for literacy, and we

got trained as DIBEL mentors. And we, I think we piloted about four schools with OPA and some other schools with the code project. So that's where it, all that language started coming into it. And it was at a very grassroots level back then.

Lisa Archibald:

Right. The language of response to intervention you mean?

Melinda Hinch:

Correct.

Lisa Archibald:

Yeah, so that, so you found out about response to intervention and then you did this initial project. Correct? I got that, right? And the course, the key in response to intervention is, is the progress monitoring piece right? It's absolutely crucial, right?

Melinda Hinch:

Mm-Hmm <affirmative> right.

Lisa Archibald:

And that's what you're describing as the DIBELS piece, right.

Melinda Hinch:

DIBELS has the universal screeners and it also had the progress monitoring booked in. So we were teaching teachers and, we did, we went and modeled it as well. We were teaching them how to do those screeners and how to intervene and which kids needed to have progress monitoring. The ones that, you know, were in the tier two and then tier three groups. And we also worked with schools on how to develop a protocol for those assessments. Sometimes the classroom teacher did it all. Sometimes the school would use all their extra staff and come in and do it. So it was up to the size of the schools and what the principal wanted, how the principal wanted to deliver the the assessments.

Lisa Archibald:

I see. Right. And then you were wrapping these interventions around them. Were they coming from the speech and language services? Were they at the educational level?

Melinda Hinch:

It wasn't as much back then. I'm very lucky because I had my background at the University of Western with Dr., So I had all that language, school, age, language, information behind me, but I did my practicums in the Hamilton Burlington area. So I got the influence of Dr. , Who at that time was an Orton Gillingham queen. And so I went and I trained as an Orton Gillingham specialist. So I, I think I was unique in that department, but then I found the ways like in the area of phonemic awareness that has

speech and language written all over it. So we were able to have the speech language pathologists and all the schools give PD on phonological awareness.

Lisa Archibald:

<Affirmative> right.

Melinda Hinch:

So that was the first introduction to the department on taking that PD kind of role in all the schools at a tier one level.

Lisa Archibald:

Right. So the one of those targets was that phonemic awareness, which makes that bridge between language and literacy. So well, being a good predictor then to try to get that as, as part of your tier one program.

Melinda Hinch:

Correct. So, up to that point, we were only seen as tier, we had under the special education silo. So we weren't seen as program curriculum people at that point in time. So this was your, you know, and then there was some difficult conversations that occurred as well, because in any type of government institution, there are silos that go on. So it was trying to build bridges between the program and curriculum people

Lisa Archibald:

. And were they you know, were, were they seeking that information at that time
Melinda?

Melinda Hinch:

No, not at that time. It was a very different time. They loved the stuff on anything on vocabulary and language and Vigotsky and anything Hanen based, but other structured literacy approaches. It was not in their educational pedagogy . And so you're, you're having big theoretical issues. And so you, you did have some big differences between special education and program at that point in time. Which isn't the case anymore. Like we watched, we watched those bridges connect beautifully in the past two years.

Lisa Archibald:

Yes. Really nice. So you moved on from that project and your whole department then moved towards an RTI kind of approach. Can you describe what that looks like? Just in a sort of a general way?

Melinda Hinch:

Sure. So, I mean, we've, we've seen some, and, and we're all at our various stages in this that's like, we're not all there and that's okay. But we all are on that journey. And I guess it started, I was selected, we don't have a supervisor. Our school board is too

small to have a supervisor, but I was invited to go to the the chief supervisors of speech-language, pathology, groups, and education, typically I got to meet in Toronto area with them. And that was an aha moment because you really get to connect with other people, having the exact same curriculum that you have exact same difficulties that you have, and they have time, the supervisors have more time in their day to lead projects like this. So at that time they were, we were talking about the RTI model and I was able to sit and help with I think Christian Kite was the lead at that time.

Melinda Hinch:

And they penned up at draft of what it, what does it look like for speech-language pathologists? And I was able to bring that back to my department. And we talked about, we really had to sit down and talk about what can we do in each tier, and then really define that. So we're all looking at making it as consistent as possible. So when we talk about math vocabulary, what does that mean? And what can we do with math vocabulary to help the whole classroom? And so we really went through and itemized everything. We do, every committee, we can sit on every lunch and learn we can give anything. And then we itemize versus tier one, tier two and tier three. And it's not always so well divided. Some things go in between and, and that's where we talk about what's good for all. So s what we think about as tier. This is one of the biggest aha things is what we think about as tier three for our, our complex students can really benefit the entire classroom.

Lisa Archibald:

Yes. Interesting. I wanna come back to that statement just a second. But let's think if we can just give a few more examples. So if we, if we zero in, on, on tier one, then what are the kinds of services that your speech-language pathologist would be doing and being considered tier one service?

Melinda Hinch:

Well, one of the big things was the emotional vocabulary and literacy program that we did. We were able to work with the superintendent of mental health and wellbeing, which was crossing a silo as well, which is wonderful. And there was some work done at, in Thames valley in your neck of the woods on emotional vocabulary. And we kind of looked at the research behind repeated readings and we selected, we got a group together and we included some psychologists and speech-language pathologists. And we did a six week program using repeated readings and highlighting emotional, like the feeling words and having four targets. Basically, you gotta name it to tame it. What is it, what does it look like in a mirror? Do a narrative for it. When I am sad, I can, and that, and then look at the synonyms behind those words, because we know that mad and enraged, there's a large scale between mad and enraged. And we collected data on that in multiple schools. And we saw some, we had some fascinating improvements. We did delayed controls in many of our schools. And so it was highly, highly effective program that all schools have access to. Now, they have all the books and now all the books are on YouTube, which make, which made it easy, easier during the pandemic. But we have lesson plans for those

Lisa Archibald:

Neat. And so when you said those are six weeks, that was you going into the classroom and delivering it in the classroom?

Melinda Hinch:

Well, we didn't, yeah, we didn't deliver it. We gave the PD to the teachers and it was kindergarten. So as teachers and ECE's on how to deliver it, we did all the pre and post assessments for the data collection, but we gave PD to all the schools.

Lisa Archibald:

Mm-Hmm, interesting. Great. So that's really increasing the capacity of your tier one program, right. With things like that. Nice. All right. Let's think about, and, and was that done jointly with psychology, that emotional vocabulary and learning? Yes. Yes. Mm-hmm, neat. Neat. Okay.

Melinda Hinch:

We, we also did math vocabulary that, well, when the, when math became emphasized as, as a huge crisis in education, right. What comes back to is that what we do and vocabulary and language and umbrellas, everything curricular from the moment that child walks into the school, they have to have, they have to have great vocabulary language to access any part of the curriculum. So we dove into so a special education coordinator and myself went into and looked at the work by Marzano and we developed, it's called growing vocabulary in math. And we made a document for kindergarten and for grade ones to three. And we identified all the vocabulary that students have to be, to be to have success in math. And that was lofty, but it was amazing because we found that at that at the kindergarten level, the vocabulary was more of the wow vocabulary, I guess it was more hands on it, wasn't tangible vocabulary. So you're looking at your prepositions, your concepts, that kind of thing. And then you saw that shifting as you got it up through grade three, where it was more of those, those meaty math words by the time you're in grade three, but we did it for each math strand. So that was that. And we still use that. We just have to add to it with the new math strands that have popped up in the curriculum.

Lisa Archibald:

Yes. And so that was a broken down by those those grades. And then there was a sort of teaching lesson plan with it, or?

Melinda Hinch:

We gave PD to everybody and we all, I mean, it all starts in the school. You have to have buy-in from the principals in the school. So our superintendents would first put us on principals meetings and we would go and give like a 20 minute overview to them. And then the principals would figure out how it would work in their school. Some of them had PLC time available, some would offer their staff pizza, come in for a lunch and learn

some would be during a staff meeting. So it depends on that school, but it all has to be that top down in order for it to be successful in a school.

Lisa Archibald:

Yes. The PLC- if a school had their primary learning groups, right. Then you might be able to become a part of them.

Melinda Hinch:

We did. And that's exactly. We became a part of them. They've kind of gone by the wayside in the past few years, but we're hoping that they're gonna come back soon, because that is where you see, when you talk about your students in need, that aren't, that aren't responding to intervention. That's the time that you can problem solve for those students in any area.

Melinda Hinch:

Yes. Interesting. All right. Can we think about the tier two, then what did you put in place for your tier two services?

Melinda Hinch:

Sure. So that's based on your data, right? You determine who your students are for tier two. And so for example, right now, we're involved in the science of reading and we have purchased literacy kits for all of our K to three. And in those literacy kits for tier two, we would have the Elkonin boxes for phonemic awareness. You have the manipulables, the tokens, the magnetic wands, whiteboards, cookie sheets for magnets. So, it's more multisensory than tier one is, and there's enough for five to six students that you can have at a small group.

Lisa Archibald:

Mm. And so that would be the teacher in the classroom doing some more intensive work with some students?

Melinda Hinch:

Right. And with the shift now that in our school board, and I think across Ontario, it's not gonna be called balance literacy anymore. It's gonna be called structured literacy. That would be done at what used to be called the guided reading table. So you're doing structured literacy at that round table now, which is your, which we are, were suggesting to teachers, your kids that already have the vocabulary and the language and the phonemic awareness and the phonic skills, they don't need as many of those small groupings. It's the students that their data shows that they're struggling. They need more of those small groups. So they're the ones that will be at the, at that table, working with the teacher.

Lisa Archibald:

And so you are setting up those materials and providing training, I guess. As you introduce those materials so that folks can easily pull those groups together in that classroom.

Melinda Hinch:

Yes. And we provide, we've made videos that we've shared. We have PowerPoint slides that we share. We are learning support, Teachers are the main, sped person in the school. They're our go to, so they're very well trained. They're the middle person that can handle the day to day questions since we're only at the school once a week.

Lisa Archibald:

I see. Yeah. Nice. And what about tier three then Melinda?

Melinda Hinch:

Tier three again, those are the, those are the students that we work with and we try to do our best, like work with directly within that classroom environment. So the reason, and sometimes it's difficult, sometimes it's crazy and chaotic, but that's where we see those skills generalized. So we might bring if we know there's a certain something going on, we might bring in a, share a book and do a shared reading with some students and work, focus on something that that student needs, whether it's WH questions for comprehension, or if it, some linear sequencing or whatever it might be. And then the great thing about that is there's always somebody around peeking at what you're doing. So they'll be able to carry it through when you're not there doing it and with our multi complex students they might typically, we don't have one to one sharing it's usually shared support, but it's the same kind of thing we might bring in our if the student's using a core board for conversation, we might bring in some types of activities to focus on some vocabulary on that core board and leave it there with, with the educators until we come back next week and demonstrate how we can work on functional communication in the class.

Lisa Archibald:

Interesting. Yeah. I think those are some good strategies because going back to those lists of recommendations that you talked about at the beginning, right. They seem overwhelming for teachers, I think. And so some of these strategies might help to make that more manageable.

Melinda Hinch:

Right. So, I mean, you've talked a lot about dynamic assessment in the past. That's become more and more important to us that we look, you have an asset based lens, which means you see exactly where that student is and you know, your scopes and sequences, you know, your developmental continuum. So you know exactly what that next step has to be. And then you're gonna wait a few weeks and go back and tap in to see with intervention. Has the student made progress in that area? And if not, why not?

We gotta go back and hone in on something different. And if so, well, let's go onto the next step.

Lisa Archibald:

Is that what's happening, Melinda, you are seeing a, a child with a, in a sort of a dynamic assessment approach repeatedly. Like how often would that be?

Melinda Hinch:

Well, if I'm in there, like, I mean it's easier with the kids. It's, I mean, you don't see the growth isn't as quick with the multi complex students. But with other students. Sure. So we've taken my favorite resource and anyone, my favorite, my favorite resource is oral language at your fingertips. I have my English copy and my French copy right here, so they have really nice scopes and sequences in there. So I just, I just rewrote it. And I put because and I said, what does, what did those skills look like for the JK student? What do those skills look like for the SK student? Then I looked at kind of how they do, they have the five fingers. So you have phonological awareness vocabulary. So what does vocabulary look like for JK SK so that they can see how those skills grow and that you know, what you have to work on. And then if students do have multi, if they're gonna go for an IEP, then you see the next goal right there, it makes that IEP goal very easy to write out.

Lisa Archibald:

Mm-Hmm <affirmative> and that's the OSLA resource, The Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists & Audiologists. And it's still available through OSLA..(SAC)

Melinda Hinch:

I just did a book talk on it with 40 people this morning.

Lisa Archibald:

<Laugh> nice. Well, that sounds like a great resource , that sort of developmental sequence or the scope and sequence as you're calling it for those different areas. Yeah, for sure. Interesting. And you talked about an asset based lens. You know, I really like that phrase. Can you talk a little bit about, more about that?

Melinda Hinch:

Right. Well, you know, that the, the kindergarten program is, is written from an asset lens, right? So you see the reporting , when educators do the report it's what can the student do? Not what can't they do? It's what can they do? So that's, we're going more in a dynamic assessment allows for that. What, where are they? What exactly. You're not, you're not worried about the next steps that they can't do. We're just like, where are they now? And what's the next step that we need to work on.

Lisa Archibald:

Interesting. Okay. So now you know, come up to present day now, Melinda, where we've got Ontario, you know, really sort of thinking hard about the science of reading, how's that fitting in with your service?

Melinda Hinch:

It's making me smile. I'm just so excited. It's been, it's just been so long waiting for it to systematically happen at a tier one level. We, I mean we use empower in our school board for our our students who are tier three with very specific reading difficulties. And we've always, we had lexia for our tier two as a tier two supplement. But to be able to have influence over and use science that's been going on for almost 30 years to help our teachers teach our kids how to read is exciting, exciting. My daughter just graduated from the faculty of education and, and she didn't learn anything about how to teach kids how to read. I mean, she knows cause she hears my conversations and has been a part of what I do in my videos. Always use your children in your own videos. But we do have a long way to go on it, but it's exciting to know that they're using science now, to support our students. And if you're working in the schools, especially after the pandemic we know it's a great time to have this happen because our students vocabulary and language and literacy are, are quite delayed.

Lisa Archibald:

So the I think we're gonna see the teacher training is gonna take some time, but what about the teachers that you have that you're working with there? They, how are you working with them? Well, in their response.

Melinda Hinch:

Okay. So our, our plan was kibosh last year because of the supply shortage that we had. So we intended on having we do have a working team which is special education coordinator, the chief of psychology and two program consultants. So two curriculum consultants, and one of those specializes in French immersion and myself. And then we have a larger group that we report to, which consists of principals and superintendents. So the working group, we started working about a year and a half because we knew what was coming down. Like we could feel it, there were rumors out there that, what was gonna happen. We all know about, you know, we know the, the positivity that of Orton Gillingham approach and how all the dyslexia associations support Orton Gillingham or that tier three type of reading approach.

Melinda Hinch:

So we kind of, we got ahead of it. That's why we're probably a little bit ahead of other school boards in Ontario because we started a year earlier and we started building relationships with the program people and having some challenging conversations, but learning from each other. And now we have a wonderful team. So we were last year, the plan was to give every school, four days of PD that supplies would come in and cover for them. But again, after I would say after Thanksgiving, that was kiboshed with the supply coverage. So the plan this year it's even better. We are going to be, so we're gonna have two teams. So myself and one of the program, people and my spec ed

partner, another program person, we are going to go to all 55 schools. I've been seconded. So this is a great news for speech language, that they're honoring us to, to be able to do that my special education coordinator, she's been seconded as well. And we're gonna go into so basically these schools and we're going to we're gonna have a trail of 10 supply teachers following us. And we're gonna have built in PLC times in those schools to talk about universal assessments, like screeners diagnostics and start off with some whole group interventions.

Lisa Archibald:

And what is that gonna look like? Your whole group interventions?

Melinda Hinch:

Well, it's going to exactly. It's going to be quite precise. They're gonna have scopes and sequences, developmental continuum and phonemic, phonological awareness. And in phonics, fluency and as well as vocabulary and language, because even though the report came out it is heavily weighted to the encoding and decoding piece. Right. Because it came out from the dyslexia, so, and that's okay. That's great. Like I actually tallied the numbers of times vocabulary language, and it was like one fifth of the time. So we're gonna balance it. We're looking at a literacy block and literacy block is going to look at explicit instruction in maybe like two to five minutes, three times a week on phonemic awareness. Maybe it's like we do have the Haggerty program, the resource in our schools. And then we're going to have an explicit phonics instruction and the use of sound symbol correspondences, and how that works and using Elkonin Boxes and say it, tap it, map it, graph it kinds of organization. And then we have, we also have the sets of decodable readers going into all the schools as well. And then the other two to three days that it will, the focus will be on vocabulary and language. And we're discussing the need to really consider choosing materials that are cross curricular in your social studies or in science curriculum and using stories, whether fiction non-fiction resources in that area.

Lisa Archibald:

Nice. Well, that is all very exciting.

Melinda Hinch:

It is. Yes. It's been a long time coming and it's very lofty, but we had Tammy, the special education coordinator and I gave four days of PD last week and we were gonna do it in person with 40 people within the first week. It was booked up and the superintendents asked us if we could do it on Teams and we were up to 150 people, so we had 150 people attending.

Lisa Archibald:

Wow...

Melinda Hinch:

Well that they're hungry for it. People are hungry for it. The, I guess the thing is, is that they don't, the, the hard part for them is thinking, how do we fit it all into a literacy block? So that seems to be the challenge right now. And that's what our a relationship with the program, that's helped the program people help out because that is their area of specialty.

Lisa Archibald:

Yeah. That's a great point there. Yeah. so I'm conscious of the time here. I wanna finish this up in just a couple of minutes, so that's gonna be your project. What does will your colleagues.....

Melinda Hinch:

Excellent questions?

Lisa Archibald:

What will they be doing?

Melinda Hinch:

Excellent. So we got on that specific science or reading journey, we did get the Haggerty resource. They're gonna be, there are supporting classroom teachers on phonemic awareness. That's Scarborough, rope has speech, language pathology written all over it. And that's, you know, that it really does you take, I don't really think there's any other profession that, that has so much knowledge on so many of those threads, the entire language strand, right. And the phonemic awareness thread as well. And the other strand. And I know the brilliant slides that you created with OSLA was very helpful going forward. That was my starting point, like going forth with it. That was, my plunge in, and it was, it was so well done because everything was research based on all of those little threads in there. It was wonderful. So my colleagues will be, my colleagues are very confident in supporting phonological awareness. All of our literacy kits are getting something called the E E T the expanding, expanding expression tool. It was created by Sarah Smith, a speech path in Michigan. It is, it is well researched that helps vocabulary and language, and there's a written language connection to it as well. That's one of my favorite resources. So the what'll happen is and the Oral Language at Your Fingertip books, all of our schools have it. Right. and I'm trying to think, oh, the other big area too, that I assume, you know, you, you come at, you assume that people have the knowledge in syntax and morphology, and then you, you say something like dependent clause or independent clause, and they're looking at you and then you have to take a few steps back. So I think the, the bigger piece I have to get into next year is doing some training on syntax, because that's gonna link into the written language piece. We just ordered a book for our group it's The Writing Revolution. . And that's something that we might be the expanding expression tool has a nice link to written language, but for higher grades, we're gonna be looking, I think, at the writing revolution. So, yeah. The speech paths are excited. They're a little scared. I'm gonna be honest with you because they're doing they're the, as I said, the multi complex students, they really they require, and they should require a lot of our time initially is our job to

ensure that all of our students have a functional communication system and are important members of those classrooms. And then we do have some special needs classrooms as well in our school board. And we do, we do consult in there regularly.

Lisa Archibald:

Right. Interesting. And you're one and a half CDAs in this model. What are they doing? How are they deployed?

Melinda Hinch:

Well, lucky for me this year I was given at the 0.5 to help me out in my schools because I was taken away a lot. Initially you can apply to our supervisor to use them. The goal was to use them in our kindergarten classrooms that are what the old word used to be compensatory schools. So those would be the schools that are in lower socioeconomic areas, high level of ELL the kids coming in with more impoverished language, and they would go into the classrooms under the supervision of the speech path and demonstrate language, facilitation techniques. I.E Hanon like techniques to support again, tier one in a way, but they'd be focusing on some other things as well, but go in and focus on that. Also, they also go into some of our special needs classrooms and model augmentative devices.

Lisa Archibald:

And you know Melinda I wanna just ask you about this one, you know, such exciting things going on, but tell me about, you know, we started off with those kids, you know, those individual syntax kids, you know, what's happening with them while we have all this fabulous sort of tier one emphasis going on?

Melinda Hinch:

We try our best. We do have a relationship in our community. I know it's different with the school board rehab services. So in our community we refer over severe articulation fluency and voice. And we don't have quite the waiting list that other areas in Ontario have. So that helps out and then they they keep them until they're considered moderate, and then we get them back and we do service students in, again, we have a, this is one thing I, I didn't mention for direct service. It's really a K to grade two, the beginning of grade two. And so we can offer two blocks of intervention for that type of service. and a block is six to eight sessions. And then we have private practice clinicians in our area, and we offer that to parents as well. And you know, we welcome in that one of the stumbling blocks is that parent connection in the schools, but if a parent ever wants to come in and watch, we're like, okay.

Lisa Archibald:

Right, right. Well, that's quite a range of services. You told me about Melinda, what a lot of exciting projects and what an impact your group, you and your group are having you know, really a part of what's going on at your school board and making that language

literacy connections so important. It's clear that you're really you know someone, a resource that folks there are looking to in leadership in this area.

Melinda Hinch:

Yep. I, I think, I think we're probably one of the only professions that really gets into those kindergarten classes. And works with kids in the classroom and works with teachers.

Lisa Archibald:

Really gets started right from the ground up then, ..

Melinda Hinch:

The early intervention prevention model.

Lisa Archibald:

For sure. All right Melinda, I want to thank you for your time and your visit to our podcast today, it has been wonderful to talk to you.

Melinda Hinch:

Thank you. This was wonderful. Thank you very much.

Lisa Archibald:

Thank you.