

Webinar Transcript: Leveraging Community Partnerships to Address Unfinished Learning in Kindergarten Through Grade 3 Due to COVID-19

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Overview

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Presenters: Carrie McKee (Rocky Mountain PBS), Treloar Bower (Denver Museum of Nature & Science) and Marietta Stechmeyer (STRIVE-Prep Ruby Hill)

Transcript

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: Hello, welcome everybody. Good to have everyone here as everyone comes in and get settled. Welcome to the Leveraging Community Partnerships to Address Unfinished Learning in Kindergarten Through Grade 3 webinar.

Want to give you a little introduction here about our platform. So we do have live captioning available. That link will go into the chat box. And you can click on it. And just click Register. All the information will be pre-populated. And you will not have to fill in any of your information. So if you're looking for closed captioning, that is available. This will also be recorded and released at a later date for access going forward.

To reduce background noise, we've muted all participants. And the chat has been disabled. But you are welcome to use the Q&A box, which will send your comments through to our panelists and to myself. We will monitor that Q&A box. And also, if you have any tech issues, go ahead and put that into the Q&A. And we'll try to help you if we can.

As we're getting settled, again, we're going to launch a participant poll to see who's in the room. So we're going to put that poll up. If you can let us know how you are connected to supporting our young learners, that would be great.

We are hosting this event through REL Central at Marzano Research. And REL Central is one of 10 Regional Educational Laboratories with a mission of supporting a more evidence-based education system.

So this is specifically hosted through our Early Childhood Education Research Alliance, which has projects focused on improving school readiness and access to high-quality early childhood programs, with two focuses, data use and teacher support and preparation.

Our presenters today include myself, I'm Anne Butterworth. I'm an Education Improvement Specialist at Marzano Research, working for REL Central. We have Carrie McKee, Vice President at Statewide Regional Innovation Center with Rocky Mountain PBS, Treloar Bower, Manager of Program Development, Denver Museum of Nature and Science, and Marietta Stechmeyer, first grade teacher at STRIVE-Prep Ruby Hill, and I've also learned, known as the Queen of Phonics. So welcome to everybody today, looking forward to chatting with you about this great topic.

Let's see how we're doing on poll responses. So it looks like we have educators, school district leaders, state administrators, and some other people, who I'm guessing might be part of our partnerships that we're talking about today. So welcome to everybody. And again, please feel free to use the question-and-answer box to ask your questions. And we'll get to those at the end of our presentation.

Through this webinar, REL Central and the invited presenters will share resources and materials available through the Colorado Classroom that can be implemented in a variety of settings to meet the needs of K-3 students who have experienced disrupted learning. The webinar will include a discussion of the types of community-based partnerships that can continue to support the development and distribution of materials to families and caregivers. This discussion will include recommendations for partnering with families and explanation of how schools and districts can leverage existing community systems to address this learning loss or unfinished learning.

So we're bringing to you some research studies that support the formation of these partnerships to help with disruption of learning. According to reports, disruptions to in-person learning during spring 2020 have impacted the learning and development of over 55.1 million children across the country. Research estimates that learning loss from school disruptions may affect younger students more than older students. Research also pointed to disparities that contributed to learning loss, including the unequal disruptions of formal learning for students that are living in poverty, students of color, and students with disabilities. Another variation impacting students' learning loss is the access to internet and technology and the quality of remote learning offered during school closures.

These studies indicated that state and district leaders might expect to see an increase in the number of students with moderate, high risk academic difficulty in reading and math for the 2020-2021 school year. Recently, a group of 28 school district education advocates and community organizations sent a letter to Colorado Governor Jared Polis, and Educator Commissioner Katy Anthes and local, and state leaders calling for more action and an investment into summer opportunities for learning.

This is a great opportunity to continue learning and to share the responsibility of that learning across the community. The letter expresses greatest concern for prekindergarten to grade five students and suggests that summer interventions are necessary to support the learning. The letter suggests that community-based approaches will be important for meeting the demand to address learning loss, as schools cannot do it alone. The letter outlines six strategies for providing students, families-- for, excuse me, for providing support to families and leveraging existing community systems.

So there are many types of summer learning programs, three, specifically, and the ability to develop partnerships among school districts, government organizations, philanthropic organizations, CBOs, and families may affect the quality of the program as well. Each of these organizations has a set of resources that can build sustainable summer learning programs. Districts can offer students, teachers, student data facilities, central office management, transportation, food service, and curricular experts.

Community-based organizations can offer deep content knowledge in certain areas and can provide enrichment opportunities that go far beyond what is typically provided in schools. Non-district national summer learning providers have vast experience in creating engaging summer

academic programs that maximize attendance. Cities can offer funds. And they have an existing interest in keeping youth safe and engaged during the summer months.

Local funders can bring additional resources to these programs. Partnerships can maximize all of these resources and expertise to support quality and sustainment. So as you can see, it's quite a puzzle of systems that can come together to really result in high-quality summer learning opportunities.

Summer learning experiences for school-aged children can be provided in a variety of ways and settings, including summer school programs, which are often remedial, community-based programs, which are often a continuation of after school programs, and home-based programs, in which families are provided information and resources and encouraged to use those at home, usually run by libraries.

Research has indicated that all three types of these summer learning programs can have positive impact on children's retention of key skills when these programs are high quality. It's also important that they recruit vulnerable children and engage families in ensuring consistent attendance. Having an impact on a broad scale requires that policies and infrastructure, including funding, are in place to expand effective programs.

Summer learning-- let me see, sorry, so the studies have shown that there-- the main practice guide has shown that there are some key features that need to be aligned. And those are that out of school programs connect to district goals and agendas or standards, that students and families are involved in taking advantage of these, that the programs are responsive and engaging to students, so that they want to be involved, and that community partners are flexible in their learning experiences.

So I am super excited to introduce Carrie McKee. And she is going to share with us some information about a partnership that has formed and the formation of the Colorado Classroom, which aligns with all of these research recommendations. Carrie, I'll turn it over to you.

CARRIE McKEE: Thank you so much. We are delighted to partner with REL Central and share a little bit about the program that we provided to hundreds of thousands of families in Colorado. Colorado Classroom really evolved as a result of kids being sent home and doing at-home learning during the spring of 2020. Immediately, Rocky Mountain PBS worked together

with other PBS stations across the country to consider how we could be supportive to families and students in this unprecedented time.

The first thing that we did was adjust our educational content for K through 12. So if you're familiar with Rocky Mountain PBS, oftentimes, it's really geared to our youngest learners. And in that March timeframe, we expanded 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, our programming, that was really geared for K through 12.

Very quickly, in the spring, we found the need to really focus on our K through 3 learners. And in a partnership with the governor's office, and the Department of Education, and Bright By Text, we quickly stood up this phase one, or season one, Colorado Classroom, Read with Me at Home. So the focus really was on reading.

And we were able to provide not only two hours, Monday through Friday, from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM, but we also quickly learned that we needed to provide bilingual resources, learning guides. We quickly stood up, not just in our headquarters out of Denver, but around the state, engagement and connections. So that these resources could be utilized throughout the state.

When we were looking at that quick turnaround, that quick whatever-- the term everyone uses these days is pivot. When we quickly pivoted, we identified several teachers through a partnership with Colorado Education Initiative and brought on some incredible folks to help our youngest learners around reading.

In the fall, we were in a different position. So on the next slide, it talks a little bit more about phase two of Colorado Classroom. Oh wait, yes, thank you. So we moved from just Read with Me at Home to Learn with Me at Home. And we focused on STEM, or actually better said, STEAM themes. And we really geared up our content partners.

So I would love to have one of our teachers, Marietta, share a little bit about the difference she experienced between the phase one, because she was a teacher as part of season one, phase one, as well as season two, phase two. And maybe she can share a little bit about the impact that having new themes that kind of paired with literacy learning, an impact that had on her as a teacher.

MARIETTA STECHMEYER: Yeah, first of all, they were both great experiences. The first phase, we just kind of dived right in, and just gave it our best, and just went for it. I think there's something to be said for that. And I can't say enough about how great the partners, the community partners were for phase two. It was wonderful to have a common text to work from, since we were so focused on literacy.

A lot of these partners had either self-published or had worked in some capacity. And they had their own text available. And that was very important due to copyright issues that we ran into in the first phase, and the issues with broadcasting. And just as a teacher, that's something we're used to doing is being given a curriculum, and then adapting it for our students and for our lessons. So that was wonderful to have.

And it was also great for all of us, as teachers, to be able to align vertically with a topic. So the first grade lesson is more complex compared to the kindergarten lesson, and so on, and so forth, as you move up into the grades. And that kind of allows a kid, if they're a more advanced kindergartener, they can plug into the other lessons. Or if maybe they need some foundational skills, and they're in third grade, they can look at those lower lessons, too. So it allows some flexibility there. And that was great to have.

CARRIE McKEE: In addition to incredible partnerships we had with teachers through CEI, we also, as you can see, the list of amazing partners throughout the state with all sorts of resources. Absolutely, our most key partner was the Denver Museum of Nature and Science.

And in the second phase, or season two, we asked DMNS to share content not just to all of our teachers for the two-hour blocks, but really, in a true form of a collaboration and partnership, we asked them to do something called science at the museum, focusing on all of our STEAM, STEM type focus. And so I would love for Treloar to share a little bit more about what that looked like for her team at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science.

TRELOAR BOWER: Thanks, Carrie. Yeah, the museum was approached by Rocky Mountain PBS and asked if we'd like to participate in the second season of Colorado Classroom. And it was an easy yes for us. And we'll talk a little bit more about the benefits of the partnership a little bit later.

But what we did specifically for the show was produce two hours of content, science content, that broadcast on Friday. And so we hoped that we were tying together some of the lessons that the children had had focused on literacy, Monday through Thursday, and then exploring the topics more with hands-on activities that families could replicate easily at home.

So in the state of Colorado, if you're a teacher, you know, there's no standard science curriculum that is adopted by all of the different districts. We talked about could we truly address a grade 3 science curriculum in a half hour block or grade 1. And what we came to was not trying to dive into specific curriculum standards. And instead, approach our science content that we were providing from a science process skills focus.

So on each of our Fridays, we would take the content theme of the week and pair it with one specific science process skill, something like asking questions, or comparing and contrasting, making observations went with the art theme one week. Quantifying in science is important.

And so if you watch any of the episodes from that particular week, we talk a lot about the butter weight of animals. And the kids watching the show would know 50,000 sticks of butter is the weight of a triceratops. So butter weight was our theme that week. So we had fun with it, too.

We wanted to have a mix of showing some behind the scenes things at the museum, the special things that we have, alongside doing demonstrations of science phenomena that families could easily replicate at home. So we made an assumption that, in a family where there might be multiple kids, the siblings could watch together. And then the parents or the caregivers could easily replicate that activity with things they had in the house, baking soda and vinegar, I'm sure you all know, that's really important science chemicals right there.

So that's how we focused the activities that we were providing through the content. And then the online resources were complementary extensions of what was done during the two-hour episodes. So we weren't replicating in those. We were extending opportunities for learning through those papers, those resource papers that people could print off. I'll hand it back to you, Carrie.

CARRIE McKEE: Yeah, so we really were fortunate to have the partnership with DMNS, and really partnerships, again, with so many entities across the state, some of which were really

focused on education, and many of which were just excited to share the incredible resources that they had with our teachers and with our partners in this collaboration.

The other probably most significant partnership we had was with the Colorado State Library System. And they really were incredible in helping not just promote people being able to access this on broadcast or on our website. They stepped up and stepped forward to offer 70 different locations around the state.

So if a family wanted a learning guide for week two for their second grader, they could contact us through a worksheet that was provided, a link that was provided, and identify the closest library to them to pick up those learning lessons around the state. And for those who didn't have a library close to them, or couldn't access their local library, they also had the option to have a send them whatever learning guides were necessary. But I'll tell you, that partnership with the library system of Colorado, really, was a huge win, not just for Rocky Mountain PBS, but for all those who had K through 3 learners.

You can see on this slide some of our funding-- well, all of our funding partners. And what was exciting was not only to have their support financially to help create this content, these programs on such a quick turnaround, but they also were willing to promote this content and all of the resources to their realms of influence. So whether they were a foundation, or just a grantor, or the funders from the state of Colorado, we felt like more and more folks were aware of what was out there.

And oftentimes, that's kind of the biggest battle. You can have incredible content, just like you can have an incredible party. But if people don't show up, or people don't utilize the resources, it's really not accomplishing the mission or having the impact.

The reaction to our resources, and to our program, and content, really, was received not just by parents and teachers, but on a national level. You can see from the quotes from parents and teachers here the appreciation they had for the resources provided. One parent articulates that he's dyslexic. And so understanding phonics and teaching phonics was a real challenge.

So to have Marietta, the phonics queen, really lead kids and families through these lessons was a huge gift. And then other teachers and parents were asking questions about how long they'd be able to access these resources for unfinished learners. We also had coverage from The New York

Times. And on this slide here, you can see a little bit about the article from The New York Times.

But it also shares some of the data around the equivalent of employees to make these programs available to families and kids around the state, and kind of the ratings and the impact there. On the next slide, and I'm going quickly, because we really want to get to questions and focus on that, we learned, both from the first and the second season, that the greatest need was kindergarten. And it was exceptionally higher than anything else.

But 75% of those who had accessed resources were kindergarten and first grade. So as we are listening and learning, we are really understanding that our youngest learners need a lot of time and attention to help them either catch up or maintain their educational levels. So that kind of leads to what's next for Colorado Classroom.

And we want to continue to listen. We're finding that we want to listen to our partners. We want to listen to our communities, to caregivers and teachers about what resources are needed, and do what we can to leverage the existing resources that PBS Kids, which is an incredible resource around the country, to take their content and their well-researched and high quality resources, and make those available to parents, to kids, to caregivers, and to our partners.

So I'll pause there. And I know Anne has some questions for us. But I just am thrilled with the opportunity to share about Colorado Classroom, its impact, and its reach. Which, I think, when we get into some of these questions, I'll be able to talk a little bit more about the reach, not just in the state of Colorado, but beyond our state's borders. You're on mute.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: Thank you. Very exciting, thank you so much. And I do see questions in our chat box about our question and answer about the reach. So we will get to that. I do also want to address the term learning loss. Amy in our Q&A asked about that. And I will say at Marzano Research and REL Central, we very much have talked about the term learning loss and how we-- what terms are used, and how we think of what has happened to and with students learning over the last few years.

So we have really coined trying to use, and most of our partners in education, have started using unfinished learning. Because there has been learning going on. There just may be some additional plug-ins that need to happen to continue that learning. And if learning did not happen,

learning loss is hard to have. Learning happened in other ways. So thank you, Amy, for bringing that forward. And we are striving to make it a positive, and not deficit mindset of there are some additional learning opportunities to offer to students.

So I'm going to get to our first question, here. And that is, we're going to start with this question for Marietta, as the educator/teacher in the group. What have been the most successful strategies and resources from Colorado Classroom that educators, family, and caregivers are using to address the learning needs that are occurring for this summer.

MARIETTA STECHMEYER: Yeah, I believe they the videos are all still up on the website. That teachers, parents, community leaders can still play those videos for any kids they're in contact with. So that's a great resource. The learning guides are also there on the website. I think we had some questions about that.

And I really just want to continue to emphasize the joy of learning. And I appreciate what you said about that this is unfinished learning, rather than learning loss. I emphasize with my students that this year, more than any other year, has been just as much about persevering, learning perseverance, learning how to love other people, learning how to love yourself, as it is about the math and the reading.

So kind of using those qualities, those things we've all lived through and learned about as not deficits, but as assets to our learning. And it's something we've all experienced. So keep fighting the good fight, everybody.

CARRIE McKEE: I would add, not only are those available on our website, they are-- as a public media entity, we have made all of these resources free and available to anyone who can access our website or the Rocky Mountain PBS app, which is free and can be downloaded on your smart devices or your phones. So whether you live in Wyoming, or Kansas, or Georgia, or Michigan, you can access these resources.

And it's not just the Read with Me at Home, which is our first season, but also the Learn with Me at Home, which is our second season. We have math minutes. We have Invest in Kids, which is kind of feel your feelings, social, emotional, skills building-- or Arizona, yes.

We also have an incredible series that is geared towards our early education, early childhood education learners, it's called Simple Gift Series. So if you go to our main page for Learn with Me at Home and scroll all the way to the bottom, you'll see these Math Minutes, Invest in Kids, but Simple Gift Series is an incredible part of our partnership.

It is kind of a Mr. Rogersesque, but it's really focused on music, and movement, and literacy. Each episode, which is 30 minutes, and if you're here in Colorado, it's Sunday mornings at 6:00 AM. But again, you can access it from our website.

But each episode, they go to a curiosity corner. So it might be a farm. It might be a construction site. It might be a local museum. Or it may be about etiquette lessons. And maybe you'll see these kids go to the Broadmoor and learn about how to enjoy a dessert there.

So Simple Gifts Series is launching its second season, actually, this coming Sunday on Rocky Mountain PBS. And again, it's available on our app and on our website as well. So we're excited about that partnership. Because like our other resources, they are available around the country and are gaining interest.

The Detroit and the Michigan PBS system asked for all of our content. They are reworking that content for their viewers in Michigan. And so just as New Jersey and Tennessee passed on resources to us, so we could create Colorado Classroom, we are passing on our resources to the Michigan.

They have a 24/7 educational channel that they're using all of our content and highlighting the resources. So that they are made available to some of the other families, caregivers, and teachers around the country. I want to hand it off to Treloar and see what her thoughts are around other resources.

TRELOAR BOWER: So science education, I think, aligns really nicely with the Simple Gifts Series. It's really all about curiosity. And at this early childhood age, where we're talking up to age 8 and grade 3, it is less about the kids being able to describe what is actually happening in a particular science phenomena, certainly not at the molecular level. What we want to do at this age is get them inspired by and curious about the world, about nature, and about science as a process, again, make sense of the world, and nature, and what's around us.

And so for anyone who is hoping to engage their children or kids that they interact with over the summer in terms of science, it really is about empowering the kids to be asking questions, making observations, and trying things out. So is there a way, if a kiddo asks a question about something, that you can explore it together or set up a way to test it?

We have an activity at the museum called ramps and rollers, where, literally, kids are building ramps out of cardboard, and getting different sized balls, and just testing to see how far they will roll if you set the ramp at different heights. And so making parents feel more comfortable that they do not need to know the answers or be able to explain the specific science phenomena, that their role with their kids around science is really to encourage the curiosity, is something that we encourage all adults to recognize.

And so promoting curiosity can happen because you're watching these videos online, taking advantage of where they're posted. And thank goodness the museum is open now. And so you can come and see exhibits with us. We offer a variety of programs both on site, as well as we're still offering programs virtually. So you can come and see what we're doing and register for things for your family to do together from the comfort of your couch some evening, and know that you're staying safe that way.

But again, just to emphasize, it is about curiosity. It's about asking questions. It's about exploring. And it's not, at this age, about knowing all the answers.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: Thank you. One clarification, I think, by looking at our chat, and I think there's such a broad audience, both specifically in Colorado, with the name Colorado Classroom, and one person had a question of is there a direct alignment to the Colorado Academic Standards or Common Core. And then I think on the other side of that continuum, we have people from across the nation joining us today saying we hear that you said other states are working on making this content customized to our states.

But are the resources that are available right now, they would really generally apply to all states? People could use them. You don't specifically have to be able to come to Denver and go to the museum to engage with these resources. Is that accurate?

CARRIE McKEE: That's correct.

TRELOAR BOWER: Yeah, for the science content, yes, it's not to a grade specific curriculum standard. It is really informal learning around science and science phenomena and focused on process skills. So that will apply anywhere.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: And I'm assuming the same for phonics and math?

CARRIE McKEE: Marietta, could you speak to kind of how you thought through your lessons? Because you not only taught for us. But you're a teacher in your everyday life. How did you consider the core curriculum and the needs with Colorado in mind? And can you kind of speak to that?

MARIETTA STECHMEYER: Yeah, so we all kind of decided, as teachers, in phase one and phase two, that we would focus on those standards that we would call high leverage standards, or standards that, in our own experience, were trickier ones that kids needed more time with. So I focused on ELD, English Language Development. And through all of the topics, I tried to incorporate some of those trickier language structures that I knew first graders struggled with in the past or needed more practice with, things like adding er to adjectives, greater, bigger, smaller, those sorts of things.

And we would just practice those sentences out loud together. So yeah, people asking about if they're common core aligned, yes, you can definitely pick and choose. And they tend to be more specific. So I would say, take a look at the website, take a look at the lessons and the topics, and what's exciting to you, and what would be high leverage for you.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: Great, thank you. What a great pool of resources. The next question we have is about the development. So how can community-based partnerships support development and distribution of materials to families and caregivers to help our students over the summer? And I'm going to start with Treloar on this one.

TRELOAR BOWER: Well, this partnership was essential for the museum. We would not have reached certain members of our statewide community without doing this partnership. So I'm going to use that word pivot.

When lockdown happened, the museum did pivot to providing things virtually. But we were limited in how we could disseminate those. So we had our website. We had our email distribution list. We had our social media accounts, Facebook, and Twitter, and Instagram.

But we couldn't broadcast anything over the air. We're not set up for that. And we know that a certain percentage of the state residents lack either internet connectivity in the first place or a level of stability or bandwidth that would allow them to stream programs that we had posted on YouTube or were offering through Zoom.

And so being able to broadcast content over the air let us fulfill our mission at a time when it was-- it was hampered because of the closure of our building for 100 days. And we also recognized the need for science content support for parents, and teachers as well, in the elementary area. So when teachers are surveyed as to their confidence level in what they're teaching, science often comes up as a content area where they lack confidence.

And so we have an entire teacher professional development program at the museum built around supporting teachers in teaching science content. And we can also do distance learning that way. But if teachers are feeling a lack of confidence, you can imagine parents at home were probably actually panicked about this. And so we wanted to get as much content out to as many adult caregivers as possible. And the broadcast option that this partnership with Rocky Mountain PBS provided was really a no-brainer for us.

In response, then, we could share with our existing constituency and stakeholders through the museum what we were doing. And so we did send information and links out to our members, to our donors, volunteers, trustees, staff, as well. We have a volunteer corps of 1800. That's a huge number of people that could be spreading the word about this program on Rocky Mountain PBS, people could watch and take advantage of.

And we hope that by doing that, we might have introduced our constituency to new organizations in the state that, perhaps, they hadn't heard of before. And that just leverages more networks, more potential programs and partnerships in the future. So it was a really exciting opportunity for us.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: Carrie?

CARRIE McKEE: I think, from my-- yeah, from my perspective, in terms of leveraging with partners, the thing we did differently in the first to second season was with our content partners, with our funding partners, with our distribution partners, we set up a partnership agreement. So that we could mentally check various boxes in terms of distributing these resources to the best of our ability.

Sometimes, we don't realize, we don't tell our own story about our collaborations as effectively as we could or should. So in that partnership agreement, we really laid out and asked, just like Treloar highlighted, that each of our partners share on social media, in their newsletters, on their website, to their boards, to their staff, to their clients that these resources exist. And that this partnership and collaboration can have greater impact if everyone shares the story and shares the resources.

When I think of the reach that the Denver Zoo, or the Denver Art Museum, or the Fort Collins Discovery Center-- no Fort Collins Center of Discovery--

MARIETTA STECHMEYER: Museum of Discovery.

CARRIE McKEE: The Space Symposium, Space Foundation, the National Cybersecurity Center, I mean, there just were incredible resources all the way to Pueblo and the Sangre de Cristo Art Center and around the state. When we really could push out these resources and this content very intentionally, it has greater reach.

I did see one question about partnerships at a state level versus at the school district level. And we really took both/and approach. We worked with the Colorado Department of Education to run our ideas by them. So that they could help us to see what blind spots we had and what resources they might have that would exist that we could share.

But then through our regional innovation centers, which are located in Denver, Grand Junction, Durango, Pueblo, and Colorado Springs, we also reached out to the local school district to make sure they were aware that these things existed. We partnered also with the counties of Colorado incorporated.

And they shared with their county leadership that these resources existed. So not just for Colorado Classroom first and second season, but for things that are coming up that we can

leverage our community partnerships more effectively. For example, Rocky Mountain PBS Kids Club is having that drive-in around the state in both April and May.

So in Denver, on April 17, families can register and drive into a blow-up outdoor drive-in theater and watch PBS Kids content and get resources from around their local community to share as they head into the end of spring and beginning of summer. So entities like PNC Bank, who has a program called Grow Up Great, the Ball Corporation, Tennessee Center for Children, those types of entities have really partnered with us to do the drive-in in Denver.

And then we go to Grand Junction and Durango, where we have incredible partners that are not just educational and content partners, but partners like Alpine Bank and the Durango Land and Home, Phil Long dealerships in Colorado Springs, and the State Land Board in Pueblo. So we have some unusual suspects. And that is the way that has most excited me around getting our resources shared.

When you look for unusual suspects, or unique partnerships, oftentimes, we don't just cut another slice of the pie. But we make the pie bigger. So that's part of how we've looked at community partners, not just locally but around the state. Marietta, what do you have on this one, community partners?

MARIETTA STECHMEYER: No, I agree with you. I think I love that, unusual suspects. I think it's a great opportunity. Honestly, we just did a morning meeting today where we invited families to come, via Zoom. And a lot of their feedback they gave to us is they want their kids-- they want their kids engaging with the world and engaging outside with nature. So all of these things are great, I think, for families and communities this summer, in order to get kids outside, since we've been so focused on the screen this school year.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: Thank you. Carrie, just a quick follow-up question that we had in the chat was who was responsible, primarily, for recruiting all of these partners and bringing them together?

CARRIE McKEE: Thank you for that question. We worked cross-departmentally within Rocky Mountain PBS. So we really put our heads together to think about our underwriting and sponsors that we've worked with in the past. Our content team thought about every story they've done, and what are some of those creative unusual suspects that we might draw in.

Our leadership giving our major donors also thought through what foundations, what granters might exist. And then we went out to those content partners and said, OK, who's not here at the table with us that should be? And even as we talk about summer coming, it makes you think about new partners, as Marietta was just sharing, whether that's nature centers, or parks and rec, or local sports teams, that really can continue to amplify the voices and share the resources.

So it was a complicated web. And we tried to be as intentional as possible. We sat down, as I said, with the Department of Education, with key educational resources like Colorado Education Initiative, and other educational leaders just to think through. And it was very quick. And it was very creative.

And I'm sure we reached out to people that if they didn't turn around and respond to us within a couple weeks, we had to say, OK, when we do season three, we'll reach back out. But because our turnaround time was so tight, we really ran with the people who were able to stand up quickly and respond to the opportunity. So that's probably the best way to describe how those partnerships evolved.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: Thank you. So obviously, bringing all these partners together, developing all of these materials, what are some lessons that were learned with the development of these materials? And Carrie, we'll go ahead and go back to you to start off on this one.

CARRIE McKEE: And I'll be quick, because I've talked a lot. One of the most significant lessons learned was the digital divide is real. And so you can't just put resources on a website and expect everyone can access those. So we very quickly, in season one, and then, additionally, in season two, started to put a bottom third on the broadcast.

Because 98% of Colorado can watch Rocky Mountain PBS. And it's very rare to have one station that is statewide. But what we found is we couldn't send people to a website if they couldn't access internet. And sometimes, that exists because of social-- I mean, socioeconomic challenges. And sometimes, it's just infrastructure, infrastructure around the state.

So we started to put a bottom third where people could actually call and request resources to be mailed to them or to acquire them at their closest library. So digital divide is a significant one. And then creating just some systems from season one to season two, like templates for the

teachers to use for their learning guides. When teachers are not only teaching, but having to come up with fun graphics that they put in the corners of a lesson, that makes it totally un-uniform when every teacher does it differently.

So season two, our creative services team at Rocky Mountain public media put together the templates. So that the teachers could just fill it in and share the lessons learned, and the at home items that might be needed, or say flip the piece of paper over and draw your response to this. So it's little things like that, I think, each time we reinvent or we evolve, we have those lessons learned that we push forward.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: Great. Treloar, Marietta, anything to add to that?

TRELOAR BOWER: Go ahead, Marietta, I can go last.

MARIETTA STECHMEYER: OK, I will say, as a teacher, it was so helpful for that phase two to have just topics. There was art week, and Earth week, and home week. And so helpful, whereas, phase one, I would think, OK, I know I need to teach about nouns. I guess let's talk about the zoo, just like random whatever.

So it's really-- it's just so helpful to have those handholds as a teacher. And also, like I was talking about before, that helps with the vertical alignment between teachers. So there's kind of a flow from lesson to lesson.

TRELOAR BOWER: And for the museum, our lessons were a lot around internal process and how our team functioned. This was certainly not the first pivot we made to be able to say yes to this project. And we continue to make pivots as our world changes.

We've really talked a lot, in a debrief process, about how is our organization prepared to immediately respond to a partnership opportunity with what we in the museum world would call the power of yes. We wanted to say yes. And it meant we were, within a couple of days, deploying team members to support this effort.

Initially, we were talking about how can we do this given our expertise and the resources we have? How can we best meet this request? And what we learned is we needed to expand the

number of people who were empowered to support this request. So we had to bring in some additional resources and do some really fast training.

And instead of having all filming done by our two digital media specialists, we had people out with their cell phones doing some recording. And for this purpose, that was OK. So it wasn't just the how can we best meet this, because best would have been running through digital media the entire time. Instead, we empowered a lot more staff to learn how to do this and be part of that power of yes. So that was great.

I also saw our team learn as we went through this. And we adapted as we went through this. And I'm really proud to be able to point to episode 1 and episode 5. And I've no problem saying, you will see an immense change in the quality of the product we produce, because we did adapt and learn as we went in how to produce the television episodes and how we empowered more of our staff to be involved in that.

So I think for any organizations that are here, to think about how you can respond with a yes to an opportunity that arises that's unexpected, but that allows you, in our case, to fulfill your mission in new and different ways at a time like a pandemic, when you couldn't be doing it as you traditionally did. Are you prepared to be able to do that? I'm so proud of us that we could.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: I think that speaks to another very positive view you can take on our experiences over the last year plus is that it's creating some opportunities for creativeness, and innovation, and moving people forward. So we're in our last five minutes.

And the question, I think I can wrap a chat question from Amy Jo into this. And we'll start with Marietta. What do families and caregivers identify, right now, as their biggest concern to supporting their children's academic and social emotional development? And then I'm just going to also add Amy Jo's question of what are some suggestions for prioritizing what resources to look at if I'm a busy parent trying to decide where I should look? So I'll start with Marietta on that one.

MARIETTA STECHMEYER: Yeah, like I was saying earlier today in Zoom school, we did a talk with your teacher. So this is kind of fresh in my mind. And I think its-- parents are heavily concerned about their child's social emotional development. And whereas, me as an educator, I'm so focused on the standards and not getting to all of our objectives or our lessons.

So I think parents really want a way to talk about what's going on in the world, the recent social justice movements, all of these things that we should and can talk with young children about. They kind of-- they wanted resources on that. They want us to be honest with their kids. So we've been doing that in our little Zoom school, which is cool, and different, and great. And the second question about, oh, yeah, what to leverage or what's the--

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: How to prioritize what resources to look at. Since there are so many.

MARIETTA STECHMEYER: I mean, I will just say, read, baby, read. That's kind of our school slogan. Reading, it should be fun. It should be joyful. And you can do so many things around it. So many things in how you talk to your kids, or kids you're in contact with. And you can do word games, all of these things that build their phonics knowledge and make them excited to read.

You're at dinner, and you say tonight we're having Bicken, not bicken, chicken, that's the best ever. And then they'll see ch in a book later. And it'll all make sense. So I'm a huge fan of literacy throughout the day in the small moments, and making it fun and joyful experience.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: Thank you. Any other last minute thoughts on the resources and biggest concerns for Carrie or Treloar.

CARRIE McKEE: Treloar, do you want to share anything?

TRELOAR BOWER: I would just say for parents, who are not professional educators, there are plenty of organizations, community based and statewide, who are what we call informal educators. That's what museums are. So we're not tied to curriculum standards. But we are about provoking wonder.

And so what is the thing that your child is interested in? Take advantage of the local nature center or your local museum. It may not be something where you're comfortable going in person yet. Most museums are reaching out to communities virtually now and offering things through YouTube, and Zoom, and their Facebook pages.

And so don't worry about sifting through all of the options that are out there. Find the thing that your kid is excited about. And know that there'll be a resource that you can track down. And just focus on that one thing for them.

Don't worry about prioritizing amongst all of the things that's out there, because yes, there has been a proliferation. Go with what your kid is interested in. Find that.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: And I think that is a great way-- oh, go ahead, Carrie.

CARRIE McKEE: I was just going to say, some of the greatest resources we often forget are our local libraries. I mean, they are all about reading, and learning, and then to play off of what Treloar and Marietta said, whether it's your local music school, or conservatory, or museum, or just your local school, so many schools are looking to set up parents and caregivers for the summer.

So just give yourself grace as parents, and teachers, and caregivers. And just continue to explore.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: Yes, and that's my message, as well, from the research. Wanted to re-mention the IES practice guide that talks about this. And one of their findings is students need to be engaged and enjoy what they're doing to make this a high quality program. So especially when we're looking at outside, wraparound services, outside of a, maybe, traditional school day, make sure kids enjoy it.

I know there are some additional questions about extended days and so forth. I wanted to put forth the Ask a REL resource. So if you have questions and are looking for some additional research, you can submit a question to Ask a REL. And our REL team will do a literature search for you and send back an annotated bibliography, which is very helpful.

And I think that is all that we have time for. A huge thank you to our panelists and learning about the Colorado Classroom in this partnership. If you have a chance, for our participants, we do ask-- just we want to say thank you. And I'm not sure. We usually have a survey. Do we have a survey link that's going to go in the chat?

ANGELA WHITED: It will go on the chat that will automatically pop up when the webinar ends.

ANNE BUTTERWORTH: Great, thank you. So thank you very much. We'll go ahead and close. I hope you all have a wonderful rest of your day and week. And if you could complete that survey, we'd love your feedback. Thanks a lot.