Joe L Alright welcome back everyone. Today is such an exciting day because we’re going to be wrapping up this long journey of the Focus on the One Challenge by giving a good review of all the key topics we took away from this wonderful series. Now today I’m here with Pam Sudduth and Cici Claar who are both part of the Academic Achievement and Student Support Unit of the Florida Problem Solving/Response to Intervention Project. Like I said, this is session number seven of the Focus on the One, Desired Results series, which is a series of a multi-session experience to support Florida educators in not only utilizing, but sustaining a multi-tiered system of support with fidelity in every school, district and classroom. Alright so Pam, would you mind kicking us off and telling us about the main takeaways you had from the first Focus on the One challenge?

Pam S Yes absolutely, thank you Joe. So the first one, if you guys remember, we really started kicking it off right with really focusing on where you begin, with looking at the standards. And as you know in Florida, we have the brand new BEST standards that are coming out. And so what I was thinking about was, what is the takeaway with that? And I guess I would have to say it’s thinking purposefully about those key indicators and the principles that are being offered as support for educators, and thinking about that and the design of it with the spotlight benchmarks and the stacked benchmarks and how that all fits together, and with the supports to ensure that students are able to master those standards at the end. How do the stacks work? What are stacks? And ensuring that students are highly engaged with the instruction. How do we design that effectively? So basically, where to begin? What are we shooting for here and why are we all doing this for the desired results? So that’s kind of what stuck out for me.

Joe L So that’s a really good transition into the 2nd challenge and the 3rd challenge, Pam so thank you so much. What I took away going past what Pam said is going to the next level to think about how you can incorporate this idea, how systems can support those standards, figuring out what those standards and how you can work with people in your building to get those standards to come alive, specifically through horizontal alignment and vertical articulation. So talking about the degree to which assessment matches corresponding content, as well as how teachers plan across grade levels to reflect a logical, consistent order of teaching across grade levels. So that was the main thing I got from the 2nd challenge, but even more with the 3rd challenge, what stood out for me was this idea of, when you’re trying to implement standards at the school level you have to take an intra-disciplinary approach, which means that a focus needs to come from how elements of a subject work together and work with each other. For instance, if you have English Language Arts you can’t teach that in isolation because that is blended in other subjects. And actually when you combine those things, such as writing and vocabulary, you can strengthen the skills around that standards for your students and see ways that you can integrate that.

Cici C. Great point Joe. That made me think about challenge number 4. The topic of challenge 4 was pre-requisite knowledge, and I was thinking as I was listening to you both talk about the standards and the instructional focus, about what I learned in challenge 4 about how we can use the standards to kind of scaffold an understanding of what other types of knowledge need to be learned by students in order for them to succeed. So for example, we talked about self-regulation and problem solving and of course reading, right? Like these basic skills that students need to be taught so that they can understand and reach those learning goals, as they’re laid out in the standards. So I really liked what David, what Dr. Davis said about designing a system where the students are able to see the learning goals, understand them and have a clear path of achievement, and just how important it is that we also pay attention to those pre-requisite skills and knowledge and making sure that students have those in order to succeed with the content. Also, challenge number 5 I learned a lot about high probability and high intensity barriers, these widespread or common barriers that impact students’ engagement and learning, and then the factors that may not be as probable but are having a larger impact on student learning. And Dr. Terrato really talked about how we need to raise standards for students, and how children and students who have not traditionally been in more rigorous classrooms, or who are transitioning into general ed classes, they’re transitioning into a more rigorous level of instruction at this point and how ya, that they’re reaching those goals. Right? Like as we raise the expectations for kids, they are able to reach those goals and she actually gave the example of how here in Hillsborough county, the rate of students with disabilities graduating with a diploma, a general education diploma, has gone from somewhere between 30 and 40% to almost 80%. So that was really inspiring for me to hear about, and in terms of looking at how we can identify those common barriers that historically underserved students have encountered and start thinking of ways that we can remove them so that those kids can succeed as well. So that’s what I took away.

Pam S. I love this information because the flow is so beautiful. It takes you from the beginning all the way to what you would do next which is taking those barriers that students are experiencing, and how do you apply those to the classrooms within tier one and say, oh my goodness, all my kiddos, how am I going to be able to support them? How am I going to be able to support them across all the tiers of instruction? So that’s what Dr. Batsch really talked about, was really looking at Universal Instruction. And that was the key takeaway that I found, and we all obviously totally agree and we’d be remiss if we didn’t talk about, what does that look like through a multi-tiered system of support and how do you help support students and eliminate those barriers that students are experiencing? So that’s really what I took away from challenge number six. I have to say, looking back across all the challenges, this really thoroughly describes the desired results and that was what we started off the beginning of this year with, was thinking about you know, what is everything from soup to nuts? What is it that you would need in order to really effectively design instruction to meet the needs of all those students within the classroom. And the beginning part of it is the desired results, starting with the standards and looking at how does everything fit together, horizontally and vertically and you know just preventing the barriers. What’s preventing students from succeeding? All of that up front when you’re planning your instruction. And then the next level after all of this would be the assessment. Really thinking about that, like what is it that students need to be able to master. How does that fit into it? And then ensuring that it’s really highly engaging instruction that really students are focusing on. And that’s to come down the road, so I just wanted to wrap that up and tie it in a nice little bow, of these bite-size pieces. And that’s where we started off with and within this year, so I really and I know we all are very proud of this work and brining all of these experts to the table and picking their brains and so much fun this year. So we really want to thank everyone for participating and being a part of it with us and thank you.

Joe L Absolutely Pam, and you and Cici did a wonderful job explaining the whole course of this whole challenge. So I really appreciate it and we really want to thank everyone who’s joined in to listen with us, and you can access all of this wonderful content by visiting our website, which is psrti-ssaa.weebly.com and then you go to that website and find our tab for Focus on the One. So within that tab, everything we’ve talked about is linked and many other resources.