

# Welcome to “Hidden in Plain Sight: Students with Disabilities in STEM Education”

**Please introduce yourself in the chat.  
What is your name, institution and role,  
and interest in this event, if you feel  
comfortable sharing. Thank you!**



**U·STEM**



# Introductions



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Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation.

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# Framework of the problem



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1.

General absence of disability from  
equity lens in the U.S.

Hard to determine and address  
underrepresentation



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2.

Constrained to *special education* and  
*disability studies* siloes in U.S.

Nearly invisible in “general” education



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3.

Need for systemic change



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# Action Research

- Continuing review of the literature
- Hosting online panels and discussion groups
- Created a padlet to crowdsource resources and facilitate communication
- Online survey for people with disabilities (still open)
  - 18 and over
  - Anonymous
  - Not limited to STEM fields
  - **Reflect on their K-12 schooling\***
  - Reflect on their workplace

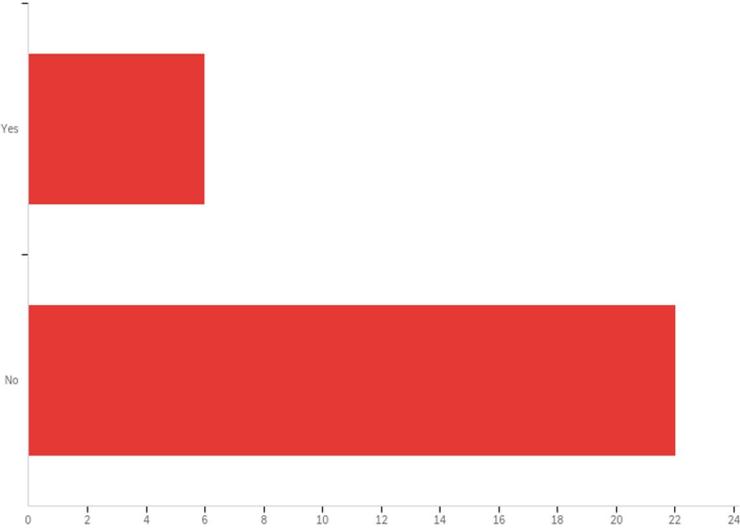


# Preliminary findings

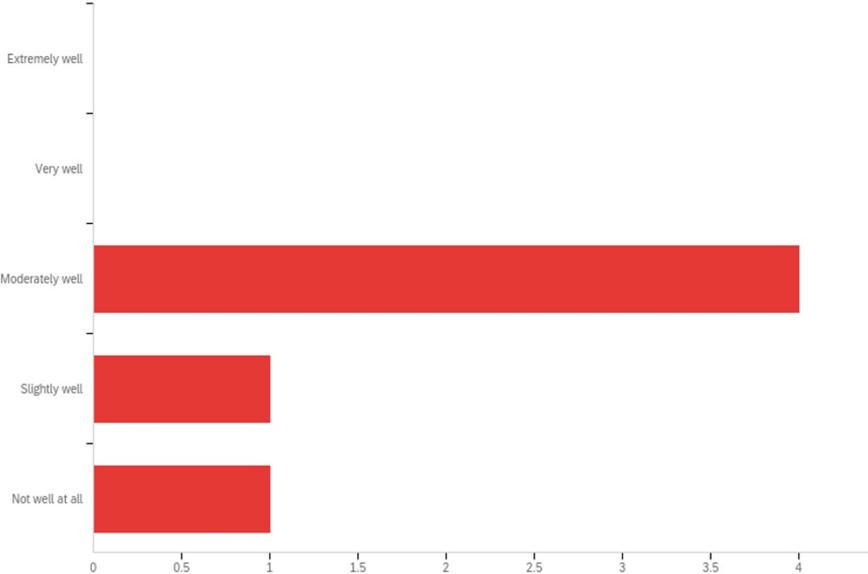


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# Did you receive services for your disability/disabilities during your K-12 education?



# How well did those services meet your needs?



# Emergent Thematic Categories

- Disability occurred later/was not diagnosed until later
- **Experiences of segregation\***
- **Recognition of having been underserved in school\***



## Segregation: *Humiliation & low expectations*

“Being pulled out of class was humiliating. In 6th grade they tried to put me in a class for all the students with disabilities (including learning). I acted out and was put back in my mainstream class.”



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## Segregation: *Humiliation & low expectations*

“My K-12 school system struggled with supporting, respecting, and believing that I could have a learning disability and be a successful student. This was particularly true in terms of my interests to take advanced courses in science, math, and English; regular education and special education teachers, as well as special education administrators openly discouraged me or prevented me from being in certain classes.”



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# Recognition of having been underserved

“I needed accommodations but didn't know what accommodations were available or how to get them (neither did my parents), so we never pursued them.”

“Recognition and extra time when needed. Sometimes my limitations caused problems with deadlines which caused great stress and anxiety.”

“Some teachers did not follow recommendations for my accommodations.”



**What are some systemic changes  
we can advocate for?**



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# Thank you!

We'd like to take some questions in the Q & A

- Please share our survey
- Use/build the padlet

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