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TRANSITION VOICE

The Council for Exceptional Children
Virginia Division on Career Development and Transition

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT Jodylee Edsall VADCDT President

Welcome to the VA DCDT 2008-2009 year! The strength of an organization depends on its members. As President, I would like to ask the members at large for your help in successfully achieving the first and fourth goal of increasing our membership by 10% with diverse and associate members. Like so much of reality TV today is based on "challenges," I would like to challenge each member to invite a colleague to join this wonderful organization. The benefits of joining the organization as well as the membership application can be found on our website, www.vadcdt.org. I would like to share with you the Goals that were developed by the Executive Board for this upcoming year.

Our Goals for VADCDT 2008-2009:

1. Increase subdivision membership by 10% (Membership)
2. Expand professional development activities
 - CTE Conference 2009 ~ provide a Transition Track (Past President)
 - Continued involvement/support with Transition Forum (Publicity)
 - Continued involvement/support with Summer Institute (Program)
 - Scholarship/Stipend Fund to support members to attend a PD activity
3. Update membership list
4. Continue to market for more diverse members and associate members
5. Enhance/expand/maintain VADCDT website
6. Enhance and maintain mentorship program
7. Continue to improve nomination process (Past President)
8. Explore ways to increase revenue to support VADCDT projects
 - Dedicate sum of money for youth/families
 - Raffle
 - Other

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Vol. 13, No.1
Fall 08

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I would like to introduce your new Executive Board this upcoming year.

President: Jodylee Edsall, Roanoke County Public Schools
Past President: Joan Lovegren-O'Brien, VDOE T/TAC VCU
Vice President: Jim Hall, DRS
Secretary: Kendel St. John, Rockingham County Public Schools
Treasurer: John McNaught, VDOE T/TAC JMU
Publicity Chair: Judy Averill, Chesterfield County Public Schools
Membership Chair: Judy Howlett, Richmond City Public Schools
Program Chair: Beth Somers, DRS

Newsletter Chair: Sally Chappel, VDOE T/TAC JMU
Legislative Chair: Mary Young, Loudoun County Public Schools
Student Rep: Sandra Fritton, VCU
AD HOC members:
DCDT Southeast Rep: Kathe Wittig
VACTE-SND: Melissa Hartman
VDOE: Marianne Moore
DRS: Erica Lovelace

I also encourage you to actively become involved in the different committees. If you are interested, go to the website and email the committee chair. The committee chairs welcome new ideas as well as an opportunity to network with individuals across the state. Remember we all are striving daily in our jobs to improve transition for our students in Virginia!!!

Finally, I look forward to seeing all our members at the Transition Forum. If you would like to attend the Transition Forum and need some assistance with funds, please check out the scholarship information and qualifications on the website. While at the Transition Forum, try to do three things as a VA DCDT member:

- 1.) Come by the VADCDCDT table and say Hi,
- 2.) Attend the VADCDCDT Social for an opportunity of "networking" and "fun"
- 3.) Attend our "Open" VA DCDT meeting.

Have a great school year working in Transition!!

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Past President

Joan Lovegren-O'Brien, Program Specialist
Virginia Department of Education T-TAC, VCU
jlovegrenobr@vcu.edu

President

Jodylee Edsall, Disability Services Coordinator for Transition/Career Assessment
Roanoke County Public Schools
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Vice President

Jim Hall, Human Services Manager
Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services
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Treasurer

John McNaught, Coordinator
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Secretary

Kendel St. John, Transition Facilitator
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Publicity

Judy Averill, Lead Transition Coordinator
Chesterfield County Public Schools
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Membership

Judy Howlett, Transition Coordinator
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Program

Beth Somers, Transition Coordinator
Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services
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Newsletter

Sally Chappel, Coordinator
Virginia Department of Education T/TAC, JMU
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Legislative Issues/Governmental Relations

Mary Young, Transition Consulting Teacher
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Student Representative

Sandra Fritton, Program Evaluator
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National DCDT Representative

Katherine M. Wittig, Program Specialist for Secondary Transition
Virginia Department of Education T/TAC, VCU
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VACTE-SND Liaison

Melissa Hartman, Special Education Supervisor
Loudoun County Public Schools
Melissa.hartman@loudoun.k12.va.us

Member at Large

Marianne Moore, Middle/Secondary Transition Specialist
Virginia Department of Education
Marianne.Moore@DOE.Virginia.gov
Erica Lovelace, Educational Services Manager
Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services
Erica.Lovelace@drs.virginia.gov

TREASURER'S REPORT

Checking Account Balance Forward:	\$3341.79
Checking Account Balance as of 10/31/08:	\$5343.80
CD: \$10,194.74 @ 3.13% (expires 12/29/08)	
Summer Institute:	
Expenses:	\$6186.35
Income:	\$8431.00
Profit:	\$2244.64

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS TRANSITION AWARDS **Jim Hall, VADCDT Vice President/Recognitions/Awards Chair**

Please take the opportunity to nominate someone you feel is deserving of recognition through one of the four VADCDT awards outlined. The four awards will be presented at the 2009 Virginia Transition Forum, and represent the finest examples of collaborative effort in the area of transition.

It is important that you send in a nomination! Take a few minutes, fill out the nomination forms that are inserted in the newsletter and send them to me by the February 2, 2009 deadline.

2009 EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The VADCDT EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR Award recognizes a business or corporation that has promoted and provided the enhancement and employment of individuals with exceptionalities in order to promote and support their full participation in the community.

2009 TRANSITION LEADER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The VA DCDT TRANSITION LEADER OF THE YEAR Award recognizes a VADCDT member who has demonstrated excellence in providing services to the field of transition. The Transition Leader provides support directly to those persons working with youth in transition (ex. transition specialist, agency personnel, T/TAC personnel, university staff, and administrator). This person is an outstanding member of the profession whose work exemplifies the best in transition practices. His or her work reflects significant success (above and beyond their work duties) for students, continued professional development and the highest standards of leadership in transition. He or she is recognized for commitment, leadership and dedication to students with exceptionalities.

2009 TRANSITION PRACTITIONER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The VADCDT TRANSITION PRACTITIONER OF THE YEAR Award recognizes a VADCDT member who has demonstrated excellence in providing services to students in the transition process. This person is an outstanding member of the profession whose work exemplifies the best in transition practices. His or her work reflects significant success for students, continued professional development and the highest standards of leadership in transition. He or she is recognized for commitment, leadership and dedication for students with exceptionalities.

2009 STUDENT OF THE YEAR AWARD

The VA DCDT STUDENT OF THE YEAR Award recognizes a student who exemplifies significant outreach and involvement to achieve his/her transition goals. This student serves as a role model for other students with exceptionalities to follow as they navigate the process of transition to employment, community involvement and a meaningful adult life.

LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

Mary Young, Legislative Issues/Governmental Relations Chair

New Legislation:

Post-secondary Doors Opened Through the Higher Education Act 2008

- Demonstration projects to support postsecondary faculty, staff and administrators in educating students with disabilities

- Grants to develop model comprehensive transition programs for students with intellectual disabilities into higher education

- Access to federal financial aid for students with intellectual disabilities

- Advisory committee established to develop a commission of accessible materials in postsecondary education

- AUCD Summary of Disability Provisions in Higher Education Act Conference Report

- http://www.aucd.org/docs/policy/post_sec_ed/hea_conference_report_summary_8.7.08.doc

- Higher Education Opportunity Act Reauthorization P.L. 110-315

- <http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Search§ion=20085&template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentFileID=2932>

The Draft Final Virginia Special Education Regulations

- Virginia adopted a standard to begin transition planning in the IEP in effect when the student turns 14, or younger, if determined appropriate by the IEP team.

- Website: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/dueproc/regulationsCWD.html>

STUDENT VOICE
The Youth Leadership Forum
By J.B. Rintels

This summer, twenty-five kids with disabilities went to a Youth Leadership Forum in Newport News, Virginia for one week as part of an enrichment program. My experience at YLF was very enjoyable. The people were nice. They were always very supportive of me and encouraged me to do the best that I could at everything. We stayed at Christopher Newport University in Newport News. It was a pleasant place. The buildings were really beautiful and spacious with lots of cool shops to buy things in. The food was particularly great too. I always got to eat a lot of the foods that I really liked, such as spaghetti, chicken, and lots of other stuff. There was also a lot of soda there. That was one of the best parts of the whole trip in my view.

I got to hear people with disabilities that were on all sorts of committees talk to us about our rights as disabled people. There was one woman who suffered from a disorder that inhibited her growth who was a lawyer for disability rights. Another man was there who had a movie made about him chronicling his experiences trying to get the Americans with Disabilities Act passed to ensure fairer treatment of disabled people. They all had some very interesting things to say.

In the middle of the week we got to go to the Virginia Assembly Building in Richmond and meet Governor Tim Kaine's wife. Governor Kaine himself was overseas at the time so we couldn't see him. But overall, I thoroughly enjoyed my time in Richmond and I'm glad I went. While there, we each got to give a speech in the General Assembly.

I guess one thing I learned really well from being at YLF was how to advocate for myself better. I am now speaking up for myself towards my family and friends more, which is one of the main reasons why I decided to go to YLF in the first place. YLF's whole purpose is to help kids with disabilities adjust to life in the real world among normal people. So I figured that by going there, I would learn how to adjust to life in the real world myself so that I would be prepared when I grew up and got a job for myself.

I really enjoyed going to YLF and I would really like going there again if I can get all my blue cards finished. Blue cards are little slips of paper where I write down things that I did in my community. If I get enough of them, I will be able to go to YLF next year and help first year students get around the place. I think it might be good to be a second-year student, but I'm just a little worried about how I will do as a leader. I've never really been in that position before, but I look forward to the challenge. Going back to YLF sounds like a good thing for me.

DRS CORNER
Beth Somers, Transition Coordinator
Department of Rehabilitative Services

As our fragile economy impacts us all, many have a keen awareness and concern of how services for our youth with disabilities will be affected. DRS wants to encourage everyone including transition practitioners, families and state leaders to continue to make referrals of students who need Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services to the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS).

Virginia's DRS has clearly defined transition processes and practices that should not falter because of the stressed economic situation.

The agency's operative mission embraces the concept of building a Roadmap to Success. This value ties in with the foundation that good transition is based on careful planning. With this in mind DRS will steer our approach according to what we can do in the lean economy.

DRS CAN:

- Take referrals from our school partners to determine eligibility for DRS services and provide guidance toward a young person's employment plan.
- Provide selected students a comprehensive vocational evaluation through the PERT program at Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center.
- Provide disability employment and outreach activities for school personnel, families and community stakeholders.

We've learned that getting students engaged early in their transition planning contributes to academic, vocational and employment success. Virginia's DRS endorses the practice of providing outreach and planning three years prior to school exit and will continue to nurture our relationships with our critical partners as we work together to lead students toward a successful employment outcomes.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

If you are interested in receiving professional development monies for conferences, activities, or other needs, please fill out the enclosed Scholarship Packet information and send it by December 1, 2008 or June 1, 2009. You must be a VADCDC member to be considered. You can also find the information on the website: www.vadcct.org under "scholarship" heading.

VDOE UPDATES

Marianne Moore, Middle/Secondary Transition Specialist Virginia Department of Education

Each T/TAC housing Transition Specialists provided professional development (PD) on transition to their regions this fall. The PD was intended to provide consistent basic information across the state regarding transition planning. Sessions were well attended.

The VDOE hosted Virginia's first Dropout Prevention Summit on October 28, 2008 in Richmond. Over 500 people attended the day long event which was sponsored by America's Promise Alliance and State Farm Insurance, and AT & T. Speakers included Governor Tim Kaine, State Superintendent Dr. Patricia Wright, Dr. Mark Emblidge, Bill Milliken, Senator Harry B. Blevins, and Delegate Robert H. Brink. Papers and presentations will be posted on the VDOE web site through the Student Services pages.

State Special Education Regulations are still in the "proposed" status. On September 25 the Virginia Board of Education approved the draft final Special Education Regulations. The document is being reviewed by the Executive Branch which includes the Department of Planning and Budget, Secretary of Education, and Governor's Office. More detailed information can be found at <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/dueproc/regulationsCWD.html>

While VDOE did experience some budget cuts, the Transition Forum and student attendance to the Youth Leadership Forum will continue to receive support. Additionally, other initiatives such as I'm Determined, data collection, Project Search replication, and ODU's READY program will receive support from VDOE. The Virginia Department of Education will also sponsor the second Youth Self Determination Summit, through the I'm Determined project, and a Parent Summit, through the Parent Priority Project. Both events will take place in Norfolk during the Transition Forum.

Standard Technical/Advanced Technical Diplomas and Academic/Career Plans

On October 30, 2008, the Virginia Board of Education held five public hearings about the proposed changes to the Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools. The Board of Education is in the process of revising its Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting Public Schools in Virginia. The regulations define the requirements for accrediting public schools in Virginia. They are the minimum standards necessary for schools to provide a foundation for quality education which will prepare children to become self-sufficient and informed citizens.

In July 2006, Dr. Mark Emblidge, president of the Board of Education formed a special committee of the Board of Education to recommend policies to reduce the number of students who drop out of high school and to improve graduation rates. Additionally, the proposed revisions are in response to legislation passed by the 2007 General Assembly requiring the Board of Education to establish requirements for the Standard Technical and Advanced Technical Diplomas.

There are a number of changes to the regulations: the creation of the Standard Technical and Advanced Technical diplomas as required by General Assembly action; the development of an Academic and Career Plan for students beginning in grade seven; and the establishment of a graduation and completion index that all schools with a graduating class will be required to meet in order to be fully accredited.

The primary changes are listed below:

- Amend elective requirements for the Standard diploma from six to five electives in order to require one credit in foreign language, economics, or personal finance.
- Increase credit requirements for the Advanced Studies diploma for graduation effective for students beginning with the ninth grade class of 2009.
- Include credit requirements for the Standard Technical and Advanced Technical diplomas.
- Include the Governor's proposal to require an Academic and Career Plan for students beginning in grade seven.
- Include a graduation and completion index in school accreditation.

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Credit Requirements for the Standard and Advanced Technical Diplomas

Discipline Area	Standard Technical Diploma		Advanced Technical Diploma	
	Standard Units of Credit Required	Verified Credits Required	Standard Units of Credit Required	Verified Credits Required
English	4	2	4	2
Mathematics	3	1	4	2
Laboratory Science	3	1	4	2
History and Social Sciences	3	1	3	2
Health and P.E.	2		2	
Foreign Language	2		3	
Career and Technical Education	4		4	
Electives	2		2	
Student Selected		1		1
TOTAL	23	6	26	9

The Academic and Career Plan is expected to contain the following components:

- the student's educational goals and program of study for high school graduation
- postsecondary career pathway based on the student's academic and career interests
- developed and signed by the student, student's parent or guardian, and school official

The Plan will be included in the student's record and will be reviewed and updated, if necessary, before the student enters the ninth and eleventh grades.

A graduation and completion index includes weighted points
 for diploma graduates (100 points),
 GED recipients (75 points),
 students not graduating but still in school (70 points),
 and students earning certificates of program completion (60 points).

The Board of Education's graduation and completion index will account for all students in the graduating class's ninth-grade cohort, plus students transferring in, minus students transferring out and deceased students. Those students who are not included in one of the preceding categories (i.e. students who dropout) will also be included in the index.

More detailed information can be found at the this address
<http://legis.state.va.us/codecomm/Register/vol24/iss26/v24i26.pdf>

SUMMER INSTITUTE 2008: A SUCCESS

Virginia's chapter hosted another successful Summer Institute on July 31st and August 1st at the Roslyn Center in Richmond, Virginia. The 2-day event was packed with great speakers from Dept. of Education; Dept. of Rehabilitative Services, GWU Mid-Atlantic RCEP, Commonwealth Autism Services, Social Security Administration, and VCU T/TAC. Participants were also able to meet others providing transition services in the relaxed environment of the Roslyn Center. With more than 150 acres on the James River the location provided a perfect meeting space to prepare for the 08-09 academic year. We were also able to increase participation by more than 40% from the 2007 event! The 60 participants at the 2008 event represented teachers, transition coordinators, special education administrators, private school providers, DRS counselors, vocational evaluators, community agency representatives, parents, and university representatives.

SAVE THE DATE FOR VADCDT SUMMER INSTITUTE '09!

The VADCDT Summer Institute will once again be held at the Roslyn Center in Richmond, Virginia. Mark your calendar to attend two days of excellent professional development on Thursday, July 30th and Friday July 31st.

The Program Committee promises to bring you the best and the latest information and education on transition. Your suggestions are welcome. Please send them to Beth Somers at beth.somers@drs.virginia.gov

BEST PRACTICES

Erica Lovelace, Education Services Manager, Department of Rehabilitative Services
Liz Getzel, VCU Rehabilitation Research and Training Center

A one-day summit on Access to Postsecondary Education for Individuals with Disabilities: A Summit on Removing Barriers to Access: Addressing Documentation Issues was held in Richmond, Virginia on November 7, 2007. The Assistant Superintendent for Instruction for the Virginia Department of Education, Mr. Douglas Cox, served as the summit chair. Fourteen key leaders and stakeholders attended representing state agencies, professional organizations, higher education consortiums, university and college administrators, family members, and secondary education administrators. The purpose of the summit was to bring together decision makers, leaders, and stakeholders to develop strategies to establish consistency in documentation requirements and to develop systems of shared responsibility for providing documentation for all students with disabilities entering postsecondary education programs in Virginia.

The Summit was coordinated and hosted by The Virginia Higher Education Leadership Partners (VA HELP) a consortium of diverse stake-holders that collaborate on issues of mutual concern pertinent to the enhancement and accessibility of postsecondary education for students with disabilities. Established in 1999, VA HELP meets quarterly to work on specific topical areas determined by its members.

The specific focus of the summit centered on just one of several challenges that students with disabilities face as they transition to college. Other challenges include concerns over the academic preparation of students with disabilities exiting high school transitioning to college; the increasing number of students with disabilities who do not self-disclose in college; students not using their accommodations once they have disclosed, and the lack of self-determination skills of students with disabilities to meet the challenges of managing their academic work and supports. However, due to the fact that the documentation of a disability is a critical step in the process for accessing services and supports in college which often results in a significant barrier for students with disabilities as they attempt to access higher education programs, the VA HELP members have focused their efforts on collaborating with other professional organizations and key decision makers to develop and implement effective strategies that addresses this issue in Virginia.

Several themes emerged from the discussion as well as ideas raised by the participants. Some of these themes are listed as follows:

- Identify major inconsistencies in policy and practice among colleges and universities and based on this information develop a joint policy model with cooperation between the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) that identifies common ground among colleges and universities and distribute to institutions to use as a baseline model
- Identify existing streams of funding that could assist students with disabilities in covering costs for assessments (e.g. workforce development)
- Access data sources to provide information on the number of students with disabilities entering Virginia higher education programs
- Identify current practices in other states to determine if specific strategies can be adopted or adapted in Virginia
- Explore the use of the Summary of Performance as a resource for documentation purposes
- Identify methods for communication between the k-12 system, the higher education system; individuals with disabilities and family members; and clinicians conducting assessments
- Align individuals with disabilities and access issues with state policies on diversity and access in higher education programs
- Establish a connection of access issues around documentation with an existing state priority that would not compete with other research priorities and work with state leadership to support research efforts

Perhaps one of the main focuses that we as practitioners can begin to develop as a best practice would be to begin to open communication between k-12 representatives and individuals representing colleges and universities in serving individuals with disabilities. It is important that we engage in dialog to understand what the concerns and needs are of both academic sectors. Too often the message that is heard within secondary education is that colleges and universities need updated and current testing and can't use what secondary education has collected and observed over the time that they work with a student. Rather than allowing this misperception to continue it is critical that the two parties begin to share information. Colleges and Universities need to understand and recognize the value of information that is available through secondary education within the IEPs present level of performance, transition planning information

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and to some extent information that can be included within the Summary of Performance. Secondary education must be willing to include observational information, accommodations that have been used by the consumer, learning styles and preferences and overall motivation of the student as part of the information sharing process.

To accomplish this we may look at pilot sites within the Commonwealth to develop a model for how this process might be used. Additionally, we want to look at ways that we can share the responsibility for removing barriers for youth with disabilities to access postsecondary education opportunities.

For more detailed information on the outcome of this summit and next steps that the Higher Education Leadership Partners will be working on please contact Liz Getzel with the VCU Rehabilitation Research and Training Center or Erica Lovelace Education Services Manager with the Department of Rehabilitative Services. The Virginia HELP welcomes any suggestions that will enhance the work that is being done to successfully remove the current access barriers to postsecondary education for individuals with disabilities.

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Joan Lovegren-O'Brien, Nominations Chair

The VADCDT Executive Board is looking for members interested in making a difference! Please consider running for one of the following positions to help VADCDT continue their excellence in supporting Career Development and Transition in Virginia.

Vice President: The Vice President serves for three years beginning July 1, 2009; the first year as Vice President, the second year as President and the third year as Past President.

As Vice President, the individual will:

- ✓ serve as President in case of absence or inability to serve,
- ✓ chair the recognition/awards committee
- ✓ assume other responsibilities as designated by the President.

Treasurer: The Treasurer serves for two years beginning July 1, 2009.

As Treasurer, the individual will:

- ✓ serve as custodian of the funds of the division;
- ✓ authorize and pay all approved expenses;
- ✓ provide a detailed written report of all debits and credits for each Executive Board meeting and to provide an annual report for the annual business meeting;
- ✓ provide all records to the Executive Board 15 days prior to the new treasurer installation, in order for the Executive Board to conduct an audit.

Please consider running for office. Contact Joan Lovegren-O'Brien if you are interested in seeking a position or if you have any questions about serving on the Executive Board. If you would like to nominate a fellow member, please receive their permission in writing prior to making the nomination.

****Concerned about the time commitment?** A majority of the VADCDT Executive Board meetings are done through conference calls. The annual business meeting is held at the Transition Forum.

TRANSITION FORUM 2009

Mark your calendars and then register for The Virginia Transition Forum 2009. It will be held at Norfolk Waterside Marriott on March 16 – 18, 2009. As a member you contribute financially to this excellent event. For more information and to obtain a registration form visit www.virginiatransitionforum.org.

Visit Our Website: www.VADCDT.org