

The Special EDGE

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A Reflection:

High Expectations for All

By James A. Tucker, Ph.D., Chair of Excellence in Dyslexia and Related Learning Exceptionalities, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

S can any current journal article or news review about the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, and you likely will read about the “new” IDEA, although it carries an idea that is at least 50 years old. There has been apparent progress. For example, what began as mainstreaming has proceeded to become integration and finally inclusion. However, all of these terms are simply euphemisms for what grew out of Wolf Wolfensberger’s concept of normalization. As a society, we have accepted this “new” concept as an alterna-

tive to the inhumane practices that prevailed in institutional settings. But years of rhetoric have resulted in what might be described as just a different form of institutionalization—institutionalization by process instead of by location. The fact that IEPs have become so cumbersome is one example of the institutionalization of process. Perhaps even more significant is the way special education is treated as a place rather than an array of services; compounding this is the categorical imperative where students are known by their disability labels rather than by their talents and dreams.

For the past several decades, the focus of legislation and policy has been to create incentives and sanctions designed to ensure that the rights of students with disabilities are maintained. And for just as many years, as the data continue to show, we have fallen far short of our ultimate goal. We have made progress, but that progress has been mixed, inconsistent, and slow. High school graduation, for example, is important. All the job-related statistics tell us that. But the “proportion of students graduated” as a statistic has become so fraught with political polemics that it is essentially meaningless as a goal by itself. And its relative importance starts fading as soon as that first post-high-school job is secured.

Jobs, Not Graduation

In his classic book, *The Renewal Factor*, Robert H. Waterman Jr. discusses how to *High Expectations*, continued on page 10

This Issue’s Focus

California’s High Performing High Schools Initiative represents State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O’Connell’s vision of how California’s high schools can work to support every student in school success. The initiative is made up of five components, each one with significant implications for students with disabilities. This issue of *The Special EDGE* offers articles from educational leaders who reflected on the first four components:

1. Implementing high expectations for all students
2. Fostering the development of world-class teachers and site administrators
3. Developing world-class instructional materials
4. Creating and supporting successful transitions to postsecondary education

On October 18–19, 2005, the Special Education Division of the California Department of Education will host a summit that is a follow-up to the overwhelmingly successful State Superintendent’s Summit on High School Reform held in October 2004. The summit for 2005 will focus on special education and high schools. The event will offer strategies for helping students with disabilities increase their achievements in English/language arts and mathematics. Speakers include Drs. Bill Daggett, Larry Gloeckler, and Richard Villa. For more information, go to <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/rel/ac/bsstrng.asp>, or contact Gloria Sannino by email at gsannino@cde.ca.gov or by phone at 916/323-2409.

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Informing and supporting parents, educators, and other service providers on special education topics, focusing on research-based practices, legislation, technical support, and current resources



IDEA '04 went into effect on Friday, July 1, 2005. Within the many new aspects that must be implemented in this law are critically important emphases on transition, transition planning, and post-school outcomes. With that in mind, and having first-hand knowledge of the wonderful work the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) has promoted to improving these outcomes, California has been working toward development of a plan for improvement.

On June 23, 2005, California held its first California Transition Community of Practice Symposium that was attended by over 300 people representing more than a dozen state and federal agencies, private organizations, and parent, advocate, and consumer groups. The symposium was organized and hosted collaboratively by the California Department of Education, the California Department of Rehabilitation, and the California State Independent Living Council. Dr. Joanne Cashman, IDEA Partnership Coordinator from the NASDSE, facilitated the general session presentations and panel discussions.

So exactly what is a Community of Practice (CoP)? It is the bringing together of multiple stakeholders to facilitate, collaborate, and exchange information about best practices across organizational boundaries, so that policymakers can solve federal, state, and local regulation implementation problems. The ultimate goal is to improve services to persons with disabilities.

The focus of a CoP is to move away from single-agency intervention toward cross-system efforts in the areas of service delivery, program interventions, data collection, professional in-service, strategic planning, and policy and regulation development. The advantages of collaboration and full participation among the partners are obvious: there will be a fuller range of options available for consumers to ensure success.

Local leaders will benefit and learn from state efforts to translate policy into practice. The state will learn from local efforts how to make policy work in practice. Locals will learn from and with each other how to incorporate effective practices. Real change will occur as families, practitioners, and decision-makers learn together and apply what works. And, most importantly, individuals with disabilities will benefit from this collaborative process as there become more opportunities to move successfully from the role of student to the role of independent citizen and worker and they enjoy greater opportunities for independent living, self-determination, self-advocacy, community participation, post-secondary education, and employment.

An effective CoP enables us to resolve a variety of barriers, such as communication breakdowns, turf issues involving differing priorities, language barriers, money issues, staff turnover, lack of relationships, absence of mutual respect, lack of opportunity to network, fragmented service delivery system, and lack of consistent state support of effective transition practices.

So how does a CoP connect policy, practices, and people? Some specific examples might be to build on voluntary affiliations and use the natural bonds between people who do the common work. By creating communication mechanisms and maintaining effective communication that strengthens natural bonds, we can keep the community members focused on learning-by-doing and use the community to bring attention to important issues. This will engage the people who can help resolve these issues and keep community members focused on outcomes.

What were the next steps identified by the symposium participants to establish and strengthen the California Community of Practice? Over 250 people signed up

Director's Letter, continued on page 12

Creating World-Class Instructional Materials

You're eleven years old and blind, sitting in your fifth-grade history classroom in the middle of November. While your sighted classmates have had their textbooks from the first day of school, you're still waiting for your Braille version to arrive.

Now jump ahead a year or three. You're in junior high or high school and the focus intensifies on content; classes are a lot larger and constantly changing; emotional supports are tenuous as the face of the teacher keeps shifting and the bells keep ringing and the distractions become greater (remember hormones?). Whether your disability at this point is sensory, physical, emotional, or cognitive, the added layers of complexity at school complicate your efforts to learn. And you're still waiting for that textbook.

Unfortunately, this happens regularly. Fortunately, part of this picture is improving. The accessibility of appropriately formatted instructional materials for students with disabilities has received a great deal of legal attention in recent years from two pieces of legislation: the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997 and its call for greater access to the general education curriculum for students with disabilities; and the No Child Left Behind Act, with its focus on standards-based testing for all students. Historically, most of the attention has been focused on assistive technology—devices that help in performing certain functions to bridge the gap between an existing infrastructure and the particular need of an individual who cannot access that infrastructure. Ramps that allow people in wheelchairs to enter buildings, for example; or a screen reader that permits a person with a visual disability to surf the Web. This ongoing effort has supported the current impetus to address the way students are presented information.

At the middle of this push is the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST), an organization committed to universal instructional design and access. This goes beyond helping teachers effectively present the general education

curriculum to students with disabilities. It involves designing instructional materials from the ground up so that they are intended, from inception, to meet the needs of all students and accommodate alternate formats of delivery, ensuring that adaptations don't diminish or weaken the way concepts or skills are presented.

The recent development of NIMAS (National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard), a universal electronic format for textbooks, represents a significant step toward universal access. NIMAS was funded initially by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, and CAST



was central in its development as an electronic standard: all textbook companies can adopt NIMAS, and it will allow them to convert print instructional materials into Braille, digital, and other specialized formats. The NIMAS standard eliminates the publishing challenge of having to provide files to customers in numerous formats—the requirements often vary from state to state. This speeds up the delivery process and also allows smaller publishers to be more competitive, since it won't require them to face numerous formatting demands.

Adopting this universal standard should help eliminate the delays that cause students with print-related disabilities to get the textbooks late into the school year (although for math, science and more abstract curricula such as art and art history, there remain accessibility challenges). Adopting NIMAS also makes

it possible for all students to get their materials across disciplines in a consistent and predictable format, so that they won't have to struggle to learn a new software application before they can get to the content of a particular course.

Federal incentives exist for states to comply with this effort, not the least of which comes out of the requirement that, if a state chooses not to comply, it must provide equivalent access to information and materials—no small task, given the sophistication of what is already in place.

That seeming sophistication may actually be a world of information delivery systems in its infancy, speculates John D. Kemp, lawyer, board member of CAST, and advocate for the rights of individuals with disabilities. Existing digital coding allows publishers to create annotated versions of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, for example, in print, Braille, voice-to-text, and e-Book versions; it also makes it possible to instantly adjust the level of commentary on the play up or down one or two grade levels. Sounds great, but Kemp thinks we're just getting started, and one day all individuals—whether or not they have a disability—will be able to customize the way they receive information, depending on how they process it—visually, auditorily, tactilely, kinesthetically, and more. According to Kemp, the folks at CAST believe that the way each of us learns is as unique as our fingerprints or our DNA.

Of course there are stumbling blocks. Copyright issues are one of them, and the legalities remain to work themselves out. For example, while ownership is known, once a textbook is downloaded from a website, or after chapters are adjusted to accommodate a student who has difficulty understanding a certain level of diction or syntactic complexity, there remain serious concerns for publishers and authors about piracy and whether new content—even a new book—has been created. Testing companies also—and already—face increasingly complex challenges in how they can appropriately accommodate various learning styles and still provide valid test results. How will a high school

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student who processes information best through what he hears, for example, take his SAT? How will his test be timed? How will that test be ranked against others? These are legitimate concerns that slow down efforts to apply accessibility standards to testing systems, but the questions may also offer opportunities for care and thoughtfulness as the world shifts from presenting information primarily in print to . . . something else.

In Kemp's mind, a commitment to accessible information for everyone—a commitment to creating this “something else”—calls into serious question not only our expectations of how information and knowledge is shared, but our values and whether or not we are willing to invest in what we say is important. If, as a society, we choose to make that investment, the required shift will affect every sector. Even organizations central to supporting individuals with disabilities after they leave school—the U.S. Department of Labor and One-Stop Centers—will need to change profoundly. If many people need their information delivered in ways other than standard-sized print on a paper page, what will this look like, and what does it require of a society committed to equality? If government services continue to be shifted from physical to virtual places (driver license renewals, permit applications, property tax payments, etc.), will access be assured to all?

As with so many things related to disability, accessible information becomes a human rights issue. Kemp's personal story places this in a valuable context. He was born without arms below the elbows or legs below the knees and uses four prostheses (not before having undergone multiple amputations before prostheses could be used). With this history, he insists he's had a privileged life. His father was a strong, steady advocate for his son (Kemp's mother died when he was 15 months old), both for Kemp's sense of himself and for his right to a world that gave him the chance to learn and thrive. Kemp currently practices law in a Washington DC firm that focuses on issues related to health, education, and the environment. He believes himself fortunate to have had available to him the technology and adaptations he has needed to live an active and productive life. Not

so, he insists, for those with severe, sensory and “invisible” disabilities, especially those that affect cognition and intellectual processing.

He has become a strong advocate for serving students with such disabilities in schools, an advocacy that gains significance in light of the fact that nearly half of students in special education programs have invisible learning disabilities. Given the population affected and the amount of potential talent and ability lost through inadequate instruction, it becomes critical that these children, like all children, be presented information in ways that can be customized to suit their unique processing needs—auditorily? visually? tactilely? cognitively? socially? emotionally? Perhaps this means that schools turn into places where everyone proceeds at his or her own pace and is allowed to advance or delve deeper into material, based on abilities, needs, and relative level of maturity. This, of course, would present a particular challenge for the important socialization aspect of schools—the last thing most of us want is a society of solitary souls locked behind computer screens, for example, no matter how content-rich a world those screens are presenting. But this may provide a new role for teachers, who could assess students individually against specific learning objectives rather than normatively comparing them to one another.

Kemp believes that the nexus of accessibility requirements and technology will revolutionize the way educational instruction is delivered overall. Children with disabilities will lead us to solutions that benefit all children and even adults. The dominance of the linear, print culture currently excludes important segments of the population. Current technology and the push for accessible information is already challenging that dominance; instructional materials already exist that are interactive: in the middle of an instructional CD-ROM, students can access pictures, sound, and additional explanations, while moving up or down grade levels to match the degree of sophistication that fits their level of understanding. However, few have even begun to scratch the surface in realizing the potential that this new flexibility and these new tools can bring to the classroom.

While both the educators' and students' instructional worlds are changing

for the better because of technology, our accountability and assessment systems, Kemp warns, may in fact be moving in the wrong direction because of how technology is *not* being used. He is concerned that actions like the U.S. Department of Education's recent decision to allow an increase in the percentage of disabled children that may be excluded from states' and local education agencies' measurements of AYP (adequate yearly progress) goals might take us back to a more segregated educational system. “Aren't students with disabilities part of every state's and school's student population?” Kemp asks, “The goal of the law is to help every child learn to proficiency; so why then shouldn't every child be included in measuring our progress toward that goal?” He notes that the No Child Left Behind Act already provides the opportunity for a student to take an alternative assessment if his disabilities prevent him from taking the regular state assessment, so long as that alternative assessment tests grade-level knowledge. “The reality is that there aren't many alternatives out there that actually do that.” He suggests that the solution is not to retreat but to design assessments in such a way that all students can be accurately assessed in determining adequate yearly progress. “If learning continues to be more customized in ways like we've done with Individualized Education Programs under IDEA, we must have more flexible and individualized assessments that reflect accurately the learning progress that actually is being made by each student.” He argues that such data can be amalgamated for districts and states to show how students are progressing toward proficiency in the state's standards.

We cannot imagine the face of instruction even twenty years from now. And the implications, not just for students with visual or auditory disabilities, and not just for students with learning disabilities, are tremendous. Perhaps a student with a learning disability will soon be seen as just another student with a particular learning style, as everyone has a uniquely particular learning style. Some styles might require especially creative methods of information delivery, but the people who need these methods can excel, and surely have something unique—and important—to teach the rest of us. ♦

Developing World-Class Teachers

Louisa Moats is currently one of the country's foremost experts in the study of reading and how to teach it. The former site director of the Washington DC Early Interventions Project, funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, she began her professional life as a technician in a neuropsychology lab and then did a stint as a resource teacher. Quickly developing a passion for working with children with disabilities in general and with reading challenges in particular, she went on to earn a master's degree in learning disabilities from Peabody and an EdD in reading at Harvard. She taught in several graduate programs and is known for designing teacher education courses that link language with reading. She was a licensed psychologist for 15 years before entering the world of research, national and state policy-making, speaking, and publishing. She has written numerous articles, policy papers, and books; served on advisory boards, and the list keeps growing. Rumor has it she was even a musician for a while. Currently, Moats is putting much of her energy where she believes she can make the most difference in the lives of children: helping educators learn how to teach reading. Clearly passionate about effective practices, she took time out from her travel schedule to share some thoughts about how to develop world-class teachers.

Foundational knowledge

First, according to Moats, teacher training must include content that treats subject matter in depth and then applies that content to classroom practice. This training requirement also demands a depth of expertise on the part of an instructor that is critical for teachers and teachers-in-training. For without a foundational understanding of the topic, Moats believes, teachers simply cannot be as effective in their own work as they might be. She insists that teachers like to be challenged and don't like their time wasted; so when professional development is "fluffy and activity-oriented," there is insufficient substance to allow anyone to understand why such practices might be useful or

what evidence might justify them.

Special education licensing programs, for example, infrequently address how to teach reading to kids with reading disabilities. Teachers usually receive a mere one-semester overview on reading methods when they are earning their credential. The realities of the classroom require a deep understanding of how "a kid's wiring and the language code might not be matching up"—an understanding that requires more in-depth study than is possible in a one-semester course.

Research-proven strategies and effective instructional approaches have been around for decades. The trick is to get people to actually use them.

The area of reading provides the examples that come most easily to mind for Moats, but the principles can be applied across subject matter; math has its own kind of language that doesn't come naturally to a lot of children, as do the sciences. Lack of natural ability in a child does not need to dictate lack of access to the material; and Moats believes that an understanding on the part of the teacher of how language is processed in the brain and a thorough grasp of "specific strategies for teaching and assessing children" can help a teacher become more effective in helping children decipher the code of written language.

Instructional Strategies

While disciplinary knowledge needs to be there, a wide range of instructional strategies is also critical to a teacher's success and to student achievement. "It doesn't get you anywhere if you teach on the basis of personal judgment and experience, without knowing the practices that are most supported by research." Moats is convinced that both a thorough understanding of the skill that is to be taught and a carefully chosen arsenal of approaches to teaching it—chosen not randomly just to see if it might work or because it worked with some kids once,

but chosen because a careful analysis points to it as the most effective way of addressing the needs of a particular child—allows a teacher to carry out the work of instruction in a systematic way and avoid the pitfalls of trying to "get the job done in a scattershot" manner.

As students get older, that knowledge base in a teacher becomes increasingly more important, beyond the level of information that the teacher needs to pass directly on to the student. Moats sees "great reading instruction programs for the older reader" (Jane Green's LANGUAGE! for example), but cautions that it is far more difficult for teachers to learn these instructional approaches if they have no background in the structure of language or in reading disabilities. So that base of knowledge needs to be there before the teacher can even learn the instructional program, let alone implement it effectively.

She is convinced, however, that when a sound, research-validated program is paired with teachers who are well grounded in the basic concepts of how people learn to read, the program will prove successful.

Sustaining the Training

When planning inservice training for teachers, Moats has very strong convictions about what works and what doesn't. In fact, she refuses to participate in any training effort that does not come with a serious, long-term commitment. In Moats' experience, "it takes two days of instruction to get faculty and leadership to understand a specific set of practices; and then it takes one day of follow-up a month for at least the first year before the strategies will be regularly [making a difference] in the classroom." As she describes it, this follow-up needs to include things like team meetings, classroom visitations, and consultations that require teachers to be accountable and provide evidence that they are using their new-found skills in the classroom. Teachers also need to be given coaching, support, and opportunities to adjust and correct their efforts. "Research-proven strategies and effective instructional approaches

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have been around for decades. The trick is to get people to actually use them in the classroom on a consistent basis” so that they acquire a new habit. This takes time and focus. “If there is no commitment to the long term, it will not stick” because adult learners need guided practice to learn a set of new teaching behaviors. All of this is difficult to do, and it may explain why so many professional development efforts fail.

It’s also difficult, according to Moats, because “something else is always coming down the pike—some new fad or a new administrator” who wants things done her way, regardless of the success of the previously implemented program. Moats believes that it is critically important for administrators to know that “teachers deeply resent the random change that can accompany either” occurrence. This constantly shifting course “drives them crazy. We’ve all heard of those seasoned teachers who just hold on and ‘wait it out.’”

Training Techniques

Becoming very practical for a moment, Moats reflected on the pacing of a training session for teachers. She is adamant that if material is getting theoretical or abstract, the presenter must show the application or concrete implication—what it looks like in practice—as often as possible. And she insists that presenters not waste time with things that are only obliquely related to teaching. For example, if someone is giving a workshop to high school teachers on ADD in adolescents, it is important that this presenter focus on the specific application of strategies to the classroom. It does no good to bog the session down with detailed scientific information appropriate to practicing psychologists, interesting though it might be. She insists that a trainer must constantly ask himself how what he’s talking about will affect the way his listeners will teach.

Instruction

Moats draws a critical distinction between instruction and remediation. Instruction, as she explains it, involves “what every teacher ought to know about teaching kids how to function in an academic environment”—and this is larger than subject matter. For example, every teacher in a high school should be well-

versed in strategies that help all students learn better—especially those students who are easily distracted, inattentive, or disorganized. This translates into every teacher knowing how to help students find main ideas, organize notes, summarize information using an expository writing style, outline or use a graphic organizer, review for tests, revisit a text, understand the structure of a chapter or an essay, organize a notebook, manage time, develop their vocabulary, and figure out the structure of words using simple linguistic decoding strategies. And there are probably more useful strategies. But her belief is that every math, science, social studies, language, physical education, and career technical education teacher should know how to teach these things and should systematically apply them in



all classroom activities. They are simply good practice.

Ideally, in any school—but especially in high school—every teacher is using the same strategies, regardless of the discipline or the grade. So, for example, the way students are required to outline notes or place headings on their research papers is the same in social studies as it is in English. This kind of consistency offers a comfort and stability that helps all students, but particularly those most in need of support. And different strategies from class to class do the reverse: they complicate students’ lives and make it harder for them to learn.

Remediation

It is also critical that teachers be trained in recognizing that remediation is very different from instruction. Remediation, as Moats sees it, does not apply to those

less-than-serious cases where a student needs basic fluency work, guided reading, and just plain practice. These things can be—and should be—provided by any classroom teacher. Remediation, on the other hand, involves a concerted and careful effort to close a serious gap in learning. It “requires of the instructor very specific training . . . [it] is not something that a well-meaning individual can just pick up through a program and accomplish.” It is critical for all teachers to have some training in determining what they can address on their own and when they need to call in a specialist.

It’s sometimes easy to forget that even seasoned teachers need their own instruction, and they sometimes need to call in a specialist. Louisa Moats offers a good place to start. ♦

Read what Louisa Moats has to say about teaching reading: http://www.idonline.org/ld_indepth/reading/whole_language_lives_on.html
Read an interview with Louisa Moats: <http://www.childrenofthecode.org/interviews/moats.htm>

Spellings

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states to apply for the paperwork reduction and three-year IEP pilot projects. Can you comment on the status of the pilot projects and the priorities for their award? What would you personally like to see come out of these pilots?

Margaret Spellings: I am pleased that the law includes several provisions to reduce unnecessary burdens on teachers and schools. For instance, the IDEIA allows the Secretary to waive paperwork requirements for 15 states. I look forward to learning how we can free teachers to teach and substantially reduce the time they spend out of the classroom. The law also contains a pilot study on multi-year IEPs. I am interested in how those states will implement multi-year IEPs while protecting the rights of children and their parents.

The Department will publish notices of proposed priorities for these two pilot studies for public review as soon as possible after the draft IDEIA regulations are issued. The purpose of the notices is to receive public input on how proposals from states should be reviewed and selected. As soon as the final IDEIA regulations are published, the Department will publish the request for states to submit their applications. ♦

Transition Comes of Age: A Common Framework

A

By Curtis Richards, National Collaborative on Workforce & Disability for Youth, Institute for Educational Leadership

Adolescence and young adulthood is a time of transition from the structured and protective environments of home and school to the unstructured, “fend for yourself” world of work and adult living. An awkward period in any young person’s life, transition is often about moving from total dependence to self-sufficiency.

Self-sufficiency is a goal expected of any young person growing into adulthood. Unfortunately, these expectations typically have not been equally applied to youth with disabilities, especially those with significant disabilities. However, these young people can make significant progress toward this goal if they are given the opportunity to learn, develop, and practice these skills.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) articulates a national framework of public policy on disability. A piece of civil rights legislation that prohibits discrimination based on disability, this act provides people with disabilities the necessary tools for making informed choices and decisions; and for achieving equality of opportunity, full inclusion, and integration into all aspects of society, employment, independent living, and economic and social self-sufficiency.

The ADA includes some of this very language in its preamble: “(T)he Nation’s proper goals regarding individuals with disabilities are to assure equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self-sufficiency . . .” (PL 101-336). Throughout the 1990s, Congress systematically wrote and reworked other major pieces of disability program legislation with the intent of making them consistent with the values and principles of the ADA, particularly in the critical areas of education, employment, and independent living. Comparable language was added to federal legislation governing special education (in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA), employment and training programs (Vocational Rehabilitation Act and the Workforce Investment Act or WIA), and the service system for people

with developmental disabilities (Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act).

From a disability context, there are two strands of policy embedded in federal legislation that are relevant to a discussion of transitioning youth with disabilities. The first strand addresses civil rights protections and basic access to services for people with disabilities; this includes ADA, Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, Section 188 of the WIA, and select parts of IDEA for youth under the age of 22. The second

Special education students are more than twice as likely as their peers in general education to drop out of high school.

strand deals with specific programs and services, and these include—but certainly are not limited to—IDEA, WIA (Titles I, II, and IV), the Social Security Act, and the Ticket-to-Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (TWWIIA). Social and economic self-sufficiency, although not well defined in these statutes, are clearly among their end objectives.

Work is the cornerstone of self-sufficiency, and education is key to employment. However, by now it is well known that becoming successful in the workforce remains elusive for many youth with disabilities. The facts make this all too clear:

- Special education students are more than twice as likely as their peers in general education to drop out of high school.
- Youth with disabilities are half as likely as their peers without disabilities to participate in postsecondary education.
- Current special education students can expect to face much higher adult unemployment rates than their peers without disabilities.
- The adjudication rate of youth with

disabilities is four times higher than for youth without disabilities.

- The pregnancy rate for youth with disabilities is much higher than the national average; among females with learning disabilities, for example, 50 percent will be pregnant within three years of school exit.
- Young adults with disabilities are three times more likely to live in poverty as adults than their peers without disabilities.
- The picture is even more grim for youth with significant disabilities: fewer than one out of ten will attain integrated employment; five out of ten will experience indefinitely long waits for post-school employment services; and most of these individuals will earn less than \$2.40 per hour in sheltered workshop settings (www.ncwd-youth.info).

This bleak picture extends to the unemployment rate of adults with disabilities, which has hovered around 70 percent for decades now. If there is any hope of reversing this stubborn statistic, it is in placing focused attention on the transition needs of youth with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities.

Some good things are in place. There are targeted national policies and programs intended to help youth with disabilities achieve successful transitions from family and school to independence and productive adult life. Families, too, make a big difference when they encourage and support their children to have high expectations of independence and self-sufficiency, especially when those expectations are based on good information.

The IDEA establishes transition as a priority within special education and requires it to be addressed in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and to be part of what schools are held accountable for accomplishing. And the Rehabilitation Act requires vocational rehabilitation programs to provide transition services; although it does not spell out what that means. The WIA requires youth-serving

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organizations to provide a specific set of important services; however, it does not link them to transition *per se*. Across the efforts that currently exist, there has been an unfortunate lack of important connections, continuity, and consistency related to transition and transition-age youth, with and without disabilities.

What is currently missing is a national transition policy that links various systems and programs in a concerted way to assist youth through that awkward, typically adolescent period in life. In fact, there is no coherent national policy that articulates what is needed during those critical transition years—in any system, let alone across systems.

However, much of this is beginning to change. In the last several years, many federal and state agencies have placed an increasing emphasis on transition, with the intent of improving youth outcomes. This attention has given rise to a new national organization focused on transition issues, the National Alliance on Secondary Education and Transition (NASET). This is a voluntary consortium of more than 40 national associations of general and special education interest groups that work toward providing effective supports for transition-age youth.

Over the last couple of years, a new national agenda has begun to take shape that goes beyond the effort of individual groups and organizations and instead supports joint efforts to assist youth with disabilities as they transition to adulthood. It focuses on building bridges that will allow responsible people and responsive local, state, and national organizations—both public and private—to help youth with disabilities achieve their highest potential as adults.

This agenda is being built on thirty years of research and experience that demonstrates that all youth—particularly at-risk youth, such as those with disabilities and those in the child welfare system—achieve better outcomes when they have access to high quality, standards-based education, whether they are in or out of school; information about career options and exposure to the world of work, including structured internships; opportunities to develop social, civic, and leadership skills; strong connections to caring adults; access to safe places to

interact with their peers; and support services and specific accommodations to allow them to become independent adults.

As part of this agenda, a growing body of work, sponsored by the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) of the U.S. Department of Labor and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in the U.S. Department of Education, has documented that successful youth transitions from school to career-path employment, lifelong learning, and independent community living are grounded in a framework of five research-based foundations:



1. Education-based preparatory experiences, whether in or out of school settings
2. Career preparation and work-based learning experiences
3. Youth development and leadership opportunities
4. Coordinated interagency connecting activities
5. Family involvement and supports

Two complementary frameworks have been created and organized around these five foundations: NCWD-Youth's "Transition Guideposts for Success" (<http://www.ncwd-youth.info>) and the "NASET Standards & Quality Indicators: Transition Toolkit for Systems Improvement" (<http://www.ncset.org>). Together they define the content of a comprehensive person-centered set of activities that needs to occur during the transition timeframe.

Already things are shifting from abstract policy to concrete application: fifteen states, including California, have received grant funds to build a cross-agency infrastructure around these five framing areas and to pilot-test them with local sites. Led by the Developmental Disabilities Council, Florida has already developed a comprehensive strategic plan for transition based on these frameworks (www.partnersintransition.org). And several state special education departments (Minnesota, New Hampshire, Wisconsin, and Colorado), along with a handful of local school districts around the country, are adopting these frameworks as the basis for their transition planning purposes. In addition, NASET's work, the aforementioned Standards and Indicators, is being adopted by educational agencies across the country to create Transition Communities of Practice in several states, including California.

The diverse and complex needs of today's youth cannot be met by one family, school district, government program, or private organization acting alone. The successful transition of all youth to adulthood and a productive, independent, self-sufficient life demands coordination and collaboration across systems and across agencies, along with an integrated services approach to serving youth at the federal, state, and local levels.

Finally, this is happening. Transition has come of age and the stars are aligning. It no longer suffices to work in programmatic silos or to look at only one or two elements of what a youth needs. The new frameworks paint a comprehensive picture of these needs and of what schools and connecting agencies must provide to meet them.

Only through this comprehensive approach to transition can the self-sufficiency goals of the ADA be realized, the employment rate of people with disabilities be substantially improved, and today's youth with disabilities look forward to leading positive, productive lives in their communities. ♦

A native Californian, Curtis Richards is a Senior Policy Fellow at the Center for Workforce Development with the Washington, DC-based Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL). IEL is home to the National Collaborative on Workforce & Disability for Youth, a national technical assistance center supported by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy.

Helping Students Prepare for the Real World

California's Career Technical Education (CTTE) model curriculum standards, approved on May 11, 2005, by California's State Board of Education (SBE), will provide California's teachers with the benchmarks they need to guide their students toward the jobs of the future. The standards have been developed and revised in a process involving almost 200 people—representatives of California's business and industry community, educators, and the general public. With their implementation, standards-based instruction will be applied not only to college-bound students, but also to those intending to pursue a technical degree or to go directly into the world of work after high school.

The California Department of Education (CDE) defines Career Technical Education as "a sequence of courses that integrates core academic knowledge with technical and occupational knowledge to provide students with a pathway to postsecondary education and careers." As summed up by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell in *The Sacramento Bee* (March 14, 2004), "The job of K–12 education in California must be to ensure that all our students graduate with the ability to fulfill their potential—whether that takes them to higher education or directly to their careers. Unfortunately, . . . too many of our students are not adequately prepared for either. By raising our expectations for our students, we can and will begin to change that."

According to Dr. Patrick Ainsworth, Assistant Superintendent and Director of the Secondary, Postsecondary & Adult Leadership Division of the CDE, before the standards existed, "it was potluck—a student's level of CTE preparedness depended on the local district and teacher. Now teachers will be able to build consistency. Students will have a better skill set that . . . will lead to educational and career success postsecondarily."

CTE standards for California were first mandated in the 1990s, but a draft prepared at that time was stalled and never submitted to the State Board of Education. A coalition of legislators, led by

Assembly Members Carol Liu and Mark Wyland, began to investigate the steps necessary to improve CTE in California. A 2002 bill by Assembly Member Rod Wright directed that the State Superintendent appoint an advisory group to provide guidance during the development of standards, which then were to be submitted to the SBE by June 1, 2005. Further legislation authored by State Senator Bruce McPherson mandated that the

"The job of K–12 education in California must be to ensure that all our students graduate with the ability to fulfill their potential."

Superintendent develop an accompanying Curriculum Framework for adoption by the SBE by June of 2006.

When Superintendent Jack O'Connell came into office, he moved quickly to appoint the CCTE Advisory Group. In November of 2003, the California Institute on Human Services at Sonoma State University was selected through a competitive bid process as the contractor to manage the development of the standards and framework. The project was directed by Dr. Eileen Warren.

Previously, vocational and technical education in California had been organized around five broad subject areas: Agriculture, Home Economics, Health, Business Education, and Industrial/Technical Education. Looking forward to a list of areas that more accurately reflected current and potential careers, representatives from business and industry convened to help determine 15 employment sectors that were expected to grow in the future. The sectors were chosen using Employment Development Department data, based on criteria such as that each area offers at least 100 individual job titles and could be expected to offer high employment opportunity.

The new sectors included Agriculture and Natural Resources; Arts, Media, and Entertainment; Building Trades and

Construction; Education, Child Development, and Family Services; Energy and Utilities; Engineering and Design; Fashion and Interior Design; Finance and Business; Health Science and Medical Technology; Hospitality, Tourism, and Recreation; Information Technology; Manufacturing and Product Development; Marketing, Sales, and Service; and Public Services and Transportation. Work groups made up of experts in the respective fields were brought together for each of the industry sectors to begin the process of developing and editing the standards.

The standards then were made available for public review and comment. Over five hundred responses were received, well over the number considered adequate. Project leaders then took the standards to business and industry representatives who had not yet been involved in the process for some fresh feedback. They received some constructive suggestions but overall received validation that these standards were, as Ainsworth says, "right where they needed to be." After additional comments from the Advisory Group, the standards were revised, submitted to the SBE, and received approval.

The purpose behind the design of the standards was to help both academic and CTE teachers provide students with not only more knowledge, but knowledge that is flexible and applicable to real-world conditions. Some standards are directed toward grade levels as early as middle school, and many attempt to cover at minimum the standards covered by the California High School Exit Exam. They attempt to capture the "underlying knowledge and skills" that students need to be successful.

While CTE teachers are not typically expected to be the primary deliverer of academics, there are some exceptions, as when a course such as agricultural biology is considered an alternative course for the biology requirement. In most cases, though, the standards are geared to provide a venue for the practical application of academic knowledge.

How they will change the way teach-

CTTE, continued on page 12

achieve and maintain a desired outcome. One of the factors that allows the world's best organizations to remain on the leading edge of development is measurement. Waterman quotes Mason Haire of the University of California as having said, "What gets measured gets done." Such a belief leaps to a major unchallenged assumption: that what is measured in schools relates to learning for meaningful outcomes in post-school life. But there is little evidence that it does, at least in terms of individual student success in the workplace—which is the ultimate purpose of education for every person. Unfortunately, education is usually a series of often unrelated events that do little to establish systematic lifelong habits of learning. Alternatively, and in a progressive sense, education can be thought of as a subscription rather than a one-time purchase.

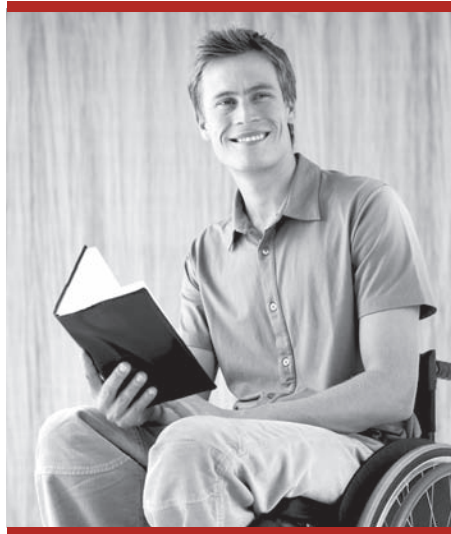
With reference to normalization and having high—and realistic—expectations for all students with disabilities so that they can look forward to a productive adult life, the general success of American schooling has been problematic. I once heard Eugene Wilhoit, former Executive Director of the National Association of State Boards of Education, make the profound observation that America's schools have not failed at all. In his words, "schools are doing exactly what they were designed to do—and that is the problem."

We choose to measure those things that lead us to believe that what we are doing is right and useful. We avoid measuring those things that reveal our weaknesses. If we were honest, we would take three critical steps. First, we would accept responsibility for educating individuals in every community. Second, we would design our educational systems to prepare students with disabilities for productive adult lives. And third, we would define and measure our outcomes in functional terms; that is, in terms of employment success rather than in terms of school completion. We would count jobs—not diplomas.

As Waterman states, "Organizations—which, after all, are merely collections of people—exist for only one purpose: to help people reach ends together that they could not achieve individually. Most leaders in renewing organizations share a belief that the organization stands in service to the individual. When the orga-

nization starts getting in the way, they change it. Dreams, not desperation, move organizations to the highest levels of performance. Our dream ought to be institutions that work for, not against, our needs." In terms of educational organizations, our citizens with disabilities have very real dreams for their future, and virtually all of those dreams involve the realization of a meaningful, happy, and productive adult life. Our policies and laws are designed with the intent of helping us achieve that objective. Intentions, though, are not always enough.

In the late 1980s in Philadelphia, I was privileged to be part of a national planning initiative that addressed the ineffectiveness of policy by itself to solve the problems that our students with disabilities were facing at the secondary level. We accepted the obvious fact



that the real objective of schooling is to foster quality of life in adulthood. We determined that one way to measure the degree to which schools adequately prepared students for adulthood was to examine the students' post-secondary lives. Depending on the student's ability and preferences, did he or she . . .

- Hold a job with an adequate salary and benefits?
- Enroll in higher education?
- Become a stay-at-home spouse?
- Enlist in the military or serve in another national service, such as the Peace Corps?
- Engage in another equally productive adult role?

We agreed that a school system might actually determine its effectiveness by tracking its seventh graders (age 12) in

terms of their successful adult roles when they had reached approximately the age of 22 or 24. No school system that we approached agreed to take part in such an evaluation, however—perhaps because of the difficulty in controlling all the variables that would have to be considered during the 10- to 12-year period that would be involved. Nevertheless, we found ourselves committed to the idea that things like high educational standards, IEPs, and individual transition plans are worthwhile, but only to the extent that they result in happy and productive citizen outcomes.

Growth of the non-traditional student population

We talk about lifelong learning, but we have very little understanding of what that means. However, what would happen if we developed programs in secondary education that encouraged continuous learning rather than school completion? This aspect of education is currently being explored most effectively in adult learning. In 2002, the U.S. Office of Education reported that "nearly three-fourths of today's undergraduate students are considered 'nontraditional' because of their age, financial status, or when they enrolled in college. . . . Only 27 percent are 'traditional' students who have a high school diploma, enroll full-time right after high school, and depend on parents for financial support."

Rodney Everhart wrote in 1999 that "higher education is struggling to maintain a sense of community and loyalty among its constituents. The geographic dispersion enabled by virtual learning technologies is compounded by the plethora of choices—students can pick from an array of education providers, changing their future alma mater almost as easily as changing their long-distance provider." This dramatic shift in student populations at colleges and universities has resulted in a dynamic new form of educational focus: adult learning. Secondary schools would do well to consider preparing students for a future of continuous learning that is served by the kinds of adult programs that are springing up everywhere.

But what is adult learning? As long ago as 1986, Stephen Brookfield reported investigations of what practitioners and professors of adult education regard as exemplary principles of practices that

facilitate adult learning. “The professors surveyed agree that adult learning is best facilitated when learners are engaged as participants in the design of learning; when they are encouraged to be self-directed; when the educator functions as a facilitator rather than didactic instructor; when individual learners, needs, and learning styles are taken into account; when a climate conducive to learning is established; when learners’ past experiences are utilized in the classroom; and when learning activities are deemed to have some direct relevance or utility to the learners’ circumstances.”

The strategies for achieving what we have long wanted and idealized for all students are perhaps somewhat utopian, but we often speak about that ideal as though it were a reality. If we were actually to realize such a state, what would it look like and how might we achieve it in reality, not just in our dreams? What follows is one such scenario.

The Community as School

Imagine all the elements of society working together for better schooling. Imagine parents, teachers, merchants, and others providing for the educational needs of young people. Imagine the members of a community having the skills necessary to sustain the education of all members of the next generation in a continuous and integrated process that begins at birth and continues for a lifetime.

What might such a system look like in reality? Picture a map of your school district. Note where the school buildings are. In your mind’s eye, allow those buildings to grow in size and to fuse together until you end up with one structure the size of your entire school district. Now remove the walls! Rather than thinking of the school as a building, think of your entire community as the school. Some school activities still take place in traditional ways, but others occupy every conceivable corner of the community at large. This includes the home, the workplace, the library, the hospital, and all other businesses and services.

When the entire community is involved . . .

Home is part of the school. Parents are full partners in the educational process. Portions of the curriculum are provided at home or, in conjunction with parents, elsewhere in the community. “Home-

work” is part of the formal school program. Communication between teachers and parents is expected and facilitated by the community.

Classroom instruction is part of the school. Effective elements of classroom instruction remain an essential part of an educational program. Much has been learned in the past few years about what works in classroom teaching. Effective instruction is basic to any educational program of a community.

The workplace is part of the school. Mentorships and apprenticeships are integrated parts of the educational program. When students choose to leave traditional classrooms to work in the community, they are changing places in the school rather than dropping out. It is impossible to drop out of the community.

The business community is part of the

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school. Through such organizations as the business roundtable, the economic leaders of the community participate in the school program. Rather than complaining about the lack of preparation on the part of school-finishers, business leaders participate in setting the expectations for students and helping to provide needed supports.

The public library is part of the school. It becomes a primary resource of the educational program instead of a community service that competes for tax dollars with school libraries. It may be possible to integrate community and library resources in order to improve their use for educational purposes.

Church is part of the school. Even though our country holds a very strong and central belief in the importance of the separation between church and government agencies, church is still very much a part of the community life of many students. It serves no one to pretend this isn’t the case. Churches in fact present valuable opportunities for learning.

Local colleges and universities are part of the school. Every member of the community has the opportunity to participate in the benefits of “higher” education by contributing to its development and implementation. Postsecondary education thus becomes a service of the community.

Community recreation facilities are part of the school. The community-at-play is facilitated through school-sponsored programs that involve families as well as individuals and provide cross-generational activities for building community spirit. Wisdom and experience have a place to be shared.

Community service is part of the school. Volunteer activities are planned as part of the community educational program in order to meet the needs of all community members. Providing food and shelter for the homeless, for example, is done through ongoing programs of service in the community.

Healthcare facilities and services are part of the school. The healthcare services of a community serve not only as vehicles to provide needed care and as a context for meaningful work, but they also represent a significant element of the educational program of the community.

Local government is part of the school. Both the executive and judicial branches of local government support the educational program of the community.

Conclusion

I would suggest the idea of a Community-based Individual Development Plan (CIDP), but I am fearful that even before the words are on paper we will have appointed a committee to study the requirements of such a plan: What format should be used? Who should sign it? How it would be evaluated? What sanctions do we impose if every person with a disability does not have such a plan within certain timelines? Sadly, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

We can realize success in life for all, with no person left behind, only if we prepare each individual for a productive and happy life after school. We can achieve such an objective under the “new” IDEA. But by continuing the debate about policy without implementing the reality that is intended by the law, we avoid the hard questions about accountability and resource allocation. There is no better time than now; in fact, there is no time but now. And if not now—when? ♦

ers deliver instruction depends on the school, Ainsworth says. CTE is most often delivered in a dedicated course, though sometimes it is in a sequence of courses or integrated into other courses. The standards will provide teachers with a starting place for discussion with their districts on content. They can then design assessments by working backward from the standards to develop outcomes for their students.

The standards have been carefully designed to be useful, as Ainsworth explains, for every student: “college-bound, at-risk, and all of the students who have some sort of disability. They have a scalability and natural progression—from exploration to very specific application—that will allow districts to build curricula to meet the needs of a wide range of students. Special education teachers will be able to reach into the standards and develop lessons that will mesh with their students’ abilities.”

The standards bring together the basics of what a student needs to know to be successful in general (represented by items known as “foundation standards”) with specific “pathway standards” for each of the 15 industry sectors. The foundation standards categories, which are uniform for all the sectors, represent eleven knowledge areas, from the intellectual (such as Academics and Legal and Ethical Responsibilities) to the practical (including Health and Safety, Demonstration and Application, etc.) Each of the categories then has subcategories (such as Academics: Mathematics: Algebra).

For example, a student wishing to enter the Agriculture and Natural Resources Industry Sector in the area of forestry can be expected to know foundation standards, such as “Understand the importance of accountability and responsibility in fulfilling personal, community, and workplace roles” (under Responsibility and Flexibility); and pathway standards, such as “Understand the oxygen, carbon, nitrogen, and water cycles” (under the Forestry and Natural Resources Pathway). Other career pathways under the Agriculture and Natural Resources sector include Agricultural Business, Agricultural Mechanics, Agriscience, Animal Science, Ornamental Horticulture, and Plant and Soil Science, and each has its correspond-

ing set of pathway standards.

Ainsworth says that the work groups came up with some results that might not have occurred to the non-expert. “You would of course find more science in the Health sector. But surprisingly, in the Construction sector there is a lot of history, because [the construction professionals] felt that was important.” He points out that these are meant to be knowledge areas, rather than specializations. “For instance, under biology you don’t have a nursing or pharmacy subsection, since that is meant to be covered in postsecondary education rather than within a CTE program.”



The next step in the process will be to develop a curriculum framework to guide the implementation of the standards in the classroom by June 2006, the completion date. “It’s an aggressive timeline, but we’re sure going to give it a try,” Ainsworth says.

The adoption of the model curriculum framework by local educational agencies is voluntary. But Ainsworth says that teachers are really looking forward to standards they can refer to. “The standards will give CTE teachers a vehicle for improving the quality of their instruction and a basis for proving that their programs improve academic performance and keep kids in school,” Ainsworth says. “If we’re going to make any improvements we need standards that set the bar. Then you can make investments that help school districts reach the bar.”

“For too long we have had a separation of academics from careers, between knowing and doing, the abstract and the applied. It’s very important to send a message that CTE is part of the educational system.”

He adds that as the advisory group begins its work on the framework, it will be developing one chapter on universal access. “It will reach areas such as economic equity, which haven’t really been addressed. These standards are intended to move everybody forward economically.”

He says that this project has been one of the most difficult for him, and one of the most rewarding. “States have big problems with students exiting schools without skills, and jobs are being outsourced. But we have the talent pool in our own back yard. We want to end up with students who are highly skilled, doing the work and creating jobs for the future. We have a big moral imperative to improve the state over the long run.”

“I really feel good about where we’re heading. Our state is out front in this effort and other states are looking at what we’re doing. The standards are likely to be used by other states as they look at the same issues. We have a very powerful piece of work here.” ♦

Go to <http://www.sonoma.edu/cibs/cte/index.html> to view the CTE Standards and Framework website, including the Advisory Group Review Team, the Review Team, the guiding documents, the foundation standards, and more. Go to <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/ct/> for the Career-Technical Education website of the California Department of Education.

Director’s Letter

continued from page 2

to join a newly established California CoP listserv to exchange transition information. There will be a 10–15-member California CoP Steering Committee established to develop a process and structure to lead and maintain the California CoP; design a CoP transition website and resource center; plan an expanded, broad-based CoP conference for 2006; and devise and implement a post-school transition data collection system to provide real-world guidance for future decision-making. The California Transition Community of Practice Symposium is an exciting first step in our efforts to improve outcomes for students with disabilities as they move from school into the adult community. ♦

Universal Access

<http://www.aequustechnologies.com/index.php>

AEQUUS Technologies creates and renders accessible digital media for people with disabilities, foreign language speakers, and senior citizens and for ubiquitous use by a new generation of children and working adults who demand innovative listening, viewing, reading, interactive, and communication styles.

<http://www.washington.edu/accessit/index.php>

AccessIT promotes the use of electronic and information technology (E&IT) for students and employees with disabilities in educational institutions at all academic levels.

<http://www.cast.org/index.html>

CAST is a nonprofit organization that works to expand learning opportunities for all individuals, especially those with disabilities, through the research and development of innovative, technology-based educational resources and strategies.

<http://www.bentermath.com/>

Henter Math creates software for students who are pencil-impaired.

School Leadership

<http://www.iel.org/about.html>

The Institute for Educational Leadership's (IEL) mission is to improve education and the lives of children and their families. Its website offers numerous innovative programs and publications.

Life After High School

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/>

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) is a valuable source for information about employment and youth with disabilities. The organization partners with experts to provide quality, relevant information.

<http://www.ncset.hawaii.edu/default.htm>

The Postoutcomes Network of the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition works to enrich the lives of individuals with disabilities

through publications and policies that support them in high school and beyond. See especially the publications at this site.

Transition

<http://www.ncset.org/>

The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET) coordinates national resources, offers technical assistance, and disseminates information related to secondary education and transition for youth with disabilities in order to create opportunities for youth to achieve successful futures.

<http://www.youthhood.org>

The Youthhood, a new website of the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition, is a free, interactive website that young adults and their teachers, parents, and mentors can use to plan for life after high school.

General Literacy

<http://www.rand.org/publications/TR/TR180/>

Achieving State and National Literacy Goals, a Long Uphill Road: A Report to the Carnegie Corporation of New York is available as a free download at this website.

<http://www.ciera.org>

Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement (CIERA) is designed to improve reading through research. The center offers theoretical, empirical, and practical solutions to teaching beginning reading. Its website provides a library and links.

<http://www.famlit.org/>

National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) provides educational and economic opportunities for at-risk children and parents, including support for professional and program development, advocacy to expand literacy services, and numerous publications and videos, as well as information on policy, trainings, and conferences.

<http://www.onlinereadingresources.com>

OnLine Reading Resources is a collection of teaching aids designed to maximize students' learning. The principal resource on this site is a collection of over 50 downloadable Scaffolded Reading Experiences (SREs): detailed, adaptable,

and research-based lesson plans that support teaching widely used fiction and nonfiction texts.

Adolescent Literacy

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/products/read180/literacyresources.asp?>

"Adolescent Literacy: A National Reading Crisis," among other valuable documents, is available free at this Scholastic Professional Paper website.

<http://www.nifl.gov/>

National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) works to improve adult literacy. It develops and disseminates products for policymakers, educators, and family members. The website offers publications, as well as programs and services.

http://www.aft.org/pubs-reports/american_educator/issues/fall04/index.htm

"Preventing Early Reading Failure—and Its Devastating Downward Spiral" by Joseph Torgesen is available as a free download from *The American Educator*, Fall 2004.

<http://www.all4ed.org/publications/ReadingNext/index.html>

Reading Next: A Vision for Action and Research in Middle and High School Literacy, a 2004 publication, is available from the Alliance for Excellent Education as a free PDF download at this site.

<http://www.siopinstitute.net/about.shtml>

The Sheltered Instruction

Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2004) was developed to provide teachers with a well-articulated, practical model of sheltered instruction in order to facilitate high-quality instruction for English-language learners in content area teaching. Learn about this model at the scheduled training programs listed at the SIOP website.

<http://cela.albany.edu>

"Six Features of Effective English Instruction" and other articles from the National Research Center on English Learning & Achievement are available free and online from the above website. Click on Publications and then click on Newsletters.

July 21–22

Supporting Students with Autism and Other Disabilities in Inclusive Settings: Preschool to Young Adult

This summer symposium features a host of speakers who will address parents and educators on the topics of inclusion, curricular adaptations, paraprofessional roles, relationships, behavior supports, family and peer supports, and more. Santa Barbara, CA. Contact Eileen Medina at 805/964-4711, ext. 5421 or 805/562-9869; email cal-tasb@sbceo.org or visit the following website: <http://www.tasb.org/cbapters/caltasb/index.htm>.

August 1–3

Teacher-to-Teacher Summer Workshop

Hosted by the United States Department of Education, this workshop provides educators and researchers with an opportunity to share successful research-based strategies for raising student achievement. Geared toward K–12 teachers and principals, sessions cover literacy, mathematics, science, history, and the arts, with additional sessions on school leadership, the No Child Left Behind Act, using data effectively, and teaching strategies that can enable all levels of to improve academically. San Jose, CA. For more information, email teacherquality@westat.com. To register, go to <http://www.teacherquality.us/TeacherToTeacher/Workshops.asp>.

August 3–6

Leading Best Practice in Language and Reading: A Vision for Excellence and Change

The Center for Reading Diagnosis and Instruction at California State University Monterey Bay offers educators this conference that focuses on instructional leadership in language and reading. The event features nationally recognized educational leaders in reading (Louisa Moats among them; see article page 5), speech-language pathology, and special education. Monterey, CA. Contact Lou Denti, PhD; phone 877/255-0600; fax 866/218-7625. For more information, go to <http://readingcenter.csUMB.edu/aboutconf.html>.

September 17

The Whole Kit and Caboodle: Organizing Integrated Literacy Instruction in the Elementary Classroom

This day-long workshop, sponsored by the California Reading Association Professional Development Institute, is designed to demonstrate how to shift from a literacy instruction model to an integrated model, with a focus on comprehension, fluency, phonics, vocabulary and spelling, and practical advice. Auburn, CA. For more information, fax Kathy at 714/435-0269. For registration materials, go to <http://www.californiareads.org/events.htm>.

September 21–22

Young Children, Adolescents, Adults: The At-Risk Chain Reaction

The Children's Network of San Bernardino County presents its 19th annual convention focusing on the effect parents have on the future of their children. Ontario, CA. For more information, go to <http://www.sbcounty.gov/childnet> or contact Susan Melanson by phone 909/387-5394 or email smelanson@bss.sbcounty.gov.

October 1

Narrowing the Language Gap: Active and Accountable Vocabulary Instruction in Mixed-Ability 4–12 Classrooms

This day-long workshop, presented by the California Reading Association Professional Development Institute and led by Dr. Kate Kinsella of San Francisco State University, helps teachers of mixed-ability, diverse classrooms present grade-level curricula. Carmichael, CA. For more information, fax Kathy at 714/435-0269.

Go to <http://www.californiareads.org/events.htm> for registration materials.

October 15–19

Ready to Learn: Helping Students Survive and Thrive

The Education Alliance and National Dropout Prevention Network offers this conference for the whole school on effective programs and strategies for dealing with students at high risk of academic failure. Santa Clara, CA. For more information, call 831/425-0299 or email admin@edalliance.org. Go to <http://www.edalliance.org/2005/readytolearn> for registration materials.

October 18–19

State Superintendent's High School Summit: High Expectations for All Students

This follow-up to the summit on high school reform in October 2004 is sponsored by the California Department of Education (see page 1 for more details). Los Angeles, CA. Go to <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/ac/bsstrng.asp> or contact Gloria Sannino by email at gsannino@cde.ca.gov or by phone at 916/323-2409.

October 27–29

Learning Disabilities: 45 Years of Meeting the Challenge

This annual conference presented by the Learning Disabilities Association of California covers issues beyond LD. Discussions center around numerous topics like ADHD, children's environmental health, assistive technology, Asperger's, math interventions, the California High School Exit Exam, and much more. Concord, CA. For more information, call 866/532-6322, email ldaca2005@sbcglobal.net, or go to <http://www.ldaca.org>.

Free Trainings from CARS+

The California Association of Resource Specialists and Special Education Teachers (CARS+) offers free trainings on a variety of subjects that can be scheduled and adapted to fit the individual needs of resource specialists and special education teachers. These trainings are designed to support improvement in the areas of writing goals, monitoring student progress, and writing standards-based IEPs. Email Debbie Baehler at speddeb@frontiernet.net for more information.

The RiSE (Resources in Special Education) Library lends materials to California's public free of charge. The items listed on this page are just a sampling of what is available. Go to <http://www.pbp.com> to view the library's complete holdings and to request materials online. To order by phone, call Judy Bower at 408/727-5775.

New Acquisition

Reflections From a Different Journey: What Adults With Disabilities Wish All Parents Knew

By Stanley Klein and John Kemp. McGraw-Hill: NY, 2004; 224 pages. Offers parents of children with disabilities inspiration and advice from those who have been there; presents 40 stories by successful adults who grew up with disabilities. They provide insights into what it is like to persevere in the face of community prejudices.

Career Technical Education

Attributes and Characteristics of Exemplary, Leading, and Innovative Career and Technical Education Teacher Preparation Programs

By Thomas H. Bruening, et al. NCDDTE: Columbus, OH, 2002; 96 pages. This report suggests exemplary, leading, and/or innovative characteristics in select CTE teacher preparation institutions. Call number 23714.

New Designs for Career and Technical Education at the Secondary and Post-Secondary Levels: Design Guide for Policy and Practice

By George H. Copa and Susan J. Wolff. NDCCTE: Columbus, OH, 2002; 82 pages. Program leaders will find this guide valuable for such activities as redesigning curriculum, planning among stakeholders, creating learning spaces, and developing materials and organization, and working collaboratively with other units of the school or college, district, and community. Call number 23713.

The Future of Career and Technical Education in a Continuous Innovation Society

By Arthur M. Harkins. NDCCTE: Columbus, OH, 2002; 36 pages. This author considers the development and management of software and technology

in schools and addresses the shifting role of CTE professionals away from teaching toward performance and innovation modeling. Call number 23712.

Preparing the Workforce of Tomorrow: A Conceptual Framework for Career and Technical Education

By Jay W. Rojewski. NCDDTE: Columbus, OH, 2002; 69 pages. This document considers the present and future of CTE using the development of a conceptual framework as the vehicle for organizing and presenting critical issues. Call number 23715.

High School Reform

Aiming High: High Schools for the 21st Century: Standards-Based Education Planning Guide

By Lynne Vaughan and Eileen Warren. Sonoma State University: Rohnert Park, CA, 2002; 155 pages. This book places standards-based education in the context of California's accountability system. Call numbers 23653, 23654.

Improving Student Outcomes: A Resource Guide for High School Reform

By Eileen Warren. Office of Vocational and Adult Education: Rohnert Park, CA, 2001; 237 pages. This guide introduces school staff and key stakeholders to

research-based principles of high school reform. Call number 23651.

Resources for High Schools

By Jack O'Connell. California Department of Education: Sacramento, CA, 2004. This CD-ROM includes an address by Jack O'Connell, State Superintendent of Public Instruction; standards maps for high schools; and facts about the California High School Exit Exam. Call numbers 23669, 23670.

No Child Left Behind

Establishing an Effective Reading Program

By Reading Rockets. WETA: Washington, DC, 2003. Video (90 minutes). Expert panelists discuss how schools and districts can find the best research-based reading program to meet the needs of their student population and mandates of NCLB. Call number 23490.

No Child Left Behind Act: What Teachers, Principals, and School Administrators Need to Know

By Suzanne Health. Wrightslaw: Hollis, NH, 2003; 4 pages. This document helps all schools in districts that accept Title I federal funds understand the annual reports they must make on the progress of all children. Call number 23261.

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Answers from Margaret Spellings

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Margaret Spellings is the United States Secretary of Education. She answered the following questions about the No Child Left Behind Act for readers of The Special EDge in California.

The Special EDge: Staff and parents in California were very pleased to hear your announcement of the opportunity for states to apply to develop modified achievement standards and assessment options. What prompted this development? What are the most important things we should keep in mind as we develop a proposal for federal review?

Margaret Spellings: In the last three years, as the No Child Left Behind Act has matured, we have learned a great deal about how it is working for states and schools. Our focus nevertheless remains on getting the best results from students—all students. So we ask that states first follow the basic principles of the law, such as assessing all students from grades three through eight every year and disaggregating results by student subgroup, so underachievement is not masked by the averages. And we encourage states to develop sound education policies so that student achievement continues to improve and the achievement gap continues to close. Once these conditions are met, a state may become eligible for new tools to help students with disabilities meet their academic goals. We are also in the process of convening a working group to find appropriate ways that different growth models might be used to measure academic achievement.

We plan to release additional information and proposed regulations in the near future that should be useful for states as they develop proposals for federal review.

The Special EDge: The assessment for students with persistent academic difficulty could take a few years to develop. Does the Department have plans to provide technical assistance and guidance for states? How will you do this?

Margaret Spellings: I have directed \$14 million in immediate support for these students. We are working to provide states with a comprehensive toolkit to help them identify and assess students with disabilities. By relying on the most current and accurate scientific research, we will learn how to best serve the academic needs of these students.

We will continue to work closely with states to provide assistance to support students with disabilities who, according to the latest scientific research, can make substantial progress toward grade-level achievement, given the proper time and instruction.

The Special EDge: We understand that the Department of Education is reorganizing and that the Office of Special Education Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) staff will be working with the Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) staff at the Department. What do you hope to happen as a result of this new arrangement? What kinds of collaborative efforts might we see as a result of this move?

Margaret Spellings: We are continuing to put together a terrific leadership team as we engage in the process of our Department's reorganization. We expect that increased collaboration across these two offices will provide important leadership at the federal and state levels. Having the assistant secretaries of both offices participate together in policy discussions and development will serve the Department and the public well.

The Special EDge: As the Department of Education continues to offer technical assistance to states, what changes, if any, do you plan to make in the way that support is disseminated?

Margaret Spellings: We are still developing plans for how technical assistance will be delivered. Much of it will be targeted to ensure that states develop and implement reliable and valid student assessments. The Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, for example, is in the process of reviewing its Comprehensive Centers, and we are looking at the many different ways information is made available to provide the best support for states.

The Special EDge: How do the changes to the Institute of Educational Science assist school administrators and teachers in improving outcomes for children and families?

Margaret Spellings: The new National Center for Special Education Research within the Institute for Education Sciences will sponsor rigorous research aimed at improving education results and services for students with disabilities. It will also evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.

The Special EDge: Two years ago, our State Superintendent of Public Instruction convened a statewide taskforce to identify practices for improvement in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process. As a result we are very excited about the opportunity presented by IDEIA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004) for

Spellings, continued on page 6

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