

Rockin' With Region 4

Written collaboratively by the VDOE T/TAC staff at George Mason University



any, many Gold-Medal Thanks to our fabulous T/TAC (GMU) Stakeholder Advisory Board members. Our annual meeting was held on March 11th here on the George Mason University Fairfax campus. We enjoyed the day with each of these talented

with Significant Cognitive Disabilities by Diane M. Browder and Fred Spooner, 2006, Paul H. Brookes Publishing

Effective Literacy Instruction for Students with Moderate or Severe Disabilities by Susan R. Copeland and Elizabeth B. Keefe, 2007, Paul H. Brookes Publishing

and knowledgeable individuals, discussing information about our work during the past year and getting their feedback on issues relevant to them in their respective school positions. We are certain that their support on this day and throughout the year helps us provide school systems in our region with specifically targeted assistance and professional development opportunities.

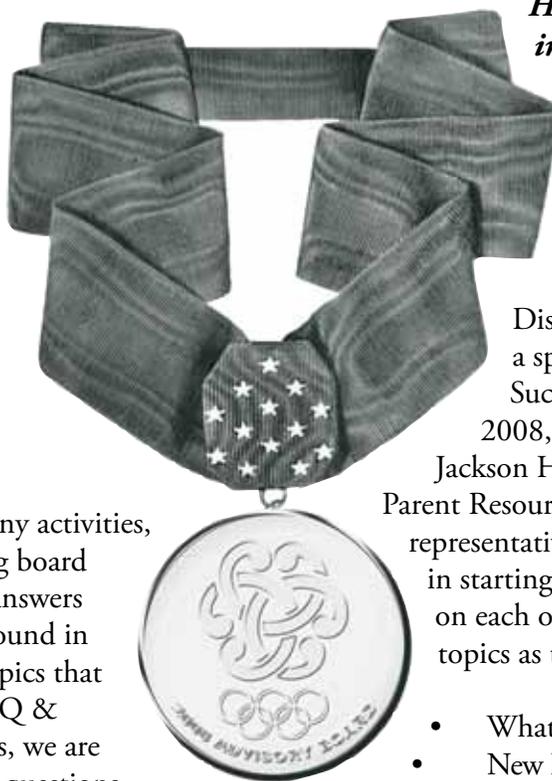
The meeting day was filled with many activities, but one of the final tasks was having board members complete exit cards. The answers to "What question is still rolling around in your head?" brought about some topics that our staff thought might be a useful Q & A to include in this newsletter. Thus, we are listing some of our board member's questions with our responses here for your reading and reviewing pleasure.

How can we improve the literacy skills of teachers who work with students with severe cognitive disabilities?

Teachers can attend the Content Teaching Academy at James Madison University, June 23-27, 2008. More information is available on T/TAC Online (www.ttaconline.org) - Events tab.

Recommended Books:

Teaching Language Arts, Math & Science to Students



How can T/TAC support us in developing regional parent information resources, particularly to help schools facilitate development of authentic, collaborative relationships with families?

The Partnership for People with Disabilities and VDOE are holding a spring conference, "Connect for Success," on May 5th, 6th, and 7th, 2008, in Staunton, VA at the Stonewall Jackson Hotel. May 5th is training for new Parent Resource Center (PRC) staff and for representatives from school divisions interested in starting a new PRC. Informational sessions on each of the conference days include such topics as the following:

- What's New in Parent Involvement?
- New Initiatives in Virginia and the VDOE
- Function/Management of Parent Resource Centers
- Networking of PRC
- Transition Planning
- IDEA and Virginia's Proposed Special Education Regulations

For more information, contact Sandy Sprague at ssprague@scs.k12.va.us - 540-582-3616 or Melanie Sterling at mrsterli@vcu.edu - 804-827-0197. Contacts at the T/TAC at GMU are Nancy Anderson at nanders7@gmu.edu - 703-993-4496 and Bonnie Carter at bcarter6@gmu.edu - 703-993-4496.

Is ICT the same as IST?

ICT is the acronym for Instructional Consultation Teams and IST stands for Instructional Support Teams. Both are based on the same model. ICT is the name used in Maryland and IST is the name adopted in Virginia. For more information on Virginia's IST initiative, visit <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/studentsrvcs/IST/>. You may also contact Cindy Cave (Cynthia.Cave@doe.virginia.gov) or Wayne Berry (Wayne.Berry@doe.virginia.gov) at the VDOE or, in Region 4, Judith Fontana (jfontan1@gmu.edu) at the VDOE T/TAC at GMU.

How might we encourage parents to become more involved with their child's education?

In the Effective Schoolwide Discipline (ESD) project, school personnel are encouraged to develop effective strategies for contacting parents to share student social, behavioral, as well as academic, successes throughout the year. For example, one school created the PAWS (Positive Attitude with Students) postcard program where teachers can fill out and mail a postcard when they see students engaging in positive school behaviors. By sharing this type of feedback with parents, a more positive rapport may develop. For secondary students, a program called Touching Bases (or other names chosen by the schools) is designed to give parents an opportunity to briefly dialogue with teachers during an early morning time period, once or twice a year. These high school students have a delayed start to their day so that all of the teachers are available to meet with parents.

What evidence exists on the issue that students learn by being engaged in an appropriate activity and not just through completing worksheets?

There is quite a lot of research currently in the field related to this issue. We suggest starting with Carol Tomlinson's books on differentiated instruction. An additional list of resources is added at the end of this Q & A. Don't forget that T/TAC Online (www.ttaonline.org) has differentiated instructional activities tied to Virginia's SOLs. Review these lessons on T/TAC Online under SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence Plus (ESS+).

Is the state developing testing that can be easily accessed by general education teachers and which focuses on progress made by students during the school year?

As far as we know, the state only provides end of year (grades 3-8 and 11) and end of course testing (in high school for selected courses) as required by No Child Left Behind. All other testing is the responsibility of local school divisions.

What are Communities of Practice?

The following are two recommended books on this topic:

Learning by Doing, by Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour, Robert Eaker, Thomas Many, 2006, Solution Tree (Publisher)

Professional Learning Communities at Work, by Rebecca DuFour, Richard DuFour, Robert Eaker, Solution Tree (Publisher)

How does someone find out what is available from T/TAC?

The VDOE T/TAC @ GMU offers short informational presentations about our T/TAC services. We welcome the opportunity to present to special education as well as general education personnel. For specific information, please access our web site at: <http://ttac.gmu.edu>.

How can the schedules of Special Education teachers be changed to best provide them opportunities for more curriculum-related staff development? How can we make it simple for teachers to use all these tools?

This is a difficult question to answer. Curriculum-related staff development opportunities should include special education teachers, especially those in inclusive or co-teaching situations. We encourage school divisions to use inclusive instructional practices and, thus, they must adjust schedules so that all teachers are involved in curriculum-related staff development.

Two books that may be useful in designing schedules that work for multiple purposes are:

Teaching in the Block: Strategies for Engaging Active Learners (1996) Canady & Rettig ISBN: 1-883001-23-4
Thinking Inside the Block Schedule (2000) Robbins, Gregory & Herndon ISBN: 0-8039-6783-7

Other books that may address some of the same issues are:
Everyone: Co-Teach: A handbook for creating and sustaining effective classroom partnerships in inclusive schools (2008) Marilyn Friend ISBN: 978-0-9778503-0-3 (all)
Co-Teaching in the Differentiated Classroom, Grades 5-12 (2008) Fattig & Taylor ISBN: 978-0-7879-8744-2

Advisory Print List Resources: 2008

A Handbook for Classroom Management that Works (2005) Robert Marzano, Barbara B. Gaddy & Maria Foseid ISBN: 1-4166-0236-4

Applications of Reading Strategies with the Classroom: Explanations, Models, and Teacher Templates for Content Areas in Grades 3-12 (2006) Frank, Grossi and Stanfield ISBN: 0-205-45603-0

Best Behavior: Building Positive Behavior Support in Schools (2005) Sprague & Golly ISBN: 1-59318-071-3

Co-Teaching in the Differentiated Classroom, Grades 5-12
(2008) Fattig & Taylor ISBN: 978-0-7879-8744-2

Differentiation in Practice: A Resource Guide for
Differentiating Curriculum Grades K-5 (2003) Tomlinson
& Eidson ISBN: 978-0-87120-760-9

Differentiation in Practice: A Resource Guide for
Differentiating Curriculum Grades 5-9 (2003) Tomlinson &
Eidson ISBN: 978-0-87120-655-8

Differentiation in Practice: A Resource Guide for
Differentiating Curriculum Grades 9-12 (2005) Tomlinson
& Eidson ISBN: 978-1-4166-0050-3

Effective Classroom Management to Support Student
Learning (2005)
Educational Research Service monograph

Everyone: Co-Teach: A handbook for creating and sustaining
effective classroom partnerships in inclusive schools (2008)
Marilyn Friend ISBN: 978-0-9778503-0-3

Responding To Problem Behavior in School (2004)
Deanne, Horner & Hawken ISBN-10: 1-57230-940-7

Teaching in the Block: Strategies for Engaging Active
Learners (1996) Canady & Rettig ISBN: 1-883001-23-4

Teaching Language Arts, Math & Science to Students with
Significant Cognitive Disabilities Browder & Spooner (2006)
ISBN: 1-55766-798-5

Thinking Inside the Block Schedule (2000) Robbins,
Gregory & Herndon ISBN: 0-8039-6783-7

The Tough Kid Book (1993) Rhode, Jenson & Reavis ISBN:
0-944584-54-3 (2) ISBN: 0-944584-54-3



The *Paraeducator* Press

Helping Students Shine

Do you know about the Virginia Department of Education's T/TAC Online web site?

T/TAC Online is a web-based community linking people and resources to help students with learning challenges, particularly those with disabilities. The web site includes: Virginia Assessment information, SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence Plus (Plus = ideas for differentiating instruction) lesson plans, Resources, Events and Online Training opportunities, including a "Paraeducator Training" series. These resources are available to you at any time at: www.ttaconline.org.

Once on the T/TAC Online site (www.ttaconline.org), click on your region on the Virginia map. The "Welcome!" page includes the "Check It Out!" box, which changes frequently and highlights new items or upcoming events. This site is organized by the colored tabs at the top of the page.

The **SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence Plus** tab
The SOL Enhanced tab will allow you to search for the Standard(s) you are currently focusing on with your students AND find lessons that include a variety of options for differentiated activities. This section also has content-related Instructional Strategies that could be helpful when working with students who have specific learning needs.

Steps to search the SOL ESS+ section:

- Click on SOL Enhanced (at the top)
- Click on Search SOL+ Lessons (left margin)
- At Option 1- choose a subject area and choose a grade/course - click Go
- Click on any SOL standard and click Submit (at bottom of page)
- Choose from the lessons listed for the standard
- Click on Word or PDF format to download lesson

The **Resources** tab

Another section that may interest you is **Resources**. Once in that section, you will see "New Resources in the Spotlight," which are the recently posted resources. By scrolling down the list, you can review the descriptions,

decide on a particular resource of interest, and click it when the cursor highlights your choice.

You can search this section by category or by disability. For example, if you choose the category "Assistive Technology," you will be provided a plethora of web site resources on Assistive Technology. Click on the highlighted web site link to go directly to the site described. If you don't want to pick a category or a disability, you can click on "View All" to see a listing of all of the resources in alphabetical order.

Have fun and review all that is available to you at www.ttaconline.org. You may want to participate in some online training or check out upcoming state and national events. The site is constantly updated and additional resources added on a regular basis. If you would like to offer feedback on your use of T/TAC Online, let us hear from you!

Paraeducators:

There are still openings for the paraprofessional strand at the 2008 Content Academy for Pre-K Early Childhood Special Education, June 23-27 at James Madison University.

The Paraprofessional Strand of this academy will provide participants with an overview of disabilities, instruction in communication and language development, personal-social development and positive behavior supports, oral motor-feeding development, positioning and handling, and an overview of special education law and regulations.

To register, go to www.ttaconline.org, click on the **Events tab**, click on **Month** (*top margin*) and click on **June** (*on left margin*).