

# THE T/TAC TELEGRAM

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Check THIS Out!

Northwestern Consortium T/TAC  
This newsletter is a collaborative effort by the Northwestern Consortium of the T/TACs, which includes James Madison University, co-directed by Cheryl Henderson and Melinda Bright, and George Mason University, directed by Lynn Wiley.

Designed by Jeff Richards

## Highlighting Success!

As the academic year winds down, we would like to applaud school systems in the Commonwealth for their huge effort to improve achievement outcomes for students in Virginia. In this newsletter, we highlight a few examples of successful VDOE initiatives and T/TAC-supported projects that are ongoing. In addition, we provide specific resources and contact information to help you continue to work towards the overall goal of school improvement and successful outcomes for all students. Please contact the T/TAC at GMU, JMU or your regional T/TAC for additional assistance. Finally, we would like to thank our guest authors for contributing their informative articles.

## Successful Practices: Getting started with a Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support System

Article by invited author Susan Barrett, M.A., National Technical Assistance Center on PBIS With an introduction by Kay Klein, M.Ed. VDOE-T/TAC at George Mason University

*Introduction*  
*Effective Schoolwide Discipline (ESD) is a Commonwealth of Virginia initiative designed to support positive academic and behavioral outcomes for all students. The initiative is derived from the evidence based research incorporated in the Positive Behavior Support model and utilizes a preventative and proactive approach to discipline that reduces the amount of time spent managing the challenging behavior of students, thereby increasing the amount of time spent teaching and learning. ESD is designed to change the culture of the school by shifting the attention to positive behavior and successful learning systems for*

*students, teachers and administrators. Susan Barrett has been co-coordinating the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Maryland initiative for the past nine years. She has a Masters in Counseling Psychology and certification in Special Education serving as a teacher and administrator with Sheppard Pratt Health System (SPHS) since 1993. Ms. Barrett is now working with the University of Oregon PBIS Technical Assistance Center as a resource partner. She assists with large scale implementation of PBIS in Maryland, South Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee. She also continues to work with Johns Hopkins University to evaluate the impact of PBIS on students, school staff, and school communities.*

### New Approach to Discipline

Positive Behavior Support is a team-based problem solving process that

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considers (a) systems, (b) data, and (c) practices.

- Systems include the policies, procedures, and processes that consider schoolwide, non-classroom, classroom, and individual student systems. Systems support staff implementation of practices and the use of data in decision-making.
- Data is used to guide decision-making processes and outcomes. Data supports the selection and evaluation of practices and systems.
- Practices include the strategies that are used directly to enhance student learning outcomes and teacher instructional activities.

PBIS is designed to serve as a structure and process that receives, organizes, implements, and evaluates multiple initiatives related to social behavior improvement (e.g., character education, attendance, literacy improvement, safe/drug free schools).

Schools cannot afford to create and maintain individual school programs for each new initiative that is presented to a school. Instead, they must look for “sameness” or overlapping targets and practices so resources (e.g., materials, personnel, time) are used effectively and efficiently. The ultimate goal of PBIS is to establish systems that enable educators to “work smarter.” Although many elements are involved with the successful implementation of PBIS, the more important features include:

- High status leadership team
- Active administrator participation
- High priority in school improvement planning
- Proactive (positive and preventive) systems approach
- Data-based decision making
- Continuum of behavior supports
- Long term commitment
- Research validated practices

### State and Local Commitment

The systems change strategies for district-wide and state-wide PBIS implementation are similar. The four components of successful implementation are the same for both district and statewide PBIS implementation. (At a statewide level, there will be more professionals on the leadership team representing the Department of Education and other human service organizations and agencies including mental health, child welfare, and developmental disability.) The four components

for successful implementation are: (a) a Leadership Team to actively coordinate implementation efforts; (b) an organizational umbrella composed of adequate funding, broad visibility, and consistent political support; (c) a foundation for sustained and broad-scale implementation established through a cadre of individuals who can provide Coaching support for local implementation, a small group of individuals who can train teams on the practices and processes of school-wide PBIS, and a system for on-going evaluation; and (d) a small group of demonstration schools that documents the viability of the approach within the local fiscal, political, and social climate of the state/district.

To enable and support the leadership team’s efforts, the PBIS implementation must have (a) adequate and sustained *funding support*; (b) regular, wide, and meaningful *visibility*; and (c) relevant and effective *political support*. Critical components of state level commitment include:

- Endorsement by Superintendent and State School Board
- Active partnership with higher education and local agencies (e.g., SPHS)
- Endorsement of local system points of contact (e.g., should have leadership role in county/district central office, be able allocate Full Time Equivalent (FTE) personnel for behavior support Coaches and provide link to state)
- 5 Year commitment
- Integrated multiple initiatives

Critical components of local level commitment include:

- Endorsement of local system leadership
- Allocation of FTE personnel for behavior support Coaches who will provide a link to the state
- Common vision and mission (e.g., PBIS is a general education initiative, responsibility is housed with student services division,
- special education has significant role and serves as a active/involved partner and also provides funding)
- 5 Year commitment
- Integrated multiple initiatives-this integration can provide a variety of funding sources, such as, Title I, Character Education, Drop Out Prevention, etc.
- School Commitment

Once state and district structures are in place, schools are invited to begin formal adoption of schoolwide-PBIS. This usually begins by inviting interested administrators to an overview presentation. Planning structures are reviewed to ensure there is agreement about the role of

the principal, leadership team, behavior support coach and other critical pieces that are essential in achieving sustainable systems change. One of the most important features is the school-based team.

School-based teams provide leadership for PBIS at the school level. Training for these teams occurs annually at a two-day training institute. Individuals who are representative of the school (e.g., by grade level and department) and respected by their colleagues comprise the school-level team. Collectively, the team members need to (1) be competent with behavioral principles, (2) have a regular and efficient means of communicating with the school staff as a whole, and (3) be endorsed actively and vigorously by their principal. Principals or vice-principals must be members of the team. During the school year, this team initially meets weekly and then, after the program is well established, at least monthly. Meetings are guided by the data collected and a proactive problem-solving approach. This team has the responsibility for reviewing school needs and establishing staff and school improvement action plans. Learn more about getting started with SW-PBIS by logging onto <http://www.ttac.edu/esd/> and [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org).

## ESD Schools in Region 4 Share Strategies

By Kay Klein

**O**ur ESD schools in Cohorts 1 and 2 were asked recently to report about a successful schoolwide intervention. What follows is a brief summary of a few of the programs that were shared.

- Potomac View Elementary school designed a Fun Friday program for students who successfully met the standards set out in their Palomino PRIDE program for students in grades 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- The “Drop Me a Lion” Postcard program began at Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School. Staff members wrote positive academic and behavioral notes to selected students weekly which are mailed to their parents/caregivers.
- Parkside Middle School began a “Locks on Loan” program designed to prevent theft of student property at school. Also, the school allowed more time to travel between classes and has instituted a “Hallway Sweep” program. Students must remain in class during the first 10 minutes of class and last 10 minutes of each class while selected staff “sweep” the hallway to check for students. Teachers reported

only 1 student tardy during the first 2 quarters of this school year as compared to the year before when 102 tardies were reported for the same time frame.

- A new cafeteria system called “Keeping Your 10” was developed at Lake Ridge Elementary. A cafeteria protocol and process was designed and taught to all students. Classes earned points through a positive recognition program and both short and long term incentives were available to the students.
- Bull Run Middle School has been recognized by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) for their efforts with two model programs. STARS, which stands for Soar To Achieve Rapid Success, is a mentoring program; SOAR, which stands for Success Through Organization, Attitude and Respect, includes the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program. The guidance staff is putting together a “blueprint” for these programs to provide information to other school guidance counselors. They will be awarded the Recognized ASCA Model Program designation at a ceremony this June in Atlanta, GA.

Reference:

Sugai, G., Horner, R., Sailor, W., Dunlap, G., Eber, L.Lewis, T., et al. (2005). School-wide Positive Behavior Support Implementers’ Blueprint and Self-Assessment. University of Oregon: OSEP Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.



# New Resources for Math and Literacy Instruction for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

By Karen Berlin, M.Ed., VDOE T/TAC at George Mason University

In an effort to support academic success for all students, the Virginia Department of Education's Instructional Priority Project for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities has added the following new resources to the T/TAC lending libraries. Visit <http://kihd.gmu.edu/library/> to check out these and other valuable instructional resources for student success!

**Early Literacy Skill Builders (ELSB):** This literacy instruction program is designed to enhance reading development in students with moderate and severe cognitive disabilities by addressing the five essential components of reading identified by the National Reading Panel (2000). Offered concurrently, "**Building with Sounds and Symbols**" works on developing phonological awareness and written language awareness skills, while "**Building with Stories**" focuses on comprehension, vocabulary, and other literacy skills. ELSB gives students the opportunity to make progress in literacy at their own pace, while also learning literature and concepts aligned to their current grade level.

**MEville to WEville:** Another literacy instruction program designed specifically for students with significant cognitive disabilities, MeVilIe to Weville offers reading learning opportunities through units focused on self, family, and school. Each unit contains an instructional manual, an action dictionary, lessons, and extension activities for reading, writing and creating books, activity reproducibles, and data collection tools.

**Star Reporter:** The Star Reporter program is a theme-based curriculum that encourages active participation and communication for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Through the means of creating a school or classroom newspaper, students learn literacy through the roles of editors, reporters, researchers, writers, and photographers. Star Reporter is available in two versions, elementary and secondary.

**Start-to-Finish Literacy Starters:** Start-to-Finish is a

collection of books supported with audio, computer, and print media for reading, language arts, social studies, and science instruction. Developed with students with significant cognitive disabilities in mind, books have been designed with a focus of improving content comprehension. T/TAC lending libraries house 17 Start-to-Finish Literacy Titles.

**Stages Math Number Sense:** This comprehensive math software program offers accessible learning activities in eight key areas of number sense. Students with communication challenges can use any of the twelve communication "Talk Math!" boards to engage in classroom discussions and activities. Beyond accessibility, the software allows teachers to adjust settings to match learner needs, change difficulty levels in small increments, and view individual learner progress over time.

## Supporting new (and veteran) teachers – one step at a time!

The VDOE Office of School Improvement has developed two manuals to be used to support new teachers.

**Stepping Stones to Success I: Teacher to Teacher** is a manual put together for new teachers as well as mentors and other veteran teachers. It is an informative guide related to a variety of issues and good practices that teachers need to be successful in the classroom. It is intended to provide practical tips and useful information for anyone new to the teaching profession.

**Stepping Stones to Success II - Collaboration: Working Together for All Students** is a manual put together to assist new teachers with the concepts of an "Inclusive Philosophy" for teacher professional growth and student learning. It provides information regarding an inclusive and collaborative school philosophy, which will allow educators to effectively differentiate instruction to reach all students. The element of collaboration is necessary for the success of ALL.

Both manuals can be accessed and downloaded at: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/SchoolImprovement/> (Go to section entitled "Related Documents and Reports; then the subsection "New Teacher Initiative")

For additional information, please contact Dr. Shelly Bazemore, School Improvement Specialist, Office of School Improvement at: [shelly.bazemore@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:shelly.bazemore@doe.virginia.gov) or your Regional T/TAC.

# Apple Pie Ridge Elementary School, Frederick County Diligence + Perseverance = Excellence: The Impact of the Instructional Support Team

By Joseph Strong M.Ed., Principal, Apple Pie Ridge Elementary School, Frederick County, VA  
With an introduction by Judith L. Fontana, Ph.D., VDOE-T/TAC at George Mason University

## Introduction

*In January 2001, the nucleus of Apple Pie Ridge Elementary School's Instructional Support Team (IST)\* received its initial training in Richmond. They were part of the Virginia Department of Education's Cohort 3. The team changed, developed, and grew in number and expertise. In October of 2006, Apple Pie Ridge earned recognition as one of the five schools in Virginia that achieved Phase II Validation as a "Model Site." Data collected in spring of 2007 confirmed on the Level of Implementation Scale that Apple Pie Ridge was fully implementing the IST model and is indeed a "Model School." Guest author, Joseph Strong, principal at Apple Pie Ridge Elementary School, and an active team member, shares his perceptions on how IST brought change to his school.*

## The Impact

When I first started at Apple Pie Ridge as an assistant principal in 2004, IST had been in place for two years. In the role of assistant principal, I had the opportunity to learn about the principles, philosophies, and the process of IST before taking over as principal of Apple Pie Ridge in 2005. As a school, we began to realize that the IST process that we were using to help individual students experience success in the classroom could be implemented on a larger scale to assist our entire school.

First, we implemented a "Problem-Solving Process" at our grade level meetings, similar to the steps that a case manager would go through in an IST case. In this process, we review regular classroom assignments and assessments to define an area of concern as a grade-level team. We determine a proficiency level through defining criteria to prove success/mastery and collect baseline data. The baseline data is a skill-specific assessment that is the same for all students and is a fair measure of what students know. After collecting the baseline data, we set our goal

to be accomplished over the next four to six weeks. This is followed by brainstorming and carefully selecting specific strategies to improve student proficiency. Next, our teachers implement and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies. At the end of our timeframe, we assess students to see if our goal was attained.

After two years of working with teams on this problem-solving process, our next logical step was to narrow that focus from the grade-level to individual students. We initiated a process to help students who "struggle" become students who experience success. At the beginning of the school year, each teacher was given a list of students who had struggled the previous year. We defined those students as individuals who had a D or F in math and/or reading, did not meet the PALS benchmark, or did not pass the math and/or reading SOL the previous year. After five weeks of school, teachers were given a "Problem ID" form, used to identify each student's strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles. Teachers had to identify the next steps they were going to take to help this student be successful. Teachers can choose to do no interventions because the student is being successful. If the student is struggling, they may do interventions on their own using a problem-solving process, work with a lead teacher to go through that same problem-solving process, or request an IST case. Every four weeks, we monitor the progress those students are making and make adjustments as necessary.

The implementation of IST, the grade-level problem-solving process, and the monitoring of our struggling students has had a significant impact on our Child Study process. The number of students who have been referred to Child Study and the number of students referred for a full evaluation to determine their eligibility for special education services have drastically decreased over the past four years (Figures 1, 2, and 3). Also, we have seen a much tighter alignment between those two as well as a drastic reduction in the number of Child Study meetings that are held each year.

Focusing on our struggling students has proven to be very successful for us. Over the first semester of the 2007-08 school year, we have documented interventions in place for 87 students, with 32 of those being IST cases. These intervention processes have helped our teachers continually improve and refine their instructional strategies to meet students' needs and have helped both teachers and students experience success in the classroom.

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Our goal has always been to provide classroom teachers with a variety of strategies for addressing concerns in their classrooms. This goal has been achieved by using IST, implementing grade-level problem-solving, and intervening with our struggling students. When teachers were asked what they appreciated the most about having IST in our school they shared comments such as: "It is comforting to have this type of support when needed; It was nice to have help when I'd run out of ideas with my student; It's reassurance when you need it; and I like having another professional to go to for students who need extra help." We also asked teachers how they have enhanced their instruction or classroom management through the IST process. Some of their responses included: "I have a better understanding of how a few very focused minutes can positively impact a struggling student; I am able to apply the strategies I have learned from IST and implement them when introducing new material or reviewing." In IST, we are constantly reminded that "Change is a process, not an event." During our

process of developing into an IST Model School, we expanded the IST concept of problem solving into a variety of options for our teachers who seek assistance for the good of all of our students.

IST is a collaborative problem solving process for teachers with concerns related to academics or behavior. Teachers request assistance from school-based teams whose members are trained in communication, problem solving, and assessment. These team members collaborate with teachers to define their concerns in observable measurable terms and to design and implement specific interventions by adjusting instruction and/or adapting the environment to increase student and staff performance. There are over 20 IST sites in various phases of development in Virginia. For information on how to bring IST to your school, contact Judith Fontana [jfontan1@gmu.edu](mailto:jfontan1@gmu.edu) at the T/TAC at GMU. For Region 5, contact Kandy Grant at the T/TAC at JMU, [grantkb@jmu.edu](mailto:grantkb@jmu.edu).

**Figure 1. Child study data**

	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07
Number of students referred for a full evaluation	28	22	10	3	7	7
Number of students found eligible for special education	15	18	6	3	7	5
Number of students not eligible for special education	13	4	4	0	0	2
Number of students who were not eligible for special education referred by parents	Data not available	Data not available	4	0	0	2
Number of students dismissed from Child Study due to goal attainment	0	0	0	0	4	3

Figure 2. IST and Child study data

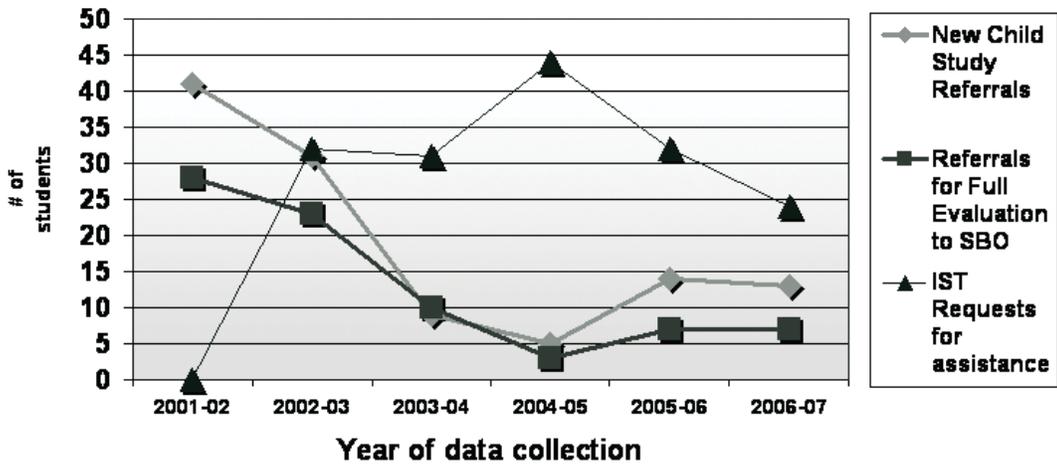
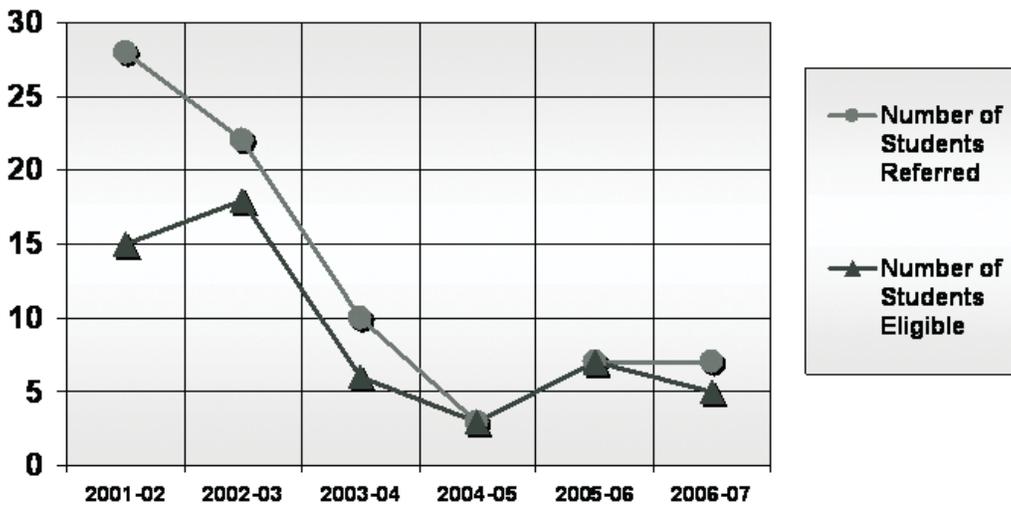


Figure 3. Pre- and Post-IST referrals and students found eligible



# Have You Heard? Virginia's Special Education Regulations are Being Revised

By Melissa C. P. Smith  
Coordinator of Administrative Services,  
Office of Dispute Resolution  
Special Education and Student Services,  
Virginia Department of Education

## Where Are We In the Process?

Since October 2006, Virginia's Board of Education has been overseeing the revision of the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Children with Disabilities in Virginia. Virginia's state special education regulations are being revised to comply with IDEA 2004 and its federal implementing regulations, and to incorporate those changes in Virginia law, which have occurred since 2002. In addition, efforts have been made to clarify current areas of ambiguity.

The proposed special education regulations were "approved" by Virginia's Board of Education in September 2007. However, that approval does not signify the completion of the revision process. Rather, the Board's approval permitted the proposed regulations to move forward in the long, multi-step process that Virginia law requires for the creation of new regulations. Since September, the proposed regulations have been reviewed and approved by several other state offices, and they are currently being reviewed by the Governor's Office. Once the Governor's Office has completed its review, the proposed regulations will be published in the Virginia Register of Regulations, initiating a 60-day public comment period that will include public hearings at eight sites throughout Virginia.

## How Can You Be Involved?

1. Stay informed. – Visit the Virginia Department of Education's web site for the regulations revision process: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/duproc/regulationsCWD.html>. It contains the most up-to-date information, including key links and resource documents, and the frequently updated "Timeline for the Revision Process," which describes where we are in the process: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/duproc/RevisionTimeline.pdf>.

2. Review the proposed regulations. – The proposed regulations are available online at [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/duproc/proposed\\_regs.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/duproc/proposed_regs.pdf) (Please note: This is a large document.)
3. Submit written public comments. – Share with the Board of Education your likes and dislikes. Also, outline any areas that need to be clarified, and those areas that have not been addressed, but should be. Comments may be emailed to [ReviseSpedRegs@doe.virginia.org](mailto:ReviseSpedRegs@doe.virginia.org); faxed to (804) 786-8520; or mailed to Special Education Regulations Revision Process, Office of Dispute Resolution and Administrative Services, Virginia Department of Education, P.O. Box 2120, Richmond, Virginia, 23218-2120. Although the official public comment period has not yet begun, comments are currently being accepted.
4. Attend a public hearing. – Once the Governor's Office approves the proposed regulations, dates and locations will be finalized for the eight public hearings. Once available, the information will be posted to the regulations revision web site.
5. Tell others about the revision process. – Encourage your colleagues and other interested groups and individuals to participate in the process.

For additional information about the revision of Virginia's Special Education Regulations, contact the Office of Dispute Resolution and Administrative Services, Virginia Department of Education, at (804) 225-2013.



# Future Quest 2007

By: Diane Loomis, Ph.D. & Bonnie Bell Carter, Ph.D.  
VDOE T/TAC at George Mason University

Future Quest 2007, a college and career forum for students with disabilities, was attended by more than seven hundred students, parents, and professionals on December 1, 2007 at George Mason University. This biennial event is coordinated by the Northern Virginia Transition Coalition, which is a volunteer organization with members from surrounding school divisions and their parent resource centers, the Department of Rehabilitative Services, Northern Virginia Community College, the Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center, and VDOE T/TAC at George Mason University (GMU). The event attracted experts on many aspects of life after high school for students with disabilities. Families and professionals could choose from 40 sessions, on such topics as self-advocacy in college, how to choose among career and technical schools, careers you can learn in two years or less, Social Security work incentives, transitioning to college for students on the autism spectrum, and more. In addition, more than 50 related organizations/agencies were displayed at the Future Quest Resource Fair.

The keynote speaker was Jonathan Mooney, activist, author, and public speaker, who spoke about growing up dyslexic and "not normal." A number of Future Quest participants found Jonathan Mooney's remarks especially empowering. One student said, "I felt uplifted and that I should never give up!" A parent believed that "My son's life will be changed forever by this presentation." A tearful young girl reported that her father, attending the conference with her, understood -- for the first time -- that learning disabled kids are not "stupid, crazy, or lazy."

A panel of young adults shared their high school and college experiences. These students impressed their audience with their positive, "can-do" approaches to life with a disability. They shared their strategies for success with openness and humor. For example, each student stressed the importance of being willing to disclose his/her disability with others who are in a position to support them in college. Also, members of the panel urged

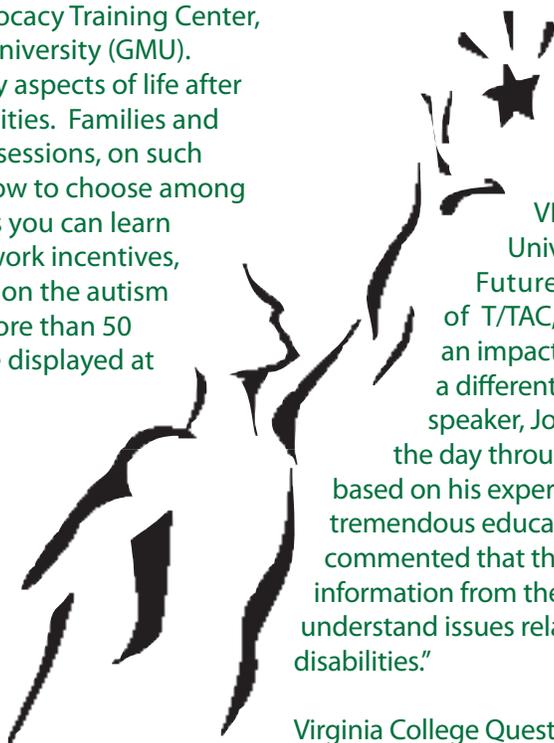
parents and other adults to allow young people to make and learn from mistakes in high school and college. They emphasized the importance of "letting go" in order for students to become self-reliant. Some of the students used computers for taking notes in class and for writing papers. However, one young man has found it helpful to take notes in class using four different colored pens to highlight various types of information given within a lecture. Analog clocks are difficult for this student to read, so he prefers to use digital clocks and watches. A young woman with emotional disabilities maintains close ties with the staff of her campus disability support services office to track her progress, and she periodically relies on the support of friends and family to help her to cope with difficult periods and maintain her success in college.

These young adults inspired the audience and illustrated how attitude, accommodations, and acceptance were crucial to their successes.

VDOE T/TAC at George Mason University was a key organizer of the Future Quest. Dr. Lynn Wiley, Director of T/TAC, felt that "Future Quest 2007 made an impact on students and their families in a different way than years past. Our keynote speaker, Jonathan Mooney, set the tone for the day through his intense and honest message based on his experiences as a student who faced tremendous educational challenges. Many participants commented that the keynote message, as well as information from the sessions, helped them better understand issues related to supporting students with disabilities."

Virginia College Quest web site ([www.vacollegequest.org](http://www.vacollegequest.org)) posts a listing of presenters and a synopsis of each presentation from Future Quest 2007. Some presentations may be downloaded from this site, and related resources and organizations are noted. This web site includes recommendations for students, parents, teachers, counselors, and post-secondary educators related to assisting students with disabilities, who are transitioning to college.

Many participants commented that they wished that all high school educators could be exposed to the information provided at Future Quest. The opportunity will come in the fall of 2009 when Future Quest will once again be held at George Mason University.



# Warren County's Autism Team Encourages Others to 'Catch the WAVE'!

By Heather Kennell, OTR/L Warren County Public Schools

Warren County Public Schools is a small school district, serving approximately 5,200 students and employing 783 full-time personnel. Our county has always relied on the expertise of staff members to work cooperatively to meet the needs of students who are on the Autism Spectrum. As we do not have a county Autism Specialist, our Physical Therapist, Ann Jeschke, was interested in the T/TAC Train-The-Trainer program. Working cooperatively with Occupational Therapists Heather Kennell and Gina Cornette, Mrs. Jeschke drafted the county's application. We were excited to learn that our county had been selected from others in our region to develop an Autism Support Team for our county. Now, we would be provided with the training and resources to give more structured support to our students with Autism.

After learning that we would be participating in this program, we quickly selected our team members based upon their level of experience working with students on the Autism Spectrum. Our core team consisted of Nytasha Brisco, an Early Childhood Special Education Teacher, Dena Lee, a Speech-Language Pathologist, Dawn Bryant, the parent of a county student diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome, and two Occupational Therapists, Heather Kennell and Gina Cornette.

Since our team has formed, we have experienced many of the 'ups and downs' associated with developing a new program. Our team members meet monthly to discuss referrals, to plan for our next inservice training, and to share our concerns and success stories. Despite the challenges we have experienced over the past two years, our team has met a number of the goals that we set for ourselves along the way.

One of our first tasks as a team was to develop our team name and our mission statement. We decided to call ourselves the WAVE Autism Support Team, with our logo being "Catch the Wave!" WAVE stands for Warren County's Autism Team Values Excellence. Our mission statement (after careful writing and editing by one of our team members, Dena Lee) is:

*...to increase awareness, establish learning opportunities, and provide support for the education and empowerment of persons with Autism Spectrum Disorders in the home, school, and community.*

Our team received training during the 2006/2007 school year and then conducted a county-wide needs assessment. After collecting data on the prevalence of Autism within our county, we sent out a survey to determine what types of services school personnel in our county would find most beneficial. One hundred sixty two staff members responded to our e-mail survey. Overall, survey results indicated that our staff would most benefit from WAVE members providing:

1. specialized instruction/training for academic staff
2. consultative services for individual students or classrooms
3. resources (through a WAVE library system).



As our team finished out the academic year, we completed a number of tasks to prepare to begin providing the above services in the Fall of 2007. We created a filing system to catalog all of the resources provided to us by T/TAC which would be accessible to both parents and staff members.

We established a group e-mail, created a documentation process for receiving referrals, and wrote an article for our county's special education newsletter. Finally, to help prepare our county to "Catch the Wave", our team presented our plan at a principals' meeting as well as at an administrative meeting at our school board office. With all of our preparations completed, our team members were ready for a summer break before our team would take on an active role in the Fall of 2007.

The 2007/2008 school year has been challenging for the WAVE team, as we have worked to balance fulfilling our roles as contractual employees and performing the

necessary tasks for the newly formed Autism Support Team. Through this year, our team has changed and developed, learning how to adapt and streamline our processes to best meet the county's needs. Our team began the 2007/2008 school year by providing a Power Point Presentation to each of our eight schools in the county. Two WAVE team members spoke at each school, outlining the services that WAVE would be providing for students and staff members and explaining our referral process and required paperwork. We used a shared computer drive to catalog all of our required forms so they would be easily accessible to any county employee.

One of the highlights of our year was completing our first inservice, where we introduced participants to Autism Spectrum Disorders using a beach theme, complete with music and a limbo contest! We had over twenty-five county employees attend, as well as representatives from an outside agency and several community members and parents. Some

of us were a little nervous to participate in our first presentation, but the T/TAC staff trained us well, and we received a lot of positive feedback. The morning after our presentation, the following e-mail was sent to the staff of a county elementary school by a participant:

*"... just wanted all of you to know that yesterday we attended the best inservice ever! The WAVE team not only taught us so much about autism, but also entertained us for 2 hours. We only wish that all of you could have been there. There are five more WAVE inservices planned this year. We will be there and hope you will too. Thanks to all you wonderful WAVE people"*

Due to the demand for consultative services, we have expanded our Autism Support Team. Our newest members are Jason Gilkerson, a speech-language pathologist, and Jennifer Crossway, a special education teacher who is currently completing a certificate program

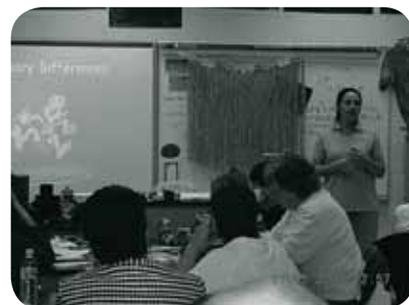
in Autism Studies through JMU. This allows us to assign team members who are from different disciplines to each referral (a combination of an educator, an occupational therapist, and/or a speech-language pathologist). We also developed a WAVE liason position, where one staff member from each of our schools is invited to quarterly meetings and is available to answer questions about our referral process at their respective school.

To date this year, our team has managed eleven referrals, loaned out twelve resources, and provided ten hours of staff inservice training. Team member Gina Cornette has created a data collection system which allows us to quickly analyze our data, review past referrals, and effectively manage our resources.

Our WAVE team has had many challenges and successes over the past two years. As we continue to grow and develop, WAVE hopes to keep in mind the greater purpose of our team and continue to meet the needs identified by teachers, parents, our students, and

community members. In the words of a WCPS staff member who completed our survey,

*"If we are a team (and we should be...including the child!), then we have to communicate and have patience with each other as we learn, and we have to have the child's welfare in mind above all else."*



# CHECK THIS OUT!

The VDOE Office of School Improvement promotes student learning and achievement by assisting schools and school divisions in the implementation of effective instructional strategies and best practices. The responsibilities of the Office of School Improvement include school-level and division-level academic reviews, school improvement planning and innovative programs such as the Partnership for Achieving Successful Schools (PASS).

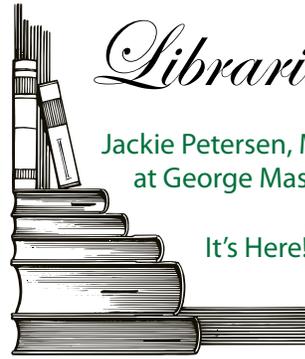
Their web site offers a plethora of information and resources related to improving instructional practices and can be accessed at: <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/SchoolImprovement/>

One example of a content-specific resource available at this site is information on schools that have demonstrated success in the area of middle school mathematics. Three principals from successful middle schools, two from Richmond City and another from Montgomery County, share their experiences in the areas of monitoring instruction, professional development, and scheduling. The VDOE also provides additional resources for middle school mathematics via streaming video.

Among others, topics include:

- LEP Mathematics Strategies for Teaching LEP Students
- Thinking Rationally about Fractions, Decimals, and Percent
- Electronic Practice Assessment Tools
- The VDOE Algebra Readiness Initiative Web site

Another resource at the Office of School Improvement site is the school improvement case files. One of these "files" describes how Hampton City Public Schools improved student achievement through test-taking strategy programs, referred to as the *Hampton Eleven* and the *Hampton Fifteen*. These programs are modeled after the 12 Powerful Words program developed by Larry Bell of Cobb County Public School in Georgia. Eleven to fifteen words frequently found in Standards of Learning test items have been incorporated into instructional and parent activities designed to help elementary and middle school students understand each word. The words are presented with student-friendly language, a visual symbol and a song (chant) or rhyme to learn approximately every two weeks. Hampton City credits this program with contributing to improved student achievement and, ultimately, higher Standards of Learning test scores.



## Librarian's Corner

Jackie Petersen, M.L.S., VDOE T/TAC  
at George Mason University

It's Here!! The Kellar Library's new T/TAC catalog is up and ready to use!

To use the new catalog, go to the library's webpage at [www.kihd.gmu.edu/library/](http://www.kihd.gmu.edu/library/). Under the section **Access Library Materials** click on **Search the T/TAC Catalog**.

The T/TAC collection contains over 4,000 items, and the new catalog gives you many new ways to find those items. See the box for specific, step-by-step instructions on how to conduct a search.

### Other Library News-

We have started cataloging new materials in Dewey Decimal classification which will make it much easier for you to find items on the shelves when you come to visit us. Older materials will be converted to Dewey Decimal classification as time permits, but our plan is to have the entire collection catalogued in Dewey Decimal classification by the end of the year.

We are continuously adding and updating content on our library webpage. <http://kihd.gmu.edu/library/> Check out the other links under **Access Library Materials** for other information that may be helpful to you.

April is National Autism Awareness Month. See the Autism Society of America's website for more information. <http://www.autism-society.org> Kellar Library has a very good collection of autism materials. Here are a few of our newest additions:

**Autism in Your Classroom:** A General Educator's Guide to Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders / Fein, Deborah; Dunn, Michelle A. -- Bethesda, MD: WOODBINE HOUSE, 2007. (Print) 371.94 FEI 2007

**Functional Behavior Assessment for People with Autism:** Making Sense of Seemingly Senseless Behavior / Glassberg, Beth A. -- Bethesda, MD: WOODBINE HOUSE, 2006. (Print) 616.85882 GLA 2006

**Intricate Minds II: Understanding Elementary School Classmates with Asperger Syndrome [DVD]** -- Winston Salem, NC: Coulter Video, 2006. (Video) VIDEO 616.8588 INT 2006

**Passport To Friendship: Facilitating Peer Play For Children With ASD [DVD]** -- [U.S.]: WOODBINE HOUSE, 2006. (Video) VIDEO 649.154 PAS 2006

**Pivotal Response Treatments for Autism:** Communication, Social, and Academic Development / Koegel, Robert; Koegel, Lynn Kern. -- Baltimore, MD: PAUL H. BROOKES PUBLISHING COMPANY, 2006. (Print) 362.19685 KOE 2006

**Reasonable People: A Memoir of Autism and Adoption** / Savarese, Ralph James. -- New York, NY: Other Press, 2007. (Print) 616.85882 SAV 2007

**Self-Help Skills for People with Autism: A Systematic Teaching Approach** / Anderson, Stephen R.; Jablonski, Amy L.; Thomeer, Marcus L.; Knapp, Vicki Madaus. -- Bethesda, MD: WOODBINE HOUSE, 2007. (Print) 616.85882 AND 2007

**Visual Supports for People with Autism: A Guide for Parents and Professionals** / Cohen, Marlene J.; Sloan, Donna L. -- Bethesda, MD: WOODBINE HOUSE, 2007. (Print) 371.94 COH 2007

**The Ziggurat Model: A Framework for Designing Comprehensive Interventions for Individuals with High-Functioning Autism and Asperger Syndrome** / Aspy, Ruth; Grossman, Barry G. -- Shawnee Mission, KS: AUTISM ASPERGER PUBLISHING CO., 2007. (Print) 616.85882 ASP 2007



## T/TAC Catalogue Search Directions

1. Go to the library's webpage at [www.kihd.gmu.edu/library/](http://www.kihd.gmu.edu/library/). Under the section **Access Library Materials** click on **Search the T/TAC Catalog**.

You can search for items by:

- Any Word (keyword)
- Title
- Publication date
- Author
- Subject
- Secondary label
- Record Type (format)
- Primary label
- Disability
- Age

You can also narrow your search results by combining any of these search methods and using the **AND, OR, NOT** drop-down list next to each search box.

For example, if you do an **ANY WORD** search on *Autism*, you find 140 records.

If you only want videos on autism, type *Autism* in the **ANY WORD** search box. Choose **AND** in the box next to **RECORD TYPE** and type *Video* in the search box. You will find 33 records.

2. When you do a search, you will get a *Search Results List*. You have 2 options on the Search Results List. Click on *Full Display* to see the complete information about the item, including if it is checked out and when it is due back.
3. Click on *Add to Cart* if you want to check out the item. Then click on the *Shopping Cart* icon at the top of your screen. On the next screen, choose *Request* from the dropdown list and click on **GO**. Fill out all of the information requested on the *Service Request Form*. Click *Submit*. | An email will be sent to the Kellar Library with your request. You will get a confirmation email, also.
4. If you have requested your items be mailed to you, then you should receive them within 3 to 5 business days. If you have chosen to pick up your items at the Kellar Library, then they will be ready for you to pick up within 24 hours of your request. *The Kellar Library is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. It is located in Krug Hall, Room 108 on the George Mason University- Fairfax campus.*

# Conferences & Trainings:

## April

### 28<sup>th</sup> 5th Annual Understanding the Spectrum and the Strategies that Work: Demystifying Autism

**Presenter: William Stillman**

James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA

Contact Sally Chappel: 540.568.8095 or

[chappesl@jmu.edu](mailto:chappesl@jmu.edu)

**April 30<sup>th</sup> – May 1<sup>st</sup> Infant & Toddler Connection Presents: Viewing the Future Through Window of Opportunity | Hotel Roanoke, Roanoke, VA**  
Infant Toddler Connection Presents: Viewing the Future Through Windows of Opportunity Infant Toddler Connection/Partnership for People with Disabilities

Contact Info: Cori Hill : 540-943-6776 | [corihill@ntelos.net](mailto:corihill@ntelos.net)  
[www.vcu.edu/partnership/calendar\\_ind\\_fam.html](http://www.vcu.edu/partnership/calendar_ind_fam.html)

## May

### 10<sup>th</sup> Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons (NVRC) Celebrate Communication 2008: Back and Bigger than Ever

George Mason University , Center for the Arts

*The largest community event in Northern Virginia promoting excellence in communication for deaf, hard of hearing, and hearing people of all ages. Wait until you see the exciting new things we've got planned for this and NVRC's other 20th anniversary events!*

Contact: Nancy Anderson

(703)993.4496 | [Nanders7@gmu.edu](mailto:Nanders7@gmu.edu)

<http://www.nvrc.org/content.aspx?page=388&section=4>

### 21<sup>st</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> The Road to Success: Raising Expectations and Creating Opportunities

The Wyndham Oceanfront Resort, Virginia Beach, VA  
VCASE Spring Conference with keynote presentation by Rick Lavoie | Contact: Marylou Wall, Executive Director – VCASE

7403 Park Terrace Drive, Alexandria, VA 22307

[www.vcase.org](http://www.vcase.org)

## July

### 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> Shining Stars Early Childhood Conference

## July Continued

**Wyndham Oceanfront Resort | Virginia beach, VA**  
*Virginia's Fifth Annual Early Childhood Conference will focus on instructional strategies that provide positive outcomes in quality inclusive settings for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with & without disabilities. The session topics, vendors, and resources will provide a wealth of information for early childhood special educators, early childhood educators, paraprofessionals, Head Start personnel, Title I personnel, Even Start providers, early intervention providers, administrators, families, and all others who are interested in developing and improving learning environments where all children are included. The keynote speakers for this year's conference will be Dr. Kristi Pretti-Frontczak from Kent State University and Michele Valeri and Ingrid Crepeau from Dino Rock Productions, Inc. Please click on PAYMENT FORM to download this form prior to registering for the Shining Stars Conference.*

Contact: Dionne Paul-Wiggins 703-993-4496

[dpaulwig@gmu.edu](mailto:dpaulwig@gmu.edu)

More info available at: [www.ttaconline.org](http://www.ttaconline.org)

[www.sporg.com/registration?link\\_type=reg\\_info&form\\_id=101739](http://www.sporg.com/registration?link_type=reg_info&form_id=101739)

### 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> From Vision to Practice Fourth Annual Academy: Growing SySTEMic Literacy Across the Content Areas | Richmond: Holiday Inn Koger South

*The goal of the academy will be to assist school divisions to increase student achievement through literacy in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM). The academy is open to administrators, teachers, and educational support staff.*

Contact: Ann Sheehan (804) 371.2932

[Ann.Sheehan@doe.virginia.gov](mailto:Ann.Sheehan@doe.virginia.gov)

<http://www.cpe.vt.edu/reg/vtop/>

### 22<sup>nd</sup> You're Going To Love This Kid: Educating Students with Autism in Inclusive Schools

Sheraton Park South, 9901 Midlothian Turnpike, Richmond, VA

*Participants will learn practical ways of supporting students with autism spectrum labels and other disabilities within a general education classroom. Paula Kluth, PhD,*

## July Continued

a teacher, author, advocate, consultant and independent scholar is the presenter.

Call Commonwealth Autism Service for more information or to register. 800-649-8481

### 31<sup>st</sup> - August 1<sup>st</sup> Connect 4 Success

#### DCDT Summer Institute 2008 CEC – Virginia Division on Career Development and Transition summer institute

Roslyn Center, Richmond, VA

Contact: Kendel St. John 540-885-0183

## August

### 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> Pathways to Possibilities: The Second Annual Conference for working with Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing and Children and Youth who are Blind, Low Vision, Deaf-Blind, Dual Sensory Impaired and/or have Multiple Disabilities

Wyndam Virginia Beach Oceanfront Hotel, Virginia Beach, VA

*This conference is sponsored by The Virginia Department of Education, the Virginia Project for Children and Youth with Dual Sensory Impairments/Deaf-Blindness, and the Technical Assistance Center for Children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing at the Partnership for People with Disabilities at VCU.*

*This collaborative conference will offer stakeholders a broad scope of resources and presenters for the populations they serve. Approximately 300 people are expected to attend this joint conference seeking the most current, research-driven methods and services for educating and working with these low incidence populations. Exciting local and nationally renowned speakers are scheduled to present.*

For general questions about the Multiple-Disabilities Strand: Mark A. Campano, [macampano@vcu.edu](mailto:macampano@vcu.edu), 804.828.8252

For general questions about the Deaf /Hard of Hearing Strand: Ann Hughes, [awhughes@vcu.edu](mailto:awhughes@vcu.edu), 804.828.1342 [www.vcu.edu/partnership/Pathways/](http://www.vcu.edu/partnership/Pathways/)

## September

### 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> The 2008 ABAI Education Conference: Evidence-Based Practice, Scientifically-Based Instruction, and Educational Effectiveness |Hyatt Regency Reston Virginia

*The 2008 ABA International Education Conference is a two-day, primarily single-track conference on evidence-based education focusing on research and applied issues.*

## September Continued

*This event will address the current state of knowledge of evidence-based practices at the policy, evaluation, and practice levels. The conference will examine critical issues including the difficulty of defining "evidence," current findings and gaps in educational effectiveness research, and the complexity involved in the design and implementation of effective programs.*

Contact info: <http://www.abainternational.org>  
<http://www.abainternational.org/educonf/>

## October

### 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> Capitalizing on Middle Schools. VA Middle School Association 2008 Fall Conference

Greater Richmond Convention Center & Omni

Richmond Hotel, Richmond, VA

Keynote speaker: Dr. Harry Wong

Info at [www.vmsa.org](http://www.vmsa.org)

## November

### 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> Annual William and Mary Symposium on Professional Collaboration and Inclusive Education

Williamsburg Marriott Hotel

*The symposium will provide a stimulating professional opportunity for educators promoting the behavioral and academic success of students with disabilities and other struggling learners.*

Contact Info: Mary Beth Mueller (757) 253.4897  
[memueller@wm.edu](mailto:memueller@wm.edu) | [www.wm.edu/TTAC](http://www.wm.edu/TTAC)



George Mason University  
The Helen A. Kellar Institute for  
Human disAbilities  
4400 University Drive  
MS 1F2  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
703.993.4496  
<http://ttac.gmu.edu>

VDOE  
Region IV T/TAC  
George Mason University  
Contact Information

**Michael Behrman, Ed.D.**  
Principal Investigator  
mbehrman@gmu.edu

**Lynn Wiley, Ph.D.**  
Director of T/TAC@GMU  
hwiley@gmu.edu

**Kay Klein, M.Ed.**  
Assistant Director of T/TAC@GMU  
mklei1@gmu.edu

**Nancy Anderson, M.Ed.**  
Special Education Polices and  
Procedures Coordinator  
nanders7@gmu.edu

**Bonnie Bell Carter, Ph.D.**  
Secondary Education & Mild/Moderate  
Disabilities Coordinator  
bcarter6@gmu.edu

**Karen Berlin, M.Ed.**  
Autism & Severe Disabilities Coordinator  
kberlin@gmu.edu

**Sheryl Fahey, M.Ed.**  
Early Childhood Coordinator  
sfahey@gmu.edu

**Judith Fontana, Ph.D.**  
Curriculum & Instruction  
Projects Coordinator, IST, SIM  
jfontan1@gmu.edu

**Kris Ganley, M.Ed.**  
Early Childhood Coordinator, Autism  
kganley@gmu.edu

**SooJin Jang, M.Ed.**  
Assistive Technology Coordinator  
sjang6@gmu.edu

**Estela Landeros, M.Ed.**  
Assistive Technology Coordinator  
elandero@gmu.edu

**Diane Loomis, Ph.D.**  
Transition & Curriculum Coordinator  
dloomis@gmu.edu

**Nikki Miller, Ed.D.**  
Curriculum & Instruction Coordinator  
nmiller7@gmu.edu

**Seunghun Ok, M.Ed.**  
T/TAC Online Coordinator  
sok@gmu.edu

**Dionne Paul-Wiggins**  
T/TAC Events Coordinator  
dpaulwig@gmu.edu

**Jackie Petersen, MLS**  
T/TAC Librarian  
jpetersk@gmu.edu

**Sandra Price**  
Administrative Office Support  
spricec@gmu.edu

**Jeff Richards**  
Graphic/Web Designer  
Jricharc@gmu.edu

**Judy Stockton, M.A.**  
Curriculum & Mild/Moderate  
Disabilities Coordinator  
jstockt1@gmu.edu

**Clare Talbert, M.Ed.**  
T/TAC Online Coordinator  
ctalber1@gmu.edu



T/TAC  
George Mason University  
4400 University Drive, MS 1F2  
Fairfax, VA 22030  
201407

