

## Update from the Director of Exceptional Student Services

Greetings!

I hope that this Newsletter arrives at a time when your life is going well and you have the time to take a break and read all of this good information. We are very busy in Colorado "*Restructuring for the Achievement of All Students*". You will read about many of these activities in this edition.



We in Colorado are not alone in our efforts to restructure or embark on comprehensive school reform. With increased accountability that results in sanctions for low performing schools, districts and schools are all looking at strategies for

assuring high student achievement for all students. Studies have been conducted on the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstrations funded by Title I School wide programs over the recent years. Evidence suggests that when school reform is conducted in a thoughtful manner, it promotes the best inclusive practices for students with disabilities. It also shows that *ALL* students benefit when collaboration between general and special education is purposefully fostered.

Studies conducted on exemplary districts that implemented Comprehensive School Reform where special and general education alignment was in place indicate some common factors for success. Lessons learned in studies conducted in Massachusetts and Maryland include:\*

- The top leadership at the district or at the

school must be committed to reform.

- A district-wide leadership team (or at the school level, a school wide team) that includes representation from general and special education, Title 1 and curriculum staff must be established with scheduled ongoing communication.
- A comprehensive, plan must be developed that considers the educational needs of all students, including those with exceptional needs.
- ALL learners must be held to high expectations.
- Assessment results/data must be used to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- State and federal mandated reforms should be addressed in a single plan.
- The coordination of funding streams should be promoted, especially Title 1 and IDEA funding.
- Flexibility and support to schools to make changes in the configuration and delivery of services should be provided.
- Professional development should be ongoing and be provided to general and special educators at the same time on *research based* best instructional practices, as well as in areas of teaming and collaboration.

In the Exceptional Student Services Unit, we are learning through our own experience the importance of having leadership teams in place at

*(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)*

# Call for Articles

WE INVITE YOU TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE FOR A FUTURE ISSUE OF THE INSIDE EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN. BELOW ARE LISTED DEADLINES AND FEATURE TOPICS, ALTHOUGH OTHER TOPICS ARE WELCOME AS WELL.

THE DEADLINE DATE FOR ARTICLES FOR THE FALL 2004 IS DUE SEPTEMBER 1ST; WINTER 2004-5 ARTICLES ARE DUE JANUARY 3RD AND SPRING 2005 ARTICLES ARE DUE APRIL 1ST.

EDITING ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE/PROVIDED AS NEEDED. TO DISCUSS SUBMISSIONS, OR FOR A LIST OF ADDITIONAL ARTICLE IDEAS TO CONSIDER, CONTACT JENNIFER JACKSON @ JACKSON\_J@CDE.STATE.CO.US.

MAILING ADDRESS FOR PHOTOGRAPHS OR LOGOS TO ACCOMPANY ARTICLES IS:

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*(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)*

the local level who know how to look at data to make decisions if we want to see sustainability of any initiative. The Positive Behavior Supports sites, the School Improvement sites, and the Transition Outcomes Projects are examples of three initiatives that rely on local team leadership and the use of assessment data to make decisions. We have revised the entire Monitoring Process from a regulatory check to a Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process that originates with leaders at the local level conducting a self assessment and then uses that data to drive plans for improvement that assures student achievement. As we begin to review the assessment data on students who are gifted and talented, we hope to see innovative plans for improving their achievement as well.

I hope that you enjoy reading the articles in this newsletter that support the restructuring of schools for the achievement of *ALL* students. I personally am very excited about all the good work that is going on throughout Colorado on behalf of students with exceptional needs.

\*Information included in this article comes from the Study of the Alignment of Special and General Education Reform in Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Programs funded by the Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) under contract # H324000043 and covers the academic years 1999-2003.

Lorrie Harkness,  
State Director  
Exceptional Student Services

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THE *INSIDE CDE SPECIAL EDUCATION* NEWSLETTER STAFF:

**COORDINATORS**  
JENNIFER JACKSON  
KELLI ROARK

THE PURPOSE OF THE *INSIDE SPECIAL EDUCATION* NEWSLETTER IS TO SERVE AS A MEDIUM FOR THE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION PERTAINING TO SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF COLORADO AND THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CDE SPECIAL EDUCATION UNIT. THIS NEWSLETTER IS DESIGNED TO DISSEMINATE INFORMATION ON PROFESSIONAL ISSUES, PROCEDURAL CHANGES, AND UPCOMING EVENTS TO COLORADO EDUCATORS.

ALL VIEWS AND OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE THOSE OF THE AUTHORS AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THE VIEWS OF THE COLORADO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OR THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO-DENVER.

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LORRIE HARKNESS

## RESTRUCTURING FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ALL STUDENTS

*The mission of the Exceptional Student Services Unit is to provide leadership and advocacy that increase the accountability of educational systems for meeting the exceptional learning needs of all Colorado children and youth.*



Currently we have several initiatives in the Exceptional Student Services Unit that are designed to enhance and improve the achievement for ALL students in Colorado. We refer to these efforts as *Restructuring for the Achievement of ALL students*. Listed below are some of the initiatives that you will read about in this issue of the Insider:

- **Self Determination of Gifted & Talented students**
- **Positive Behavior Supports**
- **YES-Year of Educator Synergy**
- **Deaf Education Reform in Colorado**
- **CHIP- Colorado Home Intervention Program**
- **Colorado IEP Task Force**
- **The SILC Road-Supporting Inclusive Learning Communities**
- **Transition Outcomes Project**
- **T 4 T-Training for Transition**
- **SWAP-School to Work Alliance Program**
- **Promising Practices for Transition**
- **MAPS**

As you read about these exciting restructuring initiatives, please note the websites or contact numbers that can be accessed for further information.

## Transition and Self-Determination for Gifted Individuals

Jean Cross, Ph.D.

Transitions are a fact of life for everyone. Cultures and religions as well as communities and families provide public rituals to celebrate transitions from one stage of life to another. Individuals in the gifted population may additionally face transitions that are related to their giftedness and nontraditional among most individuals in society. By better understanding these transitions among creative, gifted, and talented children in our classes, we honor that which makes them unique in our society. But it also means that we have to help the children make successful transition by teaching and supporting the habits of self-determination to withstand the obstacles inherent in being gifted, talented, and creative.

One type of transition for gifted children is that which occurs when they “use up” a topic or interest. The gifted brain generally processes information quickly and manages an array of connections. Gifted children in classrooms have many interests and move quickly from one to another; but that does not mean the final paper ever gets turned, the course completed, or the homework even begun. This tendency may continue. Marylou Streznewski found most gifted adults in her study maintained engagement and challenge in their jobs for little more than 2-3 years. Whether in a classroom or job, many gifted learners ask for more complex (harder) work and new projects for the fun of learning even though teachers and supervisors may be less bound by the need for continual change. The gifted child might feel less frustrated by understanding and accepting his/her constant drive for new ideas and information. No longer a “victim” to one more “bursting at the seams” need for change, a gifted child might learn to anticipate and plan productively for the next interest and challenge.

At some time or another in school, the gifted learner should experience the transition from being “a big fish in a little pond” to “a little fish in a big pond.” The upper elementary gifted child is seen by peers and teachers as being smart, fast, and always having the right answer. When this

child advances to a middle school and meets new intellectual peers and has to expend more effort to “make the grade,” it is not uncommon to see the emergence of self-doubt, discouragement, or withdrawal—or it might be a time of increased self-determination to learn a new strategies for learning and communicating with intellectual peers. Educators and parents facilitate gifted development by sharing the necessity of this transition which should occur many times.

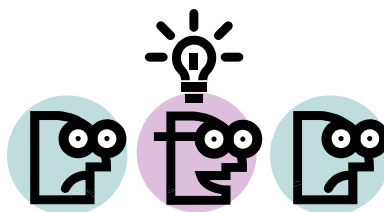
One more transition experience by many talented and creative individuals is that which leads into a “flow” experience, according to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. In his worldwide research study about optimal happiness, life satisfaction, and intrinsic motivation, he maintains people who achieve this state have a sense of mastery (determination) in their own lives, consciously participate in life events, transform chores (homework?) and jobs into creative activities, and find meaningful patterns that tie together their experiences. Without learning these habits, children may quickly lose courage and determination needed for more

complex, creative, and satisfying work. Work that is too easy, too slow, and too prescribed is an obstacle for gifted and talented children in our classrooms. These children need personal awareness and coping strategies to their own flow experiences and nurture the self-determination that for them could last a lifetime and endow our world with the fruits of their gifts.

Gifted children may need more self-determination in our schools and society to reach their potential. Self-determination can be taught and nurtured in children whose internal and public lives may differ from the vast majority of the population because of their giftedness. The children need our determination to support their growth, development of talent, and fulfillment of potential.

### References

- Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: the psychology of optimal experience*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.  
 Streznewski, M. (1999). *Gifted grownups*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.



## PBS: Designing School-Wide Systems for Student Success

The purpose of the Colorado School-wide Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) Initiative is to establish and maintain effective school environments that maximize the academic achievement and behavioral competence of all learners. Since its inception during the 2002-2003 school year, CDE has provided training and technical assistance to school-based leadership teams in sixty schools in nine districts. Each district has identified a PBS Coach who has received additional training from CDE and provides a broad range of supports for the teams. Coaches attend monthly team meeting and assist teams in implementing an action plan and using discipline data for decision making.

The Guiding Principle of PBS is that academic achievement and behavioral competence are the result of school personnel and families working together to provide a continuum of support for all learners through the application of research validated instructional and management practices. This continuum includes:

- School-wide interventions for all learners (universal)
- Specialized interventions for learners who are at-risk for academic or social failure due to behavior challenges (targeted)
- Individualized interventions for students with intense/chronic behavior challenges (intensive)

School-wide PBS is a systems change model. Key components include defining and teaching positive behavioral expectations to all students as well as designing a system to acknowledge and reward appropriate behavior. Teams receive training to collect and utilize data for ongoing decision making. They analyze the data to determine whether interventions should focus on specific locations in the building, a specific time of day or whether patterns are emerging which demonstrate a need for school-wide or targeted group interventions. Information such as the average daily office discipline referrals along with achievement data is continually reviewed to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

School-wide Positive Behavior Support is frequently represented by a 3-tiered triangle (see below) with instructional practices and intervention strategies identified at the universal, secondary and tertiary levels. This parallels the "Pyramid of Interventions" model used to describe academic interventions and strategies.

This parallel is critical in understanding the link between academic success and social and behavioral competence of students. Dr. Tim Lewis, Associate professor from University of Missouri and George Sugai, a professor at the University of Oregon and Co- Director of the OSEP Center for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support



[www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org) define the ultimate goal of PBS as "increasing the school's capacity to address effectively and efficiently the behavioral supports of all students". This reciprocal relationship is best demonstrated by the following example. If a classroom teacher spends 10 minutes a day redirecting inappropriate behavior, resolving student

conflicts or escorting a child to the office for a discipline referral, this equals 30 hours of lost instructional time lost over the course of the year! In a building of 500 students, if the principal follows up on one referral from each teacher weekly, he has spent over 4 weeks of the school year responding to behavior which interferes with learning. PBS teams provide training to all staff to assist them in preventing problem behavior by using minor disruptions as "teaching opportunities" and providing students with more socially acceptable alternatives. Research and evaluation shows that School-wide Positive Support results in:

- increased time for academic achievement,
- reduction in problem behavior and office referrals, and
- accompanying increases in student achievement.

In the Colorado Behavior Initiative, CDE has identified an additional key PBS principle: achieving academic and social competence in all

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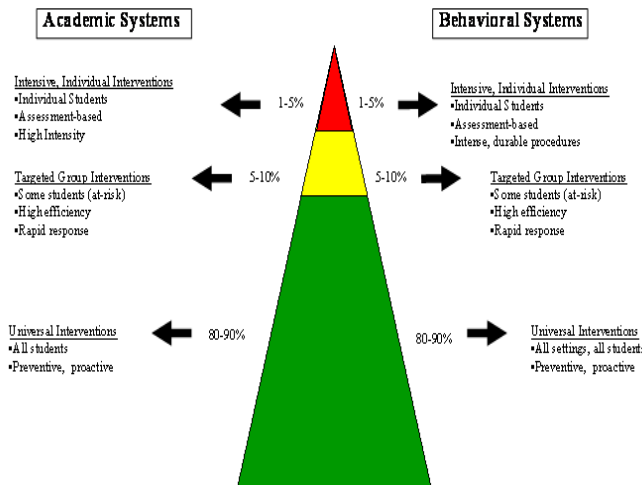
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learners through collaboration with families. Drs Lewis and Sugai indicated that “recent reviews of literature indicate that schools and parents can be successful in reducing challenging behaviors by implementing a proactive prevention approach by teaching parents to increase positive interactions and to increase their participation in their child’s education.” Judy Martinez from the National Center for School Engagement at the Colorado Foundation for Families and Children is working with PBS sites through Prevention Initiative and providing technical support to participating schools to increase family involvement.

With the goal of reaching 80% of Colorado’s school districts at the end of 5 years, CDE will continue to include additional school districts and BOCES each year.

Further information about how districts/BOCES can become involved in PBS can be obtained from the NEW CDE PBS web site at [www.cde.state.co.us/pbs](http://www.cde.state.co.us/pbs). The website contains a brochure, links to national PBS web sites and further information. In addition, CDE’s state PBS Coordinator, Kiki McGough, is available at 303-866-6768 or [mcgough\\_k@cde.state.co.us](mailto:mcgough_k@cde.state.co.us).

*“If a classroom teacher spends 10 minutes a day redirecting inappropriate behavior, resolving student conflicts or escorting a child to the office for a discipline referral, this equals 30 hours of lost instructional time lost over the course of the year! In a building of 500 students, if the principal follows up on one referral from each teacher weekly, he has spent over 4 weeks of the school year responding to behavior which interferes with learning”.*



# The Year of Educator Synergy

## ON-LINE SURVEY

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The Exceptional Student Services Unit is collaborating with the Office of Professional Services and Teacher Licensing on an exciting project. YES!, which stands for The Year of Educator Synergy, is a new initiative designed to improve teacher preparation, recruitment, induction, retention, and ongoing professional development. Educators from throughout Colorado will participate in developing guidelines and quality indicators for the phases of an educator's professional "life."

An online survey is available for all those wishing to take part in providing input for this important effort. Information derived from this survey will be used by writing teams as they complete their work. Those who would like to participate in YES! can do so by completing the online survey. If you would like additional information about future YES! activities, please email Wendy Ulibarri at [Ulibarri\\_W@cde.state.co.us](mailto:Ulibarri_W@cde.state.co.us) with your name and contact information.

Once developed, Guidelines will be posted on the CDE website and can be used/adopted by any district or teacher preparation program. Results of the YES! Survey will also be available.

### Survey Issues:

- **Attracting the best to the profession**
- **Fully informing pre-service candidates**
- **Successful recruitment/retention**
- **Relevant induction/mentoring**
- **Compelling & feasible career incentives**
- **Effective & constructive evaluation**
- **Meaningful(!) professional development**
- **Value-added career advancement**

**When:** Between April 1, 2004 and April 21, 2004

**Where:** [www.cde.state.co.us/YES](http://www.cde.state.co.us/YES)

Help develop innovative and practical policies/guidelines, which address major challenges facing Colorado education – such as those raised by AYP, Accreditation, NCLB & IDEA.

**Please say**  **and share your ideas and opinions!**

Thank you very much for participating and for providing your views on these vital matters.

Dorothy Gotlieb, Director, Office of Professional Services/Educator Licensing, CD



## Deaf Education Reform in Colorado – the Train is Moving

By Cheryl D. Johnson, E.d.D., Senior Consultant, CDE

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE), in collaboration with the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind, established a Deaf Education Reform Task Force, which met regularly throughout the 2000-01 and 2001-02 school years. The Task Force addressed the following missions:

- *Analyze the changing demographics and needs of children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH) in the state of Colorado*
- *Improve educational outcomes for D/HH children*
- *Recommend an effective communication-based service delivery system for D/HH children in Colorado.*

Four years later, progress towards a statewide service delivery system continues.

### Why are we doing this?

Performance of deaf and hard of hearing students has been notoriously and historically substandard. The continued cycle of poor outcomes is simply unacceptable as these are individuals who have the same cognitive ability and potential as their hearing peers. **Until we figure out an educational system that will result in parallel achievement, we continue to fail these children/youth.**



The recommendations of the Task Force were:

- receive services that are based on the individual communication needs of each child/youth.
- have services that are based on high academic standards and achievement expectations.
- have full access to all components of their educational environment.
- have access to programs that include a “critical mass” of deaf and hard of hearing peers to promote social and communication opportunities as well as an array of support services.

1. Colorado should implement a coordinated statewide regional education system as an educational option that will effectively and efficiently meet the needs of D/HH children.
2. D/HH students should have access to quality academic and extracurricular programs that are communication-driven. Criteria for establishing these programs should be implemented.
3. Communication-driven programs serving D/HH students should be subject to on-going assessment to assure full access, student achievement, and high standards.

### What Have we Accomplished?

#### Phase I

The first phase of the reform effort consisted of the work of the Deaf Education Reform

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4. On-going training, mentoring, and a full spectrum of professional development activities should be implemented statewide to support and improve proficiency for specialty providers, general educators, administrators, and families.
5. The Colorado Department of Education should collaborate with national and state agencies and higher education programs to recruit, train, and encourage retention of staff providing services to D/HH students.
6. A system of community and parent education that leads to meaningful involvement that will result in full access and collaboration so that each child will have opportunities to maximize potential and achieve high standards should be implemented.
7. Colorado should develop and implement a funding system that will provide sufficient resources for a quality education for D/HH children.

*The Task Force developed goals and a timeline for implementation of a statewide regional system of education and support and recommended that the program begin with a pilot program in one region. It further recommended that the pilot should be maintained in accordance with a new statewide system and should be coordinated by a regionally-appointed advisory council working with the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. The report stated that it would be critical that the pilot program reflect the unique characteristics and needs of its region while, at the same time, adhering to the high standards and basic tenants upon which the statewide system is founded. (adapted from A Blueprint for Closing the Gap: Developing a Statewide System of Service Improvements for Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, p.3-4).*

In addition to the Task Force Report, another significant change occurred in 2001. The state's early intervention program, *Colorado Home Intervention Program* or CHIP, moved from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to the Colorado School for the Deaf and the Blind. This model program had been administered through the state health department since the early seventies. Because the focus of the program was more educationally than health-based, and because our vision supported a seamless birth to age twenty-one program for deaf and hard of hearing children and their families, this move resulted in another significant step toward achieving a statewide deaf education system. The correlation between early identification and early intervention in children with hearing loss to improved outcomes later on requires that we maintain this emphasis on early intervention.



## Phase II

In order to proceed with the directives of the Task Force Report to establish a pilot regional program, three "next steps" were determined: develop program and service standards, develop an accountability plan, and develop an administrative structure and funding mechanism to support regional programming. Under the guidance of the Phase II Implementation Task Force, workgroups were established in June of 2003 to begin on these goals. As of March 2004, drafts of the *Colorado Quality*

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*Standards for Programs and Services* and the Accountability Plan are complete and will be presented for approval to the Implementation Task Force in May. The task of the funding workgroup has been more difficult. While this workgroup is continuing to explore a variety of options the Colorado Department of Education committed to setting aside federal dollars to support a three year pilot regional program.

Proposals for regional programs and services for deaf and hard of hearing children will be reviewed this spring and the selected region will be notified. The pilot program will consist of a three year project with the first year dedicated to planning followed by implementation and data collection during years two and three. CDE/CSDB will support the selected pilot with funding and technical assistance. The selected regional pilot will be required to adhere to the overall philosophy of regionalization as defined in the *Closing the Gap* report including

- adherence to the Colorado Quality Standards
- adherence to the Accountability Plan (Demographic information, parent input, school-based indicators, student-based indicators)
- annual project evaluation
- annual fiscal report

Another activity of Phase II has been the development of a video, *A is for Access*. The purpose of this video is to describe the unique characteristics of communication access for deaf and hard of hearing students. The video will be targeted to general education and special education teachers as well as parent and consumer groups. Watch for it this spring.

### What is Next?

It is hoped that through the pilot program process, we will learn two things. First, whether a statewide system of regional programming has the potential to support the tenants upon which these recommendations are based (e.g., programs/services that are communication-driven, have high standards, have a critical mass, and provide full access). And, second, to determine if the implementation of the *Quality Standards* that are based on those tenants result in improved outcomes for the students. An aggressive accountability plan will guide the evaluation of both of these hypotheses.

Once data is available that supports improved achievement, communication, and social outcomes, the Implementation Task Force and the funding workgroup are confident that we can address deaf education reform, including the necessary funding to restructure our system, with the Colorado legislature.

### References

Colorado Department of Education (2002). *A Blueprint for Closing the Gap: Developing a Statewide System of Service Improvements for Students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing*. Denver: Author. [on-line] [www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-hearing-htm](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/sd-hearing-htm)

Colorado Department of Education (March 2004). *Colorado Quality Standards for Children and Youth who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing – DRAFT*. Denver: Author.



## EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMMING COLORADO HOME INTERVENTION PROGRAM (CHIP)

C H I P

**CHIP Facilitator Survey:** A survey was disseminated to CHIP facilitators in May, 2003. Forty-one facilitators completed the surveys, representing a 39% return rate. The facilitators completing the surveys have worked with CHIP for 1-20 years as contract employees. Each facilitator was working with 1-10 families at the time of the survey. The following results reflect the strengths and needs of the program.

- *Training:* The vast majority of facilitators with an active caseload (93%) attended regional and/or state-sponsored conferences three times during the year.
- *Mentoring Provided by Colorado Hearing Resource (CO-Hear) Coordinators:* CO-Hear Coordinators provide consultation, technical assistance and support to CHIP facilitators in several ways. Eighty-three percent of the facilitators had monthly contact with their regional CO-Hear Coordinator through phone or e-mail. The regional CO-Hear Coordinator accompanied half of the facilitators on at least one home visit during the year.
- *Adherence to Family-Centered Practices:* The answers to five true-false questions were analyzed to identify the number of facilitators implementing family-centered (versus child-centered) practices. Seventy-



eight percent of the facilitators received a score of 70% or higher on these questions. The answers to open-ended questions querying the use of family-centered practices indicates the need for the program to provide more training as only 58% of the facilitators supplied answers indicating they were implementing family-centered practices.

- *Support and Information Provided to Families:* Based on parent request, the most frequently distributed materials included education about hearing loss (97%), education about communication approaches (97%), websites, books, and videos (95%), preparing for an IFSP (87%), and information about amplification and assistive technology (82%). Materials provided with less frequency (51%-69%) included connecting families with other agencies (69%), connecting families with other families (64%), visiting preschools (62%), and accompanying parents to their child's audiology appointments (51%). Information on topics provided less than 50% of the time included education about the law (46%), connecting families with D/HH role models (41%), and connecting a family with an advocate (18%).
- *Utilization of Regional Colorado Hearing Resource (CO-Hear) Coordinators:* Facilitators appreciated

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the technical assistance and support offered by the regional CO-Hear Coordinators. On a 5-point Leikert scale, CO-Hear Coordinators received mean ratings ranging from 4.3 - 4.8 on the five survey questions.

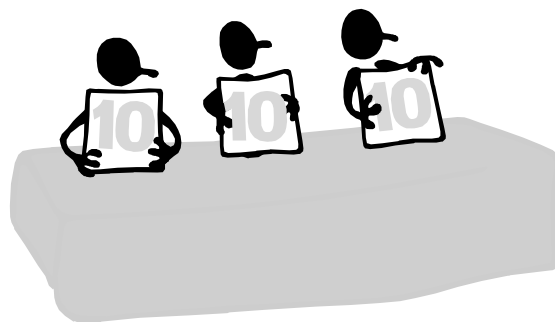
**CHIP Parent Survey:** This survey was distributed to parents currently receiving services from CHIP. Fifty-nine parents completed the survey, representing a 34% return rate. For two of the questions, they rated the CHIP program on a 5-point Leikert Scale. Other questions queried the type of information parents wanted and their participation in the FAMILY Assessment.

- *Effectiveness of CHIP Programs:* Ratings were provided for specific components of the program: use of sign language instructors (4.7), accessing the Early Literacy Initiative (4.3), use and application of the FAMILY Assessment (4.2), use of deaf and hard of hearing role models (4.0), and accessing Families for Hands & Voices - a parent group for parents of children with hearing loss - (3.9).
- *Effectiveness of CHIP Facilitators:* Facilitators received a mean rating of 4.5 - 4.8 on the following topics: sensitive to family's goals, communication style, values (4.8), supported family's choice of communication mode (4.8), behave in a professional manner (4.8), effective support during IFSP and transition meetings (4.6), collaboration with other therapists/providers (4.6), and helping

parent become an advocate for their child (4.5).

- *Information and Resources Provided to Families:* Families wanted information on 13 topics that will be listed in the order of the frequency of the request. (Topics requested less than 60% of the time are not listed.) The following topics were requested by 63% - 95% of the families: communication choices, language development, speech development, sign language, hearing aids, auditory skill development, general development, service coordination, Part C, parent groups, financial resources, appropriate play strategies and toys, private therapy. The answers also identified when families wanted information but did not receive it. This occurred for 2% -11% of the families for the topics referenced above.
- *FAMILY Assessment:* All but one of the families completing the survey were aware of the assessment and 86% of the families completed the assessment.

These results provide validation for program practices and indicate areas that need improvement. Overall, parents are highly satisfied with the Colorado Home Intervention Program. There are some instances when parents request information but do not receive it. There is also an indication that CHIP facilitators need more training on delivery of family-centered practices. CHIP's strategic plan identifies activities to address these needs.



## MAPs

*By David Gray, Southeast Regional Manager*

A notable project that the RST has undertaken relates well with the goals discussed above. This project supports teachers in their quest to improve student achievement for all students, but particularly those identified as students with disabilities. The Achievement MAP (Mastering the Achievement Process) provides a guide that helps educators make and implement effective, comprehensive plans for student learning. The MAP Shows the “topography” of achievement planning, including staff determination of what kids most need to learn, analysis of classroom and/or other assessment data, and coaching for implementation of curricula or teaching strategies—that are essential for supporting the learning process and success of all students. The MAP also links each step to resources (e.g., rubrics and reading regarding the process and content involved) that focus and strengthen the work in each step.

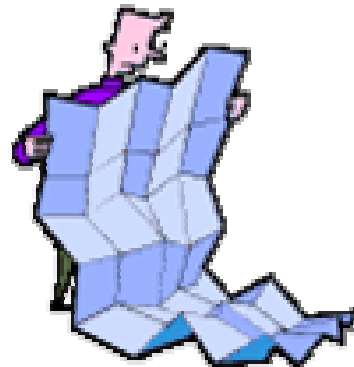
A MAP Winter Institute was sponsored by the Southeast Regional Professional Development Council (RPDC), using funds available through the Sliver Grant program. RPDC support for development of MAP-based achievement planning extends the mission of that organization to provide capacity-building professional learning opportunities that make a tangible difference in the quality of educational practice and student success.

Creation and development of the MAP has occurred primarily through the staff work and professional experiences of the Santa Fe Trail BOCES. Particular credit goes to Sandy Malouf, Director of the BOCES, and Jaime Bailey, Professional Development

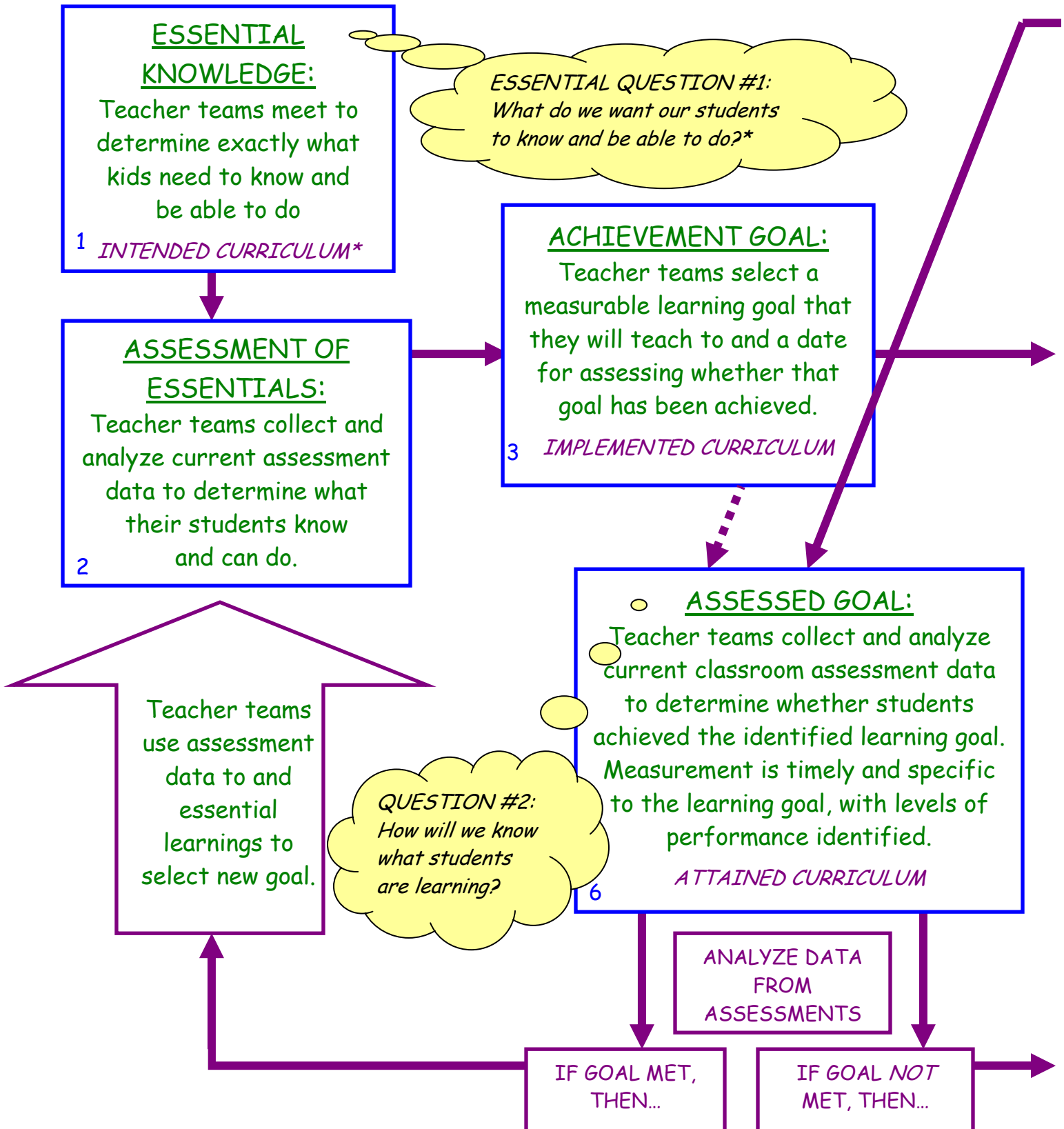
Coordinator for the BOCES.

The MAP is a work in progress—both in the sense that the guide itself is evolving (including the development of resources that support its use) and in the sense that it invites a dynamic approach to educational work and planning. Rather than offering a “fix” that educators can patch onto a specific problem, the MAP offers a journey through which educators can discover how to hone their abilities to help all students succeed.

This is one example of how collaboration and teaming of the various components of the accreditation and CIMP processes can result in positive outcomes for students, schools, and districts. The Southeast Regional Service Team is committed to continuing these practices that enhance and support true student achievement, specifically those that are represented in these under achieving sub-populations.



# ACHIEVEMENT



Three elements of effective pedagogy:  
instructional strategies; management techniques; curriculum design

### TOOLS & STRATEGIES:

Districts acquire/develop and implement researched-based tools and strategies for teachers to support student learning.

4

#### Selected Tools & Strategies

- 
- 
- 
- 

### TEACHING & LEARNING:

Districts provide support for teachers in successfully applying tools and strategies in their classrooms.

5

Skillful Classroom Application

Coaching Support and Feedback

Modeling

Instruction

**QUESTION #3:**  
How can we assist and support students in their learning?

Coaches to ensure proper implementation

### ADDITIONAL SUPPORT:

Using the assessment data, teachers determine which students are having what problems, and how to address these concerns. They may decide to provide more time, try varied strategies, refine how they implement the strategies, and/or provide extended support for individual students.

7

**QUESTION #3:**  
How can we assist and support students in their learning?

\*Essential Questions from *Getting Started: Reculturing Schools to be Professional Learning Communities*, by Robert Eaker, Richard DuFour, Rebecca DuFour, 2002.

\*Intended/Implemented/Attained Curriculum labels from *What Works in Schools*, by Robert J. Marzano, 2003.



**Colorado IEP Task Force: Promoting an Effective and Efficient IEP Process***By Candy Myers, Sr. Consultant, ESSU*

In May of 2003, the Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee (CSEAC) agreed to a proposal to create a statewide IEP Task Force to replace an ad hoc committee that was focused on developing recommendations for a “new approach to a collaborative, efficient direction of the IEP process.” The Exceptional Student Services Unit took the lead on creating such a Task Force.

**Task Force Facilitation and Membership:**

Judy Schrag, a national consultant and former OSEP (Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education) director, was contracted to facilitate the work of the IEP Task Force, along with co-facilitator, Leanne Seaver, a former co-chair of CSEAC.

“Reduce paperwork wherever possible”

The IEP Task Force members represent a wide range of stakeholders. Roles include...

- Parents
- Advocates
- General Educators
- Special Educators
- School-based nurses
- Special Education Directors & Coordinators
- Principals
- Attorneys
- State Director and Consultants (Colorado Department of Education: Exceptional Student Services Unit)
- Representative of the Colorado Education Association
- Special education instructional staff from IHE’s (Institutions of Higher Education)
- Representatives from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

“Parents need to have equal access to the IEP and progress monitoring.”

“Universal form needed for all students (replacing ILP, IEP, 504, etc.)”

“Promote direct student involvement”

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“Foster collaboration, mutual support and respect...”

**Overall Charge to the Task Force:**

The overall charge to the Task Force was to recommend a new approach in Colorado for an IEP process that...

- Is meaningful to students, parents and educators
- Assures student achievement
- Increased the efficiency of the process (considers time, paperwork, duplication of effort, human resources, etc.)

**Priorities Identified:**

The IEP Task Force has identified three priority areas...

“A simplified, child-centered, outcomes-oriented approach to the IEP Process should be flexible, dynamic and focused on improving student progress.”

**Priority 1\*:** Simplified and Meaningful IEP Process Focused on Student Outcomes

**Priority 2\*:** Enhanced Collaboration and Partnerships Involving All Stakeholders

**Priority 3\*:** An Alternative IEP Process

**Training\*:** Initially indicated by the Task Force as a separate priority, the training and professional development needed to support each the three priorities will be incorporated into the final implementation plans for each area.

The full Task Force will meet again at the end of April. At that time, action plans for the implementation of specific recommendations in each of these priority areas will be formulated. Once these implementation plans are completed, they will be posted on the web, as well.

\* Please check out the meeting notes for the first three sessions of the IEP Task Force on the CDE website for specific information as to the content of these priorities. (You will find that the priorities were reconfigured and the numbers changed along the way.) Use the following web address for the CDE/Exceptional Student Services site: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped>. Then choose “IEP Task Force” from the Topic Index.

# SILC School Improvement Initiative



"Our *Professional Learning Community*, created through participation in the SILC project, has had a tremendous impact on teacher/student achievement through school-wide collaboration, unification around a common focus and common language, and the creation of a positive learning environment for all, including students with diverse learning needs."

- Julie McVicker, Principal, Indian Peaks Elementary, St. Vrain Valley

## Supporting Inclusive Learning Communities (SILC) School Improvement Initiative

By Candy Myers, Sr. Consultant, ESSU

The focus of the SILC School Improvement Initiative is on building the capacity of schools to bring about positive learning outcomes for ALL students. Each school forms a Building Leadership Team (BLT) that includes the principal and at least one special educator and one general educator. Through the leadership of the BLT, schools work toward growth as Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). Four full-day institutes with Richard and Becky DuFour plus other optional professional development opportunities are providing the guidance for the teams in implementing the PLC improvement model. The key corollary questions for schools to continually address are:

- ? **What do we want all students to learn?** [Collaborative content or grade-level teams specifically identify the essential learnings that are necessary to achieve the standards.]
- ? **How do we know they have learned?** [Collaborative teams determine what evidence demonstrates student achievement, including common assessments developed for specific content/concepts, and create/maintain systems to monitor progress.]
- ? **What do we do when some students don't learn?** [Schools/collaborative teams determine how instruction or other support will change to directly address lack of student learning, consider any realignment of staff or roles in order to assure student learning, create a "pyramid of interventions" to address various levels of support or intensity of instruction needed, etc.]

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The key premise is that NO students are allowed to fail. Schools continue to go deeper into what can be done to prevent “losing” even one child in the educational process.

### 6 Fundamental Characteristics of a Professional Learning Community



Shared mission, vision, values and



Action orientation/experimentation



Collaborative teams



Commitment to continuous improvement



Collective inquiry



Results orientation

- Richard DuFour

A second component of the SILC School Improvement Initiative involves a focus on the effective implementation of *Differentiating Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (DCIA)\**. Again, the SILC school-based teams are involved in extensive professional development to enable them to work collaboratively in differentiating curriculum, instruction and assessment; to take a lead in sharing their experiences with other staff; and in becoming coaches/mentors to others in the building.

### Definition of Differentiation

“In a differentiated classroom, the teacher proactively plans and carries out varied approaches to content, process, and product in anticipation of and response to student differences in readiness, interest, and learning needs.”

- Carol Ann Tomlinson, 2001, *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms*

\*DCIA is a statewide training-of-trainers professional development initiative. The trainers of the professional development sessions for the school-based teams in the SILC project are a part of that initiative. The Fall, 2003, issue of the Inside Exceptional Student Services newsletter features articles about the DCIA initiative and differentiation in general. The entire newsletter can be accessed on the web at:

[http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/download/pdf/INSIDE\\_Fall2003.pdf](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/download/pdf/INSIDE_Fall2003.pdf)

## COLORADO TRANSITION OUTCOMES PROJECT

*By Jennifer Jackson, Senior Consultant,  
Exceptional Student Services Unit, CDE*

### BACKGROUND AND NEED

While much has occurred in states and local districts to improve transition services for youth with disabilities, there are many states and local districts that continue to find it challenging to meet the transition services requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

In Colorado, the need for support with transition services has been identified through the Senior Survey conducted by the School-to-Career projects, the OSEP monitoring report, self-assessments as part of the CIMP process, and requests from Directors for assistance. BOCES and administrative units participate in the Colorado Transition Outcomes Projects as one way of addressing the identified needs related to the transition requirements of IDEA. Currently the CDE has 21 sites participating in the Transition Outcomes Project. Other states have implemented this project include Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Nebraska, Kansas, Arizona, New Mexico, South Dakota, Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania.

### How it works

The process begins with the gathering of baseline information from transition IEPs. The baseline information pinpoints specific strengths and problem areas for each of the transition services requirements. Following the gathering of baseline data, a team of individuals from the state and the local district come together to reflect on the data gathered from the reviews, an action plan is designed to address areas of need and set

timelines for achieving the target goals. CDE staff assists the district to design plans and locate or obtain necessary resources. District staffs then begin to implement and put into place each of the strategies and interventions that were identified in the action plan. On-going technical assistance is provided to determine the success of the interventions and identify alternative strategies if needed.

At the conclusion of the time line (generally one and half to two school years), another review of the IEP files is conducted with the results being compared to the initial baseline findings. The specific interventions and strategies are also identified and recorded along with personal reactions and comments on the changes that have occurred as a result of district staff's efforts.

### Purpose of the Transition Outcomes Project

The purpose of the Transition Outcome Project is to:

- Assist local districts in meeting the transition service requirements of IDEA '97.
- Gather data specific to local school districts or BOCS regarding transition requirements.
- Work with local sites to identify and obtain appropriate training and resource materials on the transition process for educators, administrators, adult agency personnel, students and parents.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of providing and delivering transition services to students and families through the IEP

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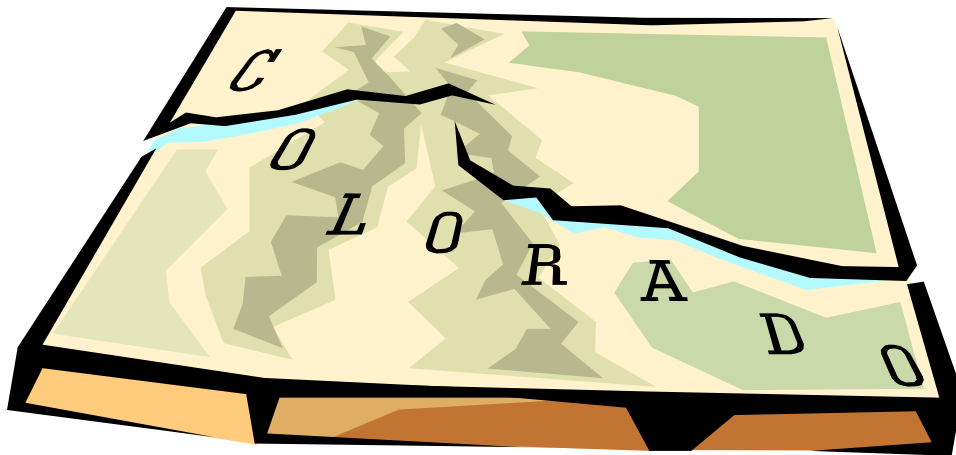
process.

- Show improvement in the post school outcomes of students with disabilities.
- Develop a model and process for meeting the transition requirements and identify strategies/interventions that work and can be replicated or implemented in a variety of schools, districts or BOCS.
- Evaluate and report on the changes, improvements, activities and strategies.

### **What changes have occurred in BOCES, Administrative Units and local School Districts**

- Some sites have created Transition Steering Committees.
- High School and middle schools have begun to streamline transition services.
- Many sites have encompassed the TOPs action plan into their CIMP process.
- Self determination has become a major focus in various TOPs sites.
- Sites are using data driven decision making to plan and implement transition services.
- Almost every site has seen a positive change in the data collected.

For more information about the Colorado Transition Outcomes Project, log on to [www.cde.state.co.us](http://www.cde.state.co.us)



# Training for Transition (T4T)

*By Dr. Romie Tobin, P.h.D., Exceptional Student Services Unit, CDE*

Training for Transition (T4T) was launched by a sliver grant through the collaborative efforts of CDE, Arc of Jefferson County and Easter Seals of Colorado. The weekend format workshops are designed to provide information on Transition issues for families whose children are between 14 and 21 years of age and have their schooling guided by an IEP. The large group information sessions cover topics such as, Social Security, employment, post-secondary options and the IEP process with the focus on transition. In addition, families gather information on community resources and have opportunities to hear from young adults who have transitioned into adult living in the community, as well as listen to a panel of parents who discuss their experiences in facing the challenges of transition.

In this era of tight funding in adult services the support and creative advice families share with one another is invaluable. Strategies such as person centered planning are discussed as a means of establishing a vision of a quality life and defining the steps to achieve those dreams. Sharing their stories gives families an opportunity to voice their fears for the future, hear how other families share similar challenges, and address the barriers creatively. Families leave the workshops with high expectations and a renewed sense of hope.

*"Thank you, thank you! My wife and I can see that our son can have many more options than we ever imagined. We are so glad we attended the training while we still have time to plan and work with the school."*

*Parent*

Educators who have taken the opportunity to participate in the weekends relate that they gain information about a variety of resources but more importantly the engage in dialogue with families and come away with a increased understanding of the many facets of transition and renewed

*"As a transition specialist I thought I knew everything there was to know. I was wrong. The weekend allowed me to learn from the parents and the T4T staff. Please don't stop. We (teachers) need this type of training."*

*Educator*

commitment to providing effective transition services to youth.

Spurred on by the success of the initial T4T sessions, the planning team broadened their collaborative team and with the support of Cornerstone T4T with an emphasis on transition for youth with mental health challenges was launched. In addition, one session this past year had a revised format to accommodate a larger number of families and educators and a successful conference for 100 individuals took place in Lakewood. The challenges for the future are how to expand the capacity and make this wonderful training opportunity available in other regions of Colorado.

While a training is a great start for families and educators in the journey, the need for ongoing support and information is vital. The need is addressed through a series of networking meetings on additional topics and access to a website [www.arjc.org/transition.htm](http://www.arjc.org/transition.htm) for further information and helpful linkages to other resources.



## School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP)

*By Barbara Palmer, Senior Consultant, Exceptional Student Services Unit, CDE*

The School to Work Alliance Program has been a model of interagency partnership through the development, implementation, and coordination of the program. SWAP is a collaborative initiative between the Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Colorado Department of Education and local school districts. The program provides case management and direct services to youth with mild to moderate needs in employment, eligible for DVR services, needing short-term support to become competitively employed and to achieve successful community outcomes. It is important to note that the definition of "mild to moderate" in the VR system does not necessarily correlate to disability labels within special education. SWAP serves youth with disabilities ages 16-25, who are preparing to exit the school system or are already out of school. Students may have been served through special education, 504, or general education services.

SWAP was designed to provide a new pattern of service that would enhance existing transition services and provide employment services to an underserved population of youth. Unique components include year-round services, case management services and one year of follow-up after successful employment. Since its inception in 1995, SWAP has grown to a five million dollar program involving approximately 128 school districts clustered into 36 SWAP sites.

Funding of a SWAP site occurs when schools and other participating agencies provide state funds to DVR which matches them with federal funds. These funds are

used to pay for staff and other expenses related to SWAP. In addition, DVR pays the cost of case services for youth served through the program. The program is operated as a year to year contract between an Administrative Unit and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, not as a time limited grant. Participation in SWAP is optional.

The following quote was printed in a booklet of SWAP success stories published in 1999. The quote was provided by a previous SWAP Coordinator in Falcon School District 49, Amy Roeth.

"...It is often difficult to single out one participant as an example of a successful program. The beauty of the SWAP program is that it addresses a person's needs on an individual basis, and thus each story that unfolds is different from another. But there are some common elements that have emerged as the SWAP program has developed – those who have completed the program and reached their goals exude a confidence and energy that was not before readily apparent. There is a spark, a renewed faith that they can indeed achieve, both in the workplace and in life. The future is no longer uncontrolled, looming and fearsome. These young adults now have a firm hold on their skills and abilities, and know how to use these tools to lead the future in the direction of their choosing. Though it is a lifelong process, it is a joy to watch young people in

- SWAP begin to understand their work persons, and begin to fill their toolbox for the employment journey ahead..."

The Colorado Department of Education,

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through a contract with DVR, provides joint training and technical assistance, product development and dissemination, conflict resolution assistance, and program monitoring to 36 local sites.

During the 2003-04 fiscal year, SWAP served over 1600 youth and successfully employed 462 of those youth. Additionally, in the past several years more than 250 youth have been linked back to school for completion of their education and others have been supported to complete GED programs.

Current SWAP sites include:

|                         |                           |                       |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Academy 20/Dist. 38     | Adams 1, 12, 27J          | Adams 14              |
| Adams 50                | Aurora                    | Boulder               |
| Canon City              | Centennial BOCES          | Cherry Creek          |
| Delta                   | Denver                    | Douglas County        |
| Durango                 | East Central BOCES        | Eagle                 |
| El Paso 2, 3, 8, 12, 14 | Falcon                    | Gunnison              |
| Jefferson County        | Littleton                 | Mesa County           |
| Moffat County           | Montrose                  | Northeast BOCES       |
| Northwest BOCS          | Poudre                    | Pueblo 60             |
| Rio Blanco BOCS         | San Luis Valley           | Santa Fe Trails BOCES |
| Sheridan                | South Platte Valley BOCES | Southwest BOCS        |
| St. Vrain               | Thompson                  | Uncompahgre BOCES     |

For information about SWAP services in your area, contact the Special Education Director for your district, Barbara Palmer at CDE (303) 866-6721 or Howard Fallik at DVR (303) 866-4763.

“SWAP provides a chance for many who have determined they don’t have a chance. The number one thing SWAP has to offer is an answer to Dreams that have been forgotten.”

Lyn Goldberg, Durango SWAP

# Promising Practices for Transition

## Peer Tutoring-How it helps special education students

By Lynette Zino, Special Education Teacher

Empowerment is the key to the successful peer tutoring program at Pleasant View Middle School (PVMS) in Pueblo District 70. It was designed by Lynette Zino, a special education teacher at the school. The tutors work with a wide range of students with "differing abilities." The students with disabilities get the help they need and in the process they earn a friend. On the flip side, the peer tutors get a taste of what these students go through in their life, and try to help. Peer tutors work with students for one class period per day. They are either scheduled into the life skills classroom, other classes or out in the community. Even with all the hard work and dedication it takes to be a peer tutor, the peer tutors certainly think that is worthwhile. Here are what some of the students say about being a peer tutor at PVMS.

"Truly being a peer tutor has been a wonderful experience. I will never forget the great times that I had helping everyone."

George Garcia

"Working with him and other challenged students is a reward in disguise for me. If I could I would love to work with all of the students as a career."

Josh Koen

"Being able to be in the Special Education room is a great privilege because we're LENDING A HELPING HAND."

Carly Garcia

"The peer tutor becomes a better person by helping out someone that is not as fortunate as you or me."

Ryan Orndoff

"Ever since I became a peer tutor, it has helped me become a better person. I t hasn't just helped the kids I help, it has helped me on my schoolwork "

Kerri Ross

"Being a peer tutor makes not only your student a better learner but yourself a stronger person."

JoAnna Hoopes

"I also like being a peer tutor because it makes me realize that there are many different kinds of people in the world."

Jessica Ayala

"I clearly love being a peer tutor because it is the best feeling in the world to watch your students improve."

Chantae Chamblin

"The best part of the day would be when these intelligent students tell me how much they appreciate my help towards whatever I've helped them do."

Ashley Walker

"I think being a peer tutor is a good thing because you get to learn something new everyday."

Marya Rodriguez

## Self Determination Action Research

By Patti Even and Cherie Spinden, Special Education Teachers,

Pueblo Middle School

Pueblo District 70 in Pueblo, Colorado is part of the Transition Outcomes Project. The district volunteered for the project as a result of several teachers wanting to create a district continuum for transition services.

All of the secondary special education teachers in the district meet through out the year to discuss how transition services are shaping and changing in the district. As a result of these meetings and thinking with our colleagues, we decided to undertake an action research project to collect data on the self determination of our students. Below are the questions and processes that we are following for our research.

1. Is there a correlation between a student's self determination and achievement?

Measurement: progress on goals and objectives and grades

2. How does a students understanding of their disability help them identify their learning style, accommodations or modifications, strengths and challenges in order to meet their post school outcomes?

Measurement: interviews, work samples, checklists and surveys, students will ask or advocate in the general ed class room, video interviews-pre and post

### Data Collection Method

1. surveys
2. checklists-pre and post in percentage forms
3. interviews with students, general ed teachers
4. tally sheets

**Collect pre data:** on awareness of disability, strengths/challenges, can they identify their accommodations or modifications and if they know their IEP

**Ongoing data:** identify strengths and challenges; tally sheet for self advocacy for accommodations or modifications; work samples from sessions.

**Post data:** use tally sheets to collect the info on awareness of disability, strengths/challenges, identifying accommodations or modifications and if they know their IEP.

Analyzing and interpreting the data

1. Compare pre and post data
2. Written summation
3. Answer our research questions

### Share the findings:

Students-final interview and review the data via the research questions

1. State
2. District
3. Principal



## Helping students with the Transition Process

*By Elizabeth Lee, Special Education Teacher,  
Pleasant View Middle School*

To help students along with the transition process, I host a transition lunch once a month. First, I have all my 14 year old students come in for a working lunch. Then, I choose a couple of surveys for us to do together. Next, we read and discuss them as a group while the students fill them out. The questions they have and the discussions are valuable for everyone! Finally, I then file all of the completed interest surveys in a notebook.

Below is a list of some of the surveys and inventories that the students have done:

- Getting to know your Anger
- Personal Strengths worksheet
- Things That are Difficult for me
- What's My Bag?
- This is how I See Myself
- Assessing My Multiple Intelligences
- What Can I DO? Personal Profile
- What's My Learning Style?
- Social Skills Inventory

At the end of the year, in May, I meet with them individually to assist them in interpreting the results and reflecting on their data. Afterwards, I send copies of their surveys on to the high school and home for the parents to put in a portfolio, as well.

It has been neat to see some of the insights they gain about themselves as we progress.

I also have started portfolios for parents with parental information. Each quarter I do something for the parents to learn about the transition process. They include:

- Sending a letter to them describing the transition process.

- Transition survey (to see if they really know where or how to help with their student's transition)
- A Parental Guide To Transition
- Top Ten Practical Tips For Parents

All of these simple strategies are the beginning foundation for my students to assist them in making a successful transition from school to work or further education. In addition, these strategies are proving to make a difference for my students in gaining self determination skills and learning more about how they envision themselves in the future.



## Exceptional Student Services Unit Receives Grant

303-866-6694.

The Exceptional Student Services Unit has recently been awarded a \$40,000 grant from the National Center for Special Education Personnel and Related Service Providers. The award is for on-site, direct technical assistance provided by the Center and will enable us to better assist local districts in successfully fulfilling federal and state requirements for a highly qualified work force. The grant will address special educators, early interventionists, and related services personnel who meet the needs of children and youth with disabilities and their families.

Although still in the planning stages, Colorado anticipates receiving technical assistance in:

- statewide planning for data collection and analysis;
- statewide work addressing personnel recruitment, preparation, and retention;
- internet recruiting services for local school districts;
- public relations materials targeting recruitment of special educators into the profession; and,
- training for local districts in recruiting personnel of diverse ethnic and traditionally underrepresented populations.

The work enabled through this project will complement and support several areas of Colorado's State Improvement Grant, including the focus on preparation, recruitment, and retention of highly qualified personnel.

For additional information, please contact Cyndi Boezio or Faye Gibson at



## New Transition Related Grants

Through the collaborative efforts of numerous disability-related agencies, including the

Colorado Department of Education, Exceptional Student Services Unit, Colorado has received several grants that will lead to enhanced services to transitioning youth. If you would like further information about any of the projects, contact the Project Coordinator or log on to the project website.

## Social Security Transitioning Youth Demonstration Project

Duration: 2003 – 2008

Funding Agency: Social Security Administration

Lead Agency: WIN Partners/UCHSC with Vocational Rehabilitation, CDE, and the Workforce Development Council

The overarching goal of the demonstration project is to remove major barriers and disincentives to work for youth who receive, or who are likely to receive SSI, SSDI or CDB. Through a two-pronged approach, the project will establish a Transition Team in each selected community to

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include a Consumer Navigator, a Benefits Planner, and a Career Counselor to provide intensive transition services to youth with disabilities ages 14-25 and their families, and will eliminate or reduce regulatory barriers through the use of waivers from SSA and the Department of Labor. Initial sites are Colorado Springs District 11, Pueblo 60 District, and Poudre District. For information contact Peter Pike at Project WIN (303) 315-1273 or check their website at <http://www.projectwin.org>.

### **State Alignment Grant --Youth Transition**

Duration: 2003-2008 (renewable each year)

Funding Agency: Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)

Lead Agency: Workforce Development Council, with Vocational Rehabilitation, CDE, University of Colorado Health Sciences Center, Community Colleges System.

The purpose of this project will be to increase the capacity of Workforce Centers to provide effective employment services to youth with disabilities. State and local resource mapping will be conducted to assess youth service delivery resources, funding streams and gaps in service. By the final year of the grant, systematic transition activities will be in place in each of the nine federally recognized workforce regions.

During the first year of the project, primary efforts will be conducted through the Workforce Centers of Tri-County (Jefferson, Gilpin, Clear Creek counties), Boulder County, and one site that is part of the Rural Region. Year two efforts will involve Workforce Centers of Arapahoe/Douglas, Denver and Weld

counties. Year three will focus efforts through Workforce Centers of Adams County, Larimer County and the Pikes Peak Region. For information contact Lee Carter at (303) 866-3430 or visit their website at

<http://www.uchsc.edu/projectwin/Project%20Train%20Pages/Project%20Train.htm>.

### **High School High Tech**

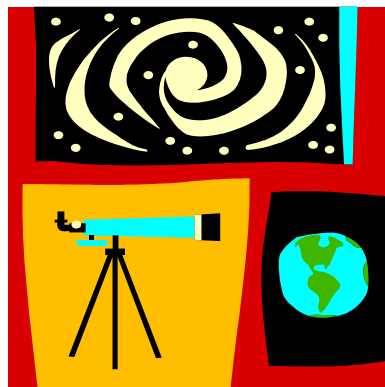
Duration: 2003-2008

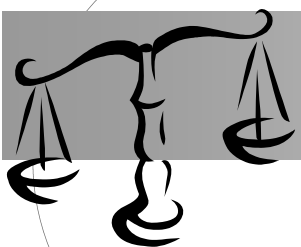
Funding Agency: Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP)

Lead Agency: Colorado Business Leadership Network with Workforce Developmental Council, Vocational Rehabilitation, CDE, DBTAC, Community College System.

The purpose of the grant is to implement a statewide High School High Tech program. HS/HT is a career development program designed to provide high school students with disabilities an opportunity to explore careers in the high tech field. During the first year of the project, students will be recruited from Jefferson County, Boulder, and Denver school districts. For information contact Heather Burkey at [hburkey@coloradohsht.com](mailto:hburkey@coloradohsht.com).

Check out this study created accessible website: <http://www.coloradohsht.com>





## SPECIAL REVIEW

A NEWSLETTER ABOUT SPECIAL  
EDUCATION LAW ISSUES

Exceptional Student Services Unit  
Colorado Department of Education

# Let's Talk Due Process

## Who Can Request Due Process?

**Parents** A parent of a student with a disability, as defined in 34 CFR 300.20, may request a due process hearing. There is also the question of divorced parents with joint custody.

Administrative rulings may vary from one state to the next, depending on interpretations of family law provisions, on who may file the request.

**School Districts** While less common than parent-initiated due process, a hearing initiated by school districts also is permitted in certain situations (34 CFR 300.507). For example, a school district may initiate due process when the parents refuse to give consent for an

evaluation as required under 34 CFR 300.505(b) or if a school district does not agree to a parent's request for a publicly funded independent educational evaluation (34 CFR 300.502(b)(2)).

**Children Who Have Reached the Age of Majority** According to 34 CFR 300.517(a)(1) a state may provide that when a student with a disability reaches the age of majority under State law that applies to all students (except for a student with a disability who has been determined to be incompetent under State law)... all other rights accorded to parents under Part B of the Act transfer to the student.

**Other Parties** IDEA has no provision that allows any party other than parents, school districts, or students who have reached the age of majority to request a due process hearing.

## Requirements of Filing for Due Process

**Model Form to Assist Parents** Every state must have a form that will assist parents in filing a request for due process. 34 CFR 300.507(c)(3). To obtain a copy of Colorado's Due Process/Mediation request form please visit our website at: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/spedlaw/info.htm>

**Request for Hearing by Parent** Hearings are initiated by a parent submitting a written request to the Special Education Director of an Administrative Unit. This request must include a description of the nature of the problem and, if known to the parent, a proposed resolution. 34 CFR 300.507(c)(2) and ECEA 6.03(3)(a)

**Right to a Hearing** A school district cannot deny or delay a parent's right to a due process hearing for failing to file such a form/request. 34 CFR 300.507(c)(4) and ECEA 6.03(3)(a)(iv)



**Request for Hearing by An Administrative Unit** Hearings are initiated when an Administrative Unit submits a written request to the Colorado Department of Education.

## Granting and Denying Due Process Requests

Only an impartial hearing officer can decide if a parent's request for a hearing is based on issues that already have been decided. A state educational agency has no authority to deny a parent's request for a due process hearing on this or any other grounds. Letter to Howey, 213 IDELR 147 (OSEP 1988) and *Drinker v. Colonial School District*, 22 IDELR 847 (E.D. PA. 1995), *aff'd*, 23 IDELR 1112 (3rd Cir. 1996).



### Procedural Rights Applying to Parents and School Districts

The procedural rights granted to both parents and school districts include the following: 1) The right to be accompanied and advised by counsel and by individuals with special knowledge or training in the problems of children with disabilities. 2) The right to present evidence and confront, cross-examine, and compel the attendance of witnesses. 3) The right to prohibit the introduction of any evidence at the hearing that has not been disclosed to that party at least five business days before the hearing. 4) The right to obtain a written or (at the option of the parents) electronic verbatim record of the hearing. 5) The right to obtain written or (at the option of the parents) electronic findings of fact and decisions. 34 CFR 300.509(a)

### Procedural Rights Applying Only to Parents

In addition, parents have the following additional hearing rights: 1) The right to have the child attend or not attend the hearing. 2) The right to open the hearing to the public. 3) The right to receive a free record of the hearing including the findings of fact and the decision (either written or electronic, at the option of the parents). 34 CFR 300.509(c)

### Non-Attorney Advocates at Due Process Hearings

A non-attorney advocate may accompany and advise a parent at a due process hearing. 34 CFR 300.509(a)(1). However, under the current IDEA, there is no specific provision authorizing the advocate to function as an attorney for the parent.

Pre-Hearing Discovery The IDEA does not contain general discovery rules and, except for the five-day rule, there is nothing in the statute to either prohibit or require the use of discovery proceedings (i.e., compelling the other party to produce documents or be deposed). Whether discovery is used in a due process hearing and the nature and extent of the of the discovery methods used are matters left to the discretion of the hearing officer subject to any relevant state or local rules of procedures. *Letter to Stadler*, 24 IDELR 973 (OSEP 1996).

Presentation of Case State law may give hearing officers the authority to control the presentation of evidence, including determining which party presents its case first in a due process hearing.

### Burden of Proof in Due Process

Hearings The IDEA is silent with respect to the burden of proof in special education cases. Accordingly, various jurisdictions have assigned the burden differently. In a Colorado case the ruling states that “the Court must look to the nature of the challenge to the IEP. Where a change in a child’s IEP is sought, regardless of whether the party seeking the change is the school district or the parents, the burden of showing that the placement is “appropriate” rests with the school district. *Fuhrmann v. East Hanover Board of Education*, 993 F.2d 1031, 1035 (3d Cir. 1993), cert. denied, 114 S.Ct. 2104 (1994) (citation omitted). This burden of proof is contrasted with the

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allocation where the issue is whether the IEP is appropriate. In this situation, the student or his parents bear the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that the IEP devised by the school authorities is inappropriate. *Doe v. Board of Education of Tullahoma City Schools*, 9 F.3d 455, 458 (6th Cir. 1993), citing *Cordrey v. Euckert*, 917 F.2d 1460, 1469 (6th Cir. 1990). The burden is also on the Plaintiff here as he is challenging the outcome of the administrative procedures. *Board of Education v. Illinois State Board of Education*, 938 F.2d 712, 716 (7th Cir. 1991), cert. denied, 112 S.Ct. 957 (1992).” 21 IDELR 985 (D. Colo. 1994)

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### Visit the Special

### Education Law Website

- For Parents Rights and other special education informational brochures: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/spedlaw/index.htm>
- To view the Rules for the Administration of the Exceptional Children’s Educational Act: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/spedlaw/rules.htm>
- To view recent Due Process Hearing Decisions: <http://www.cde.state.co.us/spedlaw/dueprocess.htm>



# CALENDAR 2004\*

*\*THIS INFORMATION IS PROVIDED AS A SERVICE. WE BELIEVE IT TO BE ACCURATE, BUT IT IS IMPORTANT TO CONFIRM WITH THE CONTACT LISTED.*

## April 2004

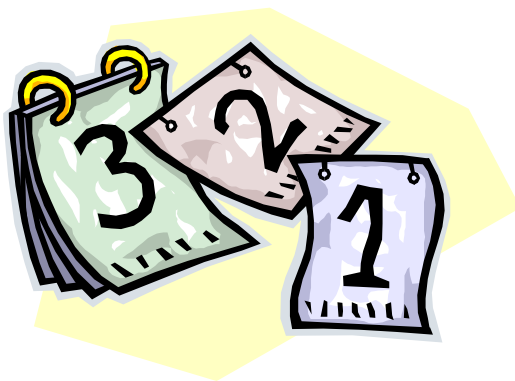
- 20 **Second Annual Colorado Transition Outcomes Rally**, Denver, CO. For more information contact Anne Webb at 303-866-6694.
- 21 **State Advisory Committee for Gifted and Talented Student Education**, Denver, CO. For more information contact Brandi Scoggins at 303-866-6666
- 22 **Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee**, Lakewood, CO. For more information contact Katherine Keck at 303-866-6943
- 29-30 **Statewide School Nurses Conference**, Breckinridge, CO. For more information contact Judy Harrigan at 303-866-6694

## May 2004

- 1 **Statewide School Nurses Conference**, Breckinridge, CO. For more information contact Judy Harrigan at 303-866-6694
- 6-8 **State Conference on Visual Impairment**, Aurora, CO. For more information contact Tanni Anthony at (303) 866-6681.
- 12 **Gifted Education Forum**, Denver, CO. For more information contact Brandi Scoggins at 303-866-6666

## June 2004

- 10-11 **CSAPA Standard Setting**, Denver, CO. For more information contact Janet Filbin at 303-866-6703.
- 20-23 **Sopris Conference**, Breckinridge, CO. For more information contact Sopris West at [www.spriswest.com](http://www.spriswest.com)



# Request for Information or Mailing Changes

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ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ WORK PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

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