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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Transition Colleagues,

Thank you for taking the time to read the DCDT Newsletter. As President of DCDT, I am pleased to share with you some exciting accomplishments

we have made in 2010–2011.

First, the 2010 DCDT Regional Conference, “Transition in the 21st Century,” was a great success. Participants had opportunities to attend more than 55 sessions in three days. Two unique conference features were the postsecondary education strand, focused on promoting postsecondary education opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities, and six sessions specifically geared toward families. Feedback from many participants indicated that this was the most beneficial conference they had attended in years! Please join me in thanking the Connecticut DCDT, the local arrangements committee, and the conference planner for their hard work in putting the conference together. If you missed this conference, you lost the opportunity to hear an excellent keynote speech from LeDerick Horne and many other informative sessions from both national and regional speakers. You also missed an opportunity to network with other passionate transition colleagues. I encourage you to make plans to attend the DCDT International Conference in Kansas City in October 2011. Information about this conference is provided in this newsletter and on our website ([www.dcdt.org](http://www.dcdt.org)).

Second, I am pleased to report that the DCDT membership has been stable even though many other organizations have seen

significant membership drops in the past few years. I sincerely thank you all for being loyal members of our great organization. I also want to extend my appreciation to state subdivision leaders and the Membership Committee for finding creative ways to promote membership. Without your efforts, DCDT could not be as strong as it has been.

Third, our DCDT website has been updated to include additional resources for our members, including upcoming events, practical ideas, research findings, and other resources to assist youth and young adults with disabilities achieve their postschool outcomes. Take advantage of the member-only section and visit the site often for up-to-date information.

While celebrating our success and accomplishments, we need to remind ourselves that as a field we have challenges still ahead of us. For a number of reasons, transition has not received the attention it deserves. Consequently adequate administrative and funding support for necessary transition services and research are lacking. We must continue to work together to advocate for transition and keep transition in the national agenda.

I want to thank you for allowing me to serve as President of DCDT. It has been a rewarding experience. Looking ahead, I trust that transition will only become stronger as an area in special education. I look forward to continue working with you to enhance transition services for all individuals with disabilities.

Sincerely,

**Dalun Zhang**  
*DCDT President 2010–2011*

## NEWS FROM **nsttac**

NSTTAC's preparations for the **5th Annual Secondary Transition State Planning Institute** that will be held in Charlotte, North Carolina, on May 17th–May 20th are well underway. The Institute is co-sponsored by the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities (NDPC-SD), the National Post-School Outcomes Center (NPSO), and the IDEA Partnership. Registration is available at the NSTTAC website ([www.nsttac.org](http://www.nsttac.org)).

We continue to assist states as they work to improve Indicator 13 data and extend research to practice through developing and updating tools (e.g., research-to-practice lesson plans, practice descriptions, program evaluation resources, toolkits). We are also in the process of updating our practice descriptions. Stay posted, as these resources will soon be available on NSTTAC's website.

One of our most valuable resources involves states learning from each other. If you have a resource that you would like to share with other states, please let us know. Resources can be shared at the "States' Corner" section. Please contact Larry Kortering ([korteringlj@appstate.edu](mailto:korteringlj@appstate.edu)) to update resources from your state.

In recent weeks we've conducted workshops with states and at conferences on using transition assessment data to develop IEPs, taking advantage of resources on our website, and implementing and evaluating evidence-based practices. We are also developing informational resources about universal design for learning in secondary transition, high school redesign initiatives, and the Common Core Standards.



### GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE UPDATE



**Lymon Duker, Chair**

Dear DCDT Members,

During the CAN meetings in Alexandria this past year, I had the opportunity to chat with other CAN coordinators, including Lisa Dieker, the TED CAN coordinator. Dr. Dieker has recently spearheaded the development of a "PALS and GALS program" with a goal of promoting greater participation in TED policy and advocacy affairs. The DCDT Government Relations Committee is also developing a PALS/GALS program. The PALS (Political Action Liaisons) and GALS (Graduate Action Liaisons) group consists of a current transition professional (PAL) and a graduate student working in the area of transition (GAL). Each state will have one PAL and one GAL affiliated with this committee. These individuals will help the committee chair promote DCDT policy and advocacy issues within their respective states. For example, if DCDT were interested in contacting legislators around the country regarding a relevant transition matter, the PALS/GALS representatives would contact their state transition constituents to encourage their involvement. The overarching goal is to promote consistent participation in relevant DCDT policy and advocacy matters.

If each regional representative will provide a list, by state, of individuals in your respective region who are willing to serve as a PAL or a GAL, we can begin to build this network. Please contact me ([ldukes@mail.usf.edu](mailto:ldukes@mail.usf.edu)).

### PAT SITLINGTON EMERGING RESEARCHER AWARD



The Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) invites graduate students to submit proposals for poster presentations in consideration for the Pat Sitlington Emerging Researcher Award. Selected students in master's and doctoral-degree programs will have

an opportunity to present their research project to experienced researchers in the field of transition education. Also, an expert panel of judges will evaluate the presentations to select an overall winner, who will receive a \$250 prize, and award second and third places to poster session participants. Selected participants must present their projects during the President's Reception at the DCDT 17th International Conference in Kansas City, Missouri, on October 13–15, 2011.

Interested graduate students should submit their proposal to DCDT; follow all the online submission program guidelines and choose Student Research as the submission type.

Submissions deadline: **May 13, 2011.**

Visit the DCDT website ([www.dcdt.org](http://www.dcdt.org)) to view poster guidelines and for more conference information. If you have any questions or need additional information about the awards, please email Eric Roberts ([eric.roberts@tamu.edu](mailto:eric.roberts@tamu.edu)) or Cynthia Allen Nixon ([cnixon@fmarion.edu](mailto:cnixon@fmarion.edu)).

## PARENT VOICE: Preparing for the Postsecondary Experience



**Beth Sweeden, Parent Representative**

Increasing numbers of students with disabilities—including students with intellectual and other significant disabilities—are considering some sort of postsecondary education. In response, in this country more programs are being developed to meet that need. The [ThinkCollege.net](http://ThinkCollege.net) website offers a wealth of information to help students with significant disabilities, their families, and educators prepare for postsecondary experiences. Many of these efforts started through effective parent advocacy based on a vision that their sons and daughters with significant disabilities would some day attend college.

However, during their high school years, students with intellectual and other significant disabilities often still are not participating in the rich, inclusive curriculum, extracurricular and community activities, and early employment experiences that we know lead to better post-school outcomes. They also frequently provide the best memories from our high school years.

Developing family, school, and community expectations that individuals with disabilities across the lifespan will participate in their schools, on the job, and in their communities is essential in creating both the opportunities and relationships necessary for students with significant disabilities to develop and achieve their goals. Like any young adult, preparation for college needs to start well before the final high school year. In fact, students with disabilities often need even more opportunities to explore and practice than their peers when developing self-advocacy skills and exploring post-school options.

Here are some ways that families and schools can begin early to prepare students with significant disabilities in developing the skills needed in college, including academic preparation, social connections, self-advocacy skills, and independence.

### Beginning in middle school:

- Start discussing a range of careers and the necessary preparation.
- Use person-centered planning tools (PATH, MAPS) to identify interests, motivators, connections, and potential opportunities.
- Get a feel for campus life by attending college sports activities, plays, and so forth.
- Encourage students to use the Internet to conduct searches about careers and postsecondary options.
- Encourage students to make choices and their own purchases at stores, restaurants, movie theaters, and so forth.
- Have students sign-in or check-in for doctor and dentist visits.
- Make sure students have library cards. Libraries are a great resource for practice in making choices and performing independent transactions.
- Prioritize participation in general education courses.
- Encourage use of technologies other students use (Facebook, Ipods, email), as well as assistive technology such as Read Out Loud or voice-to-text programs.

- Encourage participation in extracurricular and community opportunities that match student interests, and include necessary supports.
- Support students in leading their own IEPs. The website [Indetermined.org](http://Indetermined.org) has templates for supporting teams in allowing students—even individuals who are non-verbal—to develop and lead their own IEP.
- Connect students to possible leadership opportunities (e.g., youth development programs like 4-H, self-advocacy training, school leadership teams).
- Discuss the value of extracurricular activity involvement and encourage students to identify and participate in at least one activity during the freshman year.
- Include a high school teacher on the eighth-grade transition IEP team.
- Set up a high school tour and the possibility of spending some time in the high school setting as part of the eighth-grade transition process, if needed.
- Encourage participation in programs and activities that have an overnight component, such as Scouting and other camps, recreation programs, sleep-overs with friends, and so forth.
- Discuss possible summer activities that align with student career/academic interests, such as volunteer opportunities, interest camps and recreation programs, and part-time work.

### Beginning in 9th grade:

- Use age-appropriate transition assessment tools.
- Consider peer mentors, as opposed to adult supports, as tour guides, tutors, or supports when joining a new activity.
- Continue discussions about student interests, aptitudes, and motivators throughout high school.
- Provide opportunities to encourage development of self-advocacy and other self-help skills through typical high school experiences (e.g., taking field trips in which students make their own lunch and incidental purchases, learning to ride the city bus, buying items at the school store for class, signing up for peer tutoring).
- Provide support for keeping and using a daily planner.
- Build a class schedule based on ability, interests, and postsecondary options, prioritizing general education classes with modifications as needed.
- Provide further opportunities to explore careers through career fairs, job shadows, in-school and community volunteer experiences, and service learning opportunities.
- Help students learn to self-identify when they need help and to ask peers (rather than adults) for assistance.
- Support students to learn appropriate self-regulation and classroom behaviors (e.g., asking for a break, asking for help from a peer, not interrupting classroom discussion).
- Discuss ways that students can begin to take ownership for daily chores at home (e.g., make own lunch, clean room, adhere to a medication schedule).
- Encourage establishment of a bank account and use of a debit card and/or checkbook.



# Join Us in October 2011 ~ in ~ Kansas City, Missouri

## 16th DCDT International Conference

October 13–15, 2011  
Westin Crown Center, Kansas City, MO

**CALL FOR PROPOSALS – Go to [www.dcdt.org](http://www.dcdt.org)**

An energetic city forged by a rich history, Kansas City is brimming with activities~~the American Royal Barbecue and pro rodeo, eclectic cuisine, swinging jazz, one-of-a-kind museums, a thriving arts scene and fantastic shopping. The world-renowned jazz legacy continues today in clubs throughout the city. Barbecue, the city's signature food, can be found at more than 100 establishments, but visitors also delight in restaurants of every ethnic origin.



The **Kansas & Missouri** chapters of **DCDT** are planning a fabulous conference for you ~ ~ so come blow your horns and kick up your heels with us this year ... it's a guaranteed **WINNER**.

**Take the Future by the Horns** in **2011** and discover something unique and unexpected in **KANSAS CITY!**

*For More Information, contact Cindi Nixon ([cnixon@fmarion.edu](mailto:cnixon@fmarion.edu))*



# More on “Take the Future by the Horns”

## 16th DCDT International Conference

October 13–15, 2011 \* Westin Crown Center \* Kansas City, MO

### Keynote Speaker: **Jonathon Mooney**



Jonathan Mooney, who has dyslexia, is a writer and activist. He did not learn to read until he was 12 years old. He is a graduate of Brown University, class of 2000, and holds an honors degree in English literature. Jonathan is founder and president of Project Eye-To-Eye, a mentoring and advocacy non-profit organization for students with learning differences. Project Eye-To-Eye currently has 20 chapters in 13 states that work with more than 3,000 students, parents, and educators nationwide. Jonathan weaves his experiences and forward-thinking philosophies with his broad academic knowledge of education, psychology, sociology, and the history of learning and disability. Website:

<http://www.jonathanmooney.com>

### Luncheon Speaker: **Ako Kambon**



Ako Kambon is a nationally recognized leader in the fields of educational consulting and designing and conducting leadership seminars for public and private educational institutions. Mr. Kambon created a school for African American males who were at risk of entering the Ohio penal system. The school received tremendous recognition for its creative approach to reaching and teaching young men who might have otherwise fallen through the cracks. Mr. Kambon is a great believer in the efficacy of public–private partnerships and a strong advocate for the establishment of policies, programs, and procedures that engage parents in the education of their children. This is especially true for multicultural environments where there may be race, class, and communications issues to overcome. Website: <http://www.vli123.com/Our%20Presenters.htm>

engage parents in the education of their children. This is especially true for multicultural environments where there may be race, class, and communications issues to overcome. Website: <http://www.vli123.com/Our%20Presenters.htm>

### Strand Sessions will include

- \* Transition Assessment
- \* Transition to Employment
- \* Family Partnerships in Transition
- \* Community Partnerships in Transition
- \* Diversity & Multicultural Approaches to Transition
- \* Transition to Postsecondary Education
- \* Student Engagement in Secondary Schools
- \* Self-Determination & Student Involvement
- \* Personnel Prep and Professional Development in Transition
- \* IDEA and Transition: Ensuring Successful Policies and Practices
- \* Transition Education in Elementary and Middle Schools

### The Patricia Sitlington Emerging Researcher Award

## HUMAN RIGHTS AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY COMMITTEE: Working Toward Three Goals



**Chauncey Goff, Chair**

I am pleased to announce that the DCDT President Dalun Zhang has appointed me to a second term as the Human Rights and Cultural Diversity (HRC) Committee chair. This appointment brings a renewed commitment to HRC goals. These goals, which require a commitment from all

DCDT and HRC members, include specific activities designed to ensure that all students have equal access to a meaningful transition experience and achieve their desired outcomes.

In the coming years, the HRC Committee seeks to achieve three specific goals:

1. develop its webpage (<http://www.dcdt.org/hrcdcom.cfm>) so that it will offer individuals useful transition facts, tips, and other general information;
2. develop a membership list to facilitate constant contact with its members.
3. develop and disseminate research devoted to evidence-based practices in transitioning “diverse” students.

To accomplish each goal, the committee seeks the assistance of its members. If you are interested in being a part of our maturation and mission, please contact me via email ([Chauncey.Goff@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:Chauncey.Goff@mail.wvu.edu)) so that we may continue to improve the transition outcomes of ALL students.

During the DCDT 2010 Mystic, Connecticut, conference, the committee conducted its first conference strand. “Community Conversation,” presented by **Audrey Trainor** and **Marsha**

**Dempsey**, highlighted our five sessions, which opened with a question-and-answer session with Keynote **LeDerick Horne**. I then provided an open-ended discussion about diversity and what it means in a contemporary U.S. society. **Dawn Rowe** and **Sarah Johnston-Rodriguez** followed with a demonstration on research-based transition practices. Sarah then facilitated a session devoted to the voice of students and parents, providing us with an opportunity to listen to their individual transition experiences. Each session was designed to extend and facilitate the “Community Conversation.” The strand, dedicated to capturing attendees’ voice, was a welcome success, with such great attendance, energy, and collaboration that DCDT decided to provide the HRC Committee with another strand at this year’s conference in Kansas City, Missouri.

At the Kansas City conference, the committee would like to capitalize upon the interest and guidance we found at Mystic. Therefore, we are developing a strand concentrating on the political and somewhat controversial topic of “power, privilege, and transition.” Feedback indicated that many Mystic attendees want to explore relationships among these three domains and how such relationships promote or hinder the transition process. At the next conference, we will put power, privilege, and transition at center stage so as to better understand this relationship and thereby work toward achieving our mission of ensuring that all students have equal access to a transition experience and outcomes of their choosing.

In conclusion, I am wonderfully excited about the opportunity to continue as the HRC’s chair. I hope that my tenure will offer innovation and inspiration.

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## REGIONAL & CHAPTER NEWS

### Northeast Region

It has been a busy couple of months for the Northeast region. A very big thank-you goes to the **Connecticut state chapter** for holding a marvelous conference in Mystic. We had about 500 participants and dozens of interesting sessions. **Joe Madaus** (president of DCDT Connecticut) and the rest of the conference committee did a fantastic job planning the conference; we thank them for all of their hard work. CT-DCDT future plans include hosting a one-day conference this spring on transition for students with special health care needs.

The **Illinois/Wisconsin subdivision** has been busy as well, hosting meetings in Chicago and Milwaukee, with additional meetings scheduled this spring for Madison and Springfield. DCDT co-sponsored the very successful Illinois CEC Conference last October. Plans are underway for hosting a *speakers’ forum* on April 12, 2011, at Discovery World in Milwaukee. Included will be a low-cost admission fee (free for DCDT members) a speaker, and a networking wine-and-cheese session. Interested parties are asked to contact **Dr. Tom Holub** ([tholub@edgewood.edu](mailto:tholub@edgewood.edu)).

A **new state chapter** is forming in our region. While in Mystic, attendees from **Massachusetts** started discussing forming a chapter. It’s happening! We hope to have our first meeting soon. For further information, please contact **Stelios Gragoudas** ([stelios.gragoudas@umb.edu](mailto:stelios.gragoudas@umb.edu)), Northeast DCDT representative.

### Delaware DCDT

Delaware DCDT is reorganizing this year and focusing on legal issues related to incorporation, revision of our by-laws, expanding our board, and establishing a presence in the community. But we’ve managed to collaborate on two events so far:

The De-DCDT partnered with **Delaware CEC** in October for an evening *Dinner & Discussion*, with support from the **Delaware Department of Education** (DOE). After dinner and some announcements from the sponsoring organizations, participants split between two presentations: De-DCDT sponsored a session on student-led IEP meetings, with a panel of high school special educators who shared how they prepare students to lead their

own IEP meetings AND write their own IEP goals. The evening was a huge hit. Another Dinner & Discussion is being planned for May.

In March, De-DCDT will collaborate with the state DOE on the annual state *Transition Conference*. The conference program will feature 21 presentations, vendor displays, and a keynote speaker. A sell-out crowd of educators, adult providers, parents, and students is expected. We are grateful to the DOE for funding substitutes and bus transportation for students. Thank-yous go to **Dale Matusевич**, Delaware DOE, and **Dr. Barbara Riley**, Delaware Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, for their leadership on this conference. The De-DCDT Board plans to wear De-DCDT T-shirts at this event to publicize our organization.

## Idaho DCDT

The Idaho DCDT is involved this year in the *Tools for Life Fair*, which is held every year in March. Sponsors include the **Idaho State Department of Education**, the **Idaho Assistive Technology Project at the Center on Disabilities and Human Development**, the **Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities**, and the **Idaho Interagency Council on Secondary Transition**. This two-day conference is for anyone who supports or has an interest in supporting persons with disabilities who are transitioning from school to life beyond school. Participants include professionals, secondary students, and their families. The location changes from year to year, taking place in a different state region, thus making it possible for high school students to attend at least 1 year of their high school career. Presenters include regional and national experts on the issues surrounding secondary transition and assistive technology. The following Idaho DCDT members will be offering workshops this year:

- **Irene Jones & Beth Eloë-Reep:** “You’re at Tools for Life! Now What?” (*self-determination*)
- **Lana Kirkham & Bird Derrick:** “Can Those Labels” (*self-determination*)
- **Colleen Henderson:** “Self Directed IEPs” (*self-determination*)
- **Kevin Jones:** “Parents, What to Look for in the Transition Process” (*self-determination*)
- **Janice Carson:** “Just What Are Accessible Instructional Materials and Where Do I Get Them?” (*AT/IT*)
- **Tracy Warren:** “The Moving On Binder – A Tool for Transition Planning” (*self-determination*)

This is a great place for professionals, families, and students to pick up vital transition information.

## North Carolina DCDT

You are encouraged to attend NC-DCDT’s *Annual Spring Transition Conference*, which will occur April 13–15 in Greensboro. Conference topics include Transition Assessment, Job Coaching, Employability Seminar, Transition IEP Writing, Postsecondary Outcomes, NCVPS Blended Online Courses for OCS and so much more! To register or for more information go to the chapter website ([www.ncdcdt.org](http://www.ncdcdt.org)). —**Sharon Jackson**, President-Elect, **Karen Abourjile**, Treasurer

## Kansas & Missouri DCDT

MO-DCDT provided Missouri Transition Liaisons and Missouri Community Transition Teams (special education personnel, agency representatives, families, other stakeholders) with DCDT Conference flyers and local merchant items to promote the *October 2011 conference*. Our leadership team met to develop goals/action plans to facilitate Missouri’s participation at MO-CEC meetings/conferences and increase DCDT membership.

MO-DCDT member and Transition Liaison **Kathi Mills** (Midway R-1), along with Transition Liaison **Sheila Forsyth** (Branson R-IV), recently shared their experiences in starting and maintaining student-run enterprises for the latest “*Ask the Expert*” forum ([www.missouritransition.org](http://www.missouritransition.org)). Mills and Forsyth answered questions from educators about programs in their districts. Branson High School boasts a successful student-run coffee shop, while Midway students run both a vending program and a custom button-making business.

The **Missouri University Thompson Center for Autism and Neurodevelopmental Disorders** is developing a website, *Transition Roadmap to the Future: Transitioning into Adulthood with ASD*.



MO-DCDT members and Missouri Transition Liaisons support a colleague who is battling cancer. The picture was taken during the MO-DESE 2010 Summer Institute.

MO-DCDT member **Karen Allan**, training coordinator for the Center, chairs the Transition Youth Coalition. Another MO-DCDT member, **Brenda Simmons** from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, is also a Coalition member and contributes resource information for the website.

## South Carolina DCDT

Here’s a glimpse of what we have been up to in a busy 2010–2011 year:

SC-DCDT held the second annual *Fall Transition Conference* in Myrtle Beach, November 14th–15th. We want to thank the presenters, sponsors, and attendees who made this conference a success. Planning for the 2011 conference is already underway.

On November 15th, the SC-DCDT Board presented 6 awards to recognize outstanding programs and professionals who have made significant contributions to our state in the area of transition. The awards were given during a breakfast at the Fall Transition Conference. **Sharon Sanders**, Clemson University, was given the Outstanding Contributor Award, and the **Clemson LIFE Program**, an innovative transition college program, was awarded the Outstanding Program of the Year. **Dwain Waller**, of Liquid Highway, received the Outstanding Employer of the Year award for his work with several transition programs in the state in providing training and support for in-school enterprises. **Jane Langley**, Fort Mill High, received a Regular Educator

(continued on next page)



MO-DCDT provided DCDT conference information to attendees of the fall training session for Missouri Transition Liaisons.



(Regional & Chapter News, continued from page 7)

Award for her exceptional teaching and service to all students, including students with disabilities, for over 30 years. **Ellen Stevenson** also received a Regular Educator of the Year Award for outstanding service as a job coach/developer in the Summerville area. **Stillman Stevens**, who is now attending Greenville Technical College, received the Outstanding Student of the Year award. Nominations will soon be solicited for next year's awards, and all members are encouraged to consider nominating a program or individual to recognize their contributions.

At the beginning of February 2011, SC-DCDT welcomed speaker **Richard Luecking** of TransCen, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving educational and employment outcomes for people with disabilities. Dr. Luecking spoke on best practices in employment of people with disabilities. Trans Cen's work is driven by the belief that there is a job for everyone who wants one, regardless of the nature of the disability, other barriers to employment, a need for workplace support and accommodations, or economic circumstances.

Congratulations go to **Jennifer Vickery**, Clover High School, who won a \$500 SC-DCDT *mini-grant* for her project Sweet Creations. This project will provide an opportunity for students with special needs, in collaboration with general education students, to operate their own business while working on vocational, social, and academic goals.



### Featured Best Practice: Incorporating Self-Determination and Transition with a Youth-Driven Approach

**John McNaught**, VA-DCDT President & Project Director, "I'm Determined Project," VA Dept. of Education

Wehmeyer and Kelchner (1996) defined *self-determination* as acting as the primary causal agent in one's life and making choices and decisions regarding one's quality of life free from undue external influence or interference. Self-determination can also be defined more operationally as:

- Knowing and believing in yourself
- Knowing what you want your future to be like and how to make plans to achieve this future.
- Knowing the supports that you need to take control of your life.


School approaches to encouraging self-determination skills can promote interventions that will help reduce drop-out rates and thus positively affect the lives of individuals, their families, and our communities. Dropout is a national epidemic. The following statistics from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation ([www.silentepidemic.org](http://www.silentepidemic.org)) offer a sobering account of the need to address dropout prevention.

- Every school year, approximately 1.3 million U.S. students (7,000 every school day), do not graduate from high school as scheduled.
- Throughout the school years, most potential drop-outs need help in making wise choices, controlling their behavior in purposeful ways, and managing workloads.

- Having at least one ADULT CONFIDANT who is ACCESSIBLE both in and out of school is important to many of these students.

One of the challenges is working with students who cannot express or don't know what they need to be successful. Around age 14, these students start hearing words such as *strengths* and *needs*, but what do they mean to them?

A simple tool used by the Virginia Department of Education's I'm Determined Project is the *One-Pager*, which helps youth paint an accurate picture

Name:	<b>i'm determined</b>		Date:
Address:			
DOB:			
<b>My Strengths:</b>			<b>My Interests</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I can see the big picture</li> <li>• Money Management</li> <li>• Good listener</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunting &amp; fishing</li> <li>• My girls &amp; wife</li> <li>• My dog</li> </ul>
<b>My Preferences</b>			<b>My Needs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I learn best by listening &amp; seeing, then doing</li> <li>• I like to move around a lot</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notes ahead of time</li> <li>• Sitting near the front of the room</li> <li>• Visual and auditory directions</li> </ul>

of themselves and improves communication between student and teacher. The template has four categories—Strengths, Preferences, Interests, and Needs—which the student fills out with help from a teacher, parent, counselor, or mentor. The student has the option to explain his or her *One-Pager* via a Flip Video or similar video recorder. The I'm Determined Project's website ([www.imdetermined.org](http://www.imdetermined.org)) offers multiple examples of *One-Pagers* and also provides detailed directions on how to insert the video into the template. Once complete, the student can then e-mail his or her *One-Pager* to appropriate teachers. This tool has been used in a variety of ways:

- Students receiving special education services send out *One-Pagers* to general education teachers at the beginning of the school year.
- The entire ninth grade creates a *One-Pager* that the school posts on the network for all teachers to access.
- Middle school faculty and administration create *One-Pagers* to post on the school website for parents and students to view.

We've successfully used the *One-Pager* with grades pre-k through high school and have seen positive results. Youth are more confident in discussing their "SPIN," and introducing the transition language at an earlier age helps youth transition more effectively through the various stages of schooling and life. For more information on the *One-Pager* and other strategies to increase self-determination in youth, visit our website.

### Resources

- America's Promise Alliance website. <http://www.silentepidemic.org>
- Bridgeland, J., Dilulio, Jr., J., & Morison, K. B. (2006). *The silent epidemic: Perspectives of high school dropouts*. New York City, NY: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.
- Virginia Department of Education. I'm Determined Project website. <http://www.imdetermined.org>
- Wehmeyer, M., & Kelchner, K. (1996). Perceptions of classroom environment, locus of control, and academic attributions of adolescents with and without disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 19, 15–29.