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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



Greetings, DCDT Membership,

It is an honor to be addressing you as the 2013–2014 DCDT President. I would like to welcome everyone to a new and exciting year for DCDT.

Attempting to fill the shoes of previous DCDT presidents is a daunting task, and I would like to thank all of the past presidents, board members, and others who have been in touch with words of wisdom, encouragement, and support. In particular, I would like to thank **Audrey Trainor** for her guidance last year as DCDT President as she becomes the Immediate Past President, still serving on the Executive Committee. In addition, I'd like to thank **Mary Morningstar** for her years of leadership on the DCDT Executive Committee and for agreeing to continue her service as the DCDT Representative to the CEC Knowledge & Skills Subcommittee.

Since 1976, DCDT has been an actively promoting career development and transition services for students with disabilities, bringing it to the forefront of national attention. Our members have been asked to provide guidance on national, state, and local agendas. Many of our past presidents and members are known internationally for their work on, and/or related to, transition issues. I believe these are just a few of the reasons DCDT remains one of CEC's most stable subdivisions.

Several new board members have joined us this year. Welcome to **Judy Shanley** from the Easter Seals Transportation Group, who will serve as a DCDT Representative Assembly Representative, taking the place of **Sharon Kolb**. **Adam Lalor** from the University of Connecticut replaces **Eric Roberts** as Student Represent-

tative. We welcome **Linda Maitrejean** back to the board for a second term as Marketing Committee Chair. **Valerie Mazzotti** from Western Carolina University replaces **Jim Martin** as Publications Chair as he assumes his new role as Vice President. We are excited that Jim is joining the executive board in his new role. In addition, I want to add a special thank you to all the officers and board members who are continuing their terms of office.

As we move forward in continuing to keep transition at the forefront of educational efforts, DCDT has established some very important working partnerships with other organizations to strengthen our leadership role in transition. We continue to deepen our partnership with the **National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center** (NSTTAC), and NSTTAC will once again offer the Mid-Year Check and Connect Secondary Transition State Planning Institute in conjunction with our 2013 Fall DCDT Conference in Williamsburg, Virginia, on November 14th through the 16th. For more information, please visit the NSTTAC website (www.nsttac.org), as well as the DCDT website (www.dcdt.org).

A significant aspect of our partnership with **NSTTAC** is working together to develop a series of Fast Fact Sheets. The primary purpose of these Fact Sheets is to disseminate information to the field related to key topics in secondary transition, which currently include a number of topics, such as evidence-based predictors of post-school success for youth with disabilities, transition planning and assessment, transition specialist competencies, and recommendations for research in secondary transition.

Our partnership with the federally funded **IDEA Partnerships** has focused on their Na-

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REGIONAL & STATE SUBDIVISION NEWS

Northwest Region



Dawn Rowe

NW Regional Representative

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Missouri DCDT

The Missouri Department of Elementary Education and Secondary Education (DESE)–Office of Special

Education hosted the annual **Transition Institute** in Jefferson City, Missouri, in mid-June. More than 350 special education educators, administrators, community agencies, families, and individuals with disabilities attended the conference. The theme was “Great Expectations: It’s All About Employment.” National leaders such as **Dr. Richard Luecking**, President of TransCen, Inc.; **Stephen A. Wooderson**, CEO of CSAVR; and motivational speaker **Brad Cohen**, author of “*Front of the Class: How Tourette Syndrome Made Me the Teacher I Never Had*” addressed the audience as the selected keynote speakers over the three-day event.

Missouri special education educators, employers, and community partners were selected for breakout sessions showcasing best and evidence-based practices and innovative programming in the state. Missouri DCDT provided candy treats for each of the tables throughout the conference and hosted a vendor table to share information about the organization and recruitment for new members. The MO-DCDT Officers held their final meeting for the 2012–2013 school year during the evening and invited members and interested parties to a social gathering, which was attended by 30 people. MO-DCDT provided refreshments and prizes to the attendees. This annual event provides a prime opportunity to share DCDT information and support the Missouri DESE on transition best and evidence-based practices.



Southeast Region

Catherine Fowler, *SE Regional Representative*

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Happy Back to School from the Southeast Region!!

Georgia DCDT

Georgia (GA) DCDT has been busy getting its chapter “restarted” and now has a current slate of officers: **President Sandy Macdonald**, **Vice President Barry Brazelton**, and **Secretary/Treasurer Mary Edwards**. Our chapter is working hard to increase its state membership. We purchased a variety of “giveaways” and have set up a display table at two state conferences—Georgia CEC Conference in Macon (February) and the Georgia IDEAS Conference on

St. Simons Island (June). We shared with passersby about the benefits of joining DCDT and gave out many membership forms. Another goal for GA-DCDT in 2013 is to establish a statewide transition network, which will be used to share information, concerns, and solutions. We have polled all of our school districts to determine their transition contact person(s). In addition, we have talked to individuals at conferences about joining the network. Although our list is far from complete, we already have close to 100 people in the network. We are also very excited to be able to have as a resource our Georgia State Transition Coordinator. We are already working jointly on a few initiatives. Transition is looking great in Georgia!

Maryland DCDT

Maryland (MD) Subdivision is starting to use Express Electronic Networking (EEN) to further members’ abilities to support each other’s work in the field of transition and to build community within its membership. Every other month, they will share their transition successes electronically. From creatively using a new strategy with a client or student to publishing an article or designing new curriculum material, MD-DCDT members will use EEN as a space to express their passion for transition and cheer each other on to more success. At this year’s DCDT Conference MD-DCDT hopes to do a little face-to-face networking by hosting a meet-and-greet in Williamsburg. For more information, email **Cherise Hunter** (hunter.cherise@gmail.com).

South Carolina DCDT

The South Carolina Subdivision completed state elections, voting in **Tony Plotner** as our new **president** and **Joy Ivester** as **vice president**. The SC-DCDT State Transition Conference will be held October 24 and 25 in Columbia. Presenters will include **Melinda Jacobs** on transition law and **Colleen Thoma** on integrating evidence-based practices in transition programming. Please contact Joy Ivester (Joy.Ivester@uscmed.sc.edu) for more information, including a registration form. The president and vice president are collaborating on a SC-DD Council–funded project to identify and increase the use of transition evidence-based practices in South Carolina high schools.

Virginia DCDT

The Virginia Subdivision has been working to incorporate our chapter; we recently obtained our official status as a non-profit organization. This summer VA-DCDT conducted an orientation for our board members and updated our by-laws and handbook to reflect our new status. We are actively collaborating with the national DCDT to plan for the international conference being held in Williamsburg, Virginia, in November of this year. Our goals for the upcoming year include increasing our membership and collaborating with other state CEC subdivisions. VA’s new officers are **Past President Marianne Moore**, **President Lisa Holland**, **Vice-President Elaine Gould**, and **Treasurer Renee Bullano**.

NEWS FROM **nsttac**

Please give NSTTAC your feedback, as we update several resources this summer into fall.

We will be updating some of the **Indicator 13** examples and nonexample case studies, providing stronger examples of integrated employment and college for students with severe disabilities and aligning more explicitly with Common Core State Standards. Please visit <http://www.nsttac.org/content/web-based-examples-and-nonexamples-sppapr-indicator-13-checklist-overview> to view the current resource and feel free to offer feedback while we are in the midst of making changes.

Additionally, we are continuously adding examples to the **CCSS Transition Think Tank** and welcome your suggestions here at the webpage (<http://www.nsttac.org/content/ccss-transition-think-tank>). These two tables list the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics and suggest transition-focused skills that might be taught as students demonstrate proficiency in the Standards.

NSTTAC and the National Post-School Outcomes Center completed a study to operationally define the 17 predictors of post-school success (Test, Mazzotti, et al., 2009) and updated the **Predictor Implementation Self-Assessment** to reflect these updates. The tool is available in print (PDF) or as an electronic form (Word) here at the following webpage (<http://www.nsttac.org/content/predictor-resources>). This tool is intended for use by school, district, interagency, or state-level planning teams to identify strengths and needs in their programming. It is also the basis for action planning in the **State Toolkit for Examining Post-School Success (STEPSS)**, soon to be fully functional as a web-based,

data-based decision-making tool co-developed by NPSO, NSTTAC, and the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities. If you are interested in more information about STEPSS, contact **Dawn Rowe** (drowe3@uoregon.edu).

The **NSTTAC Capacity Building Planning Tool** for transition was unveiled as a web-based tool (nsttacplanningtool.org) during the Capacity Building Institute for state teams in May 2013. It is being used by states that participated in the Institute and will be available for other state transition team leaders after a training webinar in September. If you are the transition lead for your state's Department of Education, contact **Catherine Fowler** (chfowler@uncc.edu) for more information about accessing this planning resource.

Finally, the **Youth to Work Coalition** resources on NSTTAC's websites have been the focus of a series of spring and summer webinars that targeted different audiences (employers, schools, youth, families, youth service providers). Archived presentation materials and webinar recordings are available at the presentation link (<http://www.nsttac.org/ytw/home>).

If you are interested in these and other resource updates from NSTTAC (and don't receive weekly e-blasts or monthly newsletters), e-mail nsttacmail@uncc.edu to sign up for the listserv.

Test, D. W., Mazzotti, V. L., Mustian, A. L., Fowler, C. H., Kortering, L. J., & Kohler, P. H. (2009). Evidence-based secondary transition predictors for improving post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 32, 160–181. doi: 10.1177/0885728809346960



Message from the President, continued from page 1

tional Community of Practice (CoP) on Transition (sponsored by the IDEA Partnership), which continues to evolve and prosper. DCDT members and officers have been called upon to present on behalf of the Community at various conferences and workshops. This partnership has also included ensuring that youth have a voice in national, state, and local transition policy and practice and has resulted in DCDT having a youth with a disability representative on our board. DCDT members have been invited by the Community to participate in workgroups creating dialog guides about transition. To view the products of the CoP on Transition, please log on to the website (www.ideapartnership.org). **Joanne Cashman** (IDEA Partnership) invites DCDT state chapters to become involved. If any DCDT state chapter is interested in this project, please contact me directly via email (staciedj@yahoo.com). In future issues of this newsletter, I plan to describe additional accomplishments from our other partners: the **Council for Administrators of Special Education (CASE)** and **Easter Seals**.

Make sure to look in this issue for important registration information about our upcoming **17th DCDT International Conference: Leaders for Life: No Limits . . . No Boundaries**, which will be held **November 14–16, 2013**, at the **Colonial Williamsburg Resort, Williamsburg, Virginia**. Our conference planner, **Cindi Nixon**, and the Local Arrangements Committee are providing a variety of exciting events during the conference.

In closing, I just want to say that it's my hope and goal to collaborate and build new partnerships whenever and wherever possible so that DCDT's efforts to keep transition at the forefront continue to be successful.

Sincerely,
Stacie Dojonovic
DCDT President
 2013–2014
staciedj@yahoo.com

PAST PRESIDENT SAYS GOODBYE . . . and HELLO THROUGH THE ANNUAL DCDT AWARDS PROCESS



Audrey A. Trainor, *Past President*

It has been my pleasure to serve the DCDT community as president during the past year. For the 8 years that I have been on the Board, I have seen the organization go through many changes. In particular, we have fostered the growth of an annual conference that reaches out to regional communities on even-numbered years and national communities on odd-numbered years. I am looking forward to seeing everyone in Williamsburg, Virginia, this November, a few weeks later than our normally scheduled conference dates. In addition to increasing the ways that we share research through presentations, I have also seen the Board focus on the development of a research agenda. These efforts have been strengthened by the Board's commitment to practitioners and to ensuring that research we summarize or generate for our community is linked to the practice of transition education. The Board could not have accomplished any of this without the strength of our membership. It has been wonderful to meet so many teachers, leaders, employers, parents, and youth who are so dedicated to making the transi-

tion to adulthood for people with disabilities more equitable and fulfilling. Thanks to everyone for supporting me through my year as president!

Luckily, I do not have to say goodbye to the DCDT community. The Past President (a role in which I serve from July 2013 to June 2014) has the pleasure of organizing the annual DCDT awards. The awards are also a strong reminder of those individuals for whom they are named, coming before us and making the United States a leader in transition education for people with disabilities. Whether it is a nomination for an exemplary employer or an excellent transition specialist, the letters of nominations are heart-felt and inspiring. The most difficult part about the job is having to select the best of the best. Fortunately, I do not do this alone. A subcommittee of reviewers makes the decisions collaboratively. See the descriptions of awards on the next page and get involved by honoring one of your colleagues.

We have extended the deadline for nominations to **September 21, 2013**. Please consider nominating someone from your community for the Rookie Teacher of the Year, Leader of Innovative Practices, Teacher of the Year, Employer of the Year, State Leadership, and Research awards.

SNEAK PEEK: NEXT ISSUE OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSITION FOR EXCEPTIONAL INDIVIDUALS



David Test, *Journal Co-Editor*
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As a sneak preview, here is the Table of Contents for the next issue (36:3) due out in December. All articles should be currently available on OnlineFirst (<http://cde.sagepub.com/content/early/recent>).

- “Identifying and Promoting Transition Evidence-Based Practices and Predictors of Success: A Position Paper of the Division on Career Development and Transition” (Mazzotti, Rowe, Cameto, Test, & Morningstar)
- “Differences in the Relationship Between Family Environments and Self-Determination Among Anglo, Latino, and Female Students with Disabilities” (Rodriguez & Cavendish)
- “An Exploratory Survey of Transition Teaching Practices: Results from a National Sample” (Pham)
- “Identifying Nonacademic Behaviors Associated with Post-School Employment and Education” (McConnell, Martin, Juan, Hennessey, Terry, el-Kazimi, Pannells, & Willis)
- “Transitioning Youth with Intellectual and Other Developmental Disabilities: Predicting Community Employment Outcomes” (Simonsen & Neubert)
- “Investigation of Health Care Components in Transition IEPs” (Repetto, Jaress, Lindsey, & Bea)

DCDT CALL FOR 2013 AWARDS NOMINATIONS

Would you like to honor an outstanding contributor to our field?

DCDT, a division of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), is accepting nominations for awards given to people who have made outstanding contributions in the field of secondary education and transition for students with disabilities. Each candidate must be a member in good standing of DCDT at the time of nomination. **Deadline for nominations has been extended to September 21, 2013.** The awards will be given out at the 2013 DCDT International Conference in Williamsburg, Virginia.

To nominate someone for a DCDT award, please submit a letter of nomination. **Nominations and self-nominations can be e-mailed to: Audrey Trainor (aatrainor@wisc.edu).** Any questions about the nomination process can also be emailed to Audrey.

Rookie Teacher of the Year Award – Honors a secondary teacher who has completed the first year of teaching (2012–2013) and would thus be in his or her second year during 2013–2014. It will be awarded to an educator who has demonstrated outstanding, innovative, and committed services to the career education and transition of secondary students with disabilities.

Marc Gold Innovative Practices in Transition Award – Presented to an individual who or organization that has demonstrated innovation in transition services. The award is named after Marc Gold, whose innovative “Try Another Way” approach opened the door to employment for many students with significant disabilities.

Iva Dean Cook Teacher of the Year Award – A practitioner honor given to an educator who has demon-

strated outstanding commitment and service to the career education and transition of students with disabilities. The award is named in recognition of Iva Dean Cook, a DCDT founding member, past president, and a pioneer in teacher preparation in transition.

Employer of the Year Award – Presented to an employer or business that has shown remarkable commitment to promoting or providing employment opportunities for students with disabilities.

Oliver P. Kolstoe Award – Given to an individual who has made a significant contributions to the field of career development and transition through means other than direct classroom instruction (which is recognized by the Iva Dean Cook Teacher of the Year Award). The award is named in recognition of Oliver P. Kolstoe, a DCDT founding member and past president whose early research and publications significantly shaped the field of transition.

Donn Brolin Award for State/Province Leadership and Services – Awarded to an individual who has provided significant leadership and service in transition to a state or province. Donn Brolin was a founding member and the first president of DCDT and as author of the Life Centered Career Education curriculum was influential in the career development and early transition movement.

Patricia L. Sitlington Research in Transition Award – Presented to an individual who has contributed to more positive outcomes for transition-age youth and to the field of transition through a body of research in transition. The award is named in honor of Patricia Sitlington, a DCDT past-president who contributed significantly to knowledge in the field through research.

Transition Leadership Program at University of Massachusetts, Boston

The Institute for Community Inclusion and the UMass Boston Special Education Department collaborated in fall 2011 to develop two fully online graduate-level transition programs: (1) a master's degree track in special education with a focus on transition leadership, and (2) a 5-course, year-long practicum Graduate Certificate in transition leadership for educators who already have a master's degree and preliminary teaching license. These programs were developed with personnel preparation funds from the Office of Special Education Programs. In

March 2012, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick signed into law a new transition specialist endorsement, setting into motion a demand for high quality professional development for transition specialists. Now in its second year, the Transition Leadership program is this first such program in the state to promote Massachusetts teachers' transition specialist competencies and leadership.

For more information, please contact Maria Paiewonsky (maria.paiewonsky@umb.edu).

The 17th DCDT International Conference

Leaders for Life: No Limits.... No Boundaries

November 14–16, 2013

Colonial Williamsburg Resort, Williamsburg, Virginia

Conference Registration

- ⚡ DCDT Conference Registration Link: <https://www.cvent.com/events/17th-dcdt-international-conference/registration-1f5964f0bd404b17a076cc6f6dd0d9e9.aspx>
- ⚡ Early bird registration ends on **October 14, 2013**

	Regular registration fees	Early Bird registration fees
CEC Member	\$310.00	\$280.00
Non-CEC Member	\$340.00	\$305.00
Parent/Student	\$235.00	\$210.00

Hotel Information



Williamsburg Lodge, 310 South England Street, Williamsburg, VA 23185

- ⚡ Room Rates: \$149 - Standard \$169 - Deluxe
- ⚡ Hotel Reservations Online: <https://resweb.passkey.com/go/23190> or by Phone: 1-800-261-9530.
- ⚡ Please use the booking ID 23190.

Doctoral Leadership Grant in Special Education at the University of Connecticut

Project NeXus, the Special Education Program in the Neag School of Education, has been awarded a new Doctoral Leadership Grant to support the specialized preparation of doctoral students in special education. The award is from the Office of Special Education Programs and the U.S. Department of Education. Project NeXus offers a limited number of doctoral fellows the opportunity to receive (a) full tuition support, (b) monthly stipends, (c) paid travel oppor-

tunities, and (d) support to offset textbook and other costs. In addition, computer use, study space, and technology supports will also be provided. For more information, contact one of the Project NeXus co-directors: Mike Coyne (michael.coyne@uconn.edu), Joseph Madaus (joseph.madaus@uconn.edu), or George Sugai (george.sugai@uconn.edu). To apply, go to the following website (<http://www.education.uconn.edu/howtoapply/grad.cfm>).

The 17th DCDT International Conference

Preconference Workshops

NOVEMBER 13, 2013

Cost for each session is \$50; only \$90 to attend both.

Youth and Parent Involvement in Self-Determination (9 a.m.–12 p.m.)

Presenter: John McNaught, State Coordinator of the Virginia Department of Education's *I'm Determined Project*, *I'm Determined Youth Leaders*, and *I'm Determined Parent Leaders*

The Virginia Department of Education's *I'm Determined Project* focuses on building self-determined behavior, beginning at the elementary level and continuing through students' educational careers. Project activities are research based, grounded mainly in research on intrinsic motivation and the positive correlation between levels of self-determined attitudes and postsecondary success. The Project has held seven annual summits focusing on predictors of post-school success, including parental involvement, self-determination/self-advocacy, and social skills. This presentation will describe the evolution of the project and the youth/parent summits over the past seven years. One highlight of the workshop will be discussion of the most recent three-day summit, held on the campus of James Madison University in June 2013 and attended by more than 150 transition-age youth with disabilities and their parents. Data from a follow-up survey on the impact of the summit will be shared.

Customized Employment and Transition: Is Employment for All Youth? (1 p.m.–4 p.m.)

Presenter: Ellen Condon, MEd, *Transition Projects Director at the University of Montana's Rural Institute on Disabilities*

What if we began with the vision that all youth will graduate with a paid job in the community? How would that vision change our transition planning for youth with disabilities, especially those youth with a significant disability impact? Customized Employment is an approach that enables us to create and custom tailor employment that matches each young adult's contributions and ideal conditions for success. Customized Employment eliminates the need to compete for employment and removes many prerequisites that have traditionally kept people from the workforce. This session will introduce the concept of Customized Employment and explain how it overlaps with supported employment and blends with transition planning for all youth.

Be INSPIRED by Our Fabulous Keynote Speakers!

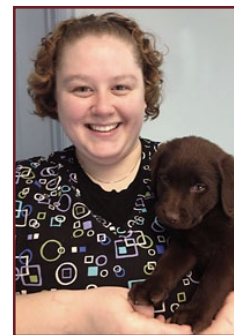


Greg Smith
Featured Keynote Speaker

Bestselling author of *On A Roll: Reflections from America's Wheelchair Dude with the Winning Attitude*, and founder of the 14-year-running syndicated *The Strength Coach Radio Show*, Greg Smith will share his journey to inner strength. Greg has

gradually been getting physically weaker throughout his whole life due to muscular dystrophy. At 65 pounds, he does not have the strength to sit upright in his power wheelchair without the support of a harness. Yet he has developed an expertise about "inner strength" that has led to amazing personal success. Greg's inner strength message offers a very simple, yet powerful formula for immediate and lasting change.

Tori Saylor
Luncheon Keynote Speaker



At the age of 27, Tori Saylor has had an interesting life filled with lessons learned. After being diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome (AS) at age 19, her life changed drastically. Quickly thereafter it was realized that her collection of struggles, triumphs, and helpful strategies was a story that could benefit more individuals. As part of her journey to a self-determined, independent adulthood, Tori has presented to hundreds of people nationally about these lessons while living with AS. Although the beginning of her life was a constant struggle, about seven years ago she experienced a major transformation when she became involved as a youth leader with the Virginia Department of Education's *I'm Determined Project*. With help from her ever-growing support system, Tori began a satisfying journey of learning how to become a self-determined self-advocate. Tori's message will leave you curious, motivated, and with a heightened awareness. Just when you think that you know everything there is to know about the autism spectrum, what you learn may surprise you.

DCDT TRANSITION SPECIALIST COMPETENCIES ARE UPDATED!



Jane Razeghi
DCDT Executive Director
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Background

Our transition competencies were first developed more than a decade ago; since that time, the “transition field” obviously has grown and evolved. The current Knowledge and Skills statements for the “Transition Specialist Advanced Preparation Standards” are included in the Council for Exceptional Children’s (CEC) 2009 publication, *What Every Special Educator Must Know: Ethics, Standards, and Guidelines*, also known as the *Red Book 2009*. This publication, available free at CEC’s website (www.cec.sped.org) under the heading “Standards,” contains those outdated transition specialist competencies.

Why are they important? These standards often serve as the **foundation for special education teacher preparation programs** and are used in **developing accreditation guidelines for college and university special education programs nationwide**. In addition, they serve as the basis for a variety of **job descriptions**, such as “Transition Specialist,” as well as the guidelines for many of the transition services provided by secondary special educators. The transition content therefore must accurately reflect the needs of the field in serving students with disabilities as they prepare for living and working independently in the community.

At the fall 2012 DCDT Conference in Denver, the DCDT Validation Team was created to address this important issue, with the goal of updating the existing transition specialist competencies. The team included myself, **Dr. Mary Morningstar** (Past President), **Dr. Robert Morgan** (member of the DCDT Knowledge & Skills Committee), and **Dr. Kendra Williams-Diehn** (DCDT Secretary). Each of these researchers had already conducted transition-related competency surveys of their own, for a combined total of almost 200 such competencies. The team began its work on updating this transition-relevant information in the Red Book.

Next Steps in the Process

Hopefully, each of you received and completed the survey that was sent out from CEC (July 8–August 8, 2013) to validate the proposed new DCDT Transition Specialist competencies. In addition to DCDT members, DCDT’s three external partners in the validation process—the Council for Administrators of Special Education (CASE), National Sec-

ondary Transition & Technical Center (NSTTAC), and the IDEA Partnerships—each selected 250 of their members to also receive the survey. In the fall, the CEC Knowledge & Skills (K&S) Subcommittee will meet to review all of the results. Based on the results of these surveys, the knowledge and skills statements with no or very little support will be dropped from the competencies. After the subcommittee’s final approval, the DCDT Executive Committee will provide a final review, and the standards will be forwarded to the CEC Professional Standards & Practices Committee (PSPC) for its approval. Once the CEC PSPC approves the standards, they will be submitted to the CEC Board of Directors for final approval. They also will be in the next copy of CEC’s *Red Book*, also expected this fall. DCDT will also want to disseminate them through our newsletter, the website, and other media.

Possible Cause for Concern

A possible cause for concern is the fact that the CEC PSPC is undergoing a significant reorganization process regarding how all special education standards, as well as their accompanying knowledge & skills statements/competencies, are developed. CEC has recently revised the CEC Standards for Special Education, and when we updated the Transition Specialist statements, they had to be organized under these new CEC Standards. When I presented the DCDT Concept Paper (currently available for review on our website) to the CEC PSPC at the April 2013 CEC Convention, along with the plan and timeline for updating the DCDT Transition Specialist competencies, I was told that DCDT was approved to proceed. However, no assurances could be provided that the validation survey results and the CEC K&S Subcommittee analysis and/or approval would necessarily result in the approval of the CEC PSPC. At that time, everything concerning the structure and policies of the CEC PSPC was in a state of flux until the reorganization was completed.

Please be aware that there are members of the CEC Board of Directors, as well as of the CEC PSPC, **who do not think there is a need for Transition Specialist standards/competencies**. Therefore, I was directed to be sure to address this issue while developing the required background “Concept” paper for CEC PSPC’s approval. Honestly, I was just a little surprised that anyone would think that standards for transition and this position would not be considered important. The following section is the justification I included in the concept paper. This is one reason why it was important to have CASE, IDEA Partnerships, and NSTTAC involved as our external partners in this process. I believe that their support is critical to us and the whole field of transition.

Response to the Concern Posed by the CEC PSPC

Why Are Advanced Professional Standards Needed for a Special Education Transition Specialist? This is the question of concern raised by the CEC Professional Standards & Practices Committee (PSPC). In response to this question, I included the following as a justification in the DCDT Concept Paper, as well as presentation. There is a very strong need for professional standards for transition specialists. The amendments to the transition provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1997 and subsequent reauthorization in 2004 require **transition** goals for special education students, as well as a **coordinated approach to delivering transition services** to these students. Many secondary special education teachers are *unprepared* to plan for and deliver these transition services, which lead to poor student outcomes in terms of their career development, future education, employment, and living in the community (Morningstar & Clavenna-Deane, 2012). “Effectively preparing transition educators requires *focusing on knowledge and skills that are often beyond what is currently included in most special education teacher preparation programs*” (Morningstar & Clavenna-Deane, 2012; Li, Bassett, & Hutchison, 2009; Wolfe, Boone, & Blanchett, 1998). Unfortunately, studies have revealed that special education teachers report a lack of knowledge of transition competencies and that this hinders their abilities to implement effective practices (Benitez, Morningstar, & Frey, 2009; Knott & Asselin, 1999). Just as the roles of secondary special educators have to change to focus on the transition needs of their students, so must teacher education programs respond accordingly (Morningstar & Clavenna-Deane, 2012). However, this has not been the case. A national survey of special education personnel preparation programs revealed that less than half of the special education programs offered a stand-alone course in transition (Anderson et al., 2003).

Advanced special education professional standards for a *transition specialist* are needed to provide guidance and direction for personnel preparation programs in developing graduate and undergraduate courses and programs across the country, and to serve as a basis for state and local guidelines and licensing now and in the future. Personnel development has been recognized as a central strategy for systems change and improvement among state education agencies (Blalock et al., 2003). Clear guidance regarding up-to-date evidence-based transition competencies must be available in order to influence the development of effective high quality courses, programs, and methods that ensure productive outcomes for students with disabilities.

Please note that the competencies for a transition specialist are vastly different from other Advanced Study sets (Diagnostic, Technology, Administrators, Early Childhood, Early Intervention, etc.). No other sets address transition competencies regarding preparing students with disabilities for the various post-secondary education and/or training options, employment, and living indepen-

dently in the community. Most special educators are not aware of this transition information, nor do they receive it in their pre-service special education programs. On the other hand, there are numerous studies documenting the fact that youth and adults with disabilities have high percentages of unemployment and under-employment. Access to high quality transition services is a minimum necessity if we hope to improve student outcomes.

In general, advanced special education professional standards describe the knowledge and skills—and dispositions—necessary for individuals to practice at accomplished levels of special education and in advanced special education roles in providing transition services to meet the needs of individuals with exceptionalities. After previously mastering initial special education professional standards, special educators work toward mastery of advanced professional standards at the post-baccalaureate levels, including master’s, specialist, and doctoral degree programs, as well as non-degree advanced certificate programs (Sparks & Mainzer, 2007, p. 8).

Advanced special education professional standards are the basis for recognizing special education preparation programs that have demonstrated through performance that the program successfully prepares candidates in the respective area. Individuals mastering the knowledge and skills identified for the advanced roles, although not necessarily earning a specific state license, can enhance their résumés and broaden the professional roles they assume. The advanced standards provide a benchmark to ensure that experienced special education professionals are able to practice at an accomplished level.

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