



Arkansas Transition Services Newsletter

Fall 2018

What Can Your ATS Consultant Do for You?

by Paul Johnston

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So have you been wondering how an ATS Consultant can help you? There are many ways they can!

Do you have an upcoming monitoring? We can come in and do a file review of your Transition Plans to see where you are and provide any training you might need to improve the plans. We can also come in after a monitoring to work with you to have outstanding Transition plans.

Do you need training? ATS Consultants can provide a variety of trainings that relate to IDEA Transition. We can provide all day trainings or customize to your needs on a variety of subjects: Transition and Due Process, Evidence Based Practices, Self-Advocacy, Planning for the Indirect Student and many others. Select trainings are always offered in the summer at the Education Coops across Arkansas. Make sure to regularly check our website www.arkansastransition.com for upcoming training and events.

Do you need direct Technical Assistance? We can come in and consult with your school or teacher to help improve Transition. From Transition Classes to Work Programs, to OWL, to new teacher assistance, we can provide the Technical Assistance to meet your needs. We can also come to IEP Meetings or Mediated IEP Meetings if you are having unique or special issues. If you are having problems to plan for a specific student we can facilitate a Person Centered Plan, all of these direct at your school.

Do you need resources? By all means make sure you check our website

www.arkansastransition.com

We have information on Transition Assessments, Agencies, information for Parents and Students, and much more.

If you have any questions or needs contact your ATS Consultant directly and see how they can help meet your needs!!

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Using GPS to Navigate a Transition Plan

by Karen Randolph

The Global Positioning System (GPS) is a satellite-based system that provides geolocation and time information to anyone with a GPS receiver, anywhere on the earth. It can be very helpful to those of us who are directional challenged and need equipment like this to help us navigate on the roads. For teachers who are assisting students, and parents in developing a transition plan, having a GPS system can help in this route. Your GPS (Goals for Post School) outcomes can be discovered through Transition Assessments. These are the instruments used in finding the student's strengths, needs, and desires, in writing an appropriate plan.

Here are some questions in need of answers using Transition Assessments:

- Who am I?
- What are my unique talents and interests?
- What do I want in life, now and in the future?
- What are some of life's demands that I can meet now?
- What are the main barriers to getting what I want from school and my community?
- What are my options in the school and community for preparing me for what I want to do, now and in the future?

Finding the right assessments can assist our IEP team in this process. We need to look at instruments that will give us information on career exploration, education/ training needs, as well as daily living and self-awareness/self-advocacy skills. Obtaining information from the parent on formal or informal assessments can also give us insight to Goals for Post School (GPS) outcomes for our students.

As your road trip continues, you keep referring back to your GPS for guidance and reassurance. The same is true in using transition assessments. Assessing is an ongoing process that keeps you and the student up to date with their progress toward their goals. The most current information helps the IEP team understand the next steps in reaching those Post-Secondary Goals. By assessing regularly, you and your students will never be lost in route, but will learn to detour to find the correct path to their success.

To stay on the right road, consult with your Transition Consultant or navigate to our Arkansas Transition website: arkansastranstion.com to find a variety of assessments that will meet you and your students' needs. To locate assessments go to the Tools/RESOURCES tab and click on assessing tools. Transition Assessments are your GPS in finding the appropriate Post-Secondary Goals for your students.

Congratulations to the new 2018-2019 OWL Districts & Schools!



- Brookland
- Centerpoint
- Crossett
- Gosnell
- Greene County Tech
- Huntsville
- Magnolia
- Har-Ber High School (Springdale)
- Kirby
- Ozark
- Trumann
- Valley View
- Westside
- Wynne
- Heritage High School (Rogers)
- Parkview High School (Little Rock)

Play School: An Opportunity for Work Based Learning Community Partner

by Jennifer Williams

Many students express a desire to work with children. Students participating in the Opportunities through Work-Based Learning program known as STINGERS (Students Transitioning Into Necessary Goals & Employment Related Services) at Harrisburg Preparatory High School are getting that experience thanks in part to Play School Daycare/Preschool. The facility cares for 133 children and has 26 staff members who hold a CDA, AA, or a BA with 12 hours of early childhood, as well as 2 full time cooks. Donna Massengill, owner, shared her experiences on working with the STINGERS program. "This is our 2nd year participating in the program and 6 students have trained here. Some of the positives have been that my teachers have become excellent trainers; they have modeled, they have explained and have given feedback in a positive manner.

Students have been excellent workers. They have followed direction, become more confident with the staff and children, and are modeling the positive behavior of the teachers. The students have also learned it takes a lot of preparation and when children are not interested, there is modification to the day's plans. They have learned to be on time, call or message when they are not going to be here, and to follow the policies and procedures of the center. One big thing they have learned is this is not babysitting and this job is not for everybody!! Of the 6 that have been here, 2 for sure (and 1 maybe) of those would like to continue their education and work with children. For me personally, it has been very rewarding to see shy, sometimes awkward, with little self-esteem students grow into

confident young adults. They have been successful here. The children miss them when they are absent and are very excited when they are here, that alone is a confidence builder for a lot of these students. I truly believe the program has been as good for my staff as it has been for the students. We all learn as we go. I am very proud to be a part of it."
Thanks Play School!!!



We've heard some pretty cool projects that some of your students are doing this Holiday Season!

If you would like to submit an article about your students' special holiday projects for our next newsletter let us know!

Send a short description of your project and a few pictures (and photo releases) to:

jennifer.bibel@arkansas.gov or bonnie.boaz@arkansas.gov

 A cartoon illustration of a snowman. It has a white body, a black top hat, a red scarf, and stick arms. It is standing on a light-colored surface.

Arkansas Department of Education - Career & Technical Education's ACT Campaign

by Sonja McMurray, ADE CTE

Each year, ACT releases The Condition of College and Career Readiness—a progress report on the ACT-tested graduating class—that includes reports for each state and the nation as a whole. Here at the Arkansas Department of Career Education – Career and Technical Education, we use the state profile report for Arkansas to inform our programs and provide our students with the best opportunities to achieve success. We know that many of our students do not understand the importance or purpose of the ACT test beyond college admission. After reviewing the latest report, we partnered with the Arkansas ACT State Council, to identify opportunities to educate students on the ACT test, its purpose, available test prep resources, the benefits of retaking the ACT, and available accommodations.

The Arkansas Department of Career Education, ACT State Council members, and professionals in the areas of special education, adult education and workforce, looked at our state's ACT College and Career Readiness Report and saw that students were not taking full advantage of the opportunities available to them, including applying for test accommodations. This group was identified as a Working Group and divided into sub-groups to address each of the national ACT State Organizations goals:

- Goal 1: Develop, implement, and increase awareness of academic and career development
- Goal 2: Identify innovative solutions that advance successful collaboration between academic and workforce development efforts
- Goal 3: Advocate for policies to support and address academic and workforce issues
- Goal 4: Advocate for policies, programs, and services to support access and equity for all students, especially students from underrepresented populations

Based on the discussions from the Working Group and recommendations from ACT based on our state's report, we have decided to focus on Goal 4.

The Arkansas Department of Education pays for all Arkansas public school juniors to take the ACT once at no cost. Students who have identified specific test accommodations in the Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) may qualify for similar accommodations on this test.

After reviewing the report, we found that:

- A low percent of students are requesting accommodations. Of the 32,411 students who took the ACT, only 2,040 (6%) requested accommodations.
- Students receiving Extended Time are achieving below their counterparts. Students taking the ACT test with Standard time have an average composite score of 19.6. While students receiving Extended Time, earned an average composite score of 15.8.

To ensure all juniors, especially those with special needs, fully understand the ACT and take full advantage of the free test, test prep resources, and request for accommodations, we have decided to launch a campaign highlighting all of the components of the test, how students could better prepare, and the advantages of utilizing accommodations as outlined in a student's IEP. The idea and concept for this campaign was a direct result of the work done through ACT Working Group.

Utilizing our established partnership with the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) State Core Team, the Office of Career and Technical Education – Special Projects will create materials for students and educators. Elements of the campaign will include:

- Videos hosted on YouTube that educators can play in the classroom
- A checklist for rolling the campaign out in schools
- A presentation for educators can use in their classrooms
- Posters and other deliverable materials

Stay tuned for more information to come on this important campaign!

Reaching for the Stars!

by Bonnie Boaz

What does one do after one reaches the Summit? CELEBRATE! That's exactly what Arkansas Transition Services is doing—celebrating the two days of hard work that will hopefully be the start of new planning for the 47 teams that attended! Over 50 school districts were part of 47 teams that started assessing their practices in Student Focused Planning and Student Development in the Taxonomy for Transition Programming online tool November 5-6, in Rogers, Arkansas.

The Summit began with a video spotlighting students and schools that have implemented practices in self-determination, work-based learning, and interagency collaboration—all predictors of positive post school outcomes! It was a great way to shine the spotlight on teachers and students who are experiencing what happens when evidence based practices are put into motion. This video will soon be available on our website.

Brad Cohen kicked off the Summit with his inspiring story of overcoming extreme ridicule as he grew up with Tourette syndrome. His story went right along with our theme: **Raising Expectations, Reaching for the Stars!** Throughout his childhood he managed to change peoples' perceptions of what people with disabilities can do. He raised his own expectations and graduated from college to go on to "reach for the stars,"—or stardom, considering a made-for-tv movie based on his book, "The Front of the Class: How Tourette syndrome Made Me the Teacher I Never Had," was produced. He used humor to share how he educated his teachers and students at his school that his disability was simply a part of him and it would not keep him from achieving great success. Cohen is now a national speaker and assistant elementary school principal in Georgia.

The feedback we received on the breakout sessions could not have been better! From sessions on planning and starting a transition program, Universal Design, technology to support work-based learning, to student success plans—presenters did a super job on sharing their expertise that teams took back to their planning sessions. Although we did endure some "technical difficulties" with technology, we heard teams express gratitude for having the time to devote to transition!

Many spent their Monday evening on the red carpet with none other than Joey Travolta and 26 other "up and coming" celebrities! The three short films produced by students of the 2018 Inclusion Film Camp were premiered Monday evening at a "Red Carpet" event. Joey Travolta and 26 students took turns being photographed with family, friends, and other supporters of their hard work at the film camp. A special presentation of a scholarship in memory of Jaime Selvera, a film camp attendee who sadly and suddenly passed away in August, was presented to his parents by Matt Sewell. The \$650 scholarship, made possible by Karan Burnette of the Arkansas Autism Resource and Outreach Center (AAROC), will help provide meals and hotel for a future Film Camp attendee. After that presentation, Mr. Travolta announced he would match the funds for an additional scholarship! The premiere of the film and presentation of awards to students after made for an amazing evening with the stars!

Joey Travolta provided the send-off session, reiterating that when expectations are raised and we give students opportunities to reach for the stars, they will get there! He shared clips that included individuals with disabilities working in the film industry and called on Arkansas students who attended his film camp to share their experiences. As one attendee stated, it was "relevant and heartwarming."

The Summit ended with teams bringing their planning to a close temporarily. It is our hope that teams will continue to work together, implement their plans, and continue to plan to raise expectations and help our students reach for the stars! Thank you all for taking time to attend and be a part of what we consider a very successful Summit! Don't forget the next one, October 20, 2020—just before the International DCDDT Conference in Little Rock, October 21-23!!!

TRANSITION for CAYSI Students and Their Families

by Jana Villemez, CAYSI

Eyes Opened, Heart Touched, Minds Inspired – Families and Providers Discover what Makes Good Life for their Child with Dual Sensory Impairment!

CAYSI – Children And Youth with Sensory Impairment is Arkansas' federally funded deafblind program. The program serves families and their children with a combined visual and hearing impairment, birth thru 21 years old. It is the rarest of rare disabilities and our students typically have a wide range of diverse and complex needs. CAYSI maintains a registry of students qualified as deafblind and currently has 215 children on the census. The students primary code of disability reported may be developmentally delayed, multiple disabilities, other health impairment, deaf, or visually impaired. In our current census of 215 students, 46% are between the ages of 14-22. These students require long-term supports and services following high school and Arkansas is working on reframing how and what that might look like. Here's how:

Family Futures Planning Days

Families come together on 2 separate days to discover what is most important for their son or daughter. They explore the need for purpose and meaning in one's life, what brings their child joy, and what "success" would look like for their child after graduation.

1. Families begin forming and taking control of a vision of the future for their child by learning the difference between IDEA and adult service guidelines and the importance of the family taking ownership. They learn the importance of coming to adult service agencies with a plan, not relying on them to control transition, and using person-centered approaches to learn about their child's interests, gifts, and preferences.
2. Families see the need in using the transition plan to work on skills that can help the child meet the family's vision of the future.
3. Families seek help and support by knowing the resources available to Arkansas families and how to access the resources effectively.
4. Families seek opportunities - looking beyond the systems now in place to think outside the box about opportunities in the community for activities (work, volunteering, social) that match with the child's gifts, interests, preferences they learned in the exploration/discovery phase of the planning days.

CAYSI will be hosting a 2-part series for families whose children are deafblind and have other disabilities. Part 1 (March 30, 2019) will focus on discovery, exploration, and identifying strengths, skills, needs, support systems, and resources. Part 2 (April 13, 2019) will focus on understanding how to navigate systems and resources needed for the families' children and individual completion of action plans. Designated agency representatives from Arkansas Rehabilitative Services, Division Services for the Blind, Arkansas Transition Services, Arkansas School for the Deaf, UALR Deaf Education, and CAYSI will support the family in learning about each child's individual strengths and hopes for having a good life and guidance in working on their action plan. All will brainstorm, problem-solve together on how the family can take the lead in their vision of creating a meaningful, purposeful, and joyful life for the child and their family.

For more information email Jana Villemez, Family Consultant for CAYSI, at jana.villemez@arkansas.gov.

Arkansas Department of Workforce Services - Did you Know??

by Lisa Washington

Committed to helping Arkansans, the Arkansas Workforce Centers “provide workforce readiness training, job search, academic enrichment and work experience to jobseekers linking them to employers through a statewide delivery system”, (*but you knew that, right?)

<http://www.discover.arkansas.gov/>

You may also know about a free online resource called Real-Life Arkansas which is designed to help students “discover” what they must do in order to have that “real-life” life-style based earnings and occupation/s to choose broken down in three options:

- (1) Reality Check - will help you find careers that pay what you need.
- (2) Future Salary - will get information on which occupations pay that much.
- (3) Occupation Direct – will find how much you can buy with your chosen occupation.

<https://www.workforce.arkansas.gov/real-life/>

But did you know about a gem of a find located at <https://www.dws.arkansas.gov/jobseekers/>?

Hover over any of the tabs and you will “discover” additional resources. For example, if you click on > Publications, the current 2018 publications will pop up (there are also archived publications). Arkansas’ Hot 45 top jobs, Career Watch Student and Teacher versions, and So You Wanna Go Pro flyer and much, much more. In addition, you can order any of the publications free of charge!

During our 2018 Transition Summit, I had an opportunity to meet and connect with Spencer Griffin, Research Project Analyst-Labor Market Information (LMI), whose job it is to take occupational data from employers around the State and put that information into the publications for students, perspective employers and anyone interested in the labor market statistical data.

When asked if he had a quote he’d want to share with students:

**“Was it a bad day...
or was it a
bad five minutes
that you milked
all day?”**

When asked if he would be available to attend transition fairs and share resources, and publications, and/or words of wisdom: “Absolutely!”

(*did you know?)