



The

PEATCpress

Summer 2003

Building Better Futures for Children with Disabilities

PEATC Partners with Juvenile Justice to Improve Youth Outcomes

by Felicia Kessel-Crawley

PEATC is hearing from more and more parents concerned about the futures of their middle and high school aged children who have been repeatedly suspended, expelled or involved in the juvenile justice system. Current research reveals that up to 90 percent of children and youth involved with the juvenile justice system are identified with disabilities. In addition, school failure is recognized as one of the highest risk factors for youth involvement with the juvenile justice system. Sadly, youth experiencing failure in school are also most at risk of presenting behavioral issues that commonly lead to involvement with the court system. These behaviors include: impulsiveness, poor social skills, poor decision making skills and aggressiveness.

These alarming statistics, coupled with calls from parents concerned about the treatment of their children in correctional and detention centers and discussion PEATC has had with local, state and national experts working in the field of juvenile justice have led us to begin dialogue with other public and private agencies about how parents and professionals can build effective, collaborative partnerships to improve outcomes for children and youth with

Profile of Youth in Virginia's Correctional Facilities

- 75% have at least one diagnosable mental disorder.
- 50% have moderate to severe disabilities.
- 70% are four or more years behind their same-aged peers in reading.
- 78% are five or more years behind in writing.
- 82% are four or more years behind in math.
- 24% have ADHD.
- 47% have a history of use of psychotropic drugs.
- 30% have had prior psychiatric hospitalizations.
- 42% are receiving special education services.

disabilities involved with the juvenile justice system. It is this growing concern that has inspired the expansion of PEATC's Juvenile Justice Initiative to include an annual Juvenile Justice Summit. The first Summit, held on October 16, 2001, brought together more than 125 parents and professionals from public and private schools, universities, social services agencies, state and local

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Mark Jacob of PADDA (l) flanks Keynote luncheon speaker **Congressman Bobby Scott** along with PEATC Executive Director **Cherie Takemoto** and JJ Summit Project Coordinator **Pierre Ames**.

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PEATC does not endorse any product or service referred to in this newsletter. Articles, announcements and resources are included for information only. Call PEATC with any questions or comments.

Hablamos Español

Si usted o alguien que usted conoce necesita información en español, pueden llamar a Ana Avanzini a PEATC al t el: 703-569-6200 (l nea en espa ol); o al 703-923-0010, ext. 103 (l nea directa).



Cherie Takemoto

Cherie's Corner

IDEA Law To Change Special Education

Special Education is about to change as the Congress is moving quickly to reauthorize the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Advocates, teachers, administrators and others are concerned and hopeful about different proposed changes. Right now is the time to let your representatives know how you feel about the proposals. The House passed HR 1350 in April. The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee sent their bill S. 1248 to the Senate in June. Both bills include major changes to special education, including changes to the way parents and schools will settle disagreements. Why should you care?

Changes to IEPs – The House and Senate bills would eliminate short-term objectives or benchmarks. The House would give the option of writing 3 year IEPs, while the Senate would offer that option after age 18. The Senate bill includes quarterly reports on progress on the IEP. The House requires that special education services be based on research. Some parents are concerned that without short-term objectives, there will be no way of tracking progress because a three year window for IEPs is too long to wait to see if special education services are effectively helping the student to progress. Others argue that these changes will reduce paperwork related to special education.

Learning Disability – The House and Senate propose revising the eligibility for LD from one that uses IQ tests to one that makes eligible students who fail to respond to research-based interventions. Funds would also be available for services to prevent students from having to come into special education through educational intervention in the regular classroom. As a result, some students who are struggling and could use specialized instruction and services available through special education will be eligible to receive services. However, some are worried that there will no longer be clear thresholds for what is and isn't a learning disability and that special education funding will go to provide services for students without disabilities.

Behavior – Advocates are concerned that changes lead to more students being pushed out for behavior related to their disability without protections and supports in place to support positive behavior.

Resolving Disagreements – Both bills add early dispute resolution processes that include meetings for parents and schools within 15 days to resolve complaints by parents. The House also adds voluntary binding arbitration. Both limit the time a parent has to initiate due process.

Accountability – The proposed law specifies results-based measures of performance including how students with disabilities are doing compared to their peers and how states are improving their performance. Additional "companion" bills include school choice (vouchers) for students in special education, full funding for IDEA, paperwork reduction and tightened discipline procedures. Once the Senate passes its version, both bills go to a Conference

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PEATC Calendar of Events

PEATC TRAINING WORKSHOPS

IN SPRINGFIELD

COFFEES

10:00 A.M. – 12:00 NOON
6320 Augusta Drive, Suite 1200
Springfield, VA 22150

September 27, 2003

Self-Advocates and Sexuality -- "What My Parents Didn't Tell Me!"

Presented by Cindy Daniels from the ARC of Northern Virginia

October 11, 2003

"Reading-What Works!"

Presented by Carie Rotenbacher, Ed. D.

November 1, 2003

"Behaviors-Educational, Therapeutic Interventions for all Disability Types -- Aspergers as well as Emotional Disorders."

Presented by James A. Sebben, Ed.D, LPC

AROUND VIRGINIA

COLLABORATIVE CONFERENCES

PEATC is proud to be a partner in the following conferences:

Future Quest

A College and Career Forum for Students with Disabilities, Parents and Professionals

Saturday, November 15, 8:00 am – 2:30 pm

George Mason University -- Fairfax Campus

Circle of Support

A Conference for Families of Children with Special Needs and the Professionals who work with Them

Saturday, November 8, 8:30 am -- 3:30 pm

Hylton High School

14051 Spriggs Road, Woodbridge, VA

Call: 703-730-3124.

DEC 2003

19th Annual International Conference on Young Children with Special Needs and Their Families

October 12-15

Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, Washington, DC

Call: 410-269-6801 or visit www.dec-sped.org

REGISTER FOR A WORKSHOP

- ◆ Please register by the Monday before the workshop by calling 703-923-0010 or 800-869-6782 or email partners@peatc.org. Please let us know if any special accommodations are needed.
- ◆ Find out about workshops in and around VA by visiting our website at www.peatc.org.
- ◆ Share information with others -- post this sheet on bulletin boards and hand it out at meetings.

AGENDA DE TALLERES EN ESPAÑOL

Invierno & Primavera 2003-2004

Talleres en Español

Hora: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Sábado Setiembre 20 del 2003

Participación de los padres en la Educación Especial y sus derechos bajo la ley de IDEA.

Sábado Octubre 25 del 2003

La Preparación de los padres antes de ir a la reunión del PEI.

Sábado Noviembre 22 del 2003

Entendiendo la Educación Especial.

Sábado Diciembre 20 del 2003

El Proceso del PEI (en inglés IEP).

Sábado Enero 24 del 2004

Referencia y Evaluación.

Sábado Febrero 21 del 2004

Elegibilidad, Plan Educativo Individualizada (PEI) y Asignación del Programa.

Sábado Marzo 20 del 2004

Plan de Instrucción, Revisión Annual, y Tri-Annual.

Sábado Abril 24 del 2004

Recursos e Intervención Temprana.

For the Love of Reading

PEATC Literacy Initiatives

by Felicia Kessel-Crawley

In order to ensure success in life for children with disabilities, PEATC believes all children must learn how to read and improve their literacy skills. Toward that end, PEATC has partnered with various academic, business and technology partners interested in expanding opportunities for literacy training using state-of-the-art technology and research-based training strategies.

PEATC is also developing ways to offer support for parents that enables them to teach reading skills through incorporating strategies and straightforward 'how-to' information.

Verizon Joins PEATC Literacy Partners

PEATC is proud to announce we have recently been awarded funding support for our LiteracyAccess Online training program through Verizon Foundation's "Verizon Reads" initiative. LAO -- LiteracyAccess Online -- is an Internet-based, hands-on, interactive instructional tool designed to help children with reading difficulties improve and enjoy learning how to read. LAO is a training tool specifically designed to provide parents, teachers, volunteers, teaching assistants and others with the literacy training skills needed to work with these children to improve their abilities (grades 4 through 8 currently.)

With fun-filled stories, bright colors and exciting characters, LAO guides parents, teachers, volunteers and paraprofessionals through creative strategies, training and student-involved exercises necessary to reach and teach students who need and want to learn to read, but who have often experienced frustration and failure at trailing behind their peers. The success of this initiative includes expanding outreach, accessibility and public awareness.

Transition News

Virginia's College Guide for Students with Disabilities

The Virginia Department of Education's *College Guide for Students with Disabilities* is available in booklet form. An electronic version can be downloaded from the Virginia Department of Education web site at www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/sped/transition/cpr.shtml. Fill out and send completed form as follows:

- Email to Diana Molnar at dmolnar@mail.vak12ed.edu
- FAX to Diana Molnar at (804) 692-3163
- Mail to Diana Molnar, Department of Education, P O Box 2120, Richmond, Virginia, 23218-2120

Here are some other websites to visit to assist with transition.

Reference Points

www.pacer.org/tatra/list/signup.asp

This site features resources and updates to help parent organizations, advocates and professionals better serve adolescents and young adults with disabilities, and their families. Transition updates from the TATRA Project is administered by PACER Center -- www.pacer.org -- as a joint technical assistance activity of the TATRA Project and the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition -- www.ncset.org

TransitionLink

www.TransitionLink.com

TransitionLink is an on-line community for sharing ideas, strategies, resources, and information concerning the transition to life after high school for adolescents with disabilities.

Preparatory Experiences

www.ncwd-youth.info/

The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth has updated its website which will now feature topics on a regular basis. The first topic in this series is about experiences that young people need in order to learn about their choices in the world of work.

Aurora School for Autistic Children
Opens in Purcellville for ages 5-12.
For more information contact: Jennifer Lassiter
(540) 751-1414

Public Policy

Parent Involvement

As schools and policymakers struggle to develop new ways to regulate improvement for students, the role of the parent seems to continue to lose ground despite research-based findings that underscore their critical role in ensuring improved outcomes. Consider the following 12 key findings from CADRE, the Consortium for Appropriated Dispute Resolution in Special Education, in its report entitled, "The Impact of Parent/Family Involvement on Student Outcomes: An Annotated Bibliography of Research from the Past Decade."

1. Parent/family involvement has a significant positive impact on student outcomes throughout the elementary, middle school, and secondary years.
2. While in general parent/family involvement improves student outcomes, variations have been found according to students' family cultures, ethnicity, and/or socioeconomic backgrounds
3. Parent/family involvement at home has a more significant impact on children than parent/family involvement in school activities
4. The nature of parent/family involvement that is most beneficial to children changes as they reach adolescence.
5. Parent/family involvement in early childhood programs helps children succeed in their transition to kindergarten and elementary school.
6. Parent/family assistance with homework can be beneficial; however, parents may need guidance and assistance in order to work effectively with their children.
7. The ways in which culturally diverse families are involved in their children's education may be different from those of other families. These family practices are nonetheless valuable and should be respected and capitalized on when planning parent/family involvement programs.
8. Promising outcomes have been documented in both mathematics and literacy when children's parent/families are involved in the educational process.
9. The most promising opportunity for student achievement occurs when families, schools, and community organizations work together.
10. To be effective, school programs must be individualized to fit the needs of students, parents, and community.
11. Effective programs assist parents in learning how to create a home environment that fosters learning and how to provide support and encouragement for their children's success.
12. Teachers must be trained to promote effective parent/family involvement in children's education.

New DOD Site

The Department of Defense has launched a new website **www.EFMconnections.org** for military families with special needs. The site has been designed to give these families access to information on a variety of military, federal and local programs available to families. The site provides a mechanism for families to exchange information.

Children & Mental Health

During this past General Assembly Session, Senator Houck introduced SJR 358, which gives the Commission on Youth the authority to maintain and update the Collection of Evidence-based Treatments for Children and Adolescents with Mental Health Treatment Needs (SJR 99, 2002). This resolution passed unanimously in both the House and the Senate. Here is a link to the resolution: <http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?ses=031&typ=bil&val=sj358>

As specified in SJR 358, the Virginia Commission on Youth, with assistance from various state agencies, has made the Collection available through the Internet and established a dissemination plan. Created with feedback from experts across the Commonwealth, this collection includes chapters on school-based services, juvenile offenders and maladaptive disorders and other features such as a glossary, definitions and licensing requirements of providers and resources on each disorder or maladaptive behaviors are included.

This collection is tailored to consumers, family members, advocates, health care providers and mental health policy makers and will be updated regularly. This print resource is now available on the Commission's web site at coy.state.va.us. To access this document, click on "Children's Mental Health Treatments" link.

PEATC Champions

for Children with Disabilities

Yvonne Byrd -- Tireless Advocate for Children

by Bellen Joyner

On March 26, 2003 PEATC Executive Director, Cherie Takemoto and Yvonne Byrd, wife, parent and entrepreneur were the featured guests during Headstart's telephone conference entitled "Supporting Families in Their Role as Advocates for Their Children." The targeted audience included representatives from Headstart's Virginia Region III programs which includes the Springfield area where PEATC headquarters is located. Kymberly Pool, Technical Assistance Specialist for the project, moderated the teleconference.

Friends and neighbors for nearly 10 years, Yvonne and I share alot in common. In addition to our passion for helping others, we are both mothers of 13 year- old sons in the seventh grade, at the same junior high school in Alexandria City. Her two other sons are aged nine and eleven. During the teleconference, I learned what makes her a true "champion for children with disabilities."

While at Headstart, her youngest son's teachers noticed some delay in his speech and language and sent him to speech therapy. He advanced to elementary school, with no follow-up instruction and was placed in a regular Kindergarten class with no special accommodations. The next couple of years were unremarkable and Yvonne thought his condition had corrected itself, however, problems resurfaced which required him to repeat the second grade because of deficiencies in reading and writing.

After years of of taking a "wait and see" approach, Yvonne finally asked the schools to evaluate her son so he could receive special education services. She urged call-participants to be proactive and open with teachers so that children don't lose valuable time floundering in school without needed support.



Yvonne is surrounded by her boys and the cast of "Ain't Misbehavin'" at a PEATC fundraising event last March.

PEOPLE AGAINST POLICE BRUTALITY

Following the 1995 fatal shooting of an Alexandria City resident, Yvonne founded People Against Police Brutality, a group of concerned citizens, who helped to stem the mounting anger over how this situation was being handled by the City. Residents were able to give voice to their emotions and the city was provided a forum to make its position known.

Since 1996, Yvonne has been an active member of the Alexandria City Tenants and Workers Support Committee. This group plays an essential role in promoting positive relations amongst the, African-American, Latino and general city populations concerning education, employment opportunities and housing issues.

Yvonne also holds a graduation certificate and seat on the board of directors of Computer CORE, a non-profit organization that provides certificates and employment opportunities to low income families

who successfully complete a six-month computer training course.

BOOKS & BOYS CLUB

Despite the time she devotes to being actively involved with in her sons' educational needs, community activities, the PTA and Headstart, Yvonne recently found time to spearhead a group called the "Books & Boys Club." Her mission is to help young men (her own, as well as mine) improve their reading and comprehension skills while making them aware of the value of community service. She also exposed them to great social, cultural and artistic events and opportunities. Whew! Where does she find the energy?

Yvonne has been able to cultivate her skills as a parent and community leader through her positive exposure to effective strategies for parents and professionals. Her parting comment on the telephone conference says it all, "If I don't as a parent then who will?" Now that's the Yvonne Byrd I know and admire!

Focus on PEATC

PEATC In Action

- **PEATC Partners with Richmond's East District Initiative to Expand Outreach**
Beginning this Fall, several new training workshops will be offered in partnership with the East District Initiative Family Resource Center in Richmond.
- **Parent/Professional Training Institutes for PRCs**
PEATC will offer Training for Parent/Professional Training Teams from Parent Resource Centers or other organizations around Virginia funded by the Virginia Department of Education through its State Improvement Grant.
- **Virginia State Fair September 25-October 5.**
Meet PEATC and other disability organizations at the PEATC exhibit at the Education Pavilion. We welcome collaboration with other disability organizations and are seeking volunteers to accomplish this endeavor.

PEATC Changes

We welcome **Cherrie Reid** as our Administrative Coordinator/Communications Associate at PEATC. In a short time, Cherrie has become a valued member of our staff by organizing the office, creating and managing databases, and assisting us with desktop publishing and our website. **Neal Rieger** is officially our new IT/Website consultant after redesigning our website and donating his expertise over the past nine months. **Junelle Cavero** is a fundraising/development intern from American University, School of Public Affairs.

We wish the best for **Charlsie Armstrong**, director of programs and operations and **Linda McKelvy Chik**, project coordinator who left PEATC to pursue new interests. **Tony Trott**, former project coordinator for LiteracyAccess Online is now taking on new challenges as a counselor at the Independence Center of Northern Virginia.

Phenomenal PEATC Partners!

- **Adobe Systems Incorporated** - for in-kind software donations.
- **Jane Barbin, Ph.D.** - for article on behavior.
- **Barbara Bradford, M.Ed., M.S.** - March Coffee presentation.
- **Belarc Incorporated** - for in-kind software donations.
- **Yvonne Byrd** - for joining PEATC in Headstart teleconference.
- **Gary Carr**, Owner, Happy Photo in Alexandria - for speedy development of photos.
- **Joan Girardi, M.S., M.Ed.** - for article on depression.
- **Microsoft Corporation** - for in-kind software donations.
- **Shirley Norman-Taylor, Esq.** - February Coffee presentation.
- **Neal Reiger** - for unprecedented inkind contributions to PEATC website redesign and IT support.
- **Carie Rothenbacher, Ed.D.** - January Coffee presentation.
- **Carmen Sanchez** - for support of numerous PEATC presentations.
- **Lory Cournoyer, McQuade Brennan, LLP** - for inkind financial expertise.
- **Nancy Hollis Sullenberger, M.S.** - for training collaboration.
- **Linda McLaine, LCSW** - for PEATC Coffee for military families.
- **Gary L. Conover, Esq.** - for conducting an IEP clinic
- **Stephen Chitwood** - for inkind management and strategic planning expertise
- **Rosalia Fajardo** - for conducting a workshop in Spanish
- **Symantec Corporation** for in-kind software donations.
- **JJII Summit leadership coordination, participation and support: Congressman Robert Scott** - for delivering dynamic keynote luncheon presentation; **Mark Jacob**, PADDA; **Andy Block**, JustChildren; **Adrienne Volnick**, University of Richmond Disability Law Clinic; **Ilona Picou**, MidAtlantic Juvenile Defender Center; **Mark Soler**, National Youth Law Center; **Suzanne Stuart** - Williamsburg/James City Co. Parent Resource Center, Volunteer Office, Richmond.

You Ought to Know

How to Assure a Life of Quality for your Child with Disabilities -- Without You

by Joanne Marcus

Imagine for a few moments that you are suddenly no longer in the picture of your child's life. If you are like most parents, you really can't imagine. Thinking about who will fill your shoes tomorrow can be quite a frightening thought today!

With advances in modern medicine, adult children with disabilities are outliving their parents. Most parents are so overwhelmed with the present day-to-day demands that planning for the future gets put on the back burner. As a result, your child's life could be severely impacted if something were to happen to you as the primary caregiver.

While parents may oversee or be the key person responsible for providing required daily support, as well as planning for future security and quality of life, rarely do they make formal plans for the future. Often parents assume they can count on their other children who may have their own families with their own personal and financial concerns. They may be unable to undertake the additional care involves. They also may not be knowledgeable about negotiating critical systems of support, the rules and reporting requirements of government entitlement programs like Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid, or how to ensure academic compliance in school.

FUTURE PLANNING – INVESTING IN QUALITY

When a parent crisis occurs, formal future planning is the key to securing essential services and financial resources. Individuals with disabilities often require government-funded income, services and health insurance programs for their support. Although government income benefits may be small, health benefits and support services can be enormous. These benefits can

include home, hospital, and long-term care, as well as, individual and family support services, like vocational and day and personal care attendants. In addition, Government programs, such as SSI and Medicaid, are means tested and the maximum amount allowed to qualify is \$2,000 in income and assets. Anyone with more will be disqualified from critically needed benefits.

SETTING UP A SPECIAL NEEDS TRUST

The good news is that there is a unique way to assure that a loved one can have an enriched quality of life, above what entitlement programs can provide. By creating a Special Needs Trust (SNT) as part of an estate plan and by writing a will, you can have peace of mind for your loved ones. There is no minimum or maximum amount required to get started, but this kind of planning is still complex for most families. It can get even more complicated for families who must be concerned with the care, comfort and well-being of a son or daughter with a disability.

Step One: The first step is finding an attorney (typically an Estate Planning Attorney) familiar with helping families set-up Special Needs Trusts.

Step Two: Identify an administrator of the SNT. This can be a difficult decision. The person who administers the trust is different from **being** a Guardian. The Trustee manages and invests the funds for the trust and makes disbursements that are for the sole benefit of the beneficiary. The Trustee also makes reports to government agencies for those receiving SSI and Medicaid and is careful not to jeopardize government benefits. Again, this is a major responsibility.

Step Three: Contact a SNT administrator. This is an organization responsible for ensuring your wishes are carried out regarding your child. They will work together with your chosen administrator as an expert guide to give you the peace of mind of knowing your child's special needs will be taken care of in your absence.

Now, truly is the best time to begin the process of planning ahead for your child's future without you.

Joanne Marcus is Executive Director for the Commonwealth Community Trust (CCT), a statewide 501 (C) 3 nonprofit organization that administers trusts for individuals with disabilities that will not jeopardize government benefits. CCT is economical and is current on government rules and reporting requirements. There is no minimum or maximum amount required to fund the trust. The Board of Directors is comprised of parents of children with disabilities, who are sensitive to the needs of people with disabilities. The Trust Company of Virginia, a licensed and bonded investment corporation, acts as Trustee and invests the funds. The process for requesting a disbursement is efficient and responsive. CCT will continue in perpetuity and provides the family member(s) who are setting up the trust the opportunity to provide information regarding their goals for the trust. Contact Joanne Marcus, MSW, Executive Director, at (804)-740-6930; toll free outside of Richmond at (888) 241-6039 or visit www.commonwealthcommunitytrust.org for more information.

Juvenile Justice

(Cont'd. from P. 1)

correctional facilities, advocacy organizations, state agencies and private professionals serving youth at the University of Richmond School of Law. An executive summary and full report of the findings are available on the PEATC website at www.peatc.org.

“From the time I walked into Tyler Haynes Commons at the University of Richmond to the time I left, I felt great pride in being associated with an organization such as PEATC. It was obvious that PEATC is a leading organization in advocacy activities for children and youth with disabilities.”

Pat Brown Glover
PEATC Board Member

Juvenile Justice Summit II

On March 7 of this year, PEATC partnered with other disability advocacy organizations, juvenile justice professionals, the public defenders office and other concerned parents and educators to hold its second annual Juvenile Justice Summit at the University of Richmond. With the theme: “Education vs. Incarceration: Taking Action to Help Our Children Learn,” attendees developed action plans for future impact after participating in discussions about relevant topics like: the American Bar Association’s Assessment of Juvenile Defender Services in Virginia; Minority Overrepresentation in the Juvenile Justice System; Improving School Retention vs. Push-out Strategies; Effective Legal Representation for Students with Disabilities; the Juvenile Death Penalty and a Special Initiative to Improve Educational Outcomes for Children in the Foster Care and Juvenile Justice Systems. Congressman

Robert C. “Bobby” Scott gave a powerful keynote luncheon address on “The Impact of Injustice on Minorities and Youth with Disabilities.”

Juvenile Justice Summit III, to be held in the Spring of 2004, will focus on exploring effective educational strategies for improving student retention, reducing suspension and expulsion, expanding transition services and increasing assessment and disability training for juvenile justice professionals in corrections, probation, social services and law enforcement.

Cherie’s Corner

(Cont’d. from P. 2)

Committee made up of representatives of both the House and Senate. After this committee agrees on a combined bill, it goes back to both houses for enactment.

Ultimately it will be members of the Congress who determine what is in the next IDEA. While there are some exceptionally well informed Congressmen and Senators, many others are not aware of how important IDEA is for students with disabilities and the parents, teachers, and others who care about them. It doesn’t matter if you agree with me, the American Association of School Administrators, disability advocates,

PEATC is also developing training and workshops for parents and professionals, including teachers, correctional personnel, school resource officers and law enforcement officers that focus on understanding how the Juvenile Justice System works and how the system professionals can better understand how to work effectively with children with disabilities. For further information on our Juvenile Justice Initiatives, please call Pierre Ames at 804-819-1999 or Bellen Joyner at 703-923-0010.

or the Council for Exceptional Children. There are decisionmakers who need to hear from you so that they can make their best decisions that will affect the future of special education. To find out more about action in the House and Senate on IDEA, visit some sites of these organizations so that you can be well-informed and weigh in on this important legislation.

Informative Websites

To read text, track the bills, find out about House and Senate members, go to the Library of Congress legislative information search engine, <http://thomas.loc.gov/>

- Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund Rapid Response Network www.dredf.org
- Council for Exceptional Children -- www.cec.sped.org
- Council of Chief State School Officers -- www.ccsso.org/federal_programs/IDEA/index.cfm
- National Association of State Directors of Special Education -- www.nasds.org
- National Association of Protection and Advocacy -- <http://napas.org>

Frequently Asked Questions in Special Education

New Standards to Qualify for a High School Diploma

by Daaiyah Rashid

“Since so many of you have questions about verified credits and modified diplomas, we’ve dedicated FAQ pages toward clarifying the issues. If you are a student or the parent of a student who is transitioning from high school, looking to receive a standard diploma, who did well in the class, but is having difficulty passing the Standards of Learning (SOL) tests, there may be additional help available for you. Recently, the state department of education released new “GUIDELINES FOR LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS TO AWARD VERIFIED CREDITS FOR THE STANDARD DIPLOMA TO TRANSITION STUDENTS.” Although we still have questions, here’s what we learned.”

Background Information

Under the Standards of Accreditation, students in the Classes of 2004-06 must earn two verified credits in English (reading and writing) and four verified credits in subjects of the student’s own selection in order to earn the Standard Diploma. Up to now, students had to pass the SOL test for a course in order to earn a verified credit. The new guidelines offer alternative means for obtaining verified credits.

School boards have more choices about how they can award verified credits in science and history/ social sciences to fulfill the requirement of four (4) verified credits of the student’s own selection. Students can only earn verified credits in English or math by passing the high school SOL tests (or approved substitute tests) in reading, writing and mathematics. A list of the substitute tests approved by the Board is found in Attachment A.

General Eligibility

To be eligible to earn locally awarded verified credits in science or history/social science under these guidelines, a student must:

- Enter the ninth grade for the first time in school years 2000-2001, 2001-2002, or 2002-2003.
- Pass the high school course, but fail the related SOL after remediation and retake with a score of 375 or above or fail an approved substitute test, and
- Meet the additional achievement criteria specified below

- Have earned fewer than four of the students-selected verified credits required for the Standard Diploma.

Additional Criteria and Guidelines by Subject Area

Science and History/Social Science

The student:

- scores within a 375-399 scale score range on any administration of the Standards of Learning test after taking the test at least twice; **AND**,
- demonstrates achievement in the academic content through an appeal process administered at the local level.

The appeal process will include:

- The appointment by the local school board of a local review panel comprised of at least three educators. Different panels may be appointed for individual schools or groups of schools at the local school board’s discretion.
- The local review panel will review information that provides evidence of the student’s achievement of adequate knowledge of the Standards of Learning content. The panel shall have discretion in determining the information to be considered and may
(Cont’d. on P. 11)



**Marriott Wardman Park Hotel
Washington, DC
October 12-15, 2003**

Frequently Asked Questions

(Cont'd. from P. 10)

include, but not be limited to, results of classroom assessments, division wide exams, course grades and additional academic assignments (e.g., papers, projects, essay or written questions) as deemed appropriate.

- Based on the evidence reviewed, the local review panel may (a) award the verified credit, (b) deny the verified credit, (c) suggest participation in a remedial program and retesting, or (d) make additional academic assignments as deemed appropriate to determining whether to award the verified credit.

General Provisions for Implementing New Guidelines

- No more than four verified credits may be awarded through this process and these guidelines may not be used to award verified credits for the Advanced Diploma.
- The award of verified credits under these guidelines will not be used to recalculate a school's accreditation rating.
- Local school boards shall adopt policies that specify local procedures for implementing these guidelines.

Expedited Re-Takes

According to the 2000 Standards of Accreditation 8 VAC 20-131-110, the Board will provide opportunities for students who meet criteria adopted by the Board to have an expedited re-take of an end-of-course SOL test to earn verified credit.

To be eligible for an expedited re-take the student must:

- Need the test for verified credit, and
- Have passed the course associated with the test, and
- One of the following:
 - Failed the test by a scale score of 375-399, OR
 - Had extenuating circumstances that would warrant retesting, OR
 - Did not sit for the regularly scheduled test for legitimate reasons.

Students who fulfill these conditions are not required to retest, but should be given the option. Divisions should

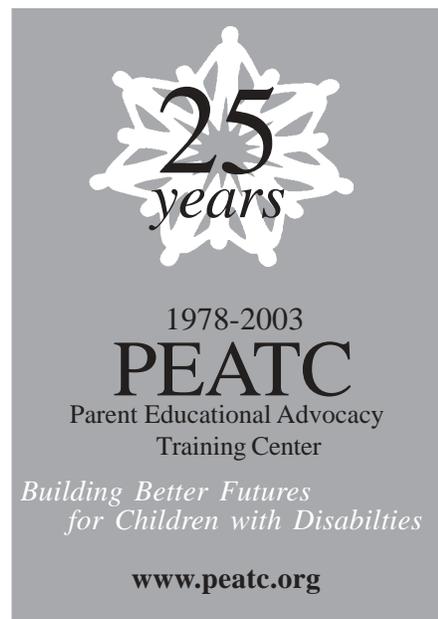
retest students who meet the criteria for expedited re-takes as soon as possible after the pass/fail reports are received. All expedited retests should be completed within four weeks of receiving your student score reports for the written tests and within three weeks for the on-line tests.

Students who retake a test under the expedited re-take provision will receive two score reports for that test—one for the original administration of the test and one for the re-take administration. Both scores will count in the school's pass rate for that test. However, the score from the expedited retake administration will count in the school accreditation rating only if the student passes.

There is no retest available for the end-of-course Writing test. Re-take requests can be made after each regular test administration in the Fall, Spring and Summer. Re-take requests cannot be made after a failed expedited re-take.

More information about graduation requirements is available at your school or on the Virginia Department of Education's website <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/2plus4in2004/2plus4gradinfo.pdf>. For further information about expedited re-takes, please contact Gordon Trump in the Division of Assessment and Reporting at (804) 225-2102 or gtrump@mail.vak123e.3edu.

You may also wish to contact Sylinda Gilchrist, Guidance Specialist in the Office of Special Education and Student Services at: sgilchri@mail.vak12ed.edu who is also an expert on SOL training and compliance issues.



Para Nuestra Comunidad

“Ask Ana”



Ana Avanzini

PEATC Especialista de Información y Colaboración Latina

Queridos Padres:

Por vez primera este espacio en la revista del PEATC Press estará dedicado a responder a las preocupaciones e interrogantes de familias latinas con niños con discapacidades y yo, Ana Avanzini estaré encantada de tener la oportunidad de responder a estos de la mejor manera.

Padres latinos han estado preguntando a PEATC por mucho tiempo, el incrementar las oportunidades para compartir e intercambiar información en español. Como madre latina con niños con discapacidades, yo estoy encantada de invitarlos a compartir con nosotros sus preguntas y preocupaciones en español, así como los difíciles obstáculos que enfrentan tratando de entender cómo conseguir recursos de educación especial para sus niños.

LA BARRERA DEL LENGUAJE

Cuando padres latinos acuden a mí, ellos vienen preocupados, atemorizados, cansados, frustrados y frecuentemente sin esperanza, sintiéndose que nadie puede ayudar a su niño(a) con necesidades especiales. Mi rol es siempre

escuchar a los padres durante éstos momentos difíciles y luego ayudarlos a encontrar soluciones juntos. Como un padre latino con hijos con discapacidades, Yo sé cuán confortable puede ser hablar en nuestro propio idioma, que para mí es el español. PEATC puede ahora ofrecer éste confort y apoyo a los padres latinos, para que expresen sus sentimientos y preocupaciones en su propio idioma y para que puedan recibir respuestas positivas así como alentadoras. Para mí es realmente muy inspirador cada vez que veo emerger una sonrisa de los labios de estos padres y sus ojos muestran una nueva esperanza y ellos empiezan a sentirse fuertes otra vez.

Así cuando Uds. estén sintiendo que: “la maestra nunca los escucha, la escuela no toma en cuenta las necesidades especiales de mi niño(a), o las escuelas hicieron sus decisiones en las reuniones de IEP sin darnos la oportunidad para expresar nuestras preocupaciones, por favor recuerde que PEATC está aquí para escucharlo y ayudarlo a hacer la diferencia en la vida de su niño(a) fortaleciéndolos a Uds. con destrezas para construir relaciones más exitosas con las escuelas y los profesionales quienes sirven a su niño(a).

“PREGUNTE a Ana”

Ahora, Uds. pueden “Preguntar a Ana” alguna cosa que les preocupa, escribiéndome o enviándome un correo electrónico a AskAna@peatc.org.

Compartiendo sus preocupaciones a través del periódico (anónimamente, por supuesto) nosotros podemos hacer que las voces de los padres latinos sean escuchadas, las

necesidades de sus niños evaluadas y fortalecerlos a Uds. como padres para que empiecen a ser miembros importantes y activos de las reuniones de IEP con sus derechos respetados, sus preocupaciones escuchadas y sus decisiones y votos tomados en consideración real.

PEATC ofrece a todos los padres, entrenamientos y talleres en inglés y español, sobre qué conocimientos son necesarios para entender el proceso de la educación especial y participar activamente en las reuniones donde decisiones sobre el futuro de su niño(a) son hechos. También sé que para algunos de nosotros, (padres latinos) “la participación en la educación de nuestro niño(a) “ es un concepto nuevo porque venimos de una cultura donde nosotros, (los padres) delegamos la responsabilidad de la educación de nuestros niños a los maestros. En América, las cosas son completamente diferentes donde se espera que los padres participen activamente en la educación de su niño(a). Esta activa participación demanda preparación y conocimiento de parte de los padres y esto es precisamente lo que PEATC ha ofrecido a los padres por más de 25 años!

Por favor escríbame o envíeme su correo electrónico a AskAna@peatc.org. o visite la página del web en www.peatc.org y presione el teclado en **Bienvenidos** para mayor información sobre programas, y materiales de servicios de educación especial de PEATC- todo en español. Hasta pronto!

Sinceramente
Ana Avanzini

Latino Corner

“Ask Ana”

Dear Parents:

For the first time ever, the PEATC Press is dedicating this space to addressing the questions and concerns of Latino families of children with disabilities; and I, Ana Avanzini am delighted to have the opportunity to try and address them as best I can.

Latino parents have been asking PEATC for sometime now for increased opportunities to share and exchange information in Spanish. As a Latino parent of two children with disabilities, I am pleased to invite you to share, in Spanish, with us your questions and concerns regarding your children, and the difficult challenges you face trying to understand how to get special education resources for your children.

THE LANGUAGE BARRIER

When Latino parents call me on the Spanish line or come in to see me at PEATC, they come to me concerned, worried, tired, and frustrated, often without hope, feeling that no one can help them find solutions for their child's special needs. My role is always to listen to the parents during these difficult moments, and then to help work at finding solutions together. As a Latino parent of children with disabilities, I know how comforting it can be to speak to someone in my own native language, which for me is Spanish. In expanding our outreach services to the Latino community, PEATC can now offer

this comfort and support to Latino parents who feel better if they can express their feelings and concerns in their own language and when they can receive positive and hopeful responses, as well. It is truly inspiring to me every time I see a smile emerge from the lips of these parents as their eyes show a new sense of hope and they begin to feel strong again.

So when you're feeling like, "The teacher never listens to us, the school doesn't take care of my child's special needs, or the schools made the decisions for us in the IEP meetings without giving us an opportunity to express out concerns, please remember that PEATC is here to listen and help you make a difference in your child's life by empowering you with skills to build more successful partnerships with the schools and professionals serving your child.

“ASK Ana”

Now, you can “Ask Ana” anything you have concerns about. by writing or sending an email to me at AskAna@peatc.org. By sharing concerns through the newsletter (anonymously, of course) we can make Latino parents' voices heard, your children's needs evaluated and empower you as parents to become important and active members of the IEP meetings with your rights respected, your concerns listened to, and your decisions and votes taken into real consideration.

PEATC offers all parents, including Latino parents, training and workshops in English and Spanish, on what knowledge is necessary to understand the process of special education and to participate actively in meetings where decisions about your child's future are made. I also know that for some of you Latino parents “the participation in your child's education” is a new concept because you come from a culture where parents delegate the responsibility of educating their children to the teachers.” In America, things are quite different where parents are expected to actively participate in the education of their child. This active participation demands preparation and knowledge on the part of the parents and this is precisely what PEATC has offered to parents for 25 years!

*Please write or email me at: AskAna@peatc.org or visit the PEATC website at www.peatc.org and click on **Bienvenidos** for lots more information about PEATC programs and services materials on special education – all in Spanish. Ciao!*

Sinceramente
Ana Avanzini
PEATC Latino Outreach
Information Specialist

PEATC *at Work*



*PEATC fundraising consultant **Edith Billups** poses with **Antwone Fisher**.*



*Ana, Barbara and former IT Coordinator **Tony Trott** attend workshop session.*



PEATC hosts Antwone Fisher VIP Reception and Screening with Motion Picture Association of America to kick-off 25th Anniversary serving Children with Disabilities. (l-r) Bob Rogers of Chesapeake Center, event sponsor, Antwone Fisher, Daniel Domench, Fairfax County Superintendent, Cherie Takemoto, PEATC Exec. Dir. and PEATC Board Member Patricia Rogers, also from Chesapeake Center.



*JJ Summit Coordinator **Pierre Ames** thanks Richmond Vice Mayor **Delores McQuinn** for participation.*

Parent Centers, Etc.

Virginia Offers SOL Appeals for Classes of '04 - '06

by Christina A. Samuels, Washington Post Staff Writer, (reprinted from orig. July 26, 2003 article)

Rising ninth, 10th and 11th graders who narrowly fail their science and history Standards of Learning tests will have other ways to earn the credits they need to graduate.

The latest change in the Virginia SOL guidelines, approved unanimously yesterday by the state Board of Education, creates a limited appeal process for the classes of 2004, 2005 and 2006, the first three in which students will have to pass at least six end-of-course SOL tests to receive their diplomas.

The board decided that some exceptions should be created for those so-called transitional students because they received much of their schooling before the SOLs existed.

“By the time the SOLs really got underway, these kids were in late elementary school,” board President Mark C. Christie said. “We’re trying to be fair.”

Since 1998, students in grades 3, 5, 8 and high school have taken the tests to see if they have met state curriculum standards in English, math, history/social studies and science. Beginning with the class of 2004, high school students must pass a certain number of tests to graduate.

A passing score is 400. Under the latest revision, transitional students who score 375 to 399 on a science or history SOL test can appeal to the school district for the credit they

would have received for passing the test. Students must take the test at least twice before appealing and must pass the course. Each school district will form a panel to review students’ course work to determine if credit is deserved.

Yesterday’s change joins an SOL revision already made for the three transitional classes. Those students must earn a credit in English reading, one in writing and four in subjects of their choosing. Beginning with the class of 2007, however, students will have to earn six credits for a standard diploma or nine for an advanced diploma, and at least one of those credits must be in math.

Virginia Parent Centers

Parent centers offer information, assistance, referrals and workshops to parents, volunteers and educators. For additional information on VA, MD and WVA Centers, please visit our website at www.peatc.org or call us at 703-923-0010.

State Team: Judy Hudgins	800/422-2083	Giles Co.	540/626-7287	Poquoson	757/868-7564
		Goochland Co.	804/556-4867	Portsmouth	757/393-8791
		Greene Co.	434/975-9400	Powhatan Co.	804/598-3034
Albemarle Co./ Charlottesville	434/975-9400	Hampton	757/896-7623	Prince George Co.	804/733-2698
Alexandria	703/706-4552	Hanover Co.	804/365-4596	Prince William Co.	703/791-8846
Allegheny Co./ Covington	540/863-1621	Henrico Co.	804/343-6523	Pulaski Co.	540/643-0204
Arlington Co.	703/228-7239	Henry Co.	540/632-7248	Radford City	540/731-3679
Bedford Co.	540/587-8990	Hopewell	804/541-6443	Roanoke City	540/853-2089
Brunswick Co.	434/848-2157	King George Co.	540/775-0589	Roanoke Co.	540/772-2161
Caroline Co.	804/633-7083	Lexington/Buena Vista/Rockbridge Co.	540/464-8560	Russell Co.	540/889-6500
Chesapeake	757/482-5923	Loudoun Co.	703/771-6765	Salem	540/389-0130
Chesterfield Co.	804/743-3703	Lynchburg	434/522-3737	Smyth Co.	540/783-4183
Colonial Heights	804/524-3452	Madison Co.	540/923-4716	Spotsylvania Co.	540/582-3616
Culpepper Co.	540/829-2108	Montgomery Co.	540/381-6175	Stafford Co.	540/658-6448
Dinwiddie Co.	804/861-4563	Nelson Co.	434/975-9400	Suffolk Co.	757/925-5579
Fairfax Co.	703/204-3941	Newport News	757/886-7859	Sussex Co.	804/861-4563
Fluvanna Co.	434/975-9400	Norfolk	757/451-4140	VA Beach	757/437-6539
Franklin Co.	540/483-0280	Orange Co.	540/672-9525	Warren Co.	540/635-2171
Frederick Co.	540/535-9006	Page Co.	540/652-1582	Williamsburg/ James City Co.	757/229-1341
Fredericksburg	540/372-1127	Petersburg	804/861-4563	Wise Co.	540/395-5516
		Piedmont Reg.	434/975-9400	York	757/890-1017



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*Building Better Futures
for Children with Disabilities*

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www.peatc.org

THANK YOU FOR 25 YEARS OF SUPPORT

To celebrate our 25th anniversary building better futures for children with disabilities, PEATC has embarked upon a yearlong campaign to raise public awareness of the need for Excellence in Education for children with disabilities. Improved teacher training and utilization of research-based practices will mean better schools and brighter possibilities for *all* children.

Thanks to your ongoing generosity, PEATC has developed new programs and outreach initiatives, including a state-of-the-art, online literacy training program, a collaborative Juvenile Justice Initiative to keep at-risk youth in school instead of behind bars, and bi-lingual and cultural mutuality training projects and materials.

SAY YES! And become a *PEATC Partner for Excellence in Education* today so even more families can realize the hopes and dreams they have for their children with disabilities. Enclosed is my tax-deductible gift of:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ |

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