

*Don't forget to register for College Bound Arkansas to be held June 10-12, 2015 at the University of Central Arkansas campus. Registration is due by May 15 so register now at [www.arkansastransition.com](http://www.arkansastransition.com) !!!!!*

# ATS Newsletter

## Spring 2015

IN THIS ISSUE

## Making Connections

by Bonnie Boaz

Many School Districts have had Transition Fairs with great success this spring! The interest around the state in these types of events is growing strong. Transition Fairs are a way to bring agencies of all types in one place so that students and their families can get the information they need to access their services. Often students and families find they have many more options for work, education and even fun, after high school. Some events had keynote speakers and breakouts—a format that has really been successful when it comes to engaging students and providing relevant information to them. Many transition teams that received the Transition Fair Toolkit at our Cadre meeting found valuable resources in planning their event—from selecting formats, to preparing students for the event, to surveying participants after the event—it's in

the Toolkit! You can find it at our website:

<http://www.arkansastransition.com/images/transition%20ofair%20toolkit.pdf>

Here are some things that some districts have shared with us—if you are thinking about holding a fair in the future, do it as a team and give the team plenty of time to plan for a successful event! Remember what the goal of the event is while you're planning and involve your students! Make sure they know how to engage in meaningful conversation so they can obtain the support they need.

At least 15 Transition Fairs were held around the state (probably more) and many invited other districts to help plan and attend the event.

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## Team Work

by Bonnie Boaz

The Arkansas Team is heading back to Charlotte, NC, for the State Capacity Building Institute, May 5-8! Remember all the work your transition team put in at the Summit, using the online taxonomy tool, assessing the needs for improving transition in your area, prioritizing those needs and building a plan to help improve transition outcomes? We will be doing the same thing on a state level! We know it's a lot of work, but it always pays off! Our team this year will include ATS representatives, IDEA Data and Research representatives, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services representatives (both from the ATP program in the schools, as well as field services), a teacher



representative and special education supervisor representatives. We have worked throughout the year on the plan we developed last year and we are happy to report we are on track! We have selected districts to implement the CIRCES program, we have developed an agency resource guide and we are continuing to research resources to

help families of students with disabilities! We'll keep you posted on what the next plan is and how you might be involved! And while you're thinking about it, how about getting your transition team together to continue to work on your plan! Don't forget to update your progress on the online tool and remember: your Transition Consultant can help you with all of that!

## AITP Summer Agency Connections

by Jennifer Harte

AITP is the Arkansas Interagency Transition Partnership, a group of agency representatives with a vision of a state that respects and values all individuals with and without disabilities who fully participate together in all life experiences. Through coordination and collaboration of these agencies the mission is to improve lifelong outcomes for youth and young adults with disabilities.

For schools to effectively link students to these agencies, they must be aware of these agencies and their services! The AITP recognizes this lack of awareness and the need to provide accurate information to school districts. The AITP Summer Agency Connections will allow up to



three representatives from districts to attend this important meeting and gather information that is critical to students' post-school success. Several agencies, both big and small, will be on hand to present information on services and eligibility requirements and talk one on one with those in attendance. Representatives from three community colleges will be in attendance to discuss postsecondary

education options. We will also have a panel of employers who have previously employed individuals with disabilities to answer any questions you may have. Join us for an excellent opportunity to learn from the agencies first hand! It's a great time to hear from individuals who have benefitted from agency services and to network with other district, as well as agency representatives!

**June 30, 2015**

**Crowne Plaza Hotel**  
201 S. Shackleford Rd.  
Little Rock, AR  
(501) 223-3000

**9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.**

Visit [www.arkansastransition.com](http://www.arkansastransition.com)  
for more information and to  
register!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**STEPSS Training**

June 4-5

**College Bound Arkansas**

June 10-12

**AITP Summer Agency Connections**

June 30

**Video Modeling Workshop with Ryan Kellems**

July 13

**Do It Yourself Study Aids Workshop with Tony Vincent**

July 14

# Transition ALL Year

by Bonnie Boaz

It may seem a little redundant to continually discuss assessments in our newsletter. I debated whether to include anything on assessments in this edition, but it didn't take me long to think about how busy we all are and how we need reminders--and how transition assessments should be going on continually throughout the year, so why not remind everyone again! So here is your reminder: Keep on Assessing! ☺

In the last newsletter we provided a sample of a timeline for providing transition assessments. We hope it was helpful and encouraged you to develop one for your district. If you would like to see other samples, we have those available. We know that it takes effort and maybe a little more time on the front end, but ultimately it will make your job easier! Consider how having an assessment plan in place will help you and the IEP team develop a more effective transition plan for your students! The assessments are what lead you to the student's goals and activities. If you have ever hurriedly had students complete random assessments days before an IEP meeting, then you know how much of a struggle it is to write a solid transition plan for that student.

You probably also know how much work it is to make that plan work toward the student's goals that may or may not be relevant. We acknowledge that some students may not seem as motivated or as concerned as others and those plans are more challenging to develop. That's where we have to think harder and work harder. How can we get them interested, involved, concerned and motivated? We don't have all the answers, but we do have strategies and resources. And we do want to help make your jobs easier. One strategy is to start talking about futures earlier, even middle school. That reminds me we are offering a training around the state this summer entitled, "Preparing Middle School Students As They Consider Going to College." It's a great opportunity to tell middle school teachers of students with disabilities about opportunities for them to get more educated on the upcoming transition of their students. It gives middle school teachers more specific strategies to talk about students' futures in meaningful ways. Check out our calendar in the newsletter or on our website to find dates in your area.

(This article is continued on Page 4)

## BE SURE TO CHECK WITH YOUR LOCAL COOP FOR THE TRANSITION CONSULTANTS' SUMMER TRAININGS!

**Toolkit Training:**

- Explains the components of the transition goals/services piece in the AR IEP
- Provides instruction on how to use the Indicator 13 Checklist to complete Forms 400-402
- Offers updated Student Profile Summary information
- Provides information on select transition assessments
- Assessments samples are provided

**Student Driven Transition Planning:**

- Teaches students to complete their student-direct Summary of Performance
- Students can determine their post-school goals and learn other aspects about themselves.
- Educators use the FREE 8 SDTP lessons to teach students how to actively participate in their transition focused IEP meeting.

**Preparing Middle School Students as they Consider Going to College:**

- For Middle School Special Education teachers
- Includes points of consideration for post-secondary options for students in middle school
- Provides a definition of college and "college and career ready"
- Provides strategies and resources for areas of career exploration, goal-setting and self-determination

Check our calendar [HERE](#) for specific dates!

## Transition ALL Year (Continued)

by Bonnie Boaz

And speaking of talking about students' futures, consider another training we are offering, "Student-Directed Transition Planning," . Who doesn't love a FREE curriculum with FREE training?! Who doesn't love a totally scripted, packed with great lessons, assessments, and materials, designed to get students involved in the transition process and a completed Summary of Performance at the end, kind of curriculum?!! It's easy to implement and the entire goal of the curriculum is one we should all have and work

toward—getting students involved in the planning of their own futures! We highly recommend this training and encourage you to attend and try the curriculum.

Finally, if you are brand new to writing transition plans, or perhaps you just need a refresher, we invite you to check out the dates and locations of our "Transition Toolkit" training. We spend a lot of time reviewing the requirements of meeting Indicator 13 (a transition related indicator that every state reports on annually). We talk about

assessments and this year we have added a new component that will provide you with tools to enhance the assessment process and show evidence of progress/completion of the activities in your students' transition plans. Did we mention our trainings are FREE? We hope you will call on us to help you with transition. We are dedicated to improving outcomes for students with disabilities and we have a lot of knowledge and experience to share! We hope to see you this summer!

## Summing it Up!

by Bonnie Boaz

Hopefully those of you who have seniors this year have been working on their SOPS—Summaries of Performance. This is the tool that the you (and the student) work on to summarize information about their disability, their post-secondary goals, levels of performance in different areas and what is recommended for them in regards to assistive technology and other types of support, so they will succeed. Most of the information is easily located within the transition plan and the IEP, but the SOP brings it together and is a great way to help students see where they are performing and what they need to keep moving toward their goals. When the SOP is completed with the student's input, it can present opportunities for many meaningful discussions. Make sure you understand the purpose and the required content areas for the SOP. Keep a copy on file as documentation of its completion (we have also heard many teachers say that students come back to get a copy). If you want to give your students some extra help for when they present the SOP to the post school agency, go to our website and customize the "Letter to Accompany the SOP," then print it out on your school letterhead. It's a great way to help students introduce themselves and include their strengths and needs for support! You will also want to check out one of our summer trainings, "Student-Directed Transition Planning." It's a FREE curriculum that will help your students and you develop a great SOP!

# Is it your district's year to be surveyed for Indicator 14?

by Bonnie Boaz

What do you know about the Post School Outcomes survey? Do you know that your district may be one of the districts whose graduated students (from 2013-14 school year) might be surveyed this year?

The PSO Survey happens every year. Every year each state must report on Indicator 14, which is the "percent of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school, and were: A. Enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school. B. Enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school. C. Enrolled in higher education or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment within one year of leaving high school". (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B) Districts are on a six year cycle and all students who

graduated with an IEP the previous year are attempted to be contacted by phone and asked a series of questions about what they are currently doing. To find out if your district's students who graduated last year will be surveyed in the next couple of months, go to this link: [https://arksped.k12.ar.us/documents/data\\_n\\_research/publicReporting/ARIindicator14samplingplanfor2014-2019.pdf](https://arksped.k12.ar.us/documents/data_n_research/publicReporting/ARIindicator14samplingplanfor2014-2019.pdf). This is basically a way to find out what is working and what might not be working. It is a way to evaluate what we are all doing and see how it helps our students reach their goals after high school. You can find the actual survey by going to the last two pages of the State Performance Plan on the Special Education website: <https://arksped.k12.ar.us/documents/policy/ar-spp-2014b.pdf> We also have a flyer on our website that you can use to help educate your parents and students so they are aware of the

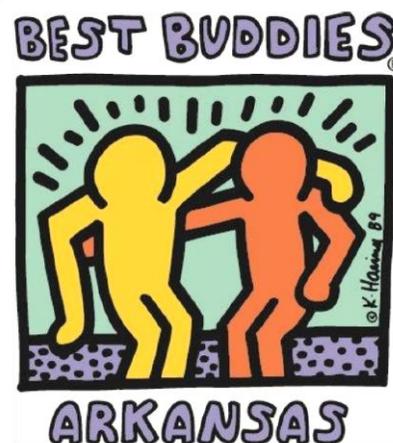
importance of the survey and know that it is a legitimate phone call <http://www.arkansastransition.com/images/PSO%20Flyer.pdf>.

Another way we are collecting this data is through a process called, data mining. We are working on agreements with various agencies (like Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Arkansas Workforce Services) so that we can essentially "tap in" to their databases and see if students are working, getting training to work, or getting some form of post-secondary education. We have been working on "perfecting" the data mining process as the returns are much better!

It's important to share this information with parents and students, so please send the information to parents at the appropriate time and include a discussion at your transition meetings. Outcomes matter!

## Agency Spotlight: Best Buddies Arkansas

Founded in 1989 by Anthony Kennedy Shriver, Best Buddies International is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit that has been spreading the mission of inclusion for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) all over the world. Best Buddies officially launched in Arkansas in November, 2014. Since then we have been working hard to create opportunities for leadership development and one-to-one friendships for individuals with IDD. We currently have eight school and college friendship chapters in Arkansas and are expanding quickly. Best Buddies chapters help build friendships between people with and without IDD, offering social mentoring while improving the quality of life and level of inclusion for a population that is often isolated and excluded. Best Buddies Arkansas has plans to implement our Jobs, Citizens and e-Buddies programs in the future once funds are raised. We firmly believe that all individuals with have the right to know what authentic friendship feels like and we want to continue to break down barriers that sometimes isolate people with IDD. Best Buddies Arkansas employs dedicated staff and enthusiastic volunteers to help facilitate this mission. Please visit our state website at this link: <http://www.bestbuddiesarkansas.org> and find out how you can get involved. For more information, contact: Dr. Angela Kremers, State Director [angelakremers@bestbuddies.org](mailto:angelakremers@bestbuddies.org).



# Transition Fair Highlights

Participation ranged from a few students and parents attending to over 150 students attending.

- 79% were held during school
- 21% were held during evening or weekend hours (in an attempt to get more parents to attend)
- 71% were held on a school campus
- 47% involved students in the planning process

## What some districts said worked with their Transition Fair:

- Flyers were sent home with students
- A notice was posted on the school website
- A newspaper article on the event was published
- Holding breakout sessions
- Student incentives were offered: “drop your lowest grade” if student brought a parent
- Door prizes
- Involving students in setup
- Students asking community for door prizes
- Using student ambassadors to facilitate the event
- Held as an all school event
- Having student entertainment – ICAN dancers and a student playing the flute

## What didn't work:

- Agencies not showing up after committing
- Not having a wide variety of schools (barbering, cosmetology, culinary arts)
- Not all confirmed vendors came
- Not preparing students
- Not having enough time to plan

Across the state, districts hosted a variety of transition fairs. Magnolia High School hosted the Transition/Career Fair for Columbia County High Schools March 4. The fair had vendors, breakout sessions for students to attend and a moving keynote from a former Arkansas student, Wesley Willson. He spoke of his ability to go on to college and obtain not only a Bachelor 's degree, but also a Master 's degree! He is quite successful and gave students a great vision of what you can do when you work hard to reach your goals! The team worked diligently with the community to get participants, door prizes, and lunch for all who attended! They all worked hard and it was a great success!

J.A. Fair High School in Little Rock took a different approach this year as they invited the ENTIRE student body to their Career/Transition Fair! They incorporated the use of Student



Tom Whittaker talks to students at the Clinton / Southside Bee Branch / Shirley Transition Fair.



A representative of a cosmetology program speaks to an interested student.

Ambassadors to help greet guests, set up booths, facilitate presentations and ensure that all knew where they were going. They were instrumental in the success of the fair which had several breakout sessions going in classrooms and vendors in the gym. They were also able to obtain the Workforce Services Mobile Unit with a specialist who worked with students to gain access to all kinds of employment information, resources and tools! A keynote from Craig O'Neill was most inspiring and got students pumped for the day!

Southside High School in Bee Branch, AR, hosted a county fair for all the districts in Van Buren County this year. Special Education teacher, George Knapp, stated, "We've been working at better connecting our students with the post school resources they'll need, and we're doing a better job of it each year; the fair is part of that effort. The transition fair really has gotten bigger and better each year." This year was especially big as special education supervisor, Deb Swink, was able to get, Tom Whittaker, to come and speak about reaching your dreams. If you have ever heard Tom speak, you know there is no one better to talk about struggling to reach your dreams, and the triumph that follows when you do!

We commend all of you who worked hard to share the resources and agency information with your students and their families! Keep up the great work! Let's see more fairs in 2015-2016!!! Please send your transition fair dates to Jennifer Harte ([jennifer.harte@arkansas.gov](mailto:jennifer.harte@arkansas.gov)) as soon as they're set so we can post them on our website!

Do you have a student with a success story that you would like to share?

Send it to Jennifer Harte at [jennifer.harte@arkansas.gov](mailto:jennifer.harte@arkansas.gov) and we will include it in our next newsletter!!