



# Arkansas Transition Services Newsletter

October 8, 2014

## Meet our new Transition Consultants!

### Lisa Washington

### Jennifer Williams

Lisa Washington has been in the classroom for about 14 years teaching students with exceptional needs at the Pre-K, junior/senior high and collegiate levels. She has also worked in the post-secondary environment as an academic advisor at Ouachita Baptist University's TRiO Upward Bound Scholarship Program. Education runs in her family – her father served in many positions from a social studies teacher to the ombudsman for the Little Rock School District and her godmother was Secretary of the US Department of Education's Regional Representative for the New England States (appointed by then President Clinton). Lisa has three biological children and one adoptive child who has exceptional needs. Lisa is the consultant for the following coop areas: Dawson, DeQueen/Mena and SouthWest. You can reach Lisa at the Dawson Education Service Coop at 501-246-3077.

Jennifer Williams is entering her twenty-first year as an educator. She has worked in variety of settings involving students with special needs from preschool to high school. She was raised in Marked Tree, Arkansas and attended college at Arkansas State University. Jennifer is married and has one child. In her spare time she enjoys going to flea markets, refurbishing old furniture, traveling to car shows with her husband, and watching her son coach high school basketball. She is looking forward to working as the transition consultant for the Crowley's Ridge Educational Services Co-op, Great Rivers Educational Co-op, and Northeast Arkansas Educational Co-op areas! You can reach Jennifer at the Crowley's Ridge Education Service Coop at 870-578-5426.



### Upcoming Events

Please contact your local Transition Consultant to get more information.

Arkansas – CEC Pre-Conference and Conference  
November 12-14

First Cadre Meeting  
December 9-10

Second Cadre Meeting  
February (TBA)

### Survey

Please copy the following question in an email and send your response to [jennifer.harte@arkansas.gov](mailto:jennifer.harte@arkansas.gov)

**We are conducting a survey, and your response would be appreciated!**  
**When providing transition assessments, when do you typically begin the process?**  
 A. At the beginning of the year and all throughout the year  
 B. Beginning of the second semester  
 C. 1-2 weeks before annual reviews  
 D. Other

If your email has changed or you would like to be added to the distribution list, please send your name, email address, and school district/agency info to: [jennifer.harte@arkansas.gov](mailto:jennifer.harte@arkansas.gov)

## Let's talk about **ME!**

By: Karen Randolph

In our last newsletter we challenged you to get your students involved in their transition planning by using the Transition Driven Annual Review approach. We discussed the importance of getting students, parents, and if needed agencies to participate in the transition process. In order for students to participate in their Annual IEP meeting we need to prepare them with the necessary skills to accomplish this task. One approach is giving the students the opportunity to practice skills that will help facilitate their independence, their ability to overcome obstacles, and their capability to self-advocate for themselves. Choosing the right curriculum will assist students in learning more about their disability, rights, goals, and accommodations. There are a variety of Transition Curriculums on the market today, which are helpful in this process. One that is free and on line is "Me! Lessons in Self-Advocacy," which can be found at the following website: <http://www.ou.edu/content/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow/tranition-education-materials/me-lessons-for-teaching-self-awareness-and-self-advocacy.html>

This curriculum was developed to assist in teaching students essential transition skills. Many schools in Arkansas are currently implementing this curriculum. There are ten units which cover topics related to Special Education, IEP, Rights and Responsibilities, Self-Awareness and Advocating for needs in and after high school. The curriculum is aligned to the Common Core Standards from 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade. All materials that are needed for this curriculum are found



online at the previously mentioned website-- from activity sheets, PowerPoints, to a variety of websites. The curriculum is teacher and student friendly, giving the objectives and materials needed for teacher and student, as well as student evaluation and extended activities. There are lesson openings and closures, scenarios with discussion points for the teacher and students, as well a script the teacher can follow to cover important points.

Answer sheets are also provided to the teacher, so there is no need to research to find the answers! One activity the students enjoy is creating the ME! Book. This activity includes the ME! Book instructions and a table of content for the teacher. It is a portfolio for the students to show their work, evaluate their performance, and to see if they have met their goals. This activity also allows students to be creative and show their organizational skills.

Students who have participated in this curriculum are better prepared to join in at their Annual IEP meeting and to discuss their transition needs. One student after learning about his disabilities and his strengths and needs, discovered that through the IEP process, he and his IEP team would discuss accommodations and activities that will be made in the classroom. You could see the smile and relief on

his face as he realized he did have a voice and a purpose in having an IEP! In his eyes it was no longer an embarrassment to attend the special education class, but a way to accomplish his goals and dreams. I challenge you this year to investigate this curriculum by clicking on the above link and downloading the curriculum. If you are interested in learning more about the Me! Lessons in Self-Advocacy, please contact your Transition Consultant.

### Heading to the Summit?! Review these tips and ideas for more meaningful team planning:

- Review current transition team plan
- Look at strategies that are working for your team
- Consider barriers to success in achieving team goals; brainstorm alternatives
- Hold at least one Pre-Summit transition team meeting.
- Ensure team includes appropriate members for your community
- Fill in gaps, if any, for team member
- Review all data resources and select those appropriate for your team
- Ask for assistance if your team needs help in locating data
- Bring laptop and all relevant team materials
- Hold introductory team meeting for any new members
- Ask your transition consultant to come and give an overview on the Summit and the Taxonomy on Transition
- Make Arkansas Transition Services aware of any changes of your team's registered attendees

## Arkansas Transition Summit

We are looking forward to the 2014 Arkansas Transition Services Summit!!! The response to the Summit has been tremendous, forcing us to end registration as we reached maximum capacity weeks before the Summit! If you are a member of one of the 55 teams attending the Summit this year, you are in for some hard work, great sessions and networking opportunities, and hopefully some fun mixed in there as well! This year our focus is on Student-Focused Planning and we will be working through the Taxonomy for

Transition Programming Tool in that area. It will be a way to look at the great things taking place in our districts, as well as a way to look at other ways to enhance our programs and improve outcomes for our students! We hope that during this time your team is committed to a plan that includes input from everyone with expectations of some great outputs! We can't think of a better group of people to come together to participate in planning for students than special educators, counselors, administrators, parents, students, agency personnel and members of

the community! We hope you are inspired by the teachers who will receive the DCDT Award for their transition programs at our Meet and Greet informal gathering at the Embassy Suites October 21, from 5:00p.m. – 7:00 p.m. We'll have more inspiring stories at the Opening Session, Wednesday at 8:30 a.m. when we share success stories of students from a few Arkansas schools! We look forward to seeing all of you and hope the upcoming two days help your team develop plans that allow your student to reach their goals!

## Transition Teams & Your School

By: Carrie Tuttle

As a Transition Consultant I am asked many times in a year why Arkansas Transition Services encourages schools to form transition teams. It's a fair enough question! We have found that schools are able to accomplish more in the area of transition if everyone at the school is working for the same common purpose. If the entire school has a plan for where they want to see transition within their community go, it is more likely to happen.

Schools that have formed transition teams usually have greater buy in from their school administration and community for what Special Education is trying to accomplish for their students. With multiple people having ownership of the process you also spread the responsibility for activities occurring. Transition Teams also help in getting a fuller plan for what will occur within a school and decreases repetition or failure to

access potential programs and services. The Team has the ability to create school policy on when transition related activities and events will occur. This increases exposure for all students instead of it being dependent on who their folder holder is or which teachers have them in class. Currently we have Transition Teams that are implementing programs such as ME!, ME! In the Middle School, Student-Directed Transition Planning, Transition Fairs, and Transition Nights for parents.

Transition Team meetings afford an opportunity for increased communication among teachers, administrators, and community agencies and programs. It allows for time to create comprehensive plans for transition development and planning of transition events. Having a diverse team can bring varying perspectives, ideas, talents, strengths and resources to the table—all of which can greatly enhance a team and the outcomes of the team plan. Team meetings can also be a time where

community based programs can come and share about their programs and services and coordinate visits with students and parents. Twice a year, ATS invites two members from local teams to register for our Cadre meetings. On a first-come, first-serve basis teams attend a two day meeting where they can continue to work on their plan, get professional development, gain resources, learn about various agency programs and network among other professionals in the field.

The best part of having a Transition Team is that you get to determine what you need it to be for your school or school district. If you are interested in starting a Transition Team at your school, do not hesitate to contact your Transition Consultant for support. We will be happy to assist in the initial development of your team and then support you in your efforts.