

# GV TRANSITIONS

*Future Mapping: Strategies For Success In The Great Valley School District and Beyond*

Volume I, Issue 1

Fall 2001

## Introducing ... *GV Transitions A* Newsletter For Parents of Secondary Students With Disabilities In Grades Six Through Twelve

We are pleased to present you with the inaugural issue of *GV Transitions* and to introduce our theme “*Future Mapping – Strategies For Success In the Great Valley School District and Beyond.*” *GV Transitions* is planned for publication three times each year. It is designed to serve parents, students, and teachers. The goal is to provide information and resources supporting the transition process. Within each issue of *GV Transitions*, you will notice that a wide variety of resources will be highlighted. This is because the transition process addresses the needs of students with disabilities with differing exceptionalities.

What you may ask is transition? Transition is a *process*, which may be viewed as a partnership involving parents, school, and community working together in support of the career and educational development, and / or community life planning for students with disabilities. In this context, transition may also be considered “an individual blueprint that assists students in moving from secondary to post-secondary environments.”

The transition process will differ from student to student based upon individual needs and preferences. The transition process begins at age 14 and continues through graduation from high school.

Transition is: “A coordinated set of activities for a student that:

- Is designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities. Post-school activities may include post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment, continuing and

adult education, adult services, independent living, and community participation.

- Is based on the individual student’s needs, taking into account the student’s preferences and interests.
- May include instruction, related services, community experience, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and when appropriate, the acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.”

Resource: The Pennsylvania Training and  
Technical Assistance Network, PDE.  
[www.pattan.k12.pa.us](http://www.pattan.k12.pa.us)

Most importantly, transition in the school is student focused. This means, “active and engaged” student participation in the transition processes beginning in the middle school is essential. The IEP should be driven by the identification of *valued* and *attainable* post-secondary goals.”

## Transition and IDEA Legislation ... It’s The Law!

The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) drives transition planning. The legislation provides students with opportunities to look to the future -- to be involved in planning their own education, to be heard, to voice their interests, preferences, and concerns, and to share in making decisions that directly affect them. At age 14, the IEP contains a “statement of transition service needs.” This statement focuses on the students’ program of study to determine if courses are in line with post-secondary goals. At age 16, the IEP includes a “statement of transition service.” The IEP team looks at services and strategies delivered in a wide range of areas, which may include: academic instruction and support, career awareness, and awareness of post-secondary training opportunities.

## More Introductions ... A New Addition To The GVSD Special Education Department

At the conclusion of the 2000 – 2001 school year, Mrs. Anne S. Morris, M.Ed., was hired as a new secondary counselor / transition coordinator working with the GVSD Special Education Department. Mrs. Morris brings with her 32 years of experience as an educator and counselor in a variety of secondary settings. Most recently, Mrs. Morris served the GVSD as Director of Counseling at Great Valley High School.

Included in Mrs. Morris' resume is volunteer work on the local, state, and national levels. Morris currently serves on the Executive Committee of the Pennsylvania School Counselors Association. She is the chairperson of the PSCA Career and Educational Development Committee. She is also a member of the PHEAA (Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency) Early Access Advisory Committee. Morris is the state coordinator for the American School Counselor Association's Planning For Life project. Locally, Morris is a member of the Chester County Youth Council, the Chester County Occupational Education Advisory Committee, and the Chester County Chamber of Commerce Education Advisory Committee.

Mrs. Morris was recently invited to speak at a meeting of the GVSD Parents of Special Needs and Gifted Students. She offered a PowerPoint presentation titled: *Transitions: Looking At Your Child's Career and Educational Development ... From School To Life.*

## All New! ... GVSD Transition Initiatives Developed For Students, Parents, and Staff

Since the beginning of the school year, several new initiatives have been developed to support students in the transition process. They include:

- ❑ **Graduate Follow-up Survey:** A one, three, and five Year Transition Follow-up Survey for the GVHS Classes of 2000, 1998, and 1996 was developed. The results of the survey will assist the GVSD in developing and enhance programs to address the transition goals of students.
- ❑ **Transition Matrix:** A comprehensive document was developed for teachers, parents, and students to assess future planning strategies available in the GVSD and the community. The matrix will support the development of transition goals for students in grades 6 – 12. It may also serve as the basis of an educational portfolio for students.

- ❑ **Future Planning Inventory:** Recently students in tenth grade completed a Future Planning Inventory. The inventory will be helpful in developing the IEP transition goals for each student.
- ❑ **Career and Educational Data Collection Tool:** This resource was developed for use during interviews with students scheduled for initial evaluations. The goal is to assess career and educational interests and preferences. This assessment serves as a basis for the development of transition goals, if necessary.
- ❑ **PA Career Link Partnership / Workshop:** A partnership was formed with the Chester County Career Link Office. Through the partnership, a special workshop was offered to students in 7<sup>th</sup> Grade and to students in grades 9-12. The guest presenter was **Mr. Doug Schmidt**, Director of the Chester County Career Link. FYI ... the PA Career Link Website may be accessed at [www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us](http://www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us)
- ❑ **Collaborative Educational Access Programs Planned with Middle School Counselors:** Counselors **Mr. Barry Brazunas**, **Dr. Samuel Darby**, and **Mrs. Sandra Gibbons** will be working with us to provide students and parents with information on TAP (PA Tuition Account Program), the PHEAA Early Access Program, and the PHEAA Mentor Program. Information on the PHEAA Mentor program will also be offered to high school students in grades 9 – 11. The PHEAA mentor website may be accessed at [www.pheaamentor.org](http://www.pheaamentor.org)
- ❑ **Collaborative Programs Planned with MS and HS Learning Support Teachers:** We are working with department chairpersons **Mr. Rick Eckel**, **GVHS** and **Mrs. Mandy Larson**, **GVMS** to provide transition services for students. These initiatives will include a variety of career and educational assessment opportunities.
- ❑ **Collaboration with Center For Arts and Technology – Pickering Campus:** A special meeting for parents of 8th grade students with IEP's was conducted on November 29, at CAT-Pickering. The project was offered in conjunction with CAT's Career and Technology Coffee and Dessert Night. Our thanks to **Dr. Ronald Husband**, **Mr. Richard Teifel**, and **Mrs. Carrie Doyle** for providing parents with this outstanding opportunity.

***“Growth is an erratic forward movement  
... two steps forward, one step back.  
Remember that and  
be very gentle with yourself.”***

## ***Parents of Special Needs And Gifted Students Provides Resources And Support***

### **Parent Information Center Sponsored**

The *Parents of Special Needs and Gifted Students*, with the monetary generosity of some of the GVSD PTO's and the hospitality of GVMS, have put together an inspired, comprehensive, and ever-growing information center about special education. The Info Center is on a big cart with wheels and is housed in the office of the library at Great Valley Middle School. The center is available upon request from the librarian. Ask for it and she will literally roll it right to you! There are many new books in the center on learning disabilities and physical challenges, survival guides for parents and children, and good up-to-date books on IEP's, standardized testing, transition and other titles of interest. Many of these books are for reference and others are available for checking out. There are also several binders of *gathered information* on specific subjects such as "The Internet" and "Post-Secondary."

Some of Richard Lavoie's excellent and insightful videos about learning disabilities can be viewed right in the comfort of the library. There are resource pamphlets from local and statewide agencies, information about the special education laws, catalogs and more. Please come and make good use of this wonderful resource. For more information or if you would like to donate books / materials please call **Ms. Victoria O'Neill** at (610) 644-8088 or email [ArtistVO@aol.com](mailto:ArtistVO@aol.com).

*Parents of Special Needs and Gifted Students* is a wonderful and supportive organization, which is available to you throughout the year. The organization holds monthly meetings. Please don't hesitate to attend! You are most welcome!

### **Programs Offered**

#### **January 23, 2002**

7:00 – 9:00 p.m. - District Office Board Room

**Mr. Andrew Faust, Esquire:** *"An Overview of the Changes in Special Education Law – Chapter 14."*

#### **February 12, 2002**

7:00 – 9:00 p.m. – District Office Board Room  
Sharing Session

#### **April 24, 2002**

7:00 – 9:00 p.m. – District Office Board Room  
Sharing Session

#### **May 14, 2002**

7:00 – 9:00 p.m. – District Office Board Room  
**Mrs. Maryann Amici**, Parent Mentor, Chester County Intermediate Unit - *"Family Supports."*

## **Center For Arts And Technology Provides Valuable Educational Options For Students**

Did you know that students graduating from the Center For Arts and Technology (CAT) have the opportunity to "jump start" their career futures, earn advanced credits at various colleges and technical schools, and save time and money continuing their education at those colleges or technical schools? "The jump start is possible because of a process known as articulation. Articulation agreements link CAT with colleges and technical schools that offer their graduates an opportunity to earn advanced credits for course work mastered at CAT. To obtain advanced credit, students must demonstrate their competency. Each articulation agreement spells out the documentation and evaluation process to be followed in awarding advanced credit. A personal recommendation from the course instructor is generally required. When a college or technical school awards advanced credit through an articulation agreement, there is only a small fee charged to record that credit."

All of this is made possible through a national program called "Tech Prep." Tech Prep is designed "to prepare students to enter specific technical fields. A primary goal is to ensure that students leave high school with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to succeed in a high skill, high wage economy. The course of study is designed to combine at least two years of high school with two or more years of post-secondary education. Tech Prep articulation agreements focus on both the academic and technical preparation of students. These agreements require that students take rigorous courses in math, science, and communications in combination with their technical program of study. The goal is for students to make a smooth transition from high school to the next educational level without having to duplicate courses or to take remedial courses.

The following post-secondary institutions are among those having Tech Prep agreements with the CAT's: Delaware Valley College, Harcum Jr. College, Pennsylvania College of Technology, Automotive Training Center, Lincoln Technical Institute, Montgomery County Community College, CHI Institute, Delaware County CC, Harrisburg Area CC, Berks Technical Institute, Central Pennsylvania College, Reading Area CC, and Stevens College of Technology. [www.catpickering.org](http://www.catpickering.org)

***"Each Success Only Buys an Admission Ticket To A More Difficult Problem."***

Henry Kissinger

## Future Mapping ... A Transition Survey: Parent Input Requested

While the heart of the transition process as outlined in IDEA is consideration of each “students’ interests and preferences”, clearly parent input is vital and valued throughout the educational experience. Included with this newsletter is a Parent Transition Survey. Your input will assist your son or daughter in planning for life after high school. The IEP team will consider your input to be valuable in the transition process. The information will be shared with learning support teachers and counselors.

We encourage you to discuss, as appropriate, all or part of the survey with your child, and to talk about your mutual dreams and aspirations. It may be interesting to see if your thoughts for your child’s future parallel your child’s dreams and aspirations. Your discussions may assist your child to begin planning and preparing for the future and to begin to assess what is *possible* and *achievable* for them. Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your consideration.

## Relevant Resources ... Fast Facts!

There are many resources available to parents and students with disabilities as they make the transition from the GVSD to a variety of post-secondary environments. In each issue of *GV Transitions*, we will report on a variety of opportunities for your consideration. These resources are presented with the knowledge that we address families whose students possess widely differing challenges. At the same time, we do not wish to “limit” in any way the possibilities for future growth and success. We also encourage *you* to share resources, which you have found helpful. We appreciate your willingness to share this information with other parents and students.

- ❑ **Going Places:** This resource for parents of middle school students is a wonderful opportunity to receive ongoing information about college and career planning, and financial aid. Information is included with this newsletter for parents of GVMS students and Online at [www.pheaaa.org](http://www.pheaaa.org)
- ❑ **Office Of Vocational Rehabilitation: Employment Services For Persons With Disabilities** – The Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) serves “persons with impairments that present a substantial impediment to employment. Services are provided to individuals who can benefit from and who need services to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain employment.” OVR services address individuals challenged by a number physical or mental impairments including but not limited to: learning disabilities, muscular disease, speech impairment, skeletal and joint disease, and developmental disabilities. In general, OVR services are accessed upon graduation from high school, but contacts with OVR may begin as early as a student’s junior year in high school. The office serving GVSD is located at 1062 East Lancaster Avenue, Rosemont, PA 19010 (610) 525-1810.
- ❑ **Cecil E. Tate Scholarship:** Sponsored by the Chester County Intermediate Unit in memory of Cecil E. Tate, the scholarship is awarded to “deserving special education seniors enrolled in either IU or district-run classes, regardless of exceptionality.” The scholarship deadline is April 5, 2002. Contact Mrs. Morris or the GVHS Counseling Department for an application. Note: References and a transcript required – see your high school counselor!
- ❑ **Chester County Coordinating Council Reference Guide:** Each year the CC Coordinating Council publishes a reference guide for parents and students. A copy of this guide is included in this issue of *GV Transitions*!
- ❑ **Right To Education Task Force:** The Right To Education Taskforce meets monthly at the Chester County Intermediate Unit. The task force was set up to “assist in improving education for all school-age persons with varying exceptionalities” including: learning disabilities, physical handicaps, mental retardation, emotional difficulties, and hearing, visual, speech, and language impairment. Additional information on the task force is included in this newsletter. The GVSD parent representative is Ms. Victoria O’Neill. Contact Ms. O’Neill at [ArtistVO@aol.com](mailto:ArtistVO@aol.com). Additional information is included in this issue of *GV Transitions*!
- ❑ **LD OnLine Report December 2001:** This is a terrific resource offering news about learning disabilities and about the latest events on the LD Online website. Check out: [www.ldonline.org/newsr/dec01\\_newsltr.html](http://www.ldonline.org/newsr/dec01_newsltr.html)
- ❑ **Understanding ADHD – Information for Parents About Attention – Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder:** A brochure published by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Web site – [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)
- ❑ **The College Board – Junior and Senior Year Calendar:** A valuable resource for all students. To print your copy ... check out the College Board website for this and more valuable information on college / career planning. [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

## *Courage Lies In The Heart*

As I encourage my child to PURSUE new ventures,  
I give her the COURAGE to risk failure;  
To fall to the ground and to fly again.

As I encourage my child to LEARN that which is new,  
I give her the COURAGE to be open to new ideas;  
To see the beauty in a world of diversity.

As I encourage my child to EXPLORE the unknown,  
I give her the COURAGE to challenge herself;  
To do what she has never done before.

As I encourage my child to THINK for herself,  
I give her the COURAGE to grow;  
To find the strength to stand behind her  
beliefs.

As I encourage my child to FOLLOW her dreams,  
I give her the COURAGE to know what's in her  
heart and to soar!  
To love life.

Anne S. Morris, 1992 – Written for Ami Hunter Morris.  
Published with Ami's permission.

## Websites Of Interest ...

Source: "World Wide Web Resources for Counseling Children and Adolescents with Disabilities," Professional School Counseling, Volume 2, Number 1, October 1998, The American School Counselor Association

- ❑ **Dyslexia: The Gift**: Online information center dedicated to the positive side of learning disability, as well as to remedial therapies and teaching methods suited to the dyslexic learning style.

[www.dyslexia.com](http://www.dyslexia.com)

- ❑ **On-Line Asperger's Syndrome (AS) Information and Support**: (A.K.A. Asperger's Syndrome Resources) Includes research papers and descriptions about AS, current research projects seeking participants, educational implications, ideas for classroom management, and more.

[www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger/](http://www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger/)

- ❑ **Independence Center**: A mainstreamed, transitional, residential program for young adults (18 – 30) with learning disabilities. Program highlights include training in independent living, social and vocational skills, counseling, and more.

[www.independencecenter.com](http://www.independencecenter.com)

- ❑ **The Arc**: (formerly Association for Retarded Citizens of the United States) a voluntary organization committed to the welfare of all children and adults with mental retardation and their families.

[www.thearc.org](http://www.thearc.org)

- ❑ **Kids Together, Inc.**: The mission statement of this nonprofit organization is "To promote inclusive communities where all people belong." The site is designed to provide helpful information and resources to enhance the quality of life for children and adults with disabilities and for communities as a whole.

[www.kidstogether.org](http://www.kidstogether.org)

- ❑ **National Attention Deficit Disorder Association**: Excellent resource for students and families.

[www.add.org](http://www.add.org)

- ❑ **Organizations and Associations Worldwide for Down Syndrome**: Includes contact information and links to worldwide associations for Down Syndrome.

[www.downsyndrome.com](http://www.downsyndrome.com)

- ❑ **Kids Camps. Com**: "The Internet's most comprehensive directory of camps and summer experiences." Includes special needs camps in Canada and the U.S.A.

[www.kidscamps.com](http://www.kidscamps.com)

*Happy Holidays  
To One And All!*

*Please Enjoy A Health, Safe, and  
Productive New Year!*

Great Valley School District  
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### **GV Transitions**

Published for parents and teachers of  
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Grades 6 -12

Superintendent:  
Director of Special Education  
GVHS Principal:  
GVMS Principal:  
Editor:

Dr. Rita Jones  
Mrs. Karol Canfield  
Mr. John Fidler  
Dr. Stephen Swymer  
Mrs. Anne S. Morris  
[amorris@gvgsd.org](mailto:amorris@gvgsd.org)

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