



A division of the Council for Exceptional Children

NETWORK

Division on Career Development and Transition

Volume 48, Issue 1

Spring 2025

Inside This Issue

Message from
the President. . . 1

Executive Director
Update 2

Partner Spotlight:
Think Higher—
Think Careers! . . 3

Tips from the
Field: Preparing
Autistic Students
for Postsecondary
Education 4

Policy and Practice
Committee
Spotlight 7

DCDT Award
Nominations . . 9

CEC DEI
Statement 9

Town Halls. . . . 10

Zarrow Institute
Call for Papers. . 11

DCDT WEBSITE
www.dcdt.org

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



I hope this spring newsletter finds warmer weather coming your way as we shrug off the remnants of winter. The year 2025 has been one marked by significant change and uncertainty—and we are only three months in! It is my honor to serve as this year's DCDT president, and I look forward to serving the organization's membership in positive and productive ways. We are enduring a time in our country where special education transition practices are being threatened, from the directive to begin dismantling the federal Department of Education to historic removal and cutting of essential research and personnel preparation grant funding. Collectively, our voices have been made known via the Council for Exceptional Children's Take Action efforts, and we appear to be at the beginning of an ongoing and necessary battle for the students we serve, our profession, and the future of transition research.

In this issue you will find a copy of the recently published Resolution Confirming Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity, and Accessibility from CEC. As a subdivision of CEC, and central to our DCDT mission and vision, we unequivocally agree and believe in the continued dedication towards these fundamental tenets.

Our field is no stranger to advocacy efforts. While the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is entering its 50th year since initially being signed into federal law, transition has only been a legislative mandate since 1990. Prior to 1975, only one in five students with disabilities were included in public school settings. We must continue to protect and push forward legislative efforts for special education services.

We will continue to come together in community to raise our voice for equitable practices, inclusive environments, essential research, and the preservation of the expertise in the Department of Education. Continue to be on the lookout for Call to Action emails that allow you to reach out to legislators via email. If you would like to view current advocacy topics and send an email please visit <https://exceptionalchildren.org/takeaction>.

DCDT Board Welcomes Returning and New Members

I am joined this year by a board of phenomenal DCDT members committed to our field and organization. I want to thank Dr. Al Daviso for his leadership in 2024 as he transitions into the role of past-president. This year we have instituted some exciting changes to our Call for Awards, ensuring funding to attend our annual conference for awardees. If you want to nominate a current DCDT member for one of our awards, please visit the DCDT website for more information and reach out to Al directly at ad39@uakron.edu. Our executive director, Dr. Stacie Dojonovic, is working closely with Dr. Tara Rowe-Frazier, incoming president, in planning an exciting and newly structured 2025 conference in downtown Denver this October. We look forward to connecting and learning from the expertise in our membership. We welcome a new vice-president to the board, Dr. Malarie Deardorff, who will work with me on efforts to engage membership throughout the year and at the annual conference. Last year in Chantilly, Malarie and I hosted a karaoke social event

(continued on page 8)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE: THE POWER OF COLLABORATION IN TRANSITION PLANNING



Greetings, DCDT Members!

Collaboration is the cornerstone of transition planning and essential to delivering high-quality transition services. At the Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT), we are committed to fostering strong partnerships that enhance outcomes for students with disabilities. This year, we are especially excited to announce a collaborative effort with three esteemed CEC divisions—Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities (DADD), Division for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners (DDEL), and Division on Learning Disabilities (DLD)—to offer dynamic preconference sessions at DCDT 2025 in Denver, Colorado!

DCDT 2025 Preconference Sessions – October 8, 2025 (2:00–6:00 PM MT)

These optional sessions (three available for an extra fee of \$75) provide an unparalleled opportunity to engage with experts, gain evidence-based strategies, and collaborate across disciplines to improve transition planning and services.

DDEL Preconference: Culturally Sustaining and Intersectionally Conscious Family Engagement

Families are key partners in transition planning, and this interactive session will explore how to create equitable, culturally sustaining partnerships that honor students' and families' diverse social, linguistic, and cultural assets.

DLD Preconference: Illuminating Pathways for Successful Transitions

Transition planning for students with learning disabilities (LD) requires evidence-based, individualized support. This session will highlight strategies to integrate specialized instruction with transition services, considering the intersectional identities of students (e.g., ADHD, anxiety, giftedness, LGBTQ+ identities, and linguistic diversity) and the changing landscape of higher education disability documentation.

DADD Preconference: It's a Balancing Act—Integrating Academics and Transition for Students with IDD

For students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), the balance between academics and transition plan-

ning is critical. This session will focus on blending inclusive, standards-based academic instruction with essential transition skills such as self-determination, career exploration, and independent living skills.

Why Collaboration Matters in Transition

DCDT's collaborations with CEC divisions strengthen our collective impact, ensuring transition professionals, educators, families, and administrators have the resources and strategies to support ALL students. The intersection of transition services with culturally responsive practices, academic instruction, and specialized interventions highlights the need for cross-disciplinary collaboration—and these preconference sessions are just the beginning!

Whether you are working with students with learning disabilities, culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, or intellectual and developmental disabilities, these sessions will provide practical, research-based strategies you can apply immediately.

Collaboration: More Than Just a Buzzword—It's a Superpower!

Now, more than ever, we need a collective community—a dynamic network of educators, families, transition specialists, employers, and policymakers—to make a meaningful impact in the lives and outcomes of youth with disabilities.

Think of it this way...

Collaboration is like a great recipe—we blend our unique skills and experiences to create something powerful, ensuring that no essential ingredient is left out!

It's like a well-coordinated sports team—each player (educators, related service provider, employers, families) has a role, and when we work together, we score BIG for our students!

It's like a DCDT social in which we dance—sometimes we lead, sometimes we follow, but we're always in step to create seamless, effective transition services!

DCDT believes that to effectively deliver transition services we must:

- ✓ Use research-based, culturally responsive transition practices to enhance collaboration.

(continued on page 3)

(Executive Director Update, continued from page 2)

- ✓ Improve programs, services, and outcomes through intentional teamwork.
- ✓ Resolve conflicts, build consensus, and strengthen support networks.
- ✓ Work across disciplines to increase the effectiveness of transition services.
- ✓ Communicate clearly with educators, families, youth with disabilities, related service providers, administrators, employers, and community partners.
- ✓ Promote active family involvement, especially for culturally and linguistically diverse families.
- ✓ Ensure youth are connected with the right services before high school graduation.

This is not just a to-do list—it's a DCDT members call to action! Are you in? Do you want to improve students' adult life outcomes?

Let's make DCDT 2025 the best year yet by embracing collaboration, connection, and community! We hope you will join us in Denver for DCDT 2025 and be part of this exciting commitment to our CEC division community and collaboration! Together, we can improve the living, learning, and working outcomes of all youth.

See you in Denver!

Stacie Dojonovic
University of Kansas
sdojonovic@ku.edu



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: THINK HIGHER— THINK CAREERS!

Research shows that college programs for students with intellectual disabilities lead to greater employment outcomes upon graduation. This new guidance from the Department of Education clarifies how vocational rehabilitation (VR) funds can be used to cover costs of higher education, and the team at Think College has developed some helpful tools to learn more about VR and employment.

Learn more about the “Think Higher. Think College” resources on employment at <https://thinkcollege.net/think-college-news/think-higher-think-careers>.





TIPS FROM THE FIELD: PREPARING AUTISTIC STUDENTS FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION



Angela Barbour, PhD



Bailey Coker, MSW

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004) mandates that by age 16, students with disabilities (SWDs) receiving an Individualized Education Program (IEP) should begin planning for transition to postsecondary environments through the creation and implementation of an individualized transition plan (ITP) by their multidisciplinary team. Unfortunately, research has shown that this is not being consistently implemented across secondary institutions (Austermann et al., 2023; Greene, 2018; Hughes et al., 2023; LaPoint et al., 2024). There are specific skills and areas of focus that need to be a priority for IEP teams in preparing SWDs, especially those with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), for successful outcomes in postsecondary education. The multidisciplinary team is responsible for facilitating the necessary skills, such as self-advocacy, executive functioning, independent living, and communication, to achieve students' postsecondary goals (Talley et al., 2024).

Necessary Skills for Postsecondary Success

Self-Advocacy

Self-advocacy is the ability of an individual to effectively express their wants and needs (Paradiz et al., 2018). The Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended (2008) is reliant upon self-advocacy as SWDs must self-identify as having a need for disability-related services before receiving accommodations and auxiliary aids (Elias & White, 2017). As such, K–12 schools should work with SWDs, particularly those with autism, on the development of self-advocacy skills. Autistic individuals generally struggle with self-determination skills, especially self-advocacy (Accardo, Bean, et al., 2019; Accardo, Kuder, & Woodruff, 2019; Paradiz et al., 2018;

Santhanam & Wilson, 2024; Scheef et al., 2019). However, these skills are rarely effectively taught, if at all, in high school (Austermann et al., 2023; Bolt et al., 2011; Fleming et al., 2017; Newman & Madaus, 2015). Therefore, it is imperative that these skills are fostered prior to entering postsecondary environments.

Executive Functioning

IEP teams should begin working on executive functioning skills with autistic students from the time they are identified under IDEA, especially if the goal is for the student to enroll in postsecondary education. Executive functioning skills are extremely important in higher education as the environment becomes less structured and coursework becomes more challenging (Sheehan & Iarocci, 2015). Autistic students may struggle with multi-tasking and need additional assistance with sustained attention and executive functioning skills such as time management, prioritization, and following multi-step directions, because they were not effectively taught strategies to mitigate these challenges in high school.

Independent Living

For many autistic individuals, postsecondary education is the first time they have lived on their own without the constant presence and assistance of family. Regrettably, this is an area of transition in which many autistic students lack formal support (Austermann et al., 2023; Lambe et al., 2019). Autistic postsecondary students indicate that they need more preparation and training in this area to live successfully and independently (Austermann et al., 2023), a sentiment that is echoed by many parents of autistic college students (Madaus et al., 2022).

(continued on page 5)

(**Tips from the Field**, continued from page 4)

Communication

Social communication deficits are a primary diagnostic criterion for ASD (American Psychological Association, 2013). Despite this, social-related goals are rarely included in a student's ITP, as evidenced by a review of 322 IEPs for autistic students, where it was found that only 14% included goals pertaining to social skills in the student's ITP; moreover, only 25% of IEPs for students without comorbid IDD included social skills instruction (Hughes et al., 2023). Because this is a known and consistent difficulty among autistic individuals, it should be a more prominent focus of IEP teams in preparing autistic students for postsecondary life.

Involvement in the IEP

Another concern regarding the transition process for SWDs in general, and particularly autistic students, is the lack of consistent participation in IEP meetings by the student. Regardless of whether the student is present in the meetings or not, they are still largely being left out of the conversation (Alverson et al., 2019; Mademtzi et al., 2017; Matthews et al., 2019). This does the student a great disservice as they do not learn or experience how to advocate for themselves and their needs, thus rendering them at a significant disadvantage when they enter college and are responsible for doing just that.

Preparedness of Autistic Students for Postsecondary Education

Autistic college students have considerably higher attrition rates than the general student population (Cage et al., 2020; Petcu et al., 2021). Less than 40% of the autistic students who enter postsecondary education will persist to graduation (Newman et al., 2011), as opposed to nearly 60% of the general student population (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2017). It should be acknowledged that a significant contributing factor to this lack of persistence is the college environment in general, which is not intended for neurodivergent individuals (Hamilton & Petty, 2023). However, an equally significant contributing factor is the lack of adequate preparation for the postsecondary environment by autistic students' secondary support systems. As previously discussed, autistic students are not being taught many of the necessary skills to be successful in college.

In a study conducted by Austermann et al. (2023), autistic college students discussed their transition from high school to college, expressing a lack of robust transition services and their desire to have been given more training on executive functioning skills, additional social opportunities, and greater independence. The participants shared that they had largely been left to figure things out [re: the transition to college] on their own, while only a small number of participants shared that they had received targeted instruction

in these areas (Austermann et al., 2023). In a separate study, parents predominately shared that they held most, if not all, of the responsibility for preparing their autistic child for independent living, fostering executive functioning skills, and social-emotional development (Madaus et al., 2022). They also recommended that secondary schools should teach more independent living, self-determination, executive functioning, and social skills (Madaus et al., 2022). Interviews with college service providers for autistic students indicated that those students who had strong self-advocacy, executive functioning, self-management, self-efficacy, and communication skills were effectively able to navigate their new environment and enjoy academic success, while those without well-developed skills in these areas tended to struggle with the transition (Madaus et al., 2023). In essence, secondary schools are not consistently preparing autistic students for positive postsecondary education outcomes, which is contributing to the lower rates of persistence and retention for autistic students.

Conclusion

Secondary schools' effective implementation of ITPs for autistic students has been shown to be inconsistent (Austermann et al., 2023; Greene, 2018; Hughes et al., 2023). SWDs in general and autistic students in particular are not consistently being equipped with the necessary skills to be successful in postsecondary education, namely self-advocacy, executive functioning, independent living, and social communication (Austermann et al., 2023; Bolt et al., 2011; Fleming et al., 2017; Newman & Madaus, 2015). To counter the low retention and persistence rates of autistic college students, it is vital that secondary school professionals accept accountability for their role in the process and begin to use ITPs as they were intended—to prepare these students for positive postsecondary outcomes. It is also incumbent upon every postsecondary institution of education to deliver specific autism supports to provide access for autistic students in an environment that is designed to exclude them.

References

- Accardo, A. L., Bean, K. M., Cook, B., Gillies, A. E., Edgington, R., Kuder, S. J., & Bomgardner, E. M. (2019). College access, success and equity for students on the autism spectrum. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 49, 4877–4890. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-019-04205-8>
- Accardo, A. L., Kuder, S. J., & Woodruff, J. (2019). Accommodations and support services preferred by college students with autism spectrum disorder. *Autism*, 23(3), 574–583. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362361318760490>
- Alverson, C. Y., Lindstrom, L. E., & Hirano, K. A. (2019). High school to college: Transition experiences of young adults with autism. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 34(1), 52–64. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088357615611880>

(continued on page 6)

(Tips from the Field, continued from page 5)

- American Psychological Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.)*. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596>
- Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended, 42 U.S.C. §12101 *et seq.* (2008).
- Austermann, Q., Gelbar, N. W., Reis, S. M., & Madaus, J. W. (2023). The transition to college: Lived experiences of academically talented students with autism. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 14, Article 1125904. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsy.2023.1125904>
- Bolt, S. E., Decker, D. M., Lloyd, M., & Morlock, L. (2011). Students' perceptions of accommodations in high school and college. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 34(3), 165–175. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0885728811415098>
- Cage, E., De Andres, M., & Mahoney, P. (2020). Understanding the factors that affect university completion for autistic people. *Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders*, 72, Article 101519. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rasd.2020.101519>
- Elias, R., & White, S. W. (2017). Autism goes to college: Understanding the needs of a student population on the rise. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 48, 732–746. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-017-3075-7>
- Fleming, A. R., Oertle, K. M., & Plotner, A. J. (2017). Student voices: Recommendations for improving postsecondary experiences of students with disabilities. *Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability*, 30(4), 309–326. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1172798>
- Greene, G. (2018). The emperor has no clothes: Improving the quality and compliance of ITPs. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 41(3), 146–155. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2165143417707205>
- Hamilton, L. G., & Petty, S. (2023). Compassionate pedagogy for neurodiversity in higher education: A conceptual analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 14:1093290. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1093290>
- Hughes, M. M., Kirby, A. V., Davis, J., Bilder, D. A., Patrick, M., Lopez, M., DaWalt, L. S., Pas, E. T., Bakian, A. V., Shaw, K. A., DiRienzo, M., Hudson, A., Schwenk, Y. D., Baroud, T. M., Washington, A., & Maenner, M. J. (2023). Individualized education programs and transition planning for adolescents with autism. *Pediatrics*, 152(1), e2022060199. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1542/peds.2022-060199>
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 *et seq.* (2004).
- Lambe, S., Russell, A., Butler, C., Fletcher, S., Ashwin, C., & Brosnan, M. (2019). Autism and the transition to university from the student perspective. *Autism*, 23(6), 1531–1541.
- LaPoint, S. C., Kim, S. Y., & Bottema-Beutel, K. (2024). Barriers to providing transitional supports for autistic students: Insights of school professionals [Preprint]. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-024-06375-6>
- Madaus, J., Cascio, A., Delgado, J., Gelbar, N., Reis, S., & Tarconish, E. (2023). Improving the transition to college for twice-exceptional students with ASD: Perspectives from college service providers. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 46(1), 40–51. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21651434221091230>
- Madaus, J., Tarconish, E., Langdon, S. W., & Gelbar, N. (2022). High school and transition experiences of twice exceptional students with autism spectrum disorder: Parents' perceptions. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, Article 995356. <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.995356/full>
- Mademtzi, M., Singh, P., Shic, F., & Koenig, K. (2017). Challenges of females with autism: A parental perspective. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 48(4), 1301–1310. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-017-3341-8>
- Matthews, L. K., Wall, K. H., Hoffman, Y., Pantale, A., & De Martinis, J. (2019). The unheard voices of transition: The experiences of four female young adults with ASD as they prepare to graduate. *High School Journal*, 102(4), 283–296. <https://doi.org/10.1353/hsj.2019.0010>
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2017). *The condition of education 2017* (NCES 2017-144; Undergraduate Retention and Graduation Rates). U.S. Department of Education. <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017144.pdf>
- Newman, L., Wagner, M., Knokey, A.M., Marder, C., Nagle, K., Shaver, D., & Wei, X. (2011). *The post-high school outcomes of young adults with disabilities up to 8 years after high school: A report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2* (NLTS2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.20600.57600>
- Newman, L. A., & Madaus, J. W. (2015). Analysis of factors related to receipt of accommodations and services by postsecondary students with disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education*, 36(4), 208–219. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0741932515572912>
- Paradiz, V., Kelso, S., Nelson, A., & Earl, A. (2018). Essential self-advocacy and transition. *Pediatrics*, 141(Supplement 4), S373–S377. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2016-4300P>
- Petcu, S. D., Zhang, D., & Li, Y. F. (2021). Students with autism spectrum disorders and their first-year college experiences. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(22), 11822. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph182211822>
- Santhanam, S., & Wilson, K. (2024). A comparison of autistic and non-autistic college students' perceived challenges and engagement in self-advocacy. *American Journal of Speech–Language Pathology*, 33, 1471–1484. https://doi.org/10.1044/2024_AJSLP-22-00381
- Scheef, A. R., McKnight-Lizotte, M., & Gwartney, L. (2019). Supports and resources valued by autistic students enrolled in postsecondary education. *Autism in Adulthood*, 1(3), 219–226. <https://doi.org/10.1089/aut.2019.0010>
- Sheehan, W. A., & Iarocci, G. (2015). Executive functioning predicts academic but not social adjustment to university. *Journal of Attention Disorders*, 23(14), 1792–1800. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1087054715612258>
- Talley, J., Talapatra, D., Miller, G., & Organisciak, P. (2024). Defensive driving: CAR:POOL as a model for proactive postsecondary planning and connection. *Contemporary School Psychology*, 28, 120–134. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40688-022-00438-0>



POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT: GET INVOLVED AND RECOGNIZE OPPORTUNITY WHEN THE WORLD SHIFTS

Vickie J. Mitchell, EdD

Sam Houston State University, Retired



Many people reading this newsletter have been in education for decades and have seen many good and bad changes. For the first five years of my education career, there was no special education. PL 94-142 came later, in 1975 (The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, Public Law 94-142). There was no Department of Education in Washington for the first ten years of my career. It began as a cabinet-level agency in 1980. That is not to say good or bad, just that change happens. The textbook in my master's degree program stated that students with intellectual disabilities (ID) cognitively peaked by age 12. Not only is that false, but as you can imagine, the textbook wording of the concept would be offensive in today's world. In 1990, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) not only included transition services for the first time, it emphasized providing access to the general education curriculum for all students. Let me ask a question: What role have you fulfilled in shaping special education's direction, quality, and advancement of your chosen profession?

Do you have ancestors who were teachers who actively advocated to obtain access to free and public education for students with disabilities? Do you have relatives who advocated for access to general education classes, bridged the gap from public school to adult life with transition services, or addressed students' individuality with language differences or gender identity in the 2000s?

Our generation must now fill their shoes. Remember the teachers in the 1900s who griped in the teachers' lounge or the teachers who complained on social media in the 2000s? Their griping did not advance education and services for students with disabilities. I tell you this story so you can recognize that YOU are this generation's version of change agents.

This column does not address whether change is good or bad but says that change happens. We can look at it with frustration, or we can look at it as an opportunity.

First, determine what topics are of interest to you and look at the resources to help you start. The Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) website has a Take Action page with a list of legislative items that range from annual appropriations for special education funding to preserving the Department of Education. If you are a researcher, read the section on the cancellation of critical education research, or you may be in a state where school vouchers are already a legislative agenda item, or you are interested in the conversation happening at the national level. Each topic will provide you with information on what is happening, resources to obtain more in-depth information, strategies to connect you with links to your legislators, and a toolkit of resources to minimize your time while maximizing the effectiveness of your efforts.

The CEC Policy Insider provides regularly updated headlines and information on actions taken by government agencies that affect services for children with disabilities, such as Health and Human Services and the Office of Civil Rights. It also provides information on actions by senators and representatives involved in committee hearings or making comments on bills.

For those in higher education, the CEC Teacher Education Division (TED) publishes the "Washington Update," which provides continuous information on topics affecting colleges and universities. Topics related to grants, institutional funding, staffing cuts, and how dissolving the Department of Education may affect Colleges of Education are but a few of the topics that provide updates and strategies for action.

Don't forget the activities at the state level. Many states have bills aligned with national actions and seismic changes. One of the best resources is your state-level CEC and CEC DCDT. Another excellent resource on what is going on at

(continued on page 8)

(Committee Spotlight, continued from page 7)

the state level is the State Office for Disability Rights, which can be found by going to the National Disability Rights Network. The state websites provide information on legislative updates on disability issues through weblinks, listservs, and social media. To locate the disability rights for your state, go to “Our Members” under the “About” tab, then enter the name of your state.

We must recognize our ability to influence by making our positions known to those who represent us. After you have made your positions known, watch the results and how laws and regulations unfold. Look for opportunities because they will be there if you look for them. All change, good and bad, comes with opportunities. Don’t miss this generation’s opportunity to save and/or improve special education.

**President’s Message, continued from page 1**

which may return in 2025—stay tuned! We also welcome Dr. Leena Landmark to the executive board as our new secretary. Both Malarie and Leena have been active members on multiple committees for many years and their expertise is valued on the executive board. Rounding out the executive board, Dr. Sheida Raley is our returning treasurer. Sheida continues to help our organization maintain fiscal health and find innovative ways to support our membership.

DCDT Committee Involvement

As a reminder, we have robust and active committees in DCDT led by elected chairs who are always looking for members to engage in meetings, projects, or other efforts to support our organization. Please visit our DCDT website at <https://dcdt.org/dcdt-committees/meetings> for a full listing of our committee meetings. Dr. Josh Taylor leads our Policy and Advocacy Committee; Dr. Kendra Williams-Diehm leads our Publications Committee; Dr. Suzanne Kucharczyk facilitates our Research Committee; and Dr. Joana Idakwo-Agha coordinates and leads our Human Rights and Diversity Committee. Newly elected to the board, Dr. Hunter Matusevich represents our Early Career Practitioners in the field. I am excited to see how she engages practitioners in monthly activities. All committee chairs will be leading a Members Only Town Hall event focused on facilitating a group discussion centered on a critical issue in special education transition. Stacie and I facilitated a discussion last Thursday afternoon, and it was a robust conversation focused on infusion of evidence- and research-based transition practices in our various educational settings. If you missed this event, you

References

- Council for Exceptional Children. (2025, April 4). *Policy insider*. <https://exceptionalchildren.org/policy-insider>
- Council for Exceptional Children. (2025, April 4). *Take action. Your voice is critical*. <https://exceptionalchildren.org/takeaction>
- Council for Exceptional Children (2025, April 4, 2025). *Washington update*. <https://tedcec.org/blog/category/washington-update>
- Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, 20 U.S.C. §1401 *et seq.*
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. §1400 *et seq.* (2012)
- National Disability Rights Network. (2025, April 4). *Protection and advocacy for people with disabilities*. <https://www.ndrn.org/>

can watch the recording and reach out with any questions! Please see the flyer in this newsletter highlighting upcoming town hall events, and we look forward to you joining us.

Community, Connection, and Collaboration

Stacie speaks of the core value collaboration within DCDT in her Executive Director’s Corner. Furthermore, the other two cornerstones I would like to advance in 2025 are community and connection. Now, more than ever, it is important to find like-minded individuals to share resources, find support, and build professional and personal networks. I hope that DCDT becomes that home for you. I remember fondly my first DCDT conference attendance as a student—and over the years my involvement in various committees and initiatives have built my knowledge, confidence, and skills. I am earnest when I say I value each of you; you have choices when you become a member of CEC as to where you commit to professionally serve, and we appreciate your membership in DCDT.

Finally, I want to extend an invitation to reach out to me directly if you have any questions or want to connect. Feel free to email me anytime at tracy.sinclair@uconn.edu.

In community and solidarity,
Tracy E. Sinclair, PhD, BCBA-D
DCDT President
tracy.sinclair@uconn.edu

NOMINATE A DCDT MEMBER TODAY!

The Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) is accepting nominations for awards given to people who have made outstanding contributions in the field of secondary education and transition for students with disabilities. Award winners must commit to attending the DCDT Conference and the opening session on October 9th at 5:00 pm. New this year, all award winners are provided \$1,250.

Each candidate must be a member in good standing of DCDT at the time of nomination, except for nominees for the Employer of the Year. Deadline for nominations is **May 1st, 2025**.

Any questions about the nomination process can be emailed to Al Daviso at ad39@uakron.edu.



[Click here For DCDT Award Directions, Awards, and Scoring Rubrics](#)

For more information on the DCDT conference please visit our website at www.dcdt.org.



3100 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 600 | Arlington, VA 22201
(P) + 1.703.620.3660 | (Toll Free) 888.232.7733 | (F) 703.264.9494
exceptionalchildren.org

CEC RESOLUTION CONFIRMING COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSIVITY, AND ACCESSIBILITY

WHEREAS, the Council for Exceptional Children has been rooted in the cause of making education equitable for all children for more than 100 years;

WHEREAS, the current political climate has many questioning the intent and value of Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity, and Accessibility initiatives;

WHEREAS, CEC remains dedicated to its vision for inclusive, equitable, high-quality education for individuals with disabilities.

WHEREAS, CEC remains steadfast in our mission of cultivating, supporting, and empowering education profes-

sionals who work with individuals with disabilities by advocating for educational professionals and individuals with disabilities and/or gifts and talents; advancing professional practice and scholarly research; promoting diversity, equity, inclusivity, and accessibility; and building networks, partnerships, and communities;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that CEC remains steadfast in ensuring an equitable education for all learners and is committed to our vision and mission of supporting efforts that promote Diversity, Equity, Inclusivity, and Accessibility.

DCDT MEMBERS ONLY

DCDT TOWN HALLS

March 20th: Implementation of Research-Informed Career Development & Transition Practices

Engage in a dynamic discussion with DCDT members, led by Stacie Dojonovic and Tracy Sinclair, to share your implementation of research-informed career development and transition practices—what's working, what challenges remain, and how we can advance together!

April 17th: Advocating For Policies that Support Transition-Focused Special Education Research: Resources, Approaches, and Success Stories.

Join Josh Taylor, Suzanne Kucharczyk, Alicia Kowitz, and Karli Johansen for a DCDT members-only town hall discussion on advocating for policies that support transition-focused special education research—connect, share, and learn from each other's experiences, resources, and success stories.

May 15th: Access Implementation Tools and Practical Strategies

Join Joana Idakwo-Agha and Sheida Raley in exploring current systems and supports in place available for parents in underrepresented communities to actively participate in IEP planning!

August 21st: Supporting Students with Extensive Support Needs: Overlapping Academics & Transition Services

Join Hunter Matesuvich to share insights and strategies on supporting students with extensive support needs by effectively overlapping academics and transition services.

September 18th: Unlocking Student Potential: Best Practices in Transition Assessment Strategies

Dr. Kendra Williams-Diehm will lead the discussion, offering insights into selecting and implementing effective assessment tools, interpreting results to inform individualized transition goals, and aligning assessment practices with student strengths, needs, and future aspirations.

October 16th: Accessing Healthcare

Join Leena Landmark for an engaging discussion on breaking barriers, sharing resources, and exploring strategies to ensure all youth with disabilities can seamlessly access essential healthcare services into adulthood!

Membership Process:

- DCDT Town Halls are available to active DCDT members in good standing. To become a member of DCDT, please visit: www.cec.sped.org/membership
- Please visit www.dcdt.org or email sdojonovic@ku.edu for any questions!





ZARROW INSTITUTE
ON TRANSITION & SELF-DETERMINATION
The UNIVERSITY of OKLAHOMA



SPECIAL ISSUE
CALL FOR PAPERS

Transition In Practice



**Zarrow Institute's 25th Anniversary
Special Issues
"Past Insights, Future Visions"**

- Systematic Literature Reviews
- Progress Through Policy
- Reflections from the Field
- A Call to Action for the Future

MANUSCRIPTS DUE: JULY 1
TRANSITIONINPRACTICE.ORG