



Virginia Tech T/TAC Forum:  
*Instilling Leadership, Efficacy,  
and a Growth Mindset*

September 30, 2016  
The Southwest Virginia Higher Ed Center  
Abingdon, Virginia

Sponsored by:  
Virginia Department of Education's  
Training and Technical Assistance Center  
at Virginia Tech

# The VT T/TAC Theme for 2016-2017: *Empowering Leadership Teams to Educate Students with Disabilities*

**September 30, 2016**

**Schedule:**

9:00–10:30	<b>Keynote</b>
10:30–10:45	Break
10:45–11:45	<b>Breakout Session 1</b>
11:45–12:30	Lunch
12:30–1:30	<b>Breakout Session 2</b>
1:30–1:40	Break
1:40–2:40	<b>Breakout Session 3</b>
2:40–2:50	Break
2:50–3:45	<b>Team work session</b>
3:45–4:00	Close and Evaluations

**In an effort to be efficient and environmentally conscious, we have uploaded all handouts and resources for the keynote and breakout sessions on our website, <http://bit.ly/TTACForum2016>.**

## **What You Need To Know:**

### **Cell Phone Courtesy**

We request, as a courtesy to speakers and colleagues, that all cell phones and pagers be turned off or on “vibrate” while in sessions.

### **Certificates of Attendance**

Certificates of Attendance are available in your T/TAC folder. Please complete an evaluation at the end of the day and hand to any coordinator on your way out.



## Lunch Choices:

- Pimento Cheese Sandwiches with Pasta or Broccoli Salad & Cookie
- Chicken Salad Sandwiches with Pasta or Broccoli Salad & Cookie
- Chicken Caesar Salads with Dressing, Cheese Wafers & Cookie
- Grilled Vegetable Wraps with Pasta or Broccoli Salad & Cookie
- Club Sandwiches with Pasta or Broccoli Salad & Cookie

Choice of Sweet or Unsweet Tea or Water

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## Vendor Information:

**Accessible Instructional Materials Center of Virginia (AIM-VA).** AIM-VA is a service of the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) through a grant to The Kellar Institute for Human Disabilities at George Mason University. AIM-VA provides accessible instructional materials to Virginia K–12 students who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Visit the AIM-VA website ([www.aimva.org](http://www.aimva.org)) or contact Ian Moore ([imoore7@gmu.edu](mailto:imoore7@gmu.edu)) to learn more about accessible instructional materials.

Representative: Ian Moore

**The Center on Transition Innovation at the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center at Virginia Commonwealth University (CTI).** The mission of CTI is to provide information and resources to assist young adults with disabilities to obtain integrated, competitive employment through such pathways as higher education or postsecondary education training. Visit the CTI website ([www.centerontransition.org](http://www.centerontransition.org)) or contact Lisa Holland ([ldholland@vcu.edu](mailto:ldholland@vcu.edu)) to learn more about transition resources and employment projects.

Representative: Lisa D. Holland

**Virginia Commonwealth University – Autism Center for Excellence (VCU-ACE).** VCU-ACE is a university-based technical assistance, professional development, and educational research center for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Visit the VCU-ACE website ([www.vcuautismcenter.org](http://www.vcuautismcenter.org)) or contact Teresa Cogar ([tlcogar@vcu.edu](mailto:tlcogar@vcu.edu)) to learn more about evidence-based practices to support individuals with ASD.

Representative: Teresa Cogar, M.Ed.

<b>10:45–11:45 Breakout Sessions #1</b>		
Sessions	Presenters	Room
<b>1. Personalizing Learning with Assistive Technology</b>	Matthew Newton & Jean Hitchins	149
<b>2. Coaching Strategies for Instructional Improvement</b>	Jerrie Adams, Cynthia Bates, Lisa Robinette, & Gale Ferrell	104
<b>3. Elementary Intervention</b>	Blenna Patterson & Kelly Wheeler	Executive Auditorium
<b>4. Co-Teaching: Working Through Challenges to Grow and Find Success</b>	Tiffany Carter & Summer Nester	103

**11:45–12:30 Lunch**

**Room:** Foyer of the Grand Hall  
*Featuring T/TAC Early Childhood Table*

<b>12:30–1:30 Breakout Sessions #2</b>		
Sessions	Presenters	Room
<b>1. Adolescent Literacy: Our Journey</b>	Tim McClung, Denise Sprinkle, Pam Austin, Sandi Witt, & Kayla Holland	149
<b>2. Overview of Google Drive &amp; Tools for the Classroom</b>	Courtney Buck & Holly Pauley	Executive Auditorium
<b>3. Nailing Down Effective Components of Co-Teaching</b>	Jason Guilliams, Melissa Hale, & Diane Lovell	130
<b>4. Fun Ways to Engage Families</b>	Laura Goad, Denice Olinger, Liza Sutherland, Heather Ramirez, & Tonyia Gibson	104
<b>5. Visuals Can Be Fun!</b>	Cindy Timp & Laura Jones	103

**1:30–1:40 Afternoon Break & Refreshments**

**Room:** Foyer of the Grand Hall

<b>1:40–2:40 Breakout Sessions #3</b>		
Sessions	Presenters	Room
<b>1. Student Advocacy Using a Team Approach</b>	Kristen Booth, Kaitlan Brooks, Jodie Bowen, Maria Dean, Alexa Mullins, & Karen Williams	104
<b>2. Making Math Relevant for Students with Disabilities</b>	Shauna Adkins	149
<b>3. Hear Me! Hear Me! It's More Than Words.</b>	Katie Cordle & Donna Mumpower	130
<b>4. Continuum To Educate: Implementing a Partnership— Career and Technical Education and Special Education</b>	Debbie Wells & Morgan Holder	103
<b>5. Tier 3 Behavior Supports: A County-Wide Approach</b>	Kimberley Harrison, Lori Hale, Melissa Compton, Angela Roberts, & Donna Poskas	Executive Auditorium

**2:40–2:50 Afternoon Break & Refreshments**

**2:50–3:45 Teams meet back in the Grand Hall for a Work Session**

**3:45–4:00 Evaluations**

## 9:00–10:30 Keynote Address by Cyndi Pitonyak

### *The Wisdom of Teacher Leaders: Why Now? Why Us? Why Not?*

**Room:** Grand Hall

**Abstract:** Teachers already hold the wisdom needed to grow and develop new ideas and skills—we do it for our students every day. Yet, one of the biggest challenges faced by schools with a great new idea, is how to truly incorporate that new idea into everyday practices and sustain it to grow over time. We can use that same wisdom that we use to guide our students to guide our schools into the next era. Now is the time; we are the ones; there is nothing to stop us!

**Presenter Bio:** Cyndi Pitonyak has been a special educator for 35 years, working as a teacher and district administrator in Montgomery County Schools for most of that time. She was a leader in Montgomery County’s move from traditional to inclusive special education services and helped in maintaining that change for over twenty years. Cyndi currently serves as a Technical Assistance Associate with Virginia Commonwealth University’s Autism Center for Excellence, supporting school divisions in southwest Virginia who are interested in changing their system to improve services for students who experience autism and other disabilities. She has been invited to testify before the United States Senate HELP Committee, interviewed by National Public Radio, and has consulted with school divisions throughout the U.S., as well as in Canada, England and Ireland.

## 10:30–10:45 Break & Refreshments (Foyer of the Grand Hall)

## 10:45–11:45 Breakout Sessions #1

### *Personalized Learning with Assistive Technology*

**Room:** 149

**Presenters:** Matthew Newton, T/TAC Coordinator

Jean Hitchins, Elementary Special Education Teacher

**Audience:** Elementary educators who work with students with multiple disabilities

**Abstract:** During this session you will be introduced to the “bright spot” method used to overcome obstacles. Practical examples and case studies from the AT consideration, assessment, and implementation process based on the SETT framework will be showcased. Presenters will also cover strategies for implementing assistive technology in the classroom and some of today’s best tools for helping students meet goals in reading, mathematics, writing, organization, and interpersonal communication. Additionally, directions for finding easily available (and often free resources) to become AT leaders in your area will be included.

#### **Learner Outcomes:**

- Participants will feel empowered that they can impact their students’ lives and ability to meet their goals with assistive technology tools.
- Participants will be able to identify and apply the components of the SETT framework to consider and evaluate the assistive technology needs of students they are working with.
- Participants will be able to implement instructional strategies in reading, math, and writing that utilize assistive technology.
- Participants will be able to identify different assistive technology resources available to assist students.

## *Coaching Strategies for Instructional Improvement*

**Room:** 104

**Presenters:** Jerrie Adams, Director of Special Education and Student Services  
Cynthia Bates, Special Education Coordinator  
Lisa Robinette, Transition Coordinator  
Gale Ferrell, Educational Diagnostician

**Audience:** All educators

**Abstract:** This session will describe how Wise County educators use the instructional coaching model to bridge the gap between training and implementation of Explicit Instruction, Co-Teaching, and the Aligned SOL Curriculum. Presenters will describe how they created systemic change, and how they have moved to the top of state rankings by using their data.

**Learner Outcomes:**

- Participants from small, rural school divisions will discover how they can overcome many of the common obstacles in their divisions and replicate a successful instructional coaching program that meets the needs of students, teachers, and administrators.

## *Elementary Intervention*

**Room:** Executive Auditorium

**Presenters:** Blenna Patterson, First Grade Teacher  
Kelly Wheeler, Reading Specialist

**Audience:** Elementary educators

**Abstract:** In order to effectively work with students who are struggling in reading, multiple things need to be in place. Participants will hear how an elementary school can structure their school-wide and classroom schedules to make room for intentional intervention with an integrated, multi-sensory approach using sign language, songs, movement, and Orton-Gillingham methods. By creating an integrated experience for students to learn phonics, fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary, educators can meet the needs of all students.

**Learner Outcomes:**

- Participants will learn a structure that provides strong whole group instruction, as well as quality time to work with struggling students.
- Participants will gain an awareness of the Orton-Gillingham multi-sensory approach.

## *Co-Teaching: Working Through Challenges to Grow and Find Success*

**Room:** 103

**Presenters:** Tiffany Carter, Middle School Mathematics Teacher  
Summer Nester, Middle School Special Education Teacher

**Audience:** Secondary educators

**Abstract:** Both co-teaching partners will begin by discussing their background and challenges that they faced as a new co-teaching team. A brief background of their school, demographics, class sizes, and categories of disability served will be provided. The co-teaching partners will discuss overcoming and coping with these obstacles, becoming a co-teaching demonstration site, and taking on leadership responsibilities in developing co-teaching partnerships within James Breckinridge Middle School. The co-teaching partners will provide a look into the daily life of their Math 6 co-taught classroom by discussing practical strategies and routines utilized for students, co-teaching models, as well as strategies used for communication and improvement of best teaching practices.



**Learner Outcomes:**

- Participants will learn techniques to strengthen new and current co-teaching partnerships to meet the diverse needs of students in co-taught middle school math classrooms.

**11:45–12:30 Please Join Us for Lunch! (Foyer of the Grand Hall)**

*Margo Vaughan and Selina Flores, T/TAC Early Childhood Coordinators, will be hosting an early childhood table at lunch. Please look for them if you are an early childhood educator.*

**12:30–1:30 Breakout Sessions #2*****Adolescent Literacy: Our Journey*****Room:** 149**Presenters:** Tim McClung, Middle School Principal  
Denise Sprinkle, Middle School Science & Mathematics Teacher  
Pam Austin, Middle School Special Education Teacher  
Sandi Witt, Middle School English Teacher  
Kayla Holland, Speech Language Pathologist**Audience:** Secondary educators

**Abstract:** This presentation will focus on Central Academy Middle School's journey in response to adolescent literacy needs. Some topics that will be discussed include the identification through data analysis of students who need additional support, the structure of the literacy program and how it works in the middle school schedule, and the students' progress through this process.

**Learner Outcomes:**

- The participants will be able to describe how data determines the literacy structures in a school.
- The participants will understand the role of school leadership, and its effect on student outcomes.

***Overview of Google Drive & Tools for the Classroom*****Room:** Executive Auditorium**Presenters:** Courtney Buck, Fourth Grade Teacher  
Holly Pauley, Fourth Grade Teacher**Audience:** Elementary & secondary educators

**Abstract:** Participants will learn about the components of Google Drive, and how to use them effectively in the classroom to reach students at all readiness levels. A review of tools to differentiate instruction will also be included, as well as tips and tricks to help teachers save time in the classroom.

**Learner Outcomes:**

- Participants will gain an awareness of how to integrate Google Apps for Education (GAFE) into curriculum for students' engagement and mastery of content.
- Participants will be able to use technological tools to differentiate instruction in order to meet student needs and readiness levels.



## *Nailing Down Effective Components of Co-Teaching*

**Room:** 130

**Presenters:** Jason Guilliams, Elementary School Principal  
Melissa Hale, Elementary General Education Teacher  
Diane Lovell, Elementary Special Education Teacher

**Audience:** Upper elementary educators

**Abstract:** Repurposing is the craze right now! In workshops across America, educators are breathing new life into old items. From picking, combining, and re-assembling used familiar items, creative educators are making beautiful useful items that once again enhance their lives. Sometimes all it takes is having a need, looking at something differently, and tweaking it so that it serves in a manner needed. That's exactly what we have done with co-teaching at Callaway Elementary School. Our specialty seems to be looking at the needs of our students, and then plugging in evidence based practices and other strategies of instruction to their individual needs. Session participants will see how we have done some picking, combining, and re-assembling the aspects of co-teaching in a way that serves our students in a manner needed. Attendees will need to come equipped with an open mind and a desire to seek ways they can take some of our methods and repurpose them to meet the needs of their students.

**Learner Outcomes:**

- Participants will receive tools and skills to establish a foundation through upside down scheduling, from which strong co-teaching practices will be built.
- Participants will leave with tools for construction of effective components of co-teaching to fit the needs of their students and school.

## *Fun Ways to Engage Families*

**Room:** 104

**Presenters:** Laura Goad, Director of Special Education  
Denice Olinger, Division Counselor  
Liza Sutherland, ESL Teacher  
Heather Ramirez, Assistant  
Tonyia Gibson, Director of AmeriCorps Tutor Program

**Audience:** All educators

**Abstract:** Carroll County Public Schools provides a variety of opportunities for parental involvement. Events and activities to be discussed during this presentation include the Disability Services Fair in conjunction with Galax City Schools, the Multicultural Festival at Oakland Elementary School, and Parent Connect events. All of these activities have been in place for five years or more. Also discussed will be the role of advisory committees and other procedures for sharing resources with parents.

**Learner Outcomes:**

- Participants will be able to describe a variety of programs to increase parental involvement.
- Participants will be able to describe the needed components to an effective parental involvement activity.

## *Visuals Can Be Fun!*

**Room:** 103

**Presenters:** Cindy Timp, Preschool Teacher  
Laura Jones, Preschool Teacher

**Audience:** Early childhood educators

**Abstract:** Enter into the magical world of our fully inclusive classroom where visual supports are much more fun than they sound. While our visuals include traditional supports, such as visual and behavior schedules, they also include puppets, props, and many more exciting ideas. Join us while we discuss how to increase preschoolers' attention, engagement, and fun through the use of a variety of visuals. In our classroom, an additional plus is that as the use of visuals increase, the behavior issues decrease.

**Learner Outcomes:**

- Participants will learn how to implement visual support to decrease problematic behaviors.
- Participants will be able to list at least 5 visual supports to increase student engagement in the classroom.

### **1:30–1:40 Break (Foyer of the Grand Hall)**

### **1:40–2:40 Breakout Sessions #3**

## *Student Advocacy Using a Team Approach*

**Room:** 104

**Presenters:** Kristen Booth, Occupational Therapist  
Kaitlan Brooks, Physical Therapist Assistant  
Jodie Bowen, School Guidance Counselor  
Maria Dean, Speech Language Pathologist  
Alexa Mullins, Elementary Special Education Teacher  
Karen Williams, Elementary General Education Teacher

**Audience:** Elementary educators

**Abstract:** When considering the topic of student advocacy, teamwork and collaboration is vital to any organization and initiative, especially when a student receives all-encompassing services including: therapies, educational services, school-wide adaptations, social needs, and a vast list of accommodations. This presentation will focus on how a team approach helped propel the needs of a student with multiple disabilities to the forefront in order to provide an appropriate augmentative communication device and accommodations for current and future academic and personal needs. The team will discuss highlights, on-going review, and obstacles from various points of view in relation to implementation of a new device in a school setting.

**Learner Outcomes:**

- Participants will take away an understanding of how collaboration can propel students' needs to the forefront of conversation.
- Participants will gain knowledge in utilizing various accommodations, manipulatives, devices, and avenues in order to obtain supportive devices for students.

## *Making Math Relevant for Students with Disabilities*

**Room:** 149

**Presenter:** Shauna Adkins, Elementary Special Education Teacher

**Audience:** Elementary educators

**Abstract:** Special education teacher, Shauna Adkins hopes to help others overcome their apprehension about teaching math by sharing her experiences and successes with teaching math to students with moderate to severe disabilities. She will discuss the importance of differentiation, curriculum alignment, paraprofessional involvement, vocabulary instruction, assessment, manipulatives, and real-life problem solving.

**Learner Outcomes:**

- Participants will be able to identify ways to engage all learners in math instruction.
- Participants will learn new ways to approach vocabulary, problem solving, and differentiation during math instruction for students of all ability levels.

## *Hear Me! Hear Me! It's More Than Words.*

**Room:** 130

**Presenters:** Katie Cordle, Elementary Special Education Teacher

Donna Mumpower, Secondary Special Education Teacher

**Audience:** Elementary & secondary educators

**Abstract:** In this session, presenters will discuss the use of AAC devices throughout the day, and how they can be implemented to assist students with disabilities in terms of communication, socialization, and participation. Successful implementation of communication devices in meaningful activities allows students to increase independence and engage with others as part of the verbal world.

**Learner Outcomes:**

- Participants will learn specific ways AAC can be implemented to increase success in the classroom.
- Participants will be able to identify goals for implementation of AAC devices in the classroom.
- Participants will be able to list at least 3 meaningful activities where AAC can be implemented to promote independence in the classroom.

## *Continuum To Educate: Implementing a Partnership—Career and Technical Education and Special Education*

**Room:** 103

**Presenters:** Debbie Wells, Supervisor of Special Education

Morgan Holder, High School Agriscience Teacher

**Audience:** Secondary educators

**Abstract:** This presentation will describe the partnership between the Montgomery County Public Schools' Career and Technical Education (CTE) department and the Special Education department. The presenters will describe the varying partnerships that were put in place to encourage the appropriate inclusion and instruction of students with disabilities in CTE courses. These partnerships include administrative, teacher, and paraprofessional partnerships at the central office level, the school building level, and the classroom level. Specific strategies that create an engaging instructional environment in the CTE classroom will be shared.

**Learner Outcomes:**

- Participants will be energized to strengthen their school's valuable partnership between Career and Technical Education and special education as a means to foster post-graduate success for all students.
- Participants will be inspired by the assistive and instructional technology, as well as teaching methods being implemented in an agricultural science course to make curricula accessible to students with diverse learning needs.

***Tier 3 Behavior Supports: A County-Wide Approach*****Room:** Executive Auditorium**Presenters:** Kimberley Harrison, Special Education Coordinator  
Lori Hale, Middle School Mathematics Teacher  
Melissa Compton, Elementary Special Education Teacher  
Angela Roberts, Special Education Coordinator  
Donna Poskas, Special Education Coordinator**Audience:** All educators

**Abstract:** This presentation will describe the work that Tazewell County has done related to Tier 3 behavior planning for individual students. Staff members, including general and special education teachers, administrators from schools, and the central office from around the county were selected to assist in helping to implement and sustain a division-wide process for Tier 3 behavior supports. With assistance from T/TAC at VT, the group met, developed the process, and began implementation. This presentation will show how the team worked together to develop the process, how they shared the process division-wide, and how the work has impacted students.

**Learner Outcomes:**

- Participants will be introduced to the steps of the process used to develop Tier 3 Positive Behavior Support plans in Tazewell County.
- Participants will gain knowledge of how Tazewell County developed a Tier 3 Behavior Support process in their division.

**2:40–2:50 Afternoon Break****2:50–3:45 Team Work Session*****How Can T/TAC Support Your Change?*****Room:** Grand Hall**Presenters:** Cyndi Pitonyak & T/TAC Staff**Audience:** All educators

During this session you will reconnect with Cyndi Pitonyak, meet with your colleagues to share what you have learned today in your breakout sessions, discuss changes that are on your radar, and identify the steps needed to implement new initiatives to support positive outcomes for students with disabilities. Afternoon refreshments will be provided.

**Padlet Question: What professional learning opportunities does your team still need?**



<https://padlet.com/wnp1/ttac>

**3:45–4:00 Evaluations**



## **A Special Thank You To:**

Scholastic Education provided the free resources for today's forum!

Scholastic Education offers classroom solutions such as Fountas and Pinnell, Guided Reading/Leveled Bookrooms, Traits of Writing authored by Ruth Culham, and a large variety of customized classroom literacy solutions.

Scholastic Education provides literacy resources that promote best practices in the classroom and foster family and community engagement.

Contact Kimber Pennington for more information: [kpennington@scholastic.com](mailto:kpennington@scholastic.com).

# Map of the SWVA Higher Education Center

