

# News notes

February 2009 Happy Valentines!  
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Special Praise for Alisha Hale! Alisha works at Parsons Middle School and is using a white board technology program to work with students. She told me she has developed presentations on most of the standards that will be tested. While I was watching the students seemed to enjoy working on understanding analogies. She sent me a presentation on author's intent. Guess what! She is willing to share what she has made. You will need to ask her to send it to you.

## Transition in the news...

It is important to work on transition with students because...

- People feel successful when they work
- People feel important when they work
- People feel good about earning money
- People like being independent
- People like having a reason to get up in the morning
- People like making a meaningful difference in the lives of others
- People learn new things
- People get a sense of calling
- People achieve goals

It is also true that fewer women with disabilities participate in the workforce than men with disabilities or women without disabilities. Frequently the **expectations** for people with disabilities play a role in their participation in the workforce. **Awareness** of a range of employment strategies and options on the part of professionals opens up possibilities that may otherwise be overlooked. Having **role models** and **mentors** makes all the difference in the world for girls and women with disabilities as they think about what they want to do with their adult lives. Using our transition plan we can help students develop meaningful, valued work ethics that are such an important part of life. We can encourage them to expand their vision of what is possible for people with disabilities in the employment arena. We can offer strategies, resources and inspiration to realize their dreams. We need to get very serious at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade or sooner with a transition plan. Maybe a student will need an alternative graduation plan.

The lower employment rate of women with disabilities most likely contributes to differences in poverty rates. 31% of women with a work limitation live in households below the poverty level as compared to 26% of men with a work limitation.

Levels of education influence chances of employment. Only 1/5<sup>th</sup> of women with disabilities who have less than a high school education are employed, as compared to over half of female college graduates with a disability.

Women tend to be clustered in occupations, whether by choice or not, in very different ways than men. Nearly half of women, regardless of disability are working in either administrative support or service occupations. These may be more frequently part-time positions that offer more flexibility in the work week, a distinct advantage to those who may have care giving responsibilities, unpredictable chronic health issues, or educational pursuits. And although the number of employees in these occupations is projected to rise faster than any other occupational category during the next 10 years, they also tend to be the lowest paid and least likely to be covered by health insurance and other benefits. There are work disincentives and transportation barriers as well as lack of training or skills that affect people with disabilities and their work. Disincentives such as SSI which does not offer child care for example.

**Students need only be tested once in high school. Concentrate on the transition goals.**

Is mobility a problem in your school? Schools with highly mobile student populations should have a school-wide, multi-tiered instructional support plan in place. We are ahead of the game in special education because the students have an IEP. The IEP should be a good one when we send a student to a new district. A reason for lack of school achievement in reading is often linked to moving from school to school without information about where the child is working. Are we paying attention to the reading level of our students? As secondary educators we should know and be able to teach the five pillars of reading. We should be able to break math into steps and design lessons based on standards and indicators. The IEP should tell you where the student is and the lack of progress in the general education curriculum.