

**Virginia Department of Education's
Training/Technical Assistance Center (T/TAC)
2003-04 Mission**

The Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE) Training/Technical Assistance Center system (T/TAC) is undergoing a transition for next year (2003-2004). Below are some questions and answers that address the changes.

Why is the T/TAC mission undergoing revision?

The Virginia Special Education Improvement Plan (VSEIP) report compiled local educational data in student achievement, personnel development, and parent involvement. These state aggregate data suggest areas needing improvement for local educational agencies and early intervention system personnel. The VSEIP report can be accessed from the VDOE Web site at: <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/sped/data.shtml>. In addition to the data-based indicators, Virginia's state and local educational agencies will be implementing new instruction and accountability requirements under the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) that need to be widely and rapidly disseminated to school personnel.

What will remain the same, and what will be different for next year?

The T/TACs were designed to be, and will continue as specialty centers to improve educational opportunities and contribute to the success of children and youth with disabilities (ages birth - 22). Their mission is twofold:

1. to increase the capacity of school personnel, service providers, and families to meet the needs of children and youth with disabilities; and,
2. to foster the state improvement goals for personnel development, which address improving the performance of children and youth with disabilities, by enhancing the knowledge, skills, abilities, and performance of all personnel who work with them.

The guiding principles that will drive the T/TAC system are to:

- develop products based on research;
- disseminate effective practices;
- consult with target schools undergoing Academic Reviews;
- facilitate technical assistance by building capacity at the local level; and
- conduct strategically planned training.

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**What are the priorities for the T/TACs and VDOE
during 2003-04?**

- ✓ Provide personnel development that fosters students with disabilities access to the general curriculum and achievement in the least restrictive environment;
- ✓ Assist schools in meeting Virginia's accreditation standards; and,
- ✓ Assist local educational agencies in meeting the qualified personnel requirements of the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) and the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA).

Projects addressing these needs will be priorities for statewide activity with centralized coordination and dissemination. Participation in, and implementation of these statewide coordinated efforts will be top priority for T/TAC staff. Priority projects to accomplish the state improvement goals are:

1. Academic Review Participation & Follow-Up Technical Assistance
2. Enhanced SOL Scope & Sequence with Differentiated Strategies
3. Instructional Strategies Development
4. Assistive Technology Task Force
5. Reading Technical Assistance & Link with *VA's Reading First* Training
6. Early Transition & Preschool Effective Practices
7. Positive Behavior Supports
8. Link with Parent Involvement Activity & Local Parent Resource Centers
9. Instructional Support Team (IST) Sites
10. Autism & Links to Other Expert Resources
11. Alternate Assessment & Achievement Standards
12. State Task Force on Middle & Secondary Instruction
13. Secondary Transition Outcomes Project

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What does this mean for services to the regions?

➤ Consultations and Long-Term Technical Assistance Agreements

Priority for consultations and long-term technical assistance agreements will be given to personnel in schools "needing improvement" as designated by the Virginia Department of Education. The T/TACs will be completing their current long-term technical assistance agreement obligations by the end of the year (June, 2004).

Other consultative services will continue, but the number of them will likely be reduced. T/TACs will continue to take requests for individual on-site services and fill those requests by providing resources from their library, phone consultations, referral and links to other resources. T/TACs will continue to build local capacity to access information and resources for individual consultations and on-site inservices.

➤ Regional Workshops

The number of regional workshops initiated by individual T/TACs may be reduced, however, we can expect strategically designed training to occur in regions on topics identified by the priority projects. These are many of the same topics T/TACs have emphasized in workshops, but efforts will be better coordinated with the VDOE and other T/TACs throughout the state.

➤ Pilot Expansion

The Virginia Tech and Virginia Commonwealth University T/TACs will no longer be serving as a pilot expansion for compensatory services, such as Title 1. However, the information services and other training opportunities will be accessible to any educator and parents, as well as students through the new T/TAC On-line Web site, <http://ttaonline.org/> .

The regional T/TAC Web sites can be found at the Virginia Department of Education's Web page: <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/sped/ta.shtml> .