

# STATE of the SCIENCE

Virtual Conference

## Agenda-at-a-Glance

## Research Findings on the Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities

Wednesday, November 1, 2023

1:00 - 1:30 pm ▶ Welcome and Overview of VCU-RRTC on Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities

Presenter: Dr. Paul Wehman, VCU-RRTC

1:30 - 2:30 pm ▶ Transition Pathways Project: A Paid Employment Intervention for Transition-Age Youth with Severe Disabilities

Presenter: Dr. Jessica Awsumb, Vanderbilt University  
Facilitator: Dr. Julie Lounds-Taylor, Vanderbilt University

2:30 - 2:45 pm ▶ Question & Answer Session

2:45 - 3:30 pm ▶ Effects of Knowledge Translation Methods on Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors Providing Pre-ETS to Youth with Significant Disabilities 14-16 Years of Age

Presenters: Dr. Susan McKelvey & Carolyn Cage, VCU-RRTC on Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities; Teresa Belluscio, University of Kentucky

Facilitator: Dr. Stephanie Lau, VCU-RRTC on Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities

Guests: Mary Lisker, Powhatan High School; Sara Meade, Powhatan High School; Vedette Spellman, Booker T. Washington High School; & Lesley Gilpin, Providence School

3:30 - 3:45 pm ▶ Question & Answer Session

3:45 - 4:15 pm ▶ Panel -- Student with Significant Disabilities: Student and Family Experiences

Facilitators: Carolyn Cage, VCU-RRTC on Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities; Teresa Belluscio, University of Kentucky; Leah Burgess & Justine Hrvatin, Vanderbilt University

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**Thursday, November 2, 2023**

**1:00 - 1:45 pm** ▶ Effects of Trained Personnel Providing Employment Supports in Higher Education on the Employment Experience of College Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disability

Presenter: Jaclyn Camden, VCU-RRTC on Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities  
Facilitator: Dr. Stephanie Lau, VCU-RRTC Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities  
Guests: Dr. Holly Whittenburg, Dr. Katie Abrams, Genna Kieper, Dr. Marcus Poppen, Washington State University ROAR

**1:45 - 2:00 pm** ▶ Question & Answer Session

**2:00 - 2:30 pm** ▶ A Systematic Review of the Literature/ Case Study of Practices Related to Transition of Youth with Disabilities into the Workplace

Presenters: Dr. Tim Tansey & Dr. Cayte Anderson University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Facilitator: Dra. Yazmin Castruita Rios, Michigan State University

**2:30 - 2:45 pm** ▶ Question & Answer Session

**2:45 - 3:45 pm** ▶ Postsecondary Experience & Collaboration Panel

- Effects of Paid Internships on Outcomes for At-Risk SWD|  
Presenter: Kelly Ligon, VCU-RRTC on Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities

- Activities and Outcomes of a Cognitive Support Technology and Career Preparatory Intervention for Postsecondary Students with Traumatic Brain Injuries  
Presenter: Dr. Phillip Rumrill, University of Kentucky

Facilitators: Dr. Susan McKelvey, VCU-RRTC on Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities  
Guest: Jennifer Cremers, University of Iowa REACH

**3:45 - 4:30 pm** ▶ Looking Ahead and Advancing Research

Presenters: Dr. Paul Wehman & Dr. Wendy Parent-Johnson, VCU-RRTC & Dr. Catherine Fowler, UNC-Charlotte

Wednesday, November 1, 2023

1:00 - 1:30 pm ► **Welcome and Overview of VCU-RRTC on Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities**

Presenter: Dr. Paul Wehman, Virginia Commonwealth University, Rehabilitation Research and Training Center

1:30 - 2:30 pm ► **Transition Pathways Project: A Paid Employment Intervention for Transition-Age Youth with Severe Disabilities**

Early paid work experiences increase the odds of successful adulthood employment; however, students with severe disabilities are too often not given the opportunity to engage in paid work during high school. This presentation examines a multi-phase randomized control trial examining the effects of paid work during high school on the employment outcomes of youth with high support needs. We will share the five phases of this intervention including, planning, piloting, implementation, evaluation, and dissemination. In addition, we will explore a team- and feedback-based approach to intervention development. Lastly, we will focus on interagency collaboration in implementing the intervention package successfully. We will discuss implications for practice, policy, and research around advancing employment for transition-aged youth with disabilities.

Presenter: Dr. Jessica Awsumb, Vanderbilt University  
Facilitator: Dr. Julie Lounds-Taylor, Vanderbilt University

Contact: [Jessica.m.awsumb@vanderbilt.edu](mailto:Jessica.m.awsumb@vanderbilt.edu)

2:30 - 2:45 pm ► **Question & Answer Session**

2:45 - 3:30 pm ► **Effects of Knowledge Translation Methods on Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors Providing Pre-ETS to Youth with Significant Disabilities 14-16 Years of Age**

Pre-employment transition skills (Pre-ETS) provide students with disabilities between the ages of 14-21 the opportunity to be better prepared to develop and follow a career plan. This presentation will

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provide an overview of phase 1 and 2 of a knowledge translation study that seeks to improve the provision of Pre-ETS to students with significant disabilities between the ages of 14-16. Included in this presentation will be feedback from educators who participated in the study.

Presenters: Dr. Susan McKelvey & Carolyn Cage, Virginia Commonwealth University, RRTC on Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities; and Teresa Belluscio, University of Kentucky

Facilitator: Dr. Stephanie Lau, Virginia Commonwealth University, RRTC on Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities

Guests: Mary Lisker, Powhatan High School; Sara Meade, Powhatan High School; Vedette Spellman, Booker T. Washington High School; & Lesley Gilpin, Providence School

Contact: [sjLau@vcu.edu](mailto:sjLau@vcu.edu)

**3:30 - 3:45 pm ▶ Question & Answer Session**

**3:45 - 4:15 pm ▶ Panel -- Students with Significant Disabilities: Student and Family Experiences**

This panel will feature the recordings from students with significant disabilities who participated in the research studies, their parents and educators. Discussion will focus on pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS), including work based learning experiences.

Facilitators: Carolyn Cage, Virginia Commonwealth University, RRTC on Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities; Teresa Belluscio, University of Kentucky; and Leah Burgess & Justine Hrvatin, Vanderbilt University

**4:00 - 4:15 pm ▶ Question & Answer Session**

**Thursday, November 2, 2023**

**1:00 - 1:45 pm ▶ Effects of Trained Personnel Providing Employment Supports in Higher Education on the Employment Experiences of College Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disability**

Postsecondary education (PSE) is considered a beneficial and at times required pathway to employment. Inclusive higher education (IHE) programs provide opportunities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (ID/D) access to postsecondary education. Incorporating work experiences into IHE programs can provide students with ID/D a paycheck, professional relationships, and opportunities to develop skills. However, not all program staff are adequately trained to address the lack of paid campus employment opportunities. This presentation will discuss the effects of the implementation of an online course, coupled with a year of technical assistance delivered to inclusive

higher education staff who provide employment support on paid employment and/or internship opportunities for college students with IDD. Washington State University ROAR staff will be included in this presentation to share their experiences as technical assistance participants.

Presenter: Jaclyn Camden, Virginia Commonwealth University, RRTC on Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities

Facilitator: Dr. Stephanie Lau, Virginia Commonwealth University, RRTC on Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities

Guests: Dr. Holly Whittenburg, Dr. Katie Abrams, Genna Kieper, & Dr. Marcus Poppen, Washington State University ROAR

Contact: [jlcamden2@vcu.edu](mailto:jlcamden2@vcu.edu)

**1:45 - 2:00 pm ▶ Question & Answer Session**

**2:00 - 2:30 pm ▶ A Systematic Review of the Literature/ Case Study of Practices Related to Transition of Youth with Disabilities into the Workplace**

Exploration of the underlying mechanisms, barriers, and opportunities affecting employment outcomes of transition-age youth with disabilities can help scholars identify and address gaps in evidence-based vocational rehabilitation practices. The primary goals of this study were to identify and describe barriers and facilitators aligned with employment outcomes for transition-age youth with disabilities, as well as identify existing practices, programs, or policies associated with improved outcomes.

A review and synthesis of the literature on best practices for supporting transition-age youth with disabilities in the workplace was completed. Multiple case studies were then conducted as a complementary analysis to better understand parent and youth perspectives on vocational rehabilitation service provision, support needs, and outcomes. This session will provide an overview of the systematic review results, preliminary findings from the case studies underway, and offer recommendations to further advance the science and practice specific to employment and transition-age youth.

Presenters: Dr. Tim Tansey & Dr. Cayte Anderson University of Wisconsin-Madison

Facilitator: Dra. Yazmin Castruita Rios, Michigan State University

Contact: [tantansey@wisc.edu](mailto:tantansey@wisc.edu)

**2:30 - 2:45 pm ▶ Question & Answer Session**

**2:45 - 3:45 pm ▶ Postsecondary Experience & Collaboration Panel**

This panel will feature study participants, educators, and vocational rehabilitation counselors to discuss their experiences providing student-centered collaboration to improve postsecondary experiences and outcomes.



Panel will introduce the studies:

- Effects of Paid Internships on Competitive Integrated Employment or Postsecondary Education Outcomes for At-Risk Youth with Disabilities Earning a Regular Diploma and
- Cognitive Support Technology for Postsecondary Students with Traumatic Brain Injuries: A Randomized Clinical Trial at the Intervention Efficacy Stage of Research.

- Effects of Paid Internships on Outcomes for At-Risk SWD

Presenter: Kelly Ligon, Virginia Commonwealth University, RRTC on Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities

Contact: [kligon@vcu.edu](mailto:kligon@vcu.edu)

- Activities and Outcomes of a Cognitive Support Technology and Career Preparatory Intervention for Postsecondary Students with Traumatic Brain Injuries

Presenter: Dr. Phillip Rumrill, University of Kentucky

Contact: [Phillip.Rumrill@uky.edu](mailto:Phillip.Rumrill@uky.edu)

Facilitators: Dr. Susan McKelvey, VCU-RRTC on Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities

Guest: Jennifer Cremers, University of Iowa REACH

### **3:45 - 4:30 pm ► Looking Ahead and Advancing Research**

Presenters: Dr. Paul Wehman & Dr. Wendy Parent-Johnson, Virginia Commonwealth University, Rehabilitation Research & Training Center & Dr. Catherine Fowler, UNC-Charlotte

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### Presenter Bios

## Research Findings on the Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities

Dr. Katie Abrams is currently the Transition Coordinator at the University of Iowa REACH program, before this Katie was the director of WSU ROAR. Katie oversees Person-Centered Planning and the transition planning process within the UI REACH program. Her research interests are emerging technology in special education, social media use within IPSE's, and transition planning for students with IDD.



**Katie Abrams, Ph.D.**

Cayte Anderson, Ph.D., LPC, CRC, University of Wisconsin-Madison serves as a research professor with the Innovative Partnership for Advancing Rehabilitation Research and Training (IPARRT) in the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the Wisconsin Center for Education Research (WCER). In this role, she actively studies youth in transition as well as evidence-based practices focused on competitive integrated employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities. Dr. Anderson received her Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has provided leadership on numerous research, demonstration, and systems-change grants for over 25 years. She publishes in peer-reviewed professional journals, including open-source venues to promote knowledge transition in the field. Her research interests include understanding and improving employment, career, and financial post-secondary outcomes for youth with disabilities, transition-age youth and families, interagency collaboration, professional issues in rehabilitation counseling, cultural responsiveness with low-income and marginalized disability populations, and use of evidence-based practices within vocational rehabilitation. She has served as President of the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) Board of Directors and as President for the National Rehabilitation Counselors and Educators Association (RCEA).



**Cayte Anderson, Ph.D.**

VCU-RRTC is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution providing access to education and employment without regard to age, race, color, national origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation, veteran's status, political affiliation, or disability. The VCU-RRTC is funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR) grant #90RTE0002-04-00). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). If special accommodations are needed, please contact Judy Averill at [jmaverill@vcu.edu](mailto:jmaverill@vcu.edu).

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Jessica Awsumb, PhD, is an assistant research professor at Vanderbilt University and a Vanderbilt Kennedy Center member. Her main research interests surround the successful transition of youth with disabilities from secondary school to employment, postsecondary education, independent living, and community participation. She is the principal investigator for two research projects focused on transition-age youth. The first project is a Rehabilitation Research and Training Center examining the effects of paid work during high school on the post-school employment outcomes of youth with an intellectual disability, autism, and multiple disabilities. The second project is the Transition Tennessee Pre-Employment Transition Services initiative with the goal to improve quality employment outcomes for youth with disabilities across our State. She has worked directly with Vocational Rehabilitation and the Department of Education in two States to increase the successful transition of youth with disabilities to adulthood by receiving needed services, experiences, and agency connections while in high school.



**Jessica Awsumb, Ph.D.**

Ms. Belluscio's professional career spans over 25 years in higher education specializing in disability services, ADA law & compliance. Ms. Belluscio is affiliated with the University of Kentucky, Human Development Institute. Current projects include the VCU Pre-ETS Research Study, SHEP TAC (Supported Higher Education Program Technical Assistance Center Team, and as Director of the Summer Leadership Experience Camp, a transitions camp for Kentucky High School students with disabilities.

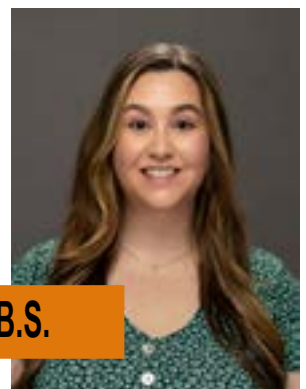


**Teresa Belluscio, MRC BCC**

Prior to her work at UK, Ms. Belluscio served as the Director of the Eastern Kentucky University Disabilities Office for 20 years managing 12 professional staff and serving approximately 675 students with disabilities per year as well as overseeing employee job accommodations. Ms. Belluscio is a Board-Certified Life Coach (BCC) where she coaches individuals with disabilities. She earned a master's degree from the University of Kentucky in Rehabilitation Counseling (MRC) and a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of Louisville, KY.

Ms. Belluscio has held various leadership roles in KY including Co-Chair of the Governors ADA Taskforce, and multiple Chair appointments at KY AHEAD (Association on Higher Education and Disabilities). Ms. Belluscio has presented at numerous conferences on topics related to ADA Compliance, Disability Law & equal access, and internationally in Belfast, Ireland and Vancouver, Canada.

Leah Burgess is an Education Consultant in the Department of Special Education at Vanderbilt University. She received her Bachelor of Science in Psychology. Her previous work history has focused on serving individuals with Severe Mental Health, Intellectual and Developmental disabilities. She has worked with Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) to ensure that adults and youth with disabilities receive Supported Employment Services. Through working with VR, she has focused on transition-age youth and provided services in classroom and individual settings. In classroom settings, all five areas of pre-ETS were addressed. On an individual basis, Work-Based Learning and Job Exploration were the two most consistently addressed pre-ETS. She successfully placed youth into paid summer work experiences that reflected their job interests.



**Leah Burgess, B.S.**



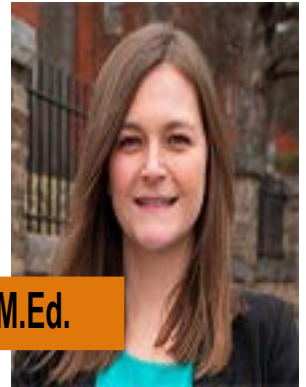
Carolyn Cage is a Transition Training Associate at Virginia Commonwealth University's Center on Transition Innovations (CTI). She began her encore career at CTI in 2019 after serving 36 and a half years with Norfolk Public schools as a classroom teacher, department chair, district transition specialist and senior coordinator for secondary transition. She is credited with developing innovative programs and services to facilitate and implement transition planning for students with disabilities like "Project Search" and "Start on Success".



**Carolyn Cage, M.Ed.**

Carolyn is currently responsible for updating content for current courses, and collaborating with other CTI team members in the development of new courses related to transition planning using evidenced-based practice. She has written two publications on culturally responsive transition planning, and has co-authored and served as editor for several other CTI resources including the "Workplace Readiness Toolkit", and the "Get Ready for College Facilitators' Guide". She has worked on several projects through CTI and VCU's Transition Research, Rehabilitation and Training Center (Transition-RRTC) and is a member of the team providing technical support to Virginia Department of Education Regions 2 and 3.

Jaclyn Camden serves as the Assistant Director of the Center on Transition Innovations at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), the Director of VCU's inclusive postsecondary education program, ACE-IT in College, and as a study lead for VCU-RRTC on Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities. Ms. Camden also serves as the chair of a national collaborative Employment Partnerships Workgroup that focuses on policy and system practices and barriers to bringing partners like Vocational Rehabilitation, schools, and employers together to enhance paid employment for students with intellectual disability. Ms. Camden has 15 years of experience providing direct support to people with disabilities and delivering technical assistance and training to educators, employers, and others. Her core focus areas encompass secondary transition, postsecondary education and employment, career planning, inclusive higher education, and employment supports. Ms. Camden has extensive experience in the transition of young adults into competitive integrated employment. Ms. Camden's experience includes implementing and coordinating state and federal-funded projects to increase employment and postsecondary education outcomes for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.



**Jaclyn Camden, M.Ed.**

Yazmin Castruita Rios is an assistant professor in the Department of Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Special Education at Michigan State University. She is a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor (CRC) and obtained her Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Counselor Education with an emphasis in leadership and research on transition for youth and young adults with disabilities from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her research focuses on the participation of transition-age youth with disabilities in areas such as employment and community integration. Additional research interests

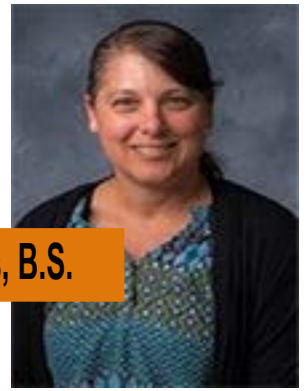


**Yazmin Castruita Rios, Ph.D.**

include understanding the best practices in outreach and engagement of Hispanic communities in vocational rehabilitation (VR) programs, VR services and outcomes, interdisciplinary collaborations, psychosocial adaptation to disability and professional issues in rehabilitation counseling.

Jennifer Cremers has been with the University of Iowa REACH Program since 2014 and is currently in her fourth year as the Career Development Coordinator. Jennifer received her Bachelors in Education and Teaching from the University of Iowa.

**Jennifer Cremers, B.S.**



Catherine Fowler is co-director of the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: the Collaborative (NTACT:C), funded through the Office of Special Education Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). Her work with NTACT:C, other grants, and adjunct faculty at UNC Charlotte focuses on the successful, respectful, and meaningful integration of individuals with disabilities in society.

Catherine Fowler is co-director for the NTACT:C, funded by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. Dr. Fowler is also an adjunct instructor of courses in transition methods and collaborative service delivery at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and supports technical assistance and research on other U.S. Dept. of Education funded projects related to transition services. Her career as a practitioner included early intervention service coordination and classroom teaching of students with autism and intellectual disabilities. Her work focuses on the successful, respectful, and meaningful integration of individuals with disabilities in society. She lives outside of Charlotte with her husband, daughter (when on college breaks), and three big dogs.

**Catherine Fowler, Ph.D.**



Lesley Gilpin is a school social worker at the Providence School in Jessamine, Kentucky. In 2023, she was the first school counselor in Kentucky to receive her national school social worker certification.

**Lesley Gilpin, M.Ed.**



Justine Hrvatin, M.S.Ed., M.A.T. is an Education Consultant in the Department of Special Education at Vanderbilt University. She received her Master of Science in Education with a focus in Special Education and Master of Arts in Teaching in English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL). Her previous work includes being an ESOL teacher and program specialist and special education teacher in alternative settings. Through her teaching experience with youth

with high support needs in alternative and low socioeconomic settings, she has focused on the improvement of teaching practices surrounding transition in the classroom and community, in

addition to the education of families on the transition process. She has successfully connected students to agencies, paid employment, internships, and postsecondary education opportunities.

**Justine Hrvatin, M.S.Ed.**



Genna Kieper is the WSU ROAR Employment Services Coordinator and a 3rd year doctoral candidate in WSU's Educational Psychology department. She oversees all employment and career-development related activities for the WSU ROAR Program's 25 students. These activities include job coaching; work-based learning; internships; professional development and credentialing; and competitive, integrated, paid employment. Research interests include culturally responsive and sustaining practices, self-determination in inclusive post-secondary education, and peer-to-peer support in the career development process for young adults with I/DD.

**Genna Kieper, M.A.**



Stephanie Lau is a Transition Training Associate for the Center on Transition Innovations (CTI) and Program Co-Coordinator for the VCU- RRTC Employment of Transition- Age Youth with Disabilities. She holds a BS in neuroscience and anthropology from The College of William and Mary, taught elementary school in the Baltimore City Public School Systems, and earned a Masters of Arts in Teaching (MAT) from Johns Hopkins University. In 2021, she completed her PhD in Public Policy and Administration at Virginia Commonwealth University, L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs.

**Stephanie Lau, Ph.D.**



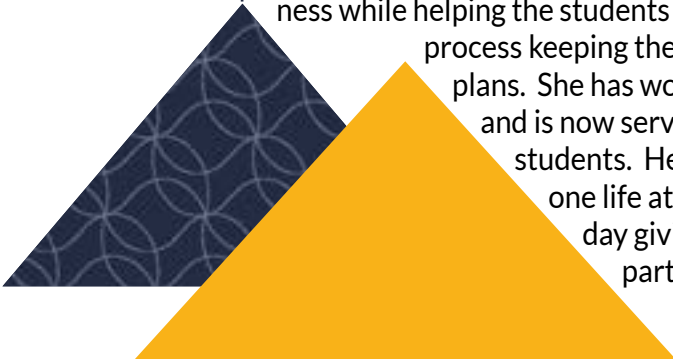
Kelly Ligon, M.Ed. is a Research and Demonstration Associate at Virginia Commonwealth University's Rehabilitation Research & Training Center. Kelly is an educator who has provided training and technical assistance, scholarship, research, and demonstration at the local, state, and national levels for over twenty-five years. Her passion is preparing students for life after high school. Since 2014, she has had primary responsibility for designing and implementing the Start on Success (SOS) program in Virginia and providing training and technical assistance to ensure program sustainability and expansion of SOS within school divisions across the state.

**Kelly Ligon, M.Ed.**



Mary Lisker graduated from IUP in Western PA with an undergraduate degree in Speech Pathology and Audiology. She moved to Westmoreland County Virginia in 1997 and worked as a Speech Pathologist for three years before moving to Chesterfield County, Virginia. While living in Chesterfield County, she started working at Powhatan High School in 2000 as a Special Education Teacher working in the collaborative classroom setting. She earned her Master's Degree in Special Education in 2003 around the time she started working as the Transition Coordinator for Powhatan County Public Schools. Her passion is working with students with disabilities to figure out their path for the future. She focuses on self-advocacy, self-determination, and disability awareness while helping the students and their families navigate the daily transition process keeping the student's "end goal" on the forefront of all plans. She has worked in the same school district for 23 years and is now serving students who are the children of former students. Her husband likes to say: Mrs Lisker, changing one life at a time in 1009 (her office). She ends each day giving thanks and feeling grateful for being a part of so many young lives.

**Mary Lisker, M.S.**





Sara Meade is a Special Education teacher at Powhatan High School. Her class includes an adaptive curriculum and community-based instruction. Sara aspired to be a Special Education teacher since she was in the 4th grade and loves working with students and families. They teach her something new every day. She is a 1990 graduate of Monacan High School in Chesterfield County, Virginia, and a 1995 graduate from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia. Sara Meade completed an undergraduate degree in Psychology and a Masters of Teaching in Special Education. Most of Ms. Meade's experience has been at the Middle and High School level in Powhatan County.

**Sara Meade, M.Ed.**

Sara is married and lives in Powhatan County. She has 3 daughters who have all graduated from Powhatan High School. Outside of school, Ms. Meade also works as a caregiver for a young lady with Cerebral Palsy and has been with her for 33 years. Ms. Meade also works in a senior living facility with her 94-year-old Grandmother. She enjoys the companionship and stories of the residents in the facility. Sara considers herself very fortunate to be able to work with so many amazing people over her career.

Susan McKelvey, Ph.D., has over 20 years of quantitative and qualitative experience in developing, implementing, and carrying out research and evaluation plans from the grant-writing phase through the final reporting. She has experience conducting research with students with and without disabilities in K-12 settings; learners in the corporate world, community colleges, and universities; conducting needs assessments; and developing assessment systems. Dr. McKelvey is the Director of Research and Evaluation and Project Co-Coordinator of the VCU-RRTC on Employment of Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities.

**Susan McKelvey, Ph.D.**



Dr. Wendy Parent-Johnson is the new Executive Director of the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center and Professor in the Department of Counseling and Special Education at Virginia Commonwealth University. Previously she was the Executive Director of the Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities at the University of Arizona. She has a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling and a Doctorate Degree in Education with an emphasis on Transition for Individuals with Severe Disabilities, both from Virginia Commonwealth University. Dr. Parent-Johnson has extensive experience in the areas of supported and customized employment, transition from school to work, Employment First policy and practice, and healthcare transition from pediatric to adult medical care. She co-developed the Circle of Indigenous Empowerment in partnership with Tribal Nations and communities in Arizona and Oyate' Circle in South Dakota focused on creating a central hub of information, resources, and trainings designed to enhance employment and quality of life for Tribal members with disabilities. She is well-known for her state, national, and international work focused on improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities, most recently providing training, mentorship, and support for disability employment advocates in Uganda. She is Editor of the Journal of Rehabilitation and a member of the Editorial Boards of the Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation and Developmental Disabilities Network Journal.

**Wendy Parent-Johnson, Ph.D.**





Dr. Marcus Poppen is an Associate Professor of Special Education at Washington State University whose work is broadly focused on supporting career development and transition outcomes for youth and young adults with disabilities. His interests include career development for youth and young adults with disabilities; collaborative school-based transition programs; post-secondary education programs for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities; and, program evaluation and capacity building.

**Marcus Poppen, Ph.D.**



Dr. Rumrill is a Professor of Counselor Education and the Director of Research in the Human Development Institute at the University of Kentucky. He holds a master's degree in Counseling from Keene State College in New Hampshire and a doctorate in Rehabilitation from the University of Arkansas. Dr. Rumrill is well known as one of the leading disability and employment researchers in the United States. He has authored or co-authored more than 450 professional publications, including 16 commercially published books (e.g., Foundations of the Vocational Rehabilitation Process, Emerging Disabilities and Rehabilitation Counseling, Case Management and Rehabilitation Counseling, Research in Rehabilitation Counseling). Dr. Rumrill has extensive experience administering funded research projects. He has had leadership roles on 46 grants with total budgets of more than \$55 million. Dr. Rumrill has received numerous awards and honors for his work, including distinguished career awards from the American Rehabilitation Counseling Association (ARCA) and the National Council on Rehabilitation Education. He has won 9 Best Research Article Awards from ARCA and the International Organization of Social Science and Behavioral Research.

**Phillip Rumril, Ph.D.**



Vedette Spellman is a veteran special education teacher in Norfolk Public Schools. In 2016 Vedette was named Norfolk's Teacher of the Year. She earned her Bachelors and Masters from Norfolk State University and her EdS from George Washington University.

**Vedette Spellman, M.S.**

Dr. Tansey received his Ph.D. in Rehabilitation Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is a professor in the Rehabilitation Counselor Education program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Tansey has over 20 years' experience as a rehabilitation counselor, educator, or rehabilitation researcher. He has published over 100 peer-reviewed articles in the areas of applying novel technology in vocational rehabilitation and rehabilitation counselor education, evidence-based practices in vocational rehabilitation, self-regulation, and self-determination. Dr.

**Timothy Tansey, Ph.D.**



Tansey is the principal investigator on the Vocational Rehabilitation Technical Assistance Center for Quality Employment, a project sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. He is currently the principal investigator, co-principal investigator, or co-investigator on several other federally funded research or national technical assistance center grants from the U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

(Social Security Administration and the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research). These current projects seek to ascertain evidence-based practices in the vocational rehabilitation of youth with disabilities, identify employer practices in the recruitment, hiring, retention, and promotion of persons with disabilities, and provide technical assistance to state vocational rehabilitation toward increasing competitive, integrated employment of persons with disabilities living in areas of extreme poverty. Dr. Tansey has developed doctoral level training focused on online and hybrid pedagogy as well as established numerous online, hybrid, and technology-enhanced courses. He serves on the co-editor of the Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin and on the editorial boards for numerous other journals.

Julie Lounds Taylor, Ph.D., is an associate professor of Pediatrics at Vanderbilt University Medical Center and the Co-Director of the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center. The goal of Dr. Taylor's research program is to understand how to promote positive outcomes in adulthood for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities and their families. Her research focuses on understanding the factors that promote a positive transition to adulthood for individuals with autism spectrum disorder and their families. Current projects include: (a) developing and testing a parent advocacy training to improve service access and post-school outcomes as youth on the autism spectrum transition from school-based to adult services; (b) understanding the implications of employment and other day-to-day experiences for mental health and quality of life; (c) examining unique vulnerabilities of women on the autism spectrum. The goal of Dr. Taylor's research program is to understand how to promote positive outcomes in adulthood for individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities and their families vulnerabilities common across sex/gender; and (d) investigating the role of language development during the transition to adulthood for youth with fragile X syndrome.



**Julie Lounds Taylor, Ph.D.**

Paul Wehman, Ph.D. has been a tenured faculty member with Virginia Commonwealth University since 1980. Originally with the VCU School of Education, he moved to a joint appointment with SOE and the School of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and has now returned to an exclusive faculty appointment with SOE. His highly interdisciplinary background and pioneering work in the beginning of supported employment has facilitated millions of persons with neurodevelopmental disabilities, brain injury and spinal cord injury all over the world to gain and retain competitive employment. As Director of the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center and Director of the VCU Autism Center for Excellence, he has written extensively on issues related to transition from school to adulthood and special education as it relates to young adulthood and employment and is founding Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation. Dr. Wehman has been the recipient of numerous awards and he's been the Principal Investigator on more than \$80 million worth of federal grants since joining



**Paul Wehman, Ph.D.**

Dr. Holly Whittenburg is an assistant professor of special education at Washington State University. She is a co-principal investigator on the Washington State University ROAR TPSID grant, and works with the WSU ROAR program to support employment services and person-centered planning. Dr. Whittenburg is also co-director of the Washington Transition Program. Her research focuses on work-related interventions for transition-aged youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities and the impact of policy on the transition experiences of youth with disabilities.



**Holly Whittenburg, Ph.D.**

