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## Announcing the Opening of Region III Assistive Technology Center

The Louisiana Assistive Technology Initiative (LATI) has established seven assistive technology (AT) regional centers. The seven centers are being funded through Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Discretionary Grant funds and were fully operational January 1, 2005. The

purpose of these centers is to increase knowledge and awareness of assistive technology and build capacity within the regions.

Region III consortium includes Ascension, Assumption, Lafourche, St. James, St. John, St. Mary, Terrebonne and



Center is located in the LeBlanc Special Services Center in Gonzales.

Nicholls State University. The

### Upcoming Events

3/7-

- \* LightSpeed demonstration

3/9-

- \* Advisory Council Meeting

3/10-

- \* Regional Meeting- Alexandria

4/12-

- \* Judith Sweeny- Ruston

4/15-

- \* AT Contact Meeting/Words Plus demonstration

4/21-22-

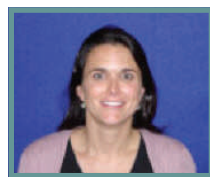
- \* Linda Burkhart- New Orleans

4/28-

- Open House- 2:00 — 7:00

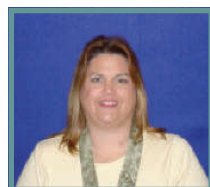
## Meet the Staff

Sharon Edwards, M.Ed., CCC-SLP



Sharon is a speech language pathologist who worked for Ascension Parish as the Assistive Technology Specialist for the last 7 years. She was responsible for evaluating, purchasing, programming, maintaining, repairing, coordinating services, training and providing technical assistance to teachers, therapists, parents and students. Sharon has participated in numerous trainings and conferences on the

Kristie Stapler, BS Mild/Moderate Special Education K-12



Kristie worked as a Mild/Moderate Special Education teacher for 12 years in St. Charles Parish. She held the position as LRE/Special Ed Technology Facilitator for 2 ½ years where she inventoried, installed, programmed, repaired, trained and provided technical assistance to teachers. Her duties also included organizing and conducting the district's Self-Review Monitoring process. She also held the position of Assistive Technology Specialist for 1½ years. Kristie has participated in InTech, DiversiTech, and UDL training as a participant and has

## 1st Annual Assistive Technology Summer Institute

LATI will be hosting a Summer Institute on Assistive Technology June 15 –17, 2005. The 3-day Institute will provide more than 20 sessions on assistive technology, implementation strategies, AT assessment, computer access, and augmentative communication.

The Institute will feature two national keynote speakers. **Jonathan Mooney**, a dyslexic writer and

activist who graduated from Brown University and wrote two books, will present on June 15. **Dave L. Edyburn, Ph.D.**, a national expert in the area of assistive technology and students with mild disabilities, will present on June 16.

The Institute is presented **FREE** of charge but seating is limited. Participants must register at <http://www.solutionwhere.com/ldoe/cw/showconference.asp>?

## Conference Schedule

### Wednesday, June 15, 2005

**7:30 - 8:30** Registration/Packet  
Pick-up

**8:00 - 8:30** Welcome/  
Announcements

**8:30 - 10:15** Keynote Speaker –  
**Jonathan Mooney**

**10:30 - 11:30** Conference Sessions

**11:30 - 12:30** LUNCH

**12:30 - 3:30** Conference Sessions

**8:30 - 10:15** Keynote Speaker –  
Dr. Dave Edyburn

**10:30 - 11:30** Conference Sessions

**11:30 - 12:30** LUNCH

**12:30 - 3:30** Conference Sessions

### Thursday, June 16, 2005

**7:30 - 8:30** Registration/Packet  
Pick-up

## Announcing Two Contests for the Summer Institute

### Student Writing Contest

LATI is announcing a statewide student writing contest. The title of this contest is *If You Give a Kid Technology...* We are asking your students to imagine and write about both existing and future technology affecting all students in the class, especially those with special

needs. Contest duration: January 13<sup>th</sup> - April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2005.

### Photo Contest

We want to see students using assistive technology at school, home, play or in the

community. Entries must be submitted by a teacher or school employee with school contact information listed. A parental consent/release form must be signed and submitted with each entry. Photos must be submitted for entry between March 1 and April 15.

## What is Assistive Technology?

Assistive technology is technology used by individuals with disabilities in order to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible. Assistive technology can include mobility devices such as walkers and wheelchairs, as well as hardware, software, and peripherals that assist people with disabilities in accessing computers or other information technologies. For example, people with limited hand function may use a

keyboard with large keys or a special mouse to operate a computer, people who are blind may use software that reads text on the screen in a computer-generated voice, people with low vision may use software that enlarges screen content, people who are deaf may use a TTY (text telephone), or people with speech impairments may use a device that speaks out loud when symbols are selected.

A formal, legal definition of an assistive technology device is any item, piece of equipment, or product system, acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. Consideration should be given for every student with a disability who is eligible for an individualized education program as to whether the student requires assistive

## AT TECH TIPS

### BIGmack® Communicator

This is a single message communication device. A message can be recorded directly into the device. The large activation surface aides students with visual and physical disabilities. Symbols can be placed on the activation surface to help students relate pictures to the spoken word. BIGmacks can also be used as a switch to activate an object such as a toy.

## 10 Ways to Use a BIGmack

- Use to play games "I win", "Your turn"
- Request physical contact "Brush my hair"; "Rub my arm"
- Tell everyone what's next "Hey, it's lunchtime"; "Let's go for a walk"
- Request an activity "Let's read a book"; "Let's listen to a tape"
- Put it in the bathroom "I'm finished"; "I need help"
- Record a repetitive word or phrase from a story "What do you see?"
- Use during snack to make a choice or comment "I want more" ; "That's yucky!"
- Place on outside or inside the door "Hello, how are you?" "Goodbye"
- Record the day or date so that the child can answer the questions for circle time
- Give directions in an activity "Pour it" "Stir it"



## Region III Assistive Technology Center

611 N. Burnside  
Gonzales, LA 70737

Phone: 225-621-2538

Fax: 225-621-2525

Email: [edwardss@apsb.org](mailto:edwardss@apsb.org)  
[staplerk@apsb.org](mailto:staplerk@apsb.org)



Visit us on the web

<http://www.apsb.org/schools/lss/AsstTech/home.htm>

## Ways to Fluff Your Pages

To aid students with fine motor difficulties, try using page fluffers to assist in turning pages.

- Carpet padding
- Velcro dots
- Packing popcorn
- Tiles
- Foam curler
- Pom poms
- Base ten blocks
- Rubber facet washers
- Cosmetic sponge wedges
- Fun foam
- Corks
- Poker chips
- Puff paint dots
- Magnets
- Beads
- Water bottle cap
- Sponge pieces
- Ethafoam

## Region III AT Center Information



Leblanc Special Services Center  
611 North Burnside Avenue  
Gonzales, LA 70737

### Hours of Operation

**7:30 - 3:30**