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Auburn conference to help young people with disabilities

Posted: Feb 28, 2012 2:45 PM CST

Updated: Feb 28, 2012 3:31 PM CST



NEWS RELEASE

AUBURN - The Auburn Transition Leadership Institute will host its 22nd Alabama Transition Conference March 5-6 at the Mariott at Grand National in Opelika.

The conference brings together service providers and educators to share ideas and work toward the goal of preparing young people with disabilities to live independently. The institute is a research and outreach center for Auburn University's College of Education.

About 600 to 700 parents, students, agencies, businesses, educators and policymakers will gather to learn more about helping students bridge the gap, or transition, from high school to post-secondary employment opportunities. They will have the opportunity to attend sessions and workshops and hear nationally renowned speakers.

Karen Rabren, director of the Auburn Transition Leadership Institute, said the conference will feature speakers who can share different perspectives and cover a wide variety of disabilities.

The keynote speaker will be Shari Rusch, from Sumner, Wash., who will share her experience of growing up with a disability and then becoming a successful writer and educator.

Other speakers include Paul Bates of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, who will conduct workshops on engaging students in person-centered planning, and Carol Schall of Virginia Commonwealth University, who will lead workshops each morning on how positive behavior supports and multi-component behavior intervention plans can help students learn to manage their behavior and find success in life after high school.

Last year's keynote speaker, Ginger Blalock of the University of New Mexico, will again guide Local Transition Planning Summit teams in planning for improved transition services.

The conference will offer a transition update on the latest information about the state of transition in Alabama. It will feature three prominent state leaders – Alabama Superintendent of Education Thomas Bice; Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services Commissioner Cary Boswell; and Alabama Department of Mental Health Commissioner Zelia Bahugh.

When Gov. Robert Bentley signed a proclamation designating March as "Transition Awareness Month" in Alabama, it highlighted the beginning of Auburn University's third decade of providing service to youth and young adults with disabilities.

For more information about the conference, go to the website at: <https://fp.auburn.edu/institute/SITE/index.asp>.

(SOURCE: AUBURN UNIVERSITY / Written by Troy Johnson.)