

**SPECIAL EDUCATOR TO RECEIVE NATIONAL RECOGNITION
FOR CAREER READINESS ACHIEVEMENTS IN CLASSROOM**

Education Associates has selected the runner-up for the 3rd Annual Gary Bates Memorial Award for Excellence in Career Education. The runner-up is Christina Petersen, the Director of Student Services at Laurel Public Schools in Montana.

Petersen is being recognized for her outstanding work implementing Education Associates' Project Discovery curriculum with her students. Project Discovery is a hands-on career exploration curriculum that can be used for students of all functional levels with adapted supports to help students with the most significant challenges. It includes lesson plans, video modeling, performance-based assessments, hands-on activities, and more. Project Discovery is proud to be endorsed by CASE, the US Department of Education, the National Dropout Prevention Network, and the Division on Career Development & Transition.



Christina Petersen found that her students were successful when combining career education with life skills and soft skills training. "It was a huge success," Petersen says. "After the first year we saw a difference in engagement and academics. Students who were failing are now soaring. We grew by leaps and bounds. We saw a decrease in student dropout by more than 50%." This statistic includes students whose parents pulled them out for homeschooling and/or moving them to other schools in search of better transition programs.

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Project Discovery and Achieve Life Skills have had a positive impact on Laurel's Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Program. They started with just a few students enrolled to a full schedule at the high school level. The Pre-ETS Program has even partnered with Vocational Rehab to expand the reach of opportunities and resources for students.

Additionally, Laurel Public Schools has expanded their reach into the community. Families are now more involved and engaged in what students are learning, and the district has partnered with local businesses to support career readiness through student internships. Christina has a positive outlook for Laurel's programs.

"So much has changed in the last few months and I anticipate that next year will be even bigger and better... The possibilities are endless."

CASE endorses products that have proven to be effective in teaching students with special needs and strives to enhance the worth, dignity, potential, and uniqueness of every individual in society. Over

1,000 special educators from across the country will gather in Pittsburgh next week for the annual National CASE Conference.

The **Gary Bates Memorial Award** was created by Education Associates to commemorate the work of the late Gary Bates, who worked tirelessly to provide educators with hands-on, evidence-based career exploration and life skills programs for 20 years. Each year, applicants are invited to nominate themselves or someone else who has used Education Associates' Project Discovery or Achieve Life Skills curricula to make a significant, positive impact in students' lives and in the community.

Education Associates is the developer of Project Discovery, the leading comprehensive career education, job preparation and life skills programs for all learners, including those with special needs. Education Associates empowers educators and workforce development leaders to help all students realize their potential. Education Associates believes everyone can become "Job Ready and Life Ready" to live the vibrant, independent lives they deserve. To learn more, visit <http://educationassociates.com>.