



## *Jared Steinkamp, Perandoe Special Education District*

The Perandoe Special Education District is a joint agreement cooperative serving Monroe and Randolph counties in Illinois. Their purpose is to assure that all children in the counties served receive a free and appropriate education regardless of the nature and severity of their disability.



### **INTERVIEW WITH Jared Steinkamp, Perandoe Special Education District**

March, 2018

TAI was fortunate to catch up with Jared Steinkamp, who oversees their PAES Lab. Jared has worked in special education for 17 years and works with staff members Angela Cartee, Stacie Hick, and Kyle Gerlach. Altogether they provide Perandoe a wealth of experience and knowledge.

**TAI:** To begin, please tell us about your approach to special learning and how PAES fits in.

**Jared:** Over the years, I have taught Physical Education, Health, Driver Education, and Self-Contained Special Education. But what I have found out is that I really enjoy working with the students in our Cross Categorical

program. These students have disabilities which include Autism and Intellectual disabilities. Before the PAES Lab, the only progression we noticed from these students is from class work and volunteering. Since we started using PAES, we noticed that these students are capable of a whole lot more. Some can potentially enter the competitive job market. Something we would have never known without the PAES Lab. Our main goal is to educate these students and provide them with the skills to help them lead productive and independent lives after school.

**TAI:**How did you first learn about PAES?

**Jared:** I first learned about PAES through Crystal Deterding, a fellow social worker that I have been working with for many years.

**TAI:** Why did you purchase a PAES Lab?

**Jared:** To help our students with disabilities learn job skills to help them become productive members of society. Also, many of our students learn better by doing instead of sitting in a classroom.

**TAI:** What were your expectations for PAES and how is your Lab meeting them?

**Jared:** At first, the expectations were low because we did not know what our students were capable of in the workplace. To start off, we did not even have someone picked to run the PAES lab. That is when I volunteered to run the lab. Since implementation, we have seen tremendous growth in our cross categorical classrooms. I am amazed at what these students can do. It seems that the students can accomplish more when they are able to work with their hands. With the lab, we are able to find a job that each student can be successful with. Currently, we have 3 students who can enter competitive employment. Without the PAES lab, we would have never known their capabilities and limitations.

**TAI:** Did you consider solutions other than PAES and if so, what and why?

**Jared:** At Perandoe, we are always finding new ways to help our students become successful. Sometimes we support them too much. With the PAES lab, we are able to let them fail and work their way back up to success with encouragement. Many teachers create new curriculum that is not offered from manufacturers. This can take a lot of time and money to create appropriate curriculum.

**TAI:** Please describe your PAES experience.

**Jared:** To date, the PAES Lab has been a great experience for me, the students, and the staff that help. It can be chaotic at times, but the experience has been great. A lot of positive feedback has been shared by the students, staff, and parents. Word about the PAES lab has spread like wildfire throughout the district. Many educators have visited the PAES lab to see how it works. They are all amazed at how well the students perform.

**TAI:** Would you share a story about a positive experience a student has had with PAES?

**Jared:** I have many stories to share. It is hard to pinpoint one story. This past summer, we had a new student to the PEP program and PAES. LT was very "energetic" to say the least. LT had a rough few days when he started. Short attention span and temper tantrums were a norm. When he entered the PAES lab, I had high expectations for him. Working quietly and staying on task were a couple. Then I found out that he had limited use of his right hand due the fact that he had meningitis as a 3 year old. This lead to him having his brain split therefore limiting the use of his right side. It affected his speech and developmental abilities. He also wears hearing aids in both ears. My goal was to get him more use out of his right hand. Currently in the PAES Lab, LT is able to use his right hand for many jobs. When his parents found out about his progress, they were asked to come visit our Lab. To their surprise, LT was able to use his right hand more often because of the work he is doing in the PAES Lab and classroom. Both parents were awestruck and pleased with his progress. Today, he can use his right hand for many tasks as well as give high 5's to me at the end of the day.

**TAI:** Describe the effect PAES has on student outcomes?

**Jared:** Student outcomes from PAES help the teachers write attainable and appropriate functional goals for the students' IEP's.

**TAI:** What kind of feedback have you received from parents?

**Jared:** From the parents I have spoken with, all feedback has been very positive. In my opinion, I feel we will get more students at our program because of the PAES Lab.

**TAI:** If you could tell your peers about PAES, what would you say to them?

**Jared:** PAES is great!!! Yes, many administrators will get sticker shock when they see the price but will quickly realize it is money well spent when they see student progression.

**TAI:** What one thing could we do to improve your experience?

**Jared:** Create an Elementary and Adult PAES program as well as one for higher functioning students

**TAI:** What did you google to find a product like PAES?

**Jared:** A colleague of mine told me about PAES. Once I found out, I found out as much as possible about it.

**TAI:** Do you refer PAES to others?

**Jared:** As many as I can, especially administrators.

**TAI:** Describe how it is to work with Talent Assessment, Inc.?

**Jared:** Terrific experience. The two individuals, Valerie Kean and Steve Putnam, which I have been in contact with have been very helpful with all the questions I have. Val is very knowledgeable and is able to explain the PAES experience in an easy to understand manner.

**TAI:** Is there anything else you would like to add?

**Jared:** I wish the PAES lab was purchased years ago. It is a great tool to use to help with student success.