



Office of Federal Programs Division for Special Education

Educating Georgia's Future

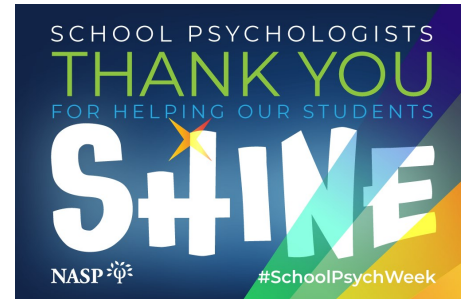
November 4, 2022

Welcome

Greetings from the State Director

Directors,

Next week has been designated as National School Psychology Awareness Week - November 7-11, 2022. This year's theme is **Together We Shine**. During the week, I encourage you and your district to take time to celebrate your school psychologists. School psychologists are unsung heroes. Until you need a school psychologist, many parents, students and even school personnel are unaware that all LEAs have school psychologists on staff or contract for school psychology services. Although we know that school psychologists are so much more than trained professionals to evaluate students, take time to say thank you for their dedication and commitment. School psychologists play a critical role in supporting students, families and staff so take time to honor your team.



Our new director of the week is Andrea McAllister from Murray County Schools. Learn more about the educators who influenced her career. Glad to have you as a new director!

The next Director's Webinar is Tuesday, November 8 at 1 p.m. Please use the [Director's Webinar link](#) to access and register.

Our district highlight this week is from Bacon County Schools. They have recently opened a coffee shop called the Bacon Brewers. Students take orders on Monday and deliver the coffee on Friday to the teachers. Fridays are now better than ever! Thank you, Bacon County Schools! I am very proud of this work.

G-CASE will be in Savannah on November 16-18, 2022. The Annual Fall Conference is always packed with great information and professional learning sessions. G-CASE is "our group" to support directors and district leadership for special education. Networking with your colleagues is also critical in your roles. Be part of the fun in spending time with leaders from other LEAs. G-CASE Fall Conference is a tradition. I think I have missed only one year since 1996. G-CASE is a priority for me! Hope to see you there.

Speaking of school psychologists – I worked in Psychological Services in a semi-large school district for eight years of my career. I served as an educational diagnostician paired with school psychologists assigned to the same schools. I evaluated on average 300 students each year. As a team, I worked with the school prior to referral during the SST process, received referrals for evaluation, completed the educational assessment including any rating scales, observation, collection of necessary documents such as work samples, and then passed the referral to my school psychologist partner. As requested, I would return for second measures and in general support the process while the school psychologist assessed and completed the report. The eligibility would come back my way to draft and communicate with the school about scheduling a meeting. Times have changed and for the better. Some things have not changed over the years. The long hours of working with students to evaluate, counsel and refer students for services is very much the same. Again, most of the time, school psychologists are unknown until their services are needed. My experience in working with school psychologists for almost 40 years is a very precise, well-educated group of professionals who care deeply and want to provide the very best support for students and their families. Trust me, at times they carry a heavy burden not just in terms of workload but due to the responsibility to support students. Since we are in the month of thanksgiving, let's give thanks for our school psychologists.

Every teacher, administrator, psychologist, counselor, support specialist, paraprofessional, job coach, parent mentor, school nurse, OT, PT, SLP, BCBA, RBT and the list could just keep going, are vital to support all students but especially



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students with disabilities. Take time to honor these professionals. Please know you are making a difference.

Thank you for all you do to support students with disabilities!

Keeping students first,

Wina



Mark Your Calendars

Special Education Events and Due Dates

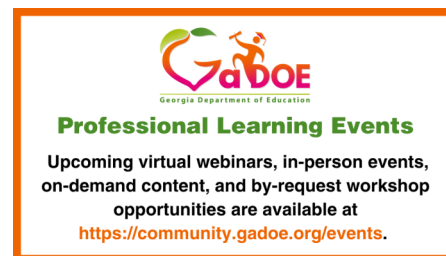
Please review the information below and the [Due Dates Calendar](#) for deadlines and key dates.

Professional Learning Events

- **November 8 at 1:00 p.m.** — Special Education Directors' Webinar see [November Webinar](#) to register.
- **November 9 at 10:00 a.m.** — Serving ESOL/SWD Dually Identified Students State (FY23 School Based Administrators PL Series) see [SESBA: Serving ESOL/SWD Dually Identified Students - GaDOE Community](#) for registration.
- **November 9 at 2:00 p.m.** — Positive Behavior Supports in Secondary Settings (FY23 SSIP Fall PL Series) see [SSIP Series: PBIS in Secondary Settings - GaDOECommunity](#) for registration.
- **November 10 at 3:30 p.m.** — Assistive Technology (AT) Webinar see [Assistive Technology \(AT\) Webinar Session 3 - GaDOE Community](#) for registration.
- **November 15 at 2:00 p.m.** — Co-teaching and SDI in Virtual Classrooms see [Co-teaching and SDI in Virtual Classrooms - GaDOE Community](#) for registration.
- **November 16 at 2:00 p.m.** — Reciprocal Teaching: Dialogue About What is Read see [Reciprocal Teaching: Dialogue About What is Read - GaDOE Community](#) for registration.
- **November 16 at 2:00 p.m.** — Integrating Accessible Educational Materials and Assistive Technology Tools with High School Completion Strategies (FY23 SSIP Fall PL Series) see [SSIP Series: Integrating AEM and AT Tools - GaDOE Community](#) for registration.
- **November 16 at 7:00 p.m.** — Unraveling Dyslexia: A Closer Look Series. Session 2: "Reading Development & Dyslexia." See [Unraveling Dyslexia: A Closer Look Series - GaDOE Community](#) for registration.

Important Date Reminders

- **November 4, 2022** — Timelines Prong 2 is due for LEAs not at 100% on July 31, 2022.



Special Education Personnel Spotlights

New Director Spotlight

ANDREA MCALLISTER

The Georgia Department of Education’s Special Education Services and Supports Division is excited to feature Andrea McAllister for our New Director Spotlight this week.

Andrea McAllister is the Special Education Director for Murray County Schools and has been in the field of education for 25 years. Ms. McAllister’s career began at Coker Elementary School as a 3rd grade teacher for seven years until moving to Spring Place Elementary to teach 4th grade for one year.



Ms. McAllister always had an interest in teaching Special Education, however never pursued the interest until a good friend, who worked in the Special Education Department, reached out to tell her about a position that opened as a Teacher of Orthopedic Impaired. From there, Ms. McAllister obtained her OI certification through Georgia State University and served as an OI teacher for 14 years. In addition to her teaching responsibilities, Ms. McAllister has also served on the Assistive Technology team, Behavior Intervention team, the Go-IEP adoption committee, served as an Itinerant Lead Teacher, Chatsworth Elementary School Lead Teacher, North Murray High School Lead Teacher and lastly, as a Behavior Support Coordinator for Murray County Schools for three years.

When reflecting on where she is in her professional career, Ms. McAllister acknowledged that Dr. Maria Bradley, her former principal at North Murray County High School, helped shape her as a leader and gave her numerous professional opportunities to develop her leadership skills.

Ms. McAllister has been married to her husband, Jeff, for ten years and has three adult bonus children, five wonderful grandchildren that keep them busy, and two fur babies, Isabeau the Mini Australian Shepard, and Zoe the Weimaraner. Ms. McAllister enjoys spending time with family and friends, as well as traveling, karate, biking, and attending concerts.



District Spotlight

BACON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT



GaDOE’s Special Education Services and Supports Division is excited to feature Bacon County School District in our district spotlight this week.

Bacon County High School’s self-contained students recently opened a coffee shop, naming it the Bacon Brewers! The students send out a Google Form each Monday allowing teachers to order coffee. The students then prepare the coffee and deliver it to teachers on Friday. Fridays have become one of their favorite days at BCHS.



Practice Pointers

USED Guidance on Discipline: Question C-1

QUESTION C-1: WHEN DO DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS AND PROGRAMMATIC CHANGES CONSTITUTE A CHANGE OF PLACEMENT?

A change of placement occurs if: (1) the removal is for more than 10 consecutive school days; or (2) the child has been subjected to a series of removals that constitute a pattern (i) because the series of removals total more than 10 school days in a school year; (ii) because the child's behavior is substantially similar to the child's behavior in previous incidents that resulted in the series of removals; and (iii) because of such additional factors such as the length of each removal, the total amount of time the child has been removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another. [34 C.F.R. § 300.536\(a\)](#).



The calculation of the 10 school days of suspension addressed in [34 C.F.R. § 300.530](#) could include exclusions that take place outside of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) discipline provisions which occur because of a child's behavior. Actions that result in denials of access to, and significant changes in, a child's educational program could all be considered as part of the 10 days of suspension and also could constitute an improper change in placement. These actions could include when a school administrator unilaterally informs a parent that their child with a disability may only remain in school for shortened school days because of behavioral issues or when a child with a disability is not allowed by the teacher to attend an elective course because of behavioral concerns. These types of actions are generally considered disciplinary removals unless all three of the following factors are met: (1) the child is afforded the opportunity to continue to appropriately participate in the general curriculum; (2) the child continues to receive the services specified on the child's individualized education program (IEP); and (3) the child continues to participate with nondisabled children to the extent they would have in their current placement. Further, the immediate removal of a child with a disability to a more restrictive setting for more than 10 days in response to disability-related behavior could also constitute an improper disciplinary removal or an improper change of placement if not specifically authorized under, and implemented consistent with, IDEA requirements.

For more information, please see the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) guidance found in [Questions and Answers: Addressing the Needs of Children with Disabilities and IDEA's Discipline Provisions as revised July 19, 2022](#).

More from GaDOE

Save the Date: Best Practices Forum

The Transition Best Practices Forum will be held in collaboration with First District RESA. The event will take place on Thursday, January 19 at Liberty County Performing Arts Center. The forum will spotlight the work of GLRS, districts, GNETS, and teachers in effective transition planning and programming, use of self-determination initiatives and collaboration with counselors, CTI, and families. More information will be made available in the coming weeks.

Student-Led IEP Train the Trainer

GaDOE is offering training to districts who wish to begin implementation of or restore a student-led IEP initiative. This training will provide participants with the knowledge needed to develop and implement ASPIRE or any student-led IEP initiative. The focus will be on building capacity and sustainability to meet the intent of laws concerning students' participation in transition planning and providing instruction in self-determination. Participants should include administrators, special education leads, and teachers who will begin the student-led IEP initiative in the school or district. As a result of this training participants will be able to identify:

- Components of a student-led IEPs (SLIEP) initiative

- Supports needed to implement a SLIEP initiative
- Processes and practices to build capacity and sustainability
- Tools for targeting and measuring self-determination

Contact Elise James at ejames@doe.k12.ga.us or by phone at 404-326-0421 to schedule your district training or find out if your GLRS is holding a regional training.

Using the Self-Determination Inventory as a Transition Assessment

GaDOE is pleased to make the Self-Determination Inventory (SDI) available to districts who wish to use it to measure students' self-determination. The SDI is a research-based self-report measure validated for young people ages 13-22 with and without disabilities.

This training has two-parts that introduce the Self-Determination Inventory (SDI).

- Part 1 provides participants with the background of the tool, pre-learning that must be conducted with students, and interpreting scores to drive instruction to fit the individual needs of students. Part 1 is for teachers who will be working with the students and those personnel who will be administrators of the SDI dashboard.
- Part 2 provides instruction and practice for administrators of the SDI dashboard. This training includes: (1) entering students and teachers in the dashboard, (2) launching assessments, (2) activating and deactivating names, (3) moving students and teachers, and (4) downloading reports.

Contact Elise James at ejames@doe.k12.ga.us or by phone at 404-326-0421 to schedule your district training or find out if your GLRS is holding a regional training.

National School Psychology Week

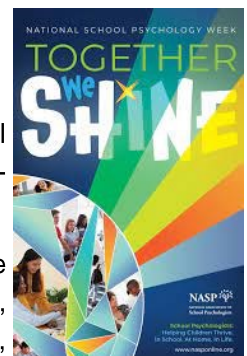
National School Psychology Week (NSPW) is November 7–11, 2022!

The GaDOE Division of Special Education Services and Supports want to say THANK YOU to all the School Psychologists in our beautiful state. We appreciate all the hard work, sacrifice, and dedication you display each day for Georgia students.

School Psychologists are uniquely qualified professionals who support the development of the Whole Child. They display expertise in diverse learning needs, data collection, progress monitoring, assessment, counseling, research, intervention development, mental health, instructional support, and a variety of other areas. They are a common thread throughout a student's PK-12 career and help foster student success. School Psychologists partner with families, schools, teachers, counselors, administrators, and others to ensure students have a supportive learning environment.

"Together We Shine" is the 2022 theme designated by the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). School Psychologists are truly bright stars in our LEAs and are true collaborators to ensure student success.

Thank you again for all you do day in and day out and please take time to thank a School Psychologist, November 7-11, 2022!!



Creating Solutions for Educational Success

Register your staff (teachers at all levels, OT, PT, SLP, AT Leadership) now to attend one of six opportunities for a day-long make and take that will inspire improved access to instruction for all students!

In partnership with Tools for Life, the Division for Special Education Services and Supports will

collaboratively support a day-long training for educators of students with Intellectual Disabilities (OT, PT, SLP, AT, special education low-incidence teachers, and leadership). In addition to receiving a copy of the book “Make Stuff and Love People,” participants will spend a full day with the book’s author, Dr. Therese Wilkomm. Dr. Willkomm will also discuss AT solutions for students with vision and hearing loss, the need for communication, and self-regulation strategies. During this hands-on professional learning day, each attendee will return not just with some great ideas but also 10 multi-use devices to support students in their classrooms.

November 8, 9 or 10 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.: Macon Marriott City Center – 240 Coliseum Dr, Macon, GA 31217

November 14, 15, or 16 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.: The Classic Center – 300 N Thomas Street, Athens, GA 30601

Please share the [training registration](#) with your educators. Don’t miss out on what may be the best one-day PL session this year!

GVRA Virtual Forums



GEORGIA VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION AGENCY

Announcing GVRA virtual forums for families, students, and special education professionals. These forums will be offered November 15, November 29, and December 13 from 6 to 7 p.m. The focus of the sessions will include: (1) how to access VR services, (2) types of services available, (3) importance of early conversations, (4) and frequently asked questions. CART services will be provided. If you have any questions or additional accessibility requests, please send them to Jeff at jeff.allen@gvs.ga.gov.

[Zoom Meeting Link](#)

Meeting ID: 878 5821 8826

Passcode: 4KZm4d

FT085 IEP Services Report Clarification

The Data and GO-IEP team was recently alerted to a discrepancy in the FT085 IEP Services Report for the FTE 1 FY22 (October 2021) report that appeared in October 2022. After careful review of the report, the reason for the difference has been detected and corrected.

The discrepancy noted was more students in the ‘N’ (Not Served) category for the FT085 than were reported in FTE 1 in October 2021. The FT085 for FY22, generated based upon October 2021 reporting, was correct until the FY23 FTE window opened.

The discrepancy in data was caused by the addition of the Status Update for Child Find in the FTE portal in October 2022 (FY23). The Status Update combined the Child Find students from October 2020 and 2021 to enable the LEA to indicate the status of Child Find students (i.e., Still Child Find, Unable to Contact, Moved from the LEA, etc.) from both reporting years. The combination of the students led to a calculation error for the FT085 for FY22 for 7-10 days.

The FT085 from October 2021 (FY22) has been corrected and the students from October 2020 (FY21) are no longer included. The FT085 for Oct 2021 now correctly shows the same data which showed previously and was used to calculate proportionate share for this year.

Please contact Linda Castellanos lcastellanos@doe.k12.ga.us, Dawn Kemp dkemp@doe.k12.ga.us, or Dominique Donaldson Dominique.Donaldson@doe.k12.ga.us if you have any questions.

MTSS Snapshot

WHY IS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CRITICAL WHEN BUILDING A SOLID INFRASTRUCTURE FOR TIER I OF THE MULTI-LEVEL PREVENTION SYSTEM?

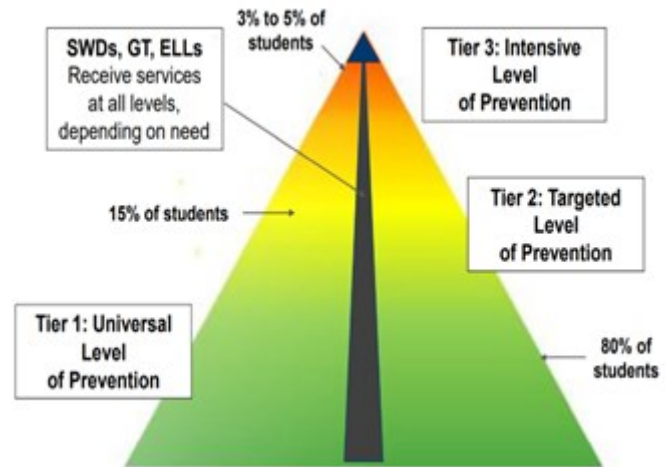
As we reflect on the effectiveness of the three tiers of the multi-level prevention system, professional development is a

critical component. The multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework is not a “wait-to-fail” model. It is a preventative framework that supports the academic and/or behavioral needs of students. It supports students who need remediation and/or acceleration. As districts and schools implement this framework, it is important to provide professional development that establishes a common understanding that MTSS is not the gateway to special education, but a preventative framework that supports improved outcomes for ALL students.

As we build the infrastructure for effective Tier I instruction, professional development is necessary to ensure that all educators are adequately prepared to know the intent of the standards and to know how to teach the standards with fidelity. Professional development (PD) that focuses on effective implementation of a standards-based classroom is essential, [GaDOE SBC Instructional Framework July 2016](#). Effective professional learning that provides teachers with effective strategies/best practices to enhance Tier I instruction, [High-Leverage Practices | Teaching-Works](#) is necessary. In addition, PD that enhances educators’ knowledge of evidence-based practices that support teaching of the standards is critical, [WWC | Practice Guides](#). Additional math and English Language Arts resources can be found on GaDOE’s website, [Mathematics](#) and [English Language Arts Program](#), to support professional development efforts for effective Tier I instruction.

Many of our students with disabilities are served in the general education setting. As we reflect on effective Tier I instruction in the general education setting, we have to ensure effective co-teaching is implemented, Co-Teaching [Series](#). Professional development should be provided for co-teachers to enhance their co-teaching experience and maximize their use of the small group co-teaching approaches. This professional learning should help to support efforts to ensure specially-designed instruction, [Specially Designed Instruction \(SDI\)](#) is implemented effectively and that our students with disabilities are receiving an appropriate education according to their unique needs. As we reflect on some of the professional development needs/resources mentioned to support Tier I instruction, it is important to also ensure that as professional development is provided, opportunities are provided for follow-up and coaching to support fidelity of implementation and sustainability efforts.

For additional information, feel free to reach out to the MTSS regional coaches or Karen Suddeth at ksuddeth@doe.k12.ga.us.



Office of Federal Programs, Division for Special Education

CONTACT INFORMATION

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 Division for Special Education Services and Supports
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 Email: wlow@doe.k12.ga.us



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Office of Federal Programs Division for Special Education

Educating Georgia's Future

November 11, 2022

Welcome

Greetings from the State Director

Directors,

The Annual Fall G-CASE Conference is next week in Savannah. This year's conference theme is **Trending Now**. Trends can be considered a fad that won't last, or a trend can be movement in the right direction such as financial gains or test scores trending upward. The aftereffects of the pandemic have resulted in a few trends that we would not wish like lost learning opportunities and increased demand for mental health services. The conference next week will provide an opportunity to learn together and share ideas. Thank you, G-CASE, for always being on trend! Look forward to seeing everyone in Savannah next week.



Our district highlight this week is from Brooks County School District. An English Cocker Spaniel puppy named Cash has made all the difference at Brooks County Middle School. Follow Cash's story as well as the new addition of Jack. Find out how an accidental discovery has led to meaningful change for students.

Our new director of the week is Velvet Scroggins, Special Education Director for Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School. Velvet believes strongly in each child needing someone to believe in them, cheers them on and advocates on their behalf. Be sure to learn more about Velvet as she is an inspiration.

Our staff member of the week is Marilyn Carter. Marilyn has stepped right into the division to assist as our new Budget Analyst. She has already made such an impact in just a few months. We are so proud to have Marilyn on our team!

Although our beloved Atlanta Braves were not in the World Series this year, the Philadelphia Phillies fought hard trying to claim the prize but fell just short. You win some and lose some. Congratulations to the Houston Astros for staying on trend to win the title. I am always intrigued by the story behind the story. Take for example, Bryce Harper from the Philadelphia Phillies was 13 years old when he was quoted in the New York Times about wanting to be a major league baseball player. Unfortunately, the article was about having unrealistic dreams. We know well in transition planning that it is our role to guide students and help them think through the steps, but we must guard against taking away dreams. As a matter of fact, Bryce Harper made his major league debut at the age of 19 years. At 30 years old, Bryce is a 7x All-Star, 2x National League Most Valuable Player, National League Rookie of the Year, all Major League Baseball First Team, 2x Hank Aaron Award winner, National League Home-run Leader and the list just keeps going. Maybe we should be unrealistic a little more often.

Thank you for all you do for students with disabilities. Dream big and work hard to reach your goals. Maybe even be a little unrealistic as you might just be like Bryce!

Keeping students first,



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Mark Your Calendars

Special Education Events and Due Dates

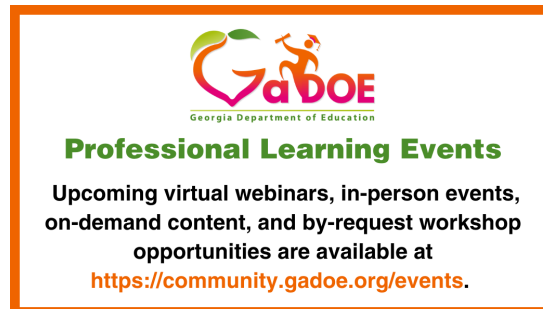
Please review the information below and the [Due Dates Calendar](#) for deadlines and key dates.

Professional Learning Events

- **November 10 at 3:30 p.m.** — [Assistive Technology \(AT\) Webinar Session 3](#)
- **November 15 at 2:00 p.m.** — [Co-teaching and SDI in Virtual Classrooms](#)
- **November 16 at 2:00 p.m.** — [Reciprocal Teaching: Dialogue About What is Read](#)
- **November 16 at 2:00 p.m.** — [SSIP Series: Integrating AEM and AT Tools](#)
- **November 16 at 7:00 p.m.** — [Unraveling Dyslexia: A Closer Look Series](#)
- **December 1 at 3:30 p.m.** — [Accessible Educational Materials Session 3](#)

Important Date Reminders

- **December 1, 2022** — Amend IDEA Budgets for CEIS Carryover and Proportionate Share Carryover (Located in the Consolidated Application in the GaDOE portal)



Special Education Personnel Spotlights

New Director Spotlight

VELVET SCROGGINS

GaDOE's Special Education Services and Supports Division is excited to feature Velvet Scroggins for our New Director Spotlight this week.

Velvet Scroggins is the Special Education Director for Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School and has been in the field of education for 16 years. Ms. Scroggins graduated with a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education and began her educational career teaching students with intellectual disabilities. From 2008-2020, Ms. Scroggins served as a Schley County Elementary Special Education Teacher, then as an Instructional Coach at Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School from 2020-2022, and from 2022 to present, has served as Special Education Director at Southwest Georgia STEM Charter School.

Ms. Scroggins believes that every child deserves to have a person that believes in them, cheers them on, advocates

for them, and informs parents of their rights. Ms. Scroggins feels that every student she has served has taught her so much -- more than she could ever have taught them -- while deeply touching her life.

“Teaching students with disabilities has had the greatest impact on my educational career. God placed me there because teaching and serving students with disabilities and their families was the blessing that I did not know that I needed. I believe every child can learn and deserves an education,” shared Ms. Scroggins.

Being fortunate enough to serve several students from elementary school all the way through high school, and being able to watch them graduate, allowed Ms. Scroggins to cherish every student who has entered her classroom and her school. Teaching, supporting, serving, and helping others is her calling, for which, she is thankful.

Married to her high school sweetheart, Ms. Scroggins and her husband have three children, twin girls who are 19 years old and a son who is 16 years old. Living out in the country within Webster County, Ms. Scroggins also has an eight-year-old beagle named, Daisy, and enjoys spending time with family, friends, reading and relaxing.



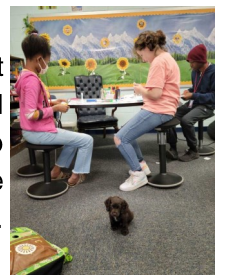
District Spotlight

BROOKS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

GaDOE's Special Education Services and Supports Division is excited to feature Brooks County School District in our district spotlight this week.

The idea of using a dog for therapy is not a new concept, but for Brooks County Middle School it happened purely by accident. One of the administrators had a new puppy that needed someplace to go. He was too small to leave outside, and the hours were too long to leave him in a crate all day. Mrs. Giddens, the small group instruction teacher, suggested bringing the puppy to school because her students would love it. Thus, Cash, the English Cocker Spaniel, made his appearance. Mrs. Giddens was correct! The students were soon doing their work with Cash and he became a steady companion for them. They learned the importance of caring for something by feeding and walking him, and they also became much calmer. There were fewer overwhelmed moments, and the students would complete their assignments with Cash sitting next to them. Students even conducted research about English Cocker Spaniels and their place in the therapy world. It was found that their calm demeanor along with their silky fur is what makes them perfect candidates as therapy dogs.

Cash is a working dog, so sadly his days at school were numbered. Mrs. Giddens received the Bright Ideas Grant and because she had seen the difference a dog can make in her classroom, she decided to use the money to purchase a dog. The dog's sole purpose would be to provide therapy services to the students of Brooks County Middle School. The students in Mrs. Giddens' class helped choose the perfect puppy, a chocolate English Cocker Spaniel with just a hint of white under his neck like Cash. They named him Jack.



Jack made his debut on October 11, 2022. His impact has been tremendous. On any given day, you can walk into Mrs. Giddens' room and find Jack under a student's desk providing quiet comfort. If he is not on the floor, he may be in someone's arms being read to, helping them count, sorting money, writing stories, or simply sleeping while being pet. Everyone knows Jack, and Jack has become very comfortable with everyone. He waddles down the hall with the class and plays outside with them during recess.

If he ever goes missing from Mrs. Giddens' room, it is because a teacher grabbed him during their planning. Jack has been more than a comfort for the students. He has also been a lifesaver for the teacher who is feeling overwhelmed. A quick cuddle and talk gives them just the boost they need.

No one could ever have imagined the impact such a small puppy could have on a class of students with special needs. Jack has assisted with less sensory overload, fewer outbursts, fewer arguments, and less frustration. Jack has also aided in delivering more writing, more reading, more laughter, more calmness, and the list could go on and on. Jack is so much more than a therapy dog; he is an integral member of the BCMS family!



A Thank You from Us!

Thank you for supporting the professional learning in Macon this week for teachers of students with the most significant disabilities. Dr. Therese Willkomm is well known as the “MacGyver” of assistive technology. Love seeing the engagement with teachers!



GaDOE Staff Spotlight

MARILYN CARTER

GaDOE’s Special Education Services and Supports Division is excited to feature Marilyn Carter for our GaDOE Staff Spotlight this week.

Marilyn has been in the field of education for two years. She is currently a Budget Analyst managing the IDEA grant funds. She is responsible for monitoring daily expenditures and ensuring funds are charged correctly following General Accounting Principles and federal guidelines. She has 19 years experience in state government and has worked with four state agencies in her tenure which has allowed her the opportunity to gain knowledge in areas of contracts, grants, accounting, purchasing and budget.

Marilyn is new to the agency, but is excited to learn more about the program offerings and how to be successful in her current role.

Marilyn is from Cleveland, Ohio and has been married for 29 years. She has two daughters ages 9 and 15, who are truly a blessing. She is so grateful to be their mom. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling and creating memories with family.

Practice Pointers

USED Guidance on Discipline: Question C-2

QUESTION C-2: WHO MAKES THE DETERMINATION AS TO WHETHER A PATTERN OF REMOVALS CONSTITUTES A DISCIPLINARY CHANGE IN PLACEMENT?

The local educational agency (LEA) makes the determination, on a case-by-case basis, of whether a pattern of removals constitutes a change in placement under the discipline provisions in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). [34](#)



[C.F.R. § 300.536\(b\)\(1\)](#). Under the IDEA, school authorities may only remove a child with a disability who violates a school's code of student conduct from the child's current placement to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting (IAES), another setting, or suspension, for not more than 10 school days at a time. This removal may only occur to the extent that such disciplinary action is applied to children without disabilities for the same violation. [34 C.F.R. § 300.530\(b\)](#). When school personnel determine that a change of placement would occur as a result of a proposed disciplinary action, prior notice and a copy of the procedural safeguards must be provided to the parent of a child with a disability consistent with the requirements under [34 C.F.R. §§ 300.503 and 300.504](#). If school personnel determine that a pattern of removals is not a change in placement, the child's parent may challenge this decision through the IDEA's dispute resolution mechanisms, which include filing a State complaint under [34 C.F.R. § 300.153](#), filing a due process complaint to request an expedited due process hearing under [34 C.F.R. § 300.532\(a\)](#), or requesting mediation under [34 C.F.R. § 300.506](#).

For more information, please see the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) guidance found in [Questions and Answers: Addressing the Needs of Children with Disabilities and IDEA's Discipline Provisions as revised July 19, 2022](#).

More from GaDOE

Save the Date!: Intentional Teaching Practices for Preschool



Join us for an in-person, day-long workshop designed for teachers of preschool students with disabilities. Intentional Teaching Practices provides developmentally appropriate learning experiences that are taught for preschool children throughout the day, from greeting children in the morning to storytime, small group, and centers. Throughout the session, we will identify a variety of methods to make adaptations and differentiate lessons to meet the various needs of the learners. Teachers will be actively engaged in learning experiences to take back to their classrooms as well as given time to reflect on managing groups of students and how to adapt for the individual needs of children.

This Best Practices Training, led by staff from Georgia State University's Department of Early Childhood and Elementary Education, provides professional development tools needed to keep Georgia educators at the forefront of current research and field-tested classroom methodology.

Registration for this training for the following dates is available [here](#).

- December 8, 2022: Coastal Plains RESA
- January 20, 2023: Oconee RESA
- January 26, 2023: Georgia State University
- February 9, 2023: Georgia State University
- March 9, 2023: Bibb County Professional Learning Center
- March 16, 2023: Pioneer RESA

If you have questions, please contact Barbara Ross at Barbara.ross@doe.k12.ga.us or Lynn Holland at lynholland@doe.k12.ga.us

Student-Led IEP Train the Trainer

GaDOE is offering training to districts who wish to begin implementation of or restore a student-led IEP initiative. This training will provide participants with the knowledge needed to develop and implement ASPIRE or any student-led IEP initiative. The focus will be on building capacity and sustainability to meet the intent of laws concerning students' participation in transition planning and providing instruction in self-determination. Participants should include administrators, special education leads, and teachers who will begin the student-led IEP initiative in the school or district. As a result of this training participants will be able to identify:

- Components of a student-led IEPs (SLIEP) initiative
- Supports needed to implement a SLIEP initiative
- Processes and practices to build capacity and sustainability
- Tools for targeting and measuring self-determination

Contact Elise James at ejames@doe.k12.ga.us or by phone at 404-326-0421 to schedule your district training or find out if your GLRS is holding a regional training.

GVRA Virtual Forums

Announcing GVRA virtual forums for families, students, and special education professionals. These forums will be offered November 15, November 29, and December 13 from 6 to 7 p.m. The focus of the sessions will include: (1) how to access VR services, (2) types of services available, (3) importance of early conversations, (4) and frequently asked questions. CART services will be provided. If you have any questions or additional accessibility requests, please send them to Jeff at jeff.allen@gvs.ga.gov.



GEORGIA VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION AGENCY

[Zoom Meeting Link](#)

Meeting ID: 878 5821 8826

Passcode: 4KZm4d

Using the Self-Determination Inventory as a Transition Assessment

GaDOE is pleased to make the Self-Determination Inventory (SDI) available to districts who wish to use it to measure students' self-determination. The SDI is a research-based self-report measure validated for young people ages 13-22 with and without disabilities.

This training has two-parts that introduce the Self-Determination Inventory (SDI).

- Part 1 provides participants with the background of the tool, pre-learning that must be conducted with students, and interpreting scores to drive instruction to fit the individual needs of students. Part 1 is for teachers who will be working with the students and those personnel who will be administrators of the SDI dashboard.
- Part 2 provides instruction and practice for administrators of the SDI dashboard. This training includes: (1) entering students and teachers in the dashboard, (2) launching assessments, (2) activating and deactivating names, (3) moving students and teachers, and (4) downloading reports.

Contact Elise James at ejames@doe.k12.ga.us or by phone at 404-326-0421 to schedule your district training or find out if your GLRS is holding a regional training.

MTSS Snapshot

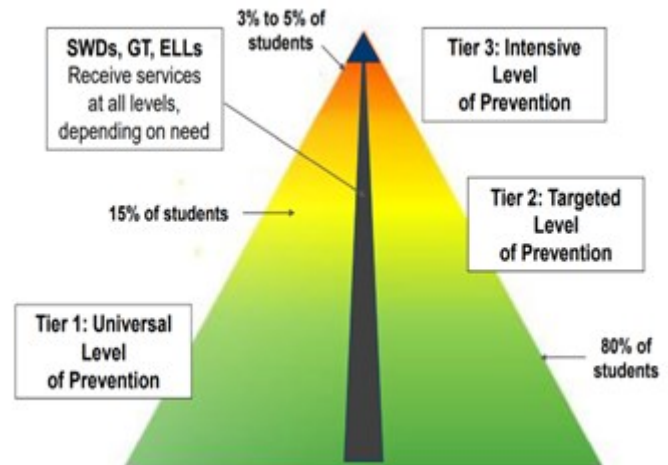
HOW DO HIGH LEVERAGE PRACTICES (HLPs) SUPPORT EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF A MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS (MTSS)?

As we implement a multi-tiered system of supports, the integration of High Leverage Practices should be implemented throughout all three tiers. The HLPs are the fundamentals of good teaching, [High-Leverage Practices | TeachingWorks](#). The practices should be used constantly and are critical to helping students learn the content. These practices can be implemented in **all** subject areas, including health, art, music, etc. These practices are essential to supporting **all** students as teachers plan and facilitate lessons that ensure access to effective Tier I instruction.

At Tiers II and III, it is essential that teachers continue to utilize HLPs when implementing evidence-based interventions with students. These practices also help to support good teaching as students access the targeted and intensive levels of prevention. The implementation of student interventions may be teacher-led or computer-based. As teachers are using the data from the computer-based interventions, it may be beneficial to provide additional teacher-led support to address students' identified needs based on the computer usage reports. This additional support is essential to helping to ensure that students get the maximum benefits from their intervention. As teachers work to provide explicit instruction and/or support during Tiers II and III, the HLPs are critical in promoting active engagement, monitoring the instructional environment, and providing feedback.

As teachers work to increase educational outcomes for students with disabilities, there is another set of High Leverage Practices that are essential, [High-Leverage Practices Resources | CEEDAR \(ufl.edu\)](#). There is also a crosswalk that compares the High Leverage Practices from teachingworks.com with the ones for students with disabilities, [HLP Crosswalk with PSEL \(ufl.edu\)](#). Additionally, this Crosswalk provides information on *Promoting Principal Leadership for the Success of Students with Disabilities*, [PSEL 2015 and Promoting Principal Leadership for the Success of Students with Disabilities: Executive Summary and User Guide | CCSSO](#).

For additional information, feel free to reach out to the MTSS regional coaches or Karen Suddeth at ksuddeth@doe.k12.ga.us.



Office of Federal Programs, Division for Special Education

CONTACT INFORMATION

Wina Low

State Director

Division for Special Education Services and Supports

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Email: wlow@doe.k12.ga.us



@GaDOEsped



Federal Programs



November 18, 2022 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education

Directors,

With next week being Thanksgiving, my mind is filled with so many Thanksgiving memories. It has been more than 25 years, but I clearly remember participating in a feast with our youngest child, Ali, while she was in Pre-k. As you would expect, some of the children were dressed as Pilgrims while others were Indians. Ali was an Indian and I have the picture of the two of us from that day to treasure. Another favorite memory was a tradition that our elementary principal started in Carrollton to allow the staff to have a meal together on the last school day before Thanksgiving holidays while parent volunteers served as substitutes from 11:00-1:00. Just to ensure our self-contained classes were properly supervised, the principal asked if our district-level staff for Student Services could cover five or six classrooms for two hours. Of course, I was happy to support this plan. We had fifteen district staff members (directors, coordinators, social workers, psychologists, administrative assistants, bookkeeper, homeless liaison) and there were only five or six classes. We were all anxious to learn of our assignment. Would it be preschool or maybe the older elementary children? Our Due Process Coordinator, Ginger, and I were assigned our K-1 class. As I recall, we had six children. Fortunately, we were a small enough system that I knew all the children and Ginger did too. I



Turkey with a hat on

knew the children through IEP meetings, paperwork, conversations with their teacher/parents and visits to their classroom but I had not been their teacher or in this case their substitute teacher. We arrived on time and assured Mrs. Brookings that we would be fine. What could go wrong? After all, I am a certified Middle Grades teacher and also certified in Special Education and Leadership. Ginger is an experienced Speech Language Pathologist and Administrator. I had brought homemade cupcakes and candy decorations to make turkey cupcakes for an activity. We knew we were going to have fun but how much fun was yet to be seen. Honestly, the teacher had not been gone for five minutes until Ginger was helping one student with the restroom and I had five very excited children waiting to decorate cupcakes. We were all together at the kidney shaped table. Everything was going as planned until one student pulled a gigantic storage container out of nowhere and promptly turned it over with thousands of dry beans going everywhere. Just as we were in our full glory trying to keep everyone safe and happy while also trying to pick up beans before anyone could see our mess, one of our general education Central Office administrators dropped by just to check on us. After he was able to stop laughing, he did help us sweep up the beans. The children thought it was all just lots of fun. Ginger and I looked like we had been in a tornado when our duties were finished. Despite our best effort to return the classroom to its original state, I fear beans could be found for the rest of the year. I must report that we made the turkey cupcakes, enjoyed eating the cupcakes and everyone stayed safe (and had fun) till their teacher and two assistants returned. The children were precious. Ginger and I had the best time. Needless to say, staying with the children became my highlight of the Thanksgiving season each year. I am so thankful for the opportunity to be an educator. We are all blessed beyond measure.

It was great seeing everyone at G-CASE this week. G-CASE in Savannah is a cherished tradition. Thank you, Sarah Burbach, and G-CASE President Cassandra Holifield as well as the officers and advisors for supporting special education leaders in Georgia. I am thankful for each of you.

Our new director highlight is Dr. Victoria Stroud from Towns County Schools. Learn more about her career journey.

Our staff spotlight is shining on Dr. Katherine Johnson. Katherine brings a wealth of experience to her role. We are so fortunate to have her on our team.

Due to the Thanksgiving holidays, the next email blast will be Friday, December 2.



Happy Thanksgiving Day

Thank you for supporting the training for teachers of students with the most significant disabilities. The six days of training were filled to capacity. Training 600 teachers in six days is another reason to give thanks. A special thank you to Paula Gumpman, Anne Myers, Barbara Ross and Florence Bry for their leadership to organize and support this initiative.

From our GaDOE family to yours, have a wonderful Thanksgiving! I am so grateful for each of you.

Keeping Students First,
Wina

Special Education Events & Due Dates

Please review the information below and the Due Dates Calendar for deadlines and key dates.



Latest news

Professional Learning Events

November 29 at 3:00 p.m. – Engaging Parents in Self-Determination

November 29 at 1:00 p.m. – State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) – Share Your Voice! Stakeholder Feedback Session

December 1 at 3:30 p.m. – Accessible Educational Materials Session 3

Professional Learning Events

Upcoming virtual webinars, in-person events, on-demand content, and by-request workshop opportunities are available at <https://community.gadoe.org/events>.

Professional Learning Events

Reminders

December 1, 2022 – Amend IDEA Budgets for CEIS Carryover and Proportionate Share Carryover (Located in the Consolidated Application in the GaDOE portal)



Dr. Victoria Stroud, Special Education Director, Towns County Schools

New Director Spotlight: Dr. Victoria Stroud

The GaDOE's Special Education Services and Supports Division is excited to feature Dr. Victoria Stroud for our New Director Spotlight this week.

Dr. Victoria Stroud is the Special Education Director for Towns County Schools and has been in the field of education for 10 years. Dr. Stroud enjoys working in the classroom with students and with other educators across North Georgia. It was early in her career when she learned that she not only loved to teach children, but also adults. Dr. Stroud learned early on in life that she loved to teach due to having a little sister who was about 10 years younger than her, which presented many opportunities to do so.

An interesting fact about her is that she became one of the original State TKES Train the Trainers, when they opened it up for district employees to do so. This allowed her to fully learn a new method of evaluations, how to navigate the platform formally known as the TLE Platform, and then work on her skillset of teaching adults. Dr. Stroud learned the true meaning of patience in this setting and genuinely enjoyed the challenge of every ability level that she worked with, especially with technology.

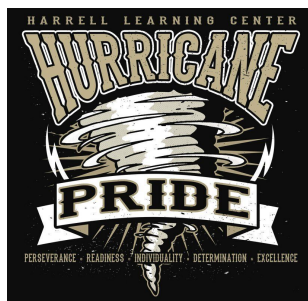
Getting to be that helpful phone call to principals or teachers within her school system was something she looked forward to and to this very day, Dr. Stroud and one of the principals still joke that they are one another's "best friend", based on how much they spoke over the phone in those early days. Dr. Stroud has felt extremely fortunate in working for people who have always supported

her longing to learn something new or try something different. She lives by the phrase, "The grass is greener where you water it" and she is glad that she gets the opportunity to continue this mindset and challenge her current employees.

Before becoming the Special Education Director in Towns County, Dr. Stroud also served as the Executive Director of Federal Programs at Mountain Education Charter High School, where she oversaw roughly ten Federal Programs as well as the opportunity to collaborate with multiple federal contacts at the state and LEA level. In making her move to Towns County Schools this school year, Dr. Stroud was able to transition to Special Education and find excitement in being over just one program, though finding that the workload did not decrease. Dr. Stroud's newest endeavor has been inspiring, challenging, and made room for growth, as being connected to the Special Education network has truly been rewarding for her. Dr. Stroud has shared how blessed and rewarding it has been, as she has been able to get to work with so many amazing people, in addition to being connected to the students, again.

Completing her doctorate through Valdosta State University is one thing Dr. Stroud is most proud of, as she loves to encourage others to aspire after their own doctoral journey. Being a lifelong learner is truly a passion for Dr. Stroud and instilling this value in others gives her so much joy.

Dr. Stroud has been married for eight years to her husband, Josh Stroud. The Strouds have one daughter and one dog, who took the loss of his previous role in being the only child very well! The Strouds love optimizing the beautiful North Georgia mountains and the many hiking trails available to them.



Harrell Learning Center logo

District Spotlight: South Central GLRS

GaDOE's Special Education Services and Supports Division is excited to feature The Harrell Learning Center in our district spotlight this week.

The Harrell Learning Center (HLC), GNETS STEAM lab students recently

completed their Animal Adaptation lesson in PLTW (Project Lead the Way).

Students were asked to pick an animal, domesticated or not, to think of their adaptation and the benefits and uses of the adaptation. Students were excited to learn they were then going to paint the animal of their choice. They were then given a short lesson by Mrs. Shannon Miller, the HLC Technology Lab Teacher, on some of the differences in painting strokes, holding a brush, and even learning some uses and different types of paint. They discussed in more detail some of the different techniques that give character to animated facial paintings. The students then wrote a fictional story using a nonfictional adaptation their animal has.



Artwork

The HLC staff believe that integrating art or any type of hands-on project with each lesson has helped their students have a better understanding of interrelated topics they have learned and also in their day to day life. It has promoted creativity, and made students more engaged in their lessons. In addition to engagement, staff has witnessed a dramatic change in student behavior: improved self-control, increased self-confidence, and increased motivation and excitement for learning are all evident.

The PLTW lab with Mrs. Miller has had a tremendous impact on students and we are forever grateful for her dedication!

GaDOE Staff Highlight: Dr. Katherine Johnson

GaDOE's Special Education Services and Supports Division is excited to feature Dr. Katherine Johnson for our GaDOE Staff Spotlight this week.

Katherine has been in the field of education for 32 years. She is currently the Program Manager for Instruction and Systemic Improvement. She retired from Cobb County School District after 31 years and worked as a general education teacher, special education teacher, special education supervisor at the district level working with all categorical disabilities, and as a supervisor of Specialized Teaching and Learning and Assistive Technology. She has a PhD in

Educational Leadership from University of Southern Mississippi, Ed.S and M.Ed from the University of West Georgia, and a B.S. from Western Kentucky University.

Katherine has a passion for sharing educational experiences, developing and providing professional learning in the area of multisensory leaning and specially designed instruction.

Katherine loves her family, football and learning. Her most recent adventure was skydiving. She always looks forward to spending time with family and friends. Every day she works in education is a day that she is proud and appreciative to be part of.



Arrows

Practice Pointers – USED Guidance on Discipline: Question C-3

QUESTION C-3: CAN THE IMPOSITION OF SHORT-TERM DISCIPLINARY REMOVALS BE A BASIS FOR RECONVENING THE CHILD’S IEP TEAM?

The answer is yes. Under 34 C.F.R. § 300.324(b), individualized education program (IEP) reviews and revisions are appropriate to address, among other issues: any lack of expected progress toward meeting the annual goals; the results of any reevaluation; information about the child provided to, or by, the parent; the child’s anticipated needs; or other matters such as the behavior that led to the short-term disciplinary removal including the impact on the child’s learning or that of others.

Frequent use of short-term disciplinary removals or informal removals of children with disabilities may indicate that the child’s IEP does not appropriately address their behavioral needs, which may result in a denial of a free appropriate public education (FAPE). School staff should be aware of, and gauge the need for and effectiveness of, behavioral interventions when implementing exclusionary disciplinary measures that continually or significantly interfere with a child’s instruction and participation in school activities (e.g., a pattern of office referrals, repeatedly sending a child out of school on

“administrative leave” or regularly requiring a child to leave the school early and miss instructional time).

Some of the factors that may be considered when considering the use of short-term removals include: (1) the circumstances that led to the child’s removal; (2) whether the child was being provided services in accordance with the IEP; (3) whether the behavior can be addressed through minor changes to classroom or program practices; and (4) whether the IEP Team should be reconvened to address possible changes to the IEP. In situations where the child’s behavior and the resulting removals impede the child’s learning or that of others, local educational agencies (LEAs) must review and revise the child’s IEP to ensure that appropriate behavioral supports and services are in place to address the behavior that is resulting in such disciplinary removals. Further, the LEA must take the steps necessary to ensure that the child’s IEP, including any positive behavioral interventions, supports, and other strategies, are consistently implemented. 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.323 and 300.324(a)(2).

For more information, please see the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) guidance found in [Questions and Answers: Addressing the Needs of Children with Disabilities and IDEA’s Discipline Provisions as revised July 19, 2022](#).



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If you have questions, please contact Barbara Ross at Barbara.ross@doe.k12.ga.us or Lynn Holland at lholland@doe.k12.ga.us.

FY23 GaDOE Legal Updates: School Psychologists

The Division for Special Education Services and Supports is hosting a technical assistance webinar for school psychologists titled, FY23 GaDOE Legal Updates: School Psychologists. Please forward this information to School Psychologists and/or appropriate personnel in your Local Educational Agency (LEA).

Jamila Pollard, Legal Office/Senior Program Manager, will deliver updates regarding current dispute resolution data in Georgia and discuss some common IDEA violations found in formal state complaints and due process hearings. The webinar will place an emphasis on IDEA violations that are related to the work of school psychologists. This webinar will occur virtually on January 19, 2023 from 1:00-2:30 p.m.

FY23 GaDOE Legal Updates: School Psychologists Registration

For more information, please contact Alicia Mercer by email at amercer@doe.k12.ga.us.



Back to Basics Behavior Edition

Join us for a one-day professional learning opportunity that will assist both general education and special education teachers in addressing challenging behaviors within the classroom. Participants will explore the science of behavior, discussing developmental norms, static and alterable variables, the function of behavior, and avoiding a power struggle. Presenters will share research on the power of relationship-building and empowerment and dive into Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) and High Leverage Practices (HLP) for Behavior. There will be five locations around the state. The locations and dates are listed below:

- December 5 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.: Northwest GA RESA Georgia Highlands College, 3167 Cedartown Hwy, Rome, GA 30161 from
- January 24 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.: Coastal Plains RESA, 245 N Robinson, Lenox, GA 31637
- January 30 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.: East GA GLRS, 4683 Augusta HWY S.E., Dearing, GA 30808
- February 1 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.: First District RESA, 201 W Lee St, Brooklet, GA 30415
- February 8 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.: Thompson-Upson Fin Art Center, 268 Knight Trail Thomaston, GA 30286

Back to Basics Behavior Edition Registration



People reviewing feedback

SPP/APR Share Your Voice! Stakeholder Feedback Sessions

The SPP/APR is a report submitted annually to the federal government to examine the progress and status of Georgia in implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for students with disabilities. The input of Georgia's stakeholders in this process is critical!

Families, educators, and students with disabilities are invited to register and participate in one of the stakeholder input sessions below to review the current SPP/APR Indicator data including the areas of graduation, dropout, assessment, and environment. Participants will have the opportunity to provide input on possible baseline and target changes as indicated by the data.

-Session 1: November 29 from 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

-Session 2: December 7 from 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

-Session 3: December 7 from 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

-Session 4: December 9 from 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

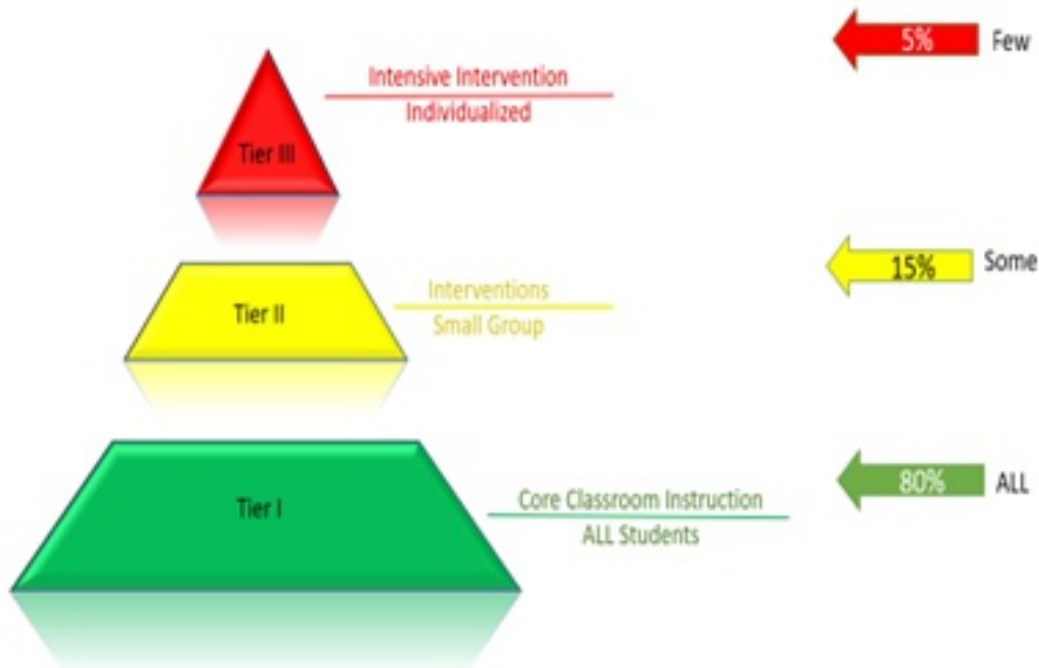
[SPP/APR Share Your Voice! Stakeholder Feedback Sessions Registration](#)



People in a group giving high fives

MTSS Snapshot: How can we involve parents in supporting implementation of a multi-level prevention system?

As we strive to increase parental involvement and work to increase student achievement, it is very important to ensure effective communication with parents. As we reflect on how to continue to involve them, we should ensure they are aware of how they can support Tier I instruction and also aware of any evidence-based interventions that are being implemented with their child at Tiers II or III, Family Engagement Month.



As we plan effective instruction at Tier I, communicating with parents about various ways they can support reinforcing the core curriculum is very important. A few tips that can be shared with parents to help reinforce Tier I instruction are below:

- Support reinforcement of the vocabulary/Language of the Standard (provide strategies that can be used at home)
- Ensure homework is completed each night (providing supplemental videos to support the content would be useful)
- Provide information for tutors, if applicable, to help reinforce the content
- Use checklists and/or rubrics that supplement Tier I

- Monitor assignments and due dates by checking teacher's webpage or agendas/planners (dates for tests, quizzes, homework, study guides, projects, etc.)
- Maintain effective communication with your child's teacher
- Monitor use of supplemental interventions/resources that can be used at home

As students are provided access to supplemental resources that support the three tiers, it is important to ensure that parents have access to these resources. If there are Parent Reports available to help monitor usage, ensure parents have access to these reports. Monitoring the use of an evidence-based, computerized intervention to ensure that students are meeting the required number of lessons each week, is critical to help ensure fidelity of implementation. If parents can support this, please communicate this with them. If there are academic or behavior checklists that teachers are using that can support implementation of Tiers II or III, parents may also find these useful when supporting their child.

For additional information, feel free to reach out to the MTSS regional coaches or Karen Suddeth, ksuddeth@doe.k12.ga.us to learn more.

Office of Federal Programs, Division for Special Education

CONTACT INFORMATION

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