



May 5, 2023 Email Blast

## Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education



*Thank you, Teachers!*

Directors,

Next week is Teacher Appreciation Week. Although we should show our appreciation all year long, Teacher Appreciation Week is a great time to share love, support and respect for teachers. It is an honor and pleasure to recognize the hard work, dedication and compassion of our teachers. Teachers face extraordinary expectations to ensure academic performance but also face a variety of challenges daily to meet the needs of the whole child. During my classroom days, the challenges were much less than required of today's teachers. Let's stand together and thank our teachers!

On Tuesday, May 9, 2023 at 1:00 pm, our next Director's Webinar will be held. The agenda seems to be another possible marathon so you may want to plan accordingly. As our guest, Paula Swartzberg, Director of Accountability, will provide details regarding the 2023 Graduation Cohort including a high-level overview of the process for appeals. Please include other staff members as you deem necessary. The remainder of the webinar will focus on evaluations and reevaluations, preschool updates, EdTrade and updates from Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency.

May Directors' Webinar Registration

This week's district highlight is Greene County School District. Learn more about Greene County High School's Adaptive PE class, spearheaded by Ms. Amber Conoly, and how it has led to tremendous growth with its students.

We also have an educator shoutout for special education teacher Libby DeLoach from Bleckley County Schools.

Please consider submitting a teacher to recognize from your district in our weekly eblast. I would love to hear about our special education teachers from across the state. As you know, teacher retention is one of our biggest concerns. Showing appreciation goes a long way to encourage and support teachers but we also must listen and understand what they need. It would be an honor to have a teacher or group of teachers to feature each week.



*You're the best.*

Thank you for all you do to support students with disabilities including having excellent teachers to teach and nurture the students. Your support as administrators can make all the difference for students and teachers. Take time to reflect on your teaching days. I bet a favorite teaching moment or student immediately came to mind. Being a teacher is an honor. Teachers influence lives. Ensure your teachers know how much they are appreciated.

I appreciate all our teachers, but I also appreciate each of you. Almost without exception, every special education leader is also a certified teacher. I am proud to be a Georgia teacher!

Keeping Students First,  
Wina

## Special Education Events & Due Dates

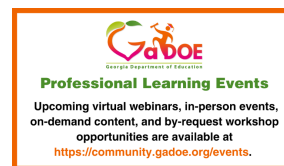
Please review the information below and the Due Dates Calendar for deadlines and key dates.

### Professional Learning Events

**May 9 at 1:00 p.m.** – Special Education Directors' Webinar

**May 10 or 11 at 9:00 a.m.** – School Psych. Multi-lingual Learners Workshop

**May 10 at 12:00 p.m.** – Exiting Fully Proficient ELs and EL/SWD



*Professional Learning  
Events*

## Reminders

The FY23 Parent Survey is OPEN.

**May 31** Parent Survey Closes (APR Indicator 8)

**July 30** Budget Completion Reports Deadline for all State Grants for FY23

**July 31** CCEIS/CEIS FY23 Student Events Data Upload Due

**July 31** CCEIS/CEIS Plan for FY23 Due

**July 31** Preschool Exit Data (FY23 Data)

**July 31** Timelines Data (FY23 Data) - Child Find and Early Childhood Transition Deadline

**July 31** Post-School Outcomes (for FY22-23 Exiters)

Visit [GaDOE Community](#) for a complete listing of GaDOE Professional Learning Events.

## Educator Shoutout: Libby DeLoach, Bleckley County Schools, Special Education Teacher

Libby DeLoach is a treasure at Bleckley Primary! She has been a special educator for a long time and her passion for special education is evident in her daily walk with students with disabilities at the Pre-K level. Not only is she a blessing to the children and the families she serves – she is a wonderful example of an inspiring educator who always goes above and beyond!



*Libby DeLoach, Special Education Teacher, Bleckley County Schools*

These are comments from individuals outside our school system who recently saw firsthand how wonderful Libby is with her students as well as a tremendous source of support for other staff members:

“In an attempt to learn more about the Pre-K Intervention Program, I spent some time with Libby DeLoach in her classroom this morning. WOW! She and her paras are doing amazing things with those children. I was very impressed with the evidence-based practices for special needs children that I saw at work in her classroom! The organization with which she runs her classroom and the level at which she has her students attend and perform is excellent. I was amazed that they were not only identifying shapes but discussing how many sides a triangle, square, hexagon, etc. have. She was not only teaching the names of the basic shapes, but introducing them to vocabulary such as rhombus and trapezoid. This was all while managing challenging behaviors and

having a hearing-impaired student. These are just a few of the things that I saw this morning! Maybe this is normal, as I said I am just learning about Pre-K intervention, however, to see students with special needs engaged in this at this age is awesome. Kudos to Mrs. DeLoach and her paras.”

“Our region is fortunate to have Libby over our Special Education Preschool Consortium for the Heart of Georgia Region. She stepped up to the plate when no one else would. Thanks to Libby, we've had an increase in participation this year in our consortium. I appreciate her leadership and dedication to the field. It's easy to see that Libby is a wonderful teacher-leader!”

Libby is truly doing what she loves day in and day out. It is a joy to walk in her classroom and see our sweet students loving to learn and grow. She is where she is supposed to be for sure. Bleckley is blessed to have Libby DeLoach and she is most deserving of this recognition!



*Greene County School District logo*

## **District Spotlight: Greene County School District**

GaDOE is proud to highlight Greene County High School's Adaptive PE class, spearheaded by Ms. Amber Conoly. Amber started APE at GCHS this school year and the district has witnessed tremendous growth with its students.

Adapted PE programming supports Greene County High School's students by providing avenues for them to play a variety of sports and do so in a competitive atmosphere. This unique program allows student athletes to compete on a level that suits their ability level, whether that's an individual skills competition, team skills competition, or a more traditional competition level. Students have the opportunity to participate in local, area, and state events for multiple sports, including basketball, bowling, tennis, and track and field. For example, last week our students participated in the USTA's tennis clinic where USTA Net Generation donated tennis equipment to our APE program and came to the school to work with our athletes. Last semester, our adaptive students competed in the Special Olympics Basketball invitation brackets and placed both in team skills and 3v3. These are just two examples of the exciting opportunities APE brings to our students. It's important for all students to have access to extracurricular sports and the adapted PE program makes this possible for all students and their ability levels. It's exciting to see our students engaged and interacting with their teammates during practices and competitions. This is also a critical component for socialization,

sportsmanship, and community involvement. Competing in sports and being part of a team helps to boost self-confidence and independence with our students. It helps them develop personal interests in the area of physical activity so that they can continue to stay engaged in healthy lifestyles long after they graduate from GCHS.



*Arrows*

## **Practice Pointers – Evaluation Process and Visual Impairment**

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) definition of Visual Impairment/Blindness, any impairment in vision, regardless of severity, is included, provided that such impairment, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. 34 C.F.R. § 300.8(c)(13)

According to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Policy Letter 17-05, the evaluation of vision status and the need for special education and related services should be thorough and rigorous, include a data-based media assessment, be based on a range of learning modalities, including auditory, tactile, and visual, and include a functional visual assessment. If a student is suspected of having a visual impairment, or the parent requests an evaluation, the local educational agency (LEA) should initiate an evaluation to determine if the visual impairment, regardless of acuity or etiology, adversely impacts the student's educational performance. This evaluation should include at a minimum, a functional vision evaluation, learning media assessment, review of academic records and eye report, and when appropriate an orientation and mobility assessment. Even if the main concern is visual impairment, the

evaluation should be comprehensive as is required under IDEA.

Please contact Dr. Emily Adams, [emily.adams@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:emily.adams@doe.k12.ga.us) for questions or concerns.

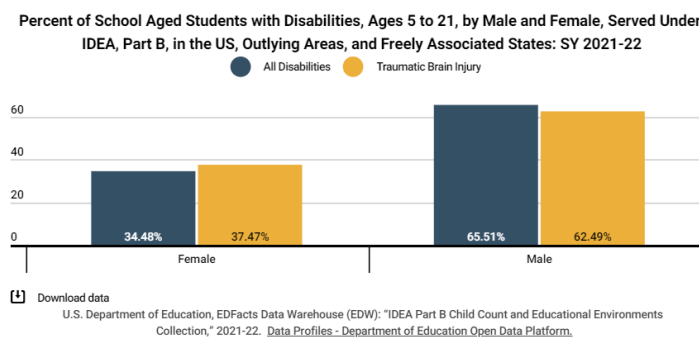


U.S. Department of Education

*US Department of Education  
logo*

## Dear Colleague Letter

Please review the Dear Colleague Letter from March 24, 2023. A Dear Colleague Letter (DCL) is Calling for End to Corporal Punishment in Schools and Guiding Principles on School Discipline. The [U.S. Department of Education webpage](#) has more information about the letter. You can read the letter in its entirety [here](#). Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education also released a document called [Guiding Principles for Creating Safe, Inclusive, Supportive, and Fair School Climates](#) for supporting students and school staff.



## OSEP Released a new Fast Fact on Students with Traumatic Brain Injury Served Under IDEA, Part B

Less than 1% of school aged students with disabilities are identified with traumatic brain injury. OSEP's latest [OSEP Fast Facts: Students Identified With Traumatic Brain Injury](#) takes a closer look at data from the data collections authorized under IDEA Section 618 including those collected through child count, educational environments, discipline, and exiting data collections with a focus on students identified with traumatic brain injury.

OSEP Fast Facts is an ongoing effort to display data from the 12 data collections authorized under IDEA Section 618 into graphic, visual representations with the intent to present Section 618 data quickly and clearly.

Visit the [OSEP Fast Facts page](#) for existing and future Fast Facts.

## **District Participation Announcement**

The Instruction and Systemic Improvement Unit is excited to announce, the following LEAs have been selected to participate in FY24s Specially Designed Instruction Project.

### **Burke County**

-Burke County High School

### **Clayton County**

-Michelle Obama STEM Elementary Academy

-Eddie White Middle School

### **Early County**

-Early County Elementary School

-Early County Middle School

### **Seminole County**

-Seminole County Elementary School

-Seminole County Middle School

### **Academy for Classical Education**

Systemic Improvement planning meetings will start this summer. Please stay tuned for updates as the project gets underway in August. For additional questions regarding the project or future participation, please contact Yyanisha Bass Bonner at [Yyanisha.Bass@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:Yyanisha.Bass@doe.k12.ga.us).

## **Special Education Rural Grant**

The Office of Special Education Services and Supports in partnership with the Office of Rural Education recently awarded 115 rural local educational agencies (LEAs) with a grant to support the teaching and learning outcomes of students with disabilities. Each LEA received a \$50,000 grant- \$26,000 from IDEA funds and \$24,000 from ESSER funds. In the Consolidated Application (Con App), the IDEA funds are loaded under Special Education Programs in the IDEA – Special Education Rural Grant, and the ESSER funds are loaded under Title Programs in the ESSER III – ARP – LL Special Education Rural Grant.

In addition, please note that the [IDEA – Special Education Rural Grant](#) follows the same allowability principles as the IDEA 611 Grant. The IDEA funds must be spent by September 30, 2023. Unexpended funds will not carry over to fiscal year 2024.

For questions about the IDEA – Special Education Rural Grant, please contact Nicole Croom at [ncroom@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:ncroom@doe.k12.ga.us). For questions about the ESSER – Special Education Rural Grant, please contact Dr. Kermit Gilliard, Jr. at [kermit.gilliard@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:kermit.gilliard@doe.k12.ga.us).

## **School Psychologists Multi-lingual Learners Workshop: Pre-referral and Evaluation of Multi-Lingual Learners**

GaDOE's Division for Special Education Services and Supports is hosting a two-day in-person Technical Assistance Workshop for School Psychologists titled, Pre-referral and Evaluation of Multi-Lingual Learners. Seating is Limited. Lunch will be on your own.

**Dates:** May 10 - 11, 2023

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. (Sign In & Registration is from 8:00 - 8:45 a.m.)

**Location:** 205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive SE, Atlanta, GA 30334

**School Psych. Multi-lingual Learners Workshop Registration**

Our workshop speaker/facilitator will be Samuel Ortiz, Ph.D. The intended audience for this workshop is School Psychologists Speech-Language Pathologists, EL Specialists, district staff, and program specialists involved in the education, instruction, intervention, and assessment process of multilingual learners. Dr. Ortiz will provide participants with current research on the relationship between language, cognitive, and academic development and how it may be used to guide the activities of pre-referral and post-referral assessment teams. Additionally, participants will be provided with practical instruction and training in the use and application of rigorous theoretical and psychometric assessment principles within a practical, systematic framework for conducting valid and defensible evaluations of culturally and linguistically diverse children, particularly multilingual learners.

Please forward this information to your region, other School Psychologists, diagnosticians and/or appropriate personnel in your Local Educational Agency (LEA).

For more information, please contact Alicia Mercer by email at [amercer@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:amercer@doe.k12.ga.us).

## **Mathematics Manipulatives and Materials Grant**



The Mathematics Manipulatives and Materials Grant provides an opportunity for schools across Georgia to receive funding to purchase manipulatives and materials to assist with the implementation of the newly adopted mathematics standards. The mathematics learning plans and units developed by the Georgia Department of Education include manipulatives and materials that can be used as inspiration for what may be needed in the classroom to implement the newly adopted mathematics standards. These lists are not all inclusive, and ultimately, resource selection decisions are made at the local district and/or school level.

This grant will support quality mathematics instruction during the school day through the provision of manipulatives and materials. A maximum of \$1,600,000.00 will be awarded in Mathematics Manipulatives and Materials for the 2023-2024 (FY24) school year, up to \$4,000 per grantee. Only one grant will be allowed per school.

If you have any questions during the application process, please send an email to [mathematics@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:mathematics@doe.k12.ga.us).

Apply Today!

**Mathematics Manipulatives and Materials Grant**

Proposal Applications Due: May 10, 2023

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Atlanta, Georgia

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May 12, 2023 Email Blast

## Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education



*Happy Mother's Day*

Directors,

Happy Mother's Day! This Sunday is a special occasion to celebrate mothers. Mothers come in different forms with some being chosen. I suspect there are many special education teachers, coaches, and educators in general, who have been there in the gap when needed. Take time to celebrate and let Mom know how much she means to you.

Last week, our Federal Programs met together for strategic planning and alignment. Thought you might enjoy this picture. Federal Programs includes IDEA and ESSA. We are here for you, and it is an honor to support your work!

This week we have an amazing student highlight from Utopian Academy of the Arts. Learn more about their student, Jomar Crawford, and his amazing journey to the Next Narrative Monologue's national competition at Harlem's legendary Apollo Theatre. We look forward to watching him grow in his craft and cheering him on!

Join me in honoring Melinda Dustin for their contributions to Pataula Charter Academy. Superintendent Kylie Holley submitted this recognition due to exceptional contributions to students with disabilities.



*You're the best.*



*Mothers hold their children's hands for a while, but their hearts forever.*

As a child, we always had to wear a red rose on our Sunday dress for Mother's Day. If you had lost your mother, a white rose was worn. I don't see that custom continued very often now. Growing up in North Georgia, our rose bushes were typically in bloom by Mother's Day. While I am writing this message, I can visualize cutting the rose on Saturday evening and having help to attach the rosebud to my Sunday best. Such a simple and sweet tradition to honor all mothers.

As you are entering the last few weeks of school, rest assured that you have made a difference. I am proud of your work and appreciate each of you!

Keeping Students First,  
Wina



*Professional Learning  
Events*

**Special Education Events & Due Dates**

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

## Reminders

The [FY23 Parent Survey](#) is OPEN.

**May 19** Preschool Exit Data Opens

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*Melinda Dustin, High School Special Ed Teacher,  
Pataula Charter*

## Educator Shoutout: Melinda Dustin, High School Special Ed Teacher, Pataula Charter

Melinda has always been a wonderful Sped teacher; supporting and advocating for her students like a boss. However, she really had an opportunity to shine this year, when Pataula Charter Academy unexpectedly lost its Special Education Director mid-year. While maintaining her teaching duties, she stepped in to help with director duties. This included assisting with a Cross Functional Monitoring. She has been an invaluable support for our other Sped teachers and to the academy. She deserves a huge shout-out!!!



*Greene County School District  
logo*

## **Special Education Student Highlight: Jomar Crawford, Utopian Academy of the Arts**

### **Young Actor Prepares for Debut at Apollo Theatre in National Competition**

Standing in the glow of the spotlight at Atlanta’s Woodruff Arts Center, Jomar Crawford has the presence of an actor twice his age. His cadence is commanding; his diction is crisp or casual, fitting the mood of his character.

He can cry on cue.

When the 16-year-old delivers his lines, the judges at Atlanta’s True Colors Next Narrative Monologue Competition take notice. Of the more than 60 contestants who auditioned for the monologue showcase, Crawford, a sophomore at Utopian Academy for the Arts High School, was selected as the top-ranked regional winner, a victory that earned him a \$600 scholarship and a spot in the finals. (UAFA freshman Caleb Thomas and Jonah Slade were also semifinalists.)

On May 8, Crawford will face off against students from across the country at Next Narrative Monologue’s national competition in Harlem’s legendary Apollo Theatre. Thrilled about his pending New York debut, the young actor has been practicing daily—in between booking feature films and a streaming TV show.

“When I’m backstage, my heart is beating out of control, but when I hit the stage and stand in the lights—I’m there,” Crawford said. “My nerves get transformed into energy. I give it my all.”

Crawford is laser-focused on improving his craft. His success as an actor is being celebrated by UAFA’s Theatre Department—and its Department of Exceptional Student Education.

Diagnosed in the fourth grade as a student with special needs, Crawford spent years struggling with academic focus and recall. But not anymore. His decision to commit to acting has improved his academic performance.

“Jomar is serious about acting. He calls me every day for guidance,” said Tonia Jackson, a veteran television, film, and stage actress who heads the theatre department at UAFA High. “I’ve placed his audition videos on my social media and helped him to get acting jobs. His talent is so strong that he has appeared onstage in a play with me and inspired a director to write a part for him to play in a movie.”

Crawford has an IMBD profile that touts his latest work: The Netflix series *First Kill* (2022) and the feature films *Life Span of a Dog* and *American Leopard* (2020).

Once a “C-B student,” Crawford now gets A’s and B’s worthy of a spot on the honor roll.

Here’s how Crawford turned himself around: The same diligent work habits that he uses to learn his lines for auditions, to organize his practice time, to study the work of other actors, and to plot his acting career from high school to his Oscar acceptance, he applies to his studies.

“When I was at my other school, it didn’t have acting, so I didn’t really have an outlet or something that motivated me,” he said. “When I found acting, I knew it was what I wanted to do. It became my motivation. But my mother made it clear that my schoolwork comes first. That helped me to find balance.”

National research shows that students who study the arts benefit from improved verbal, reading, and math skills overall, as well as critical-thinking skills needed for analysis and problem-solving. And when students with disabilities study the arts, it can have an even greater impact in the classroom.

According to the national Learning Disability Resources Foundation, the arts “provide an excellent way (for students) to express their feelings ... improve self-esteem, self-awareness, and self-expression. It engages their mind, body, spirit, and can lead to self-discovery of their emotions.”

Emery Williams, special education coordinator for UAFA agrees. “With Utopian Academy’s arts curriculum and Jomar’s participation in the drama program specifically, he has been able to fight through his self-esteem issues and his disabilities, making them abilities,” Williams said. “He is able to thrive in the classroom as general education students do.”

The special education coordinator added that some of his other exceptional students are making similar strides in their focus by creating visual art and playing golf. “Students who can’t sit still in class are focusing for long periods of

time in those activities,” he said.

Crawford’s mother, Bridget Shannon of Jonesboro, has also seen the difference in her son. “Jomar has grown so much by going to Utopian Academy,” she said. “It impacts his life a lot.”

“Ms. Jackson is an amazing teacher,” Crawford said. “She is always there for me. She knows the industry and puts me in the right rooms and encourages me.”

Now, the rising junior is contemplating college.

“College is on the table for me,” he said. “I want to get that higher education experience and learn in classes with other artists who want to break into the industry. I’m thinking, Juilliard.”



*Arrows*

## **Practice Pointers – Child Find and Individual Evaluations: Parentally-Placed Private School Children**

### **QUESTION A-10: WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHILD FIND UNDER 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.111 AND 300.131?**

The child find provision in 34 C.F.R. § 300.111 addresses the responsibility of a State to conduct child find for all children with disabilities residing in the State, including children with disabilities attending private, including religious, elementary and secondary schools. It ensures that all children with disabilities residing in the State are identified, located, and evaluated. Section 300.111, which applies to States, is much broader in scope than 34 C.F.R. § 300.131. The child find provision in 34 C.F.R. § 300.131 addresses the responsibility of the local educational agency (LEA) where the private school is located to conduct child find for all children with disabilities who are enrolled by their parents in private, including religious, elementary schools and secondary schools located in the LEA. This provision addresses which children enrolled in private elementary schools and secondary schools by their parents are eligible to receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

For more information, please see [Questions and Answers on Serving Children with Disabilities Placed by Their Parents in Private Schools \(PDF\)](#), the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\) Evaluation Process and Additional Procedures for Identifying Children with Specific Learning Disabilities](#).

## **Important Budget Announcement: High-Cost Fund Grant and Residential and Reintegration Services Grant**

The High-Cost Fund Grant and Residential and Reintegration Services Grant were submitted to the State Board of Education for approval on May 11. Please allow one week for the budgets to be uploaded to the Consolidated Application. Also, please remember these grants end June 30, 2023. Be sure to add the grant and complete the budgets as soon as possible.

## **Administrator Summer Series**

### **Hosted by the Office of Whole Child Supports in collaboration with the Office of Special Education and the Office of Teaching and Learning**

This summer series is designed for district and school leaders with topics related to discipline and school safety. For each of the topics listed below, a secondary session will be offered from 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. and an elementary session will be offered from 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. We hope you will join us!

- June 6th: Prevention Systems
- June 8th: Discipline Definitions
- June 13th: Prevent, Teach, Respond
- June 15th: Alternative to Suspension
- June 20th: Discipline Laws
- June 22nd: Preventing Disproportionality
- June 27th: Vaping
- June 29th: School Safety

Please register for individual sessions using the links above and read the [Administrators Summer Series Flyer](#) for more information.





## Federal Programs



May 19, 2023 Email Blast

### Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education

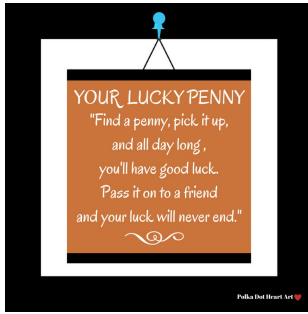
Directors,

Did you know that May 23 is National Lucky Penny Day? The history of this celebration is unknown but if you find a penny on this day, it is thought to be extra lucky. A penny is often the smallest unit of currency in many countries. The first pennies were minted in England in 757 A.D. Pennies arrived in America in 1793. Due to inflation, the metal value and cost to mint the coin results in the penny's value being less than the cost to produce. It costs about 2.1 cents to make a penny. Finding a lucky penny always makes me happy! Hope you have good luck next week too.



*Face of a penny*

Speaking of pennies, I am excited to announce the Capacity Building Grants for FY23 have been approved by the State Board of Education. The total amount awarded is \$7,153,274 to 151 LEAs/GNETS. Grant award notices will arrive within the next week or two, but the funds may be loaded in the Consolidated Application even sooner. If you applied for a grant, please see the [IDEA Capacity Building Grant - Submissions and Approved Funding](#) document to check your award amount. Just as a reminder, the funds are available through September 30, 2023. Please contact Dr. Katherine Johnson with questions at [katherine.johnson@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:katherine.johnson@doe.k12.ga.us).



*Your lucky penny: Find a penny, pick it up, and all day long, you'll have good luck. Pass it on to a friend and your luck will never end.*

Our district spotlight this week is Stephens County Schools. Read all about their Career Competency Pathways and how they provide students with disabilities opportunities to develop individualized workforce-ready skills in a variety of CTAE courses.

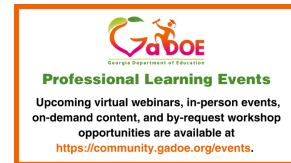
Even if you don't find a penny on National Lucky Penny Day, I hope the Capacity Building Grant will feel like you hit the jackpot! I know you will use the funds wisely to enhance services for students with disabilities.

Thank you for all you do each day! I am lucky to have each of you as colleagues and friends!

Keeping Students First,  
Wina

## Special Education Events & Due Dates

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



*Professional Learning  
Events*

### Reminders

The FY23 Parent Survey is OPEN.

**May 19** Preschool Exit Data Opens

**May 31** Parent Survey Closes (APR Indicator 8)

**June 15** Final Student Record Submission - Including Special Education Record and GNETS Program Record (Indicators 1, 2 & 4)

**June 30** Grant Period Ends for State Budgets

**July 21** Preschool Exit Data (Submission Available)

**July 30** Budget Completion Reports Deadline for all State Grants for FY23

**July 31** CCEIS/CEIS FY23 Student Events Data Upload Due

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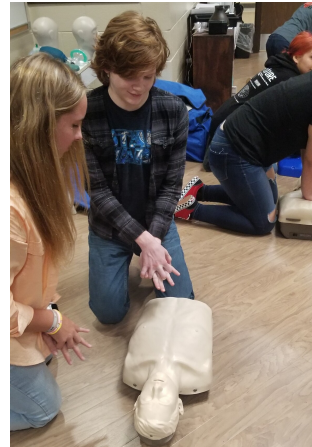
*Stephens County Schools logo*

## District Highlight: Stephens County Schools

Stephens County Schools embraced Director Brandy Stacy's vision to increase opportunities for high school students with disabilities. When beginning her career as the district's director in January 2021, she quickly noticed a need to expand elective opportunities for students with disabilities in middle and high school.

During the 2021-2022 school year, Ms. Stacy worked collaboratively with Mr. Michael Keown (SCHS Principal), Ms. Shelley Langston (SCHS AP), and Ms. Jessica Simmons to develop the Career Competency Pathway for students taught using alternate content standards. CTAE teachers participated in professional development during summer. After extensive planning, the district embarked on this journey at Stephens County High School in August 2022.

The Career Competency Pathway is specially designed for students with disabilities, allowing them opportunities to develop individualized workforce-ready skills in a variety of CTAE courses including healthcare science, occupational safety, welding, automotive mechanics, veterinarian science, carpentry, and audio-visual science. Each unit of study consists of four weeks of instruction. The special education teacher introduces a CTAE pathway to acclimate the students to the content, vocabulary, tools used, and safety precautions needed while in the classroom during the first week of instruction. The students are also introduced to the general education teacher and general education peers. During the second, third, and fourth weeks of the unit, the special education teacher and the general education teacher co-teach the CTAE course. The students with disabilities are fully included in the CTAE classroom, working alongside their general education peers through hands on, project-based learning. Skills taught in the class are task analyzed and allows students to self-monitor through the learning process. The unit is culminated in the special education classroom with a review of learning with the special education teacher at the end of the fourth week of the unit.





Collaboratively, the team strategically schedules units of study in each pathway throughout the school year to give students with disabilities the greatest opportunity for success through active participation and hands-on learning. CTAE teachers and general education students are supported by the special

education department in preparation for the co-taught units of study. They receive training on specially designed instructional strategies, ways in which tasks will be broken down into manageable parts for student learning, and characteristics of learning and behavior of students with disabilities. This pre-training establishes a foundation for a successful inclusive learning experience for all.

Ms. Stacy, Director of Special Education, is incredibly thankful for the work of staff and students to help provide life-changing opportunities for students with disabilities. She has noticed a change in the students' sense of purpose and belonging in how they take pride in their learning and interact with peers. Ms. Stacy is excited to see what the future holds for students as these efforts expand to community-based instruction and opportunities for employment.

## **Practice Pointers – Child Find and Individual Evaluations: Parentally-Placed Private School Children**



*Arrows*

### **QUESTION A-12: MAY A LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY (LEA), CONDUCTING INDIVIDUAL EVALUATIONS OF CHILDREN SUSPECTED OF HAVING DISABILITIES, WHO ARE ENROLLED IN PRIVATE SCHOOLS BY THEIR PARENTS, EXCLUDE CHILDREN SUSPECTED OF HAVING CERTAIN DISABILITIES, SUCH AS THOSE WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES?**

The answer is no. The LEA, where private elementary schools and secondary schools are located, must identify, and evaluate all children enrolled in those schools who are suspected of having a disability as defined under 34 C.F.R. § 300.8. An LEA may not exclude children suspected of having certain disabilities, such as those with specific learning disabilities, from its child find activities. The United States Department of Education recommends that an LEA consult with officials from private elementary schools and secondary schools on how best to implement the State's evaluation criteria for identifying children with specific

learning disabilities enrolled in private schools by their parents.

For more information, please see [Questions and Answers on Serving Children with Disabilities Placed by Their Parents in Private Schools \(PDF\)](#), the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\) Evaluation Process and Additional Procedures for Identifying Children with Specific Learning Disabilities](#).

## Important Announcement: Annual Performance Reports

Special Education Directors: Your LEA's Annual Performance Report is available in the Special Education Applications portal. Please review this data no later than May 26, 2023, and verify its accuracy.



*Graphs and report documents*

If you have any questions, please contact any of the following individuals: Linda Castellanos at [lcastellanos@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:lcastellanos@doe.k12.ga.us), 404-719-8045; Dawn Kemp at <mailto:dkemp@doe.k12.ga.us>, 678-340-6738; Dominique Donaldson at [dominique.donaldson@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:dominique.donaldson@doe.k12.ga.us), 404-796-4589

## Important Budget Reminder: IDEA 611 ARP and IDEA 619 ARP

The IDEA 611 ARP and 619 ARP grants will expire September 30, 2023. If your LEA did not fully expend these funds in FY22, funds have been carried over to FY23. Please ensure that a budget has been added and completed in the FY23 Consolidated Application. Funds must be obligated by September 30, 2023 or the funds will expire, and your LEA will no longer have access to the funds. Please take immediate action to ensure funds are expended on allowable expenditures for students with disabilities.



*Students in a science class*

## Science Georgia Standards of Excellence

The Science Georgia Standards of Excellence follow a three-dimensional approach to teaching and learning. This inquiry-based approach includes the science and engineering practices (SEPs), the crosscutting concepts, and the core ideas. Science and engineering practices are the actions

that students should be using daily in science class starting in kindergarten. To support all learners in classrooms across the state we have provided guidance documents called Supporting the SEPs for K-5 and 6-12. These documents provide a brief explanation of each practice and ideas that can be used to support students when using the practices.

## Administrator Summer Series

### Hosted by the Office of Whole Child Supports in collaboration with the Office of Special Education and the Office of Teaching and Learning

This summer series is designed for district and school leaders with topics related to discipline and school safety. For each of the topics listed below, a secondary session will be offered from 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. and an elementary session will be offered from 1:00 - 2:30 p.m. We hope you will join us!

- June 6th: Prevention Systems
- June 8th: Discipline Definitions
- June 13th: Prevent, Teach, Respond
- June 15th: Alternative to Suspension
- June 20th: Discipline Laws
- June 22nd: Preventing Disproportionality
- June 27th: Vaping
- June 29th: School Safety

Please register for individual sessions using the links above and read the Administrators Summer Series Flyer for more information.

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May 26, 2023 Email Blast

## Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education

Directors,



*Memorial Day, Remember and Honor*

Memorial Day weekend is generally considered the unofficial start of summer. Although the long weekend may include swimming and a backyard barbeque, Memorial Day is when we honor and remember military personnel who gave their life while serving in the United States military. We are all thankful for the freedom we enjoy because of the dedication and service of our military men and women. Those who gave their lives defending our democracy should be honored and remembered for their sacrifice. Pause and take time to remember.

Please make one last push for parent participation in the Parent Survey. The survey deadline is May 31, 2023.

With Student Records submission just around the corner, please take time to review students reported as graduates. If you find an error, it is much easier to change prior to sign-off than ask for reactivation.

Take time to learn more about the Award of Excellence given to Cameron Hobes from Bleckley County Schools. Thanks to his art teacher, he was able to connect with a famous artist from London. Read the full article to learn more.

Fulton County Schools celebrated their students with disabilities with the 22nd Annual YES I Can Awards. The awards program was started by the local chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children. Thank you for continuing such a great tradition.

Please note the proposed rulemaking related to Medicaid billing. The United States Secretary of Education is proposing to remove the requirement for public agencies to obtain parental consent prior to accessing for the first time a child's public benefits or insurance to provide or pay for required Part B services. The comment period is open until August 1, 2023.



*Happy Memorial Day*

Even though this school year is ending, it is time to think about next year. Please use the link to access the Special Education Administrators Leadership Academy schedule and registration information. [SELDA 2023-24 Schedule and Registration](#). If you will be a new Special Education Director or second-year Director, please register and plan to join us. The first session is scheduled for July 18-19, 2023, at the Georgia Department of Education, West Tower, 10th Floor, Atlanta.

Hope the long weekend allows time to rest before starting the busy summer months to prepare for the new school year. Have a safe Memorial Day weekend!

Thank you for all you do each day! We are very fortunate to have such a dedicated group of leaders working to support students with disabilities and their families. You are making a difference!

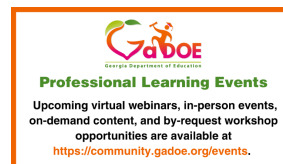
Keeping Students First,  
Wina

## Special Education Events & Due Dates

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

### Coming Up

**June 6** at 9 a.m. (Secondary Session) or 1 p.m. (Elementary Session) – Administrator Summer Series: Prevention Systems



*Professional Learning Events*



**June 8** at 9 a.m. (Secondary Session) or 1 p.m. (Elementary Session) –  
Administrator Summer Series: Discipline Definitions

## Reminders

The FY23 Parent Survey is OPEN.

**May 31** Parent Survey Closes (APR Indicator 8)

**June 15** Final Student Record Submission - Including Special Education Record and GNETS Program Record (Indicators 1, 2 & 4)

**June 30** Grant Period Ends for State Budgets

**July 21** Preschool Exit Data (Submission Available)

**July 30** Budget Completion Reports Deadline for all State Grants for FY23

**July 31** CCEIS/CEIS FY23 Student Events Data Upload Due

**July 31** CCEIS/CEIS Plan for FY23 Due

**July 31** Preschool Exit Data (FY23 Data)

**July 31** Timelines Data (FY23 Data) - Child Find and Early Childhood Transition Deadline

**July 31** Post-School Outcomes (for FY22-23 Exiters)

Visit [GaDOE Community](#) for a complete listing of GaDOE Professional Learning Events.



*Cameron With Mrs. Robyn Raffield, BCHS Art Teacher*

## GaDOE Award of Excellence Recipient – Cameron Hobes – Bleckley County

GaDOE's State Special Education Director, Wina Low, honored Award of Excellence recipients across Georgia on May 5 during a virtual awards presentation. Bleckley County High School senior Cameron Hobes was selected for this prestigious award from submissions sent from the entire Heart of Georgia RESA! Cameron was surrounded by his teachers, paras, friends, and family including his wonderful high school art teacher, Mrs. Robyn Raffield, who spoke highly of Cameron's artistic talent and abilities. Mrs. Raffield has been instrumental in working with Cameron during his high school years and even connected Cameron with a famous artist with autism in London, England, Stephen Wiltshire. They were able to zoom together! Diagnosed with autism at age three, Stephen Wiltshire is famous for producing highly detailed scenes after just a brief glance. Today, Stephen Wiltshire is one of Britain's best-known artists. Mrs. Raffield says Cameron has the ability to draw in the same manner

as Wiltshire.

Dr. Trey Belflower, Superintendent, and Dr. Cindy Felkins, Director of Student Support Services, also attended to support Cameron as he was honored. A special thank you to the BCHS administration and staff for supporting all high school students with disabilities! Cameron is an outstanding young man who faces challenges with autism daily but overcomes them! Congratulations Cameron!



*Fulton County Schools logo*

## District Highlight: Fulton County Schools

Fulton County Schools celebrated their students with disabilities at the 22nd Annual YES I Can Awards!

The Yes I Can Award is provided to students chosen by their school for demonstrating exemplary progress or achievement in one of the following areas: Academics, Communication, Self-Help or Daily Living Skills, Athletics, Music/Arts, Social Skills, Vocational or Pre-Vocational Skills, Community Involvement, or Extracurricular Activities. The award was started by their local chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children in 2001 to increase public awareness of the abilities of persons with disabilities.



Fulton Academy of Virtual Excellence's winner, Khosay Sesay, is a perfect candidate for the "Yes I Can" award as he continues to excel in the classroom even while dealing with adversity. He is well organized, has excellent time management skills, and exceptional communications skills. Khosay is a very mature and driven young man that has already applied to ten colleges and has been granted admission to at least five of them so far. Khosay is very tech-savvy and always knows the most up-to-date and useful information for the senior class, and he is always willing to help

his classmates navigate these unfamiliar waters. He is genuine, and inquisitive, and kind-hearted, and his smile always lights up the room.

## **Practice Pointers – Child Find and Individual Evaluations: Parentally-Placed Private School Children**



*Arrows*

### **QUESTION A-13: IF THE LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY (LEA) WHERE THE PRIVATE SCHOOL IS LOCATED CONDUCTS AN EVALUATION ON A CHILD AND THE PARENT DISAGREES WITH THAT EVALUATION AND WISHES TO REQUEST AN INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION (IEE) AT PUBLIC EXPENSE, WHICH LEA IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE IEE?**

The parent has the right to an IEE, consistent with the requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 300.502, if the parent disagrees with an evaluation conducted by the public agency, including if the parent believes the child was not evaluated in all areas related to the child’s disability. Therefore, if the LEA where the private school is located conducted the evaluation, and if the parent disagrees with that evaluation, the parent has the right to request an IEE from that LEA at public expense. A parent is entitled to only one IEE at public expense each time the LEA conducts an evaluation with which the parent disagrees. 34 C.F.R. § 300.502(b)(5). As continued in Question A-14, under 34 C.F.R. § 300.140(b), the parent of a child with a disability who disagrees with his or her child’s evaluation or reevaluation may file a due process complaint to request a due process hearing with the LEA where the private school is located. Further, if the child’s parent disagrees with the results of an initial evaluation or reevaluation conducted by that LEA, the child’s parent may file a State complaint pursuant to 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.151 through 300.153.

For more information, please see [Questions and Answers on Serving Children with Disabilities Placed by Their Parents in Private Schools \(PDF\)](#), the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act \(IDEA\) Evaluation Process and Additional Procedures for Identifying Children with Specific Learning Disabilities](#).

## **Proposed Rulemaking Related to Medicaid Billing for IEP Services**

Please be aware of the proposed actions related to billing Medicaid for IEP services. A notice of proposed rulemaking was posted in the Federal Register last week and is linked in the message below. The Secretary of Education proposes to amend the IDEA Part B regulations to remove the requirement for public agencies to obtain parental consent prior to accessing for the first time a child's public benefits or insurance (e.g., Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)) to provide or pay for required IDEA Part B services.

On May 18, the U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Health and Human Services (HHS) announced updated resources and proposed regulations for schools to deliver health care to eligible students. . In a [joint press release](#), ED and HHS announced three actions the departments will take to support the administration's national mental health strategy. These actions include:

- Releasing a [Notice of Proposed Rule Making](#) under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to streamline Medicaid services consent provisions when billing for Medicaid services provide through a student's individualized education program (IEP),
- Releasing a ["Comprehensive Guide to Medicaid Services and Administrative Claiming"](#)

Comments on the proposed changes may be made through August 1, 2023.

## **IDEA Budget and Grants Update**

Our Grants Accounting team has updated the FY 2023 state grants for the amended appropriations based on the increase in the health insurance rates. The allocations in the consolidated application have all been updated for those districts that had a finalized budget. The change in funding is based on the number of employees reported on the October 2022 (2023-1) CPI report in comparison to October 2021 (2022-1).

## **Important Budget Reminder: IDEA 611 ARP and IDEA 619 ARP**

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