



Federal Programs

January 26, 2024 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education

Directors,

In the world we live in today, we have a flood of information each day. I did stop to pause when I read this quote, "Never be afraid to try something new. Remember, amateurs built the Ark ... professionals built the Titanic." This anonymous quote made me stop to think. We know from research that it takes roughly 10 years to become an expert. It requires studies in the subject as indicated, practicing your craft and being mentored by experts in the field. Becoming an expert does not always guarantee success as was seen by what happened with the Titanic. The ship was supposed to be unsinkable, but we know that was not true. Amateurs on the other hand, bring new ideas, positivity, eagerness and are generally idealistic. They want to be successful even if it means building an ark to save the animals. New teachers are energetic, innovative, inspired and work hard to connect with their students. As mentors, we must show new teachers how to leverage their strengths and contributions. The Teacher Induction Program focused on high leverage practices is available to all LEAs for induction level special education teachers. Contact your GLRS if interested in participating. Many of us have plenty of experience to be called a professional or even an expert but just remember amateurs bring new life into the classroom. We must invest now to ensure we have strong teachers and leaders for the future.



Cartoon Noah's Ark

Federal Programs Conference - GENERAL REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN!

General Registration for the Georgia Department of Education's Federal Programs Conference: District and School Leaders Improving Outcomes for Georgia's Students is open. This is a collaborative initiative from the Offices of Federal Programs, School and District Improvement, Teaching and Learning, Whole Child Supports, Financial Review, Assessment & Accountability, and Rural Education and Innovation.

District and school leaders will receive information to assist with plans for coordinating federal funds in FY25 and supporting newly identified CSI and TSI schools. Participants from Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) should include representatives working with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) grants, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) grants, and selected instructional personnel. Principals at newly identified Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) schools, their direct supervisors, and the district point of contact for Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) schools are required to attend.

This conference will be an in-person event with a modified virtual option. LEA staff not able to join in-person can register for the free live-stream of the general sessions only. All workshop recordings will be available in the GaDOE PL Events catalog after the conference.

Join us at the Georgia International Convention Center (GICC) for two days of training and information sharing on February 13-14.

Conference information and registration are available [here](#).

The U.S. Department of Education's [Office of Educational Technology](#) and the [Office of Special Education Programs](#) released a comprehensive guidance package designed to increase understanding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's (IDEA's) assistive technology (AT) requirements, dispel common misconceptions regarding AT, and provide examples of the use of AT devices and services for children with disabilities, as well as to highlight the different AT requirements under Part C and Part B of IDEA.

This package includes two parts:

-A joint [Dear Colleague Letter](#) from Glenna Wright-Gallo, Assistant Secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, and Roberto J. Rodríguez, Assistant Secretary of the Office of Planning, Evaluation, and Policy Development announcing the release of the guidance package, and

-A guidance document dispelling common misconceptions regarding AT titled, **Myths and Facts Surrounding Assistive Technology Devices and Services**.

The Department is also releasing the 2024 National Education Technology Plan (NETP) today. This flagship policy document provides actionable recommendations to address digital use, design, and access divides in education. In this document, you will see examples of early educators, school districts, and states creating more inclusive and accessible learning environments for all learners, including those with disabilities. The NETP also provides links to resources, such as the accessibility training modules developed by OSEP's Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) Center.

Please share a link or copy of the **Myths and Facts Surrounding Assistive Technology Devices and Services** released on January 22, 2024 to appropriate personnel. All special education personnel would benefit from the document as well as building leaders.

Our new director spotlight this week is Lila K. Brown from DeKalb County Schools. Learn more about Lila K. Brown and the person who impacted her educational career!



Rainbow

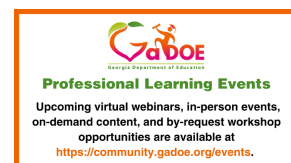
Please invest in new teachers and leaders. Today's new teachers will be the leaders of tomorrow. Everyone needs to be surrounded by trusted colleagues. Help new teachers find the rainbow as a promise of hope.

Thank you for all you do! The future is bright, and the best is yet to come!

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*

Coming Up

January 29 – February 1 at 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention: Coastal Area

January 31 at 2 p.m. SSIP FY24: Implementing PBIS in Secondary Settings

February 1 at 10 a.m. Multisensory Approaches to Teaching Vocabulary (Literacy/Reading)

February 2 at 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Deaf/Hard of Hearing Core Components Workshop

February 5 at 1 p.m. Special Education Directors' Webinar

February 5-8 at 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention: West Georgia

February 7 at 3:30 p.m. Significant Cognitive Disabilities Best Practices Series

February 7 at 2 p.m. SSIP FY24: Improving Graduation Rates & the School Completion Toolkit

February 8 at 1 p.m. Special Education Open Office Hours - CFM

February 8 at 1:30 p.m. FY24 Special Education Student Record Recovering Rejected Events

Reminders

January 31 Deadline for Excess Cost Calculation Submission (Consolidated Application in GaDOE Portal)

February 15 Post School Outcomes Opens for Viewing (FY 22-23 Exiters) Located in the SE Applications Dashboard - APR Indicator 14

February 15 Final Date to submit Grant for Residential and Reintegration Services Application (Submitted to Budget Liaison using Portal email)

February 15 Final Date to Submit High Cost Grant Application (Submitted via www.gahcf.org)

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



DeKalb County Schools

New Director Spotlight: Lila K. Brown, DeKalb County Schools

GaDOE is excited to feature Lila K. Brown for our New Director Spotlight this week. Lila K. Brown is the Special Education Director for DeKalb County Schools and has been in the field of education for 22

years.

Ms. Brown started her educational career journey as an ELA teacher for a charter school for grades 4-7, and then became a special education teacher for middle grades serving resource and co-taught classrooms in ELA and Georgia History within the DeKalb County School District. Also, serving as a lead teacher of special education, program specialist, special education coordinator and

assistant principal, Ms. Brown's most recent experience was as an alternative school principal for grades 6-12 and in February 2023, transitioned to the role of being the proud GNETS Director for DeKalb-Rockdale GNETS Program.

When sharing the person that impacted her educational career, Ms. Brown noted that it was her former special education teacher, Ms. Patricia Santos. Ms. Brown shared, "I did not think I was college material or wanted to go to college. Ms. Santos would always have high expectations for me even when I did not have them for myself. She is the reason I became a special educator. As a result, I share with my students my journey as a special education student and that they can be successful, as well. I share the same high expectations for my students."

With hobbies that include reading Stephen King novels, watching scary movies and traveling, Ms. Brown is also the proud parent of two children, Erin (17) and Chris (23), and a fur baby named Thor.

Practice Pointers – Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team Excusal: Local Educational Agency (LEA) Representative



Arrows

QUESTION C-1: MAY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PUBLIC AGENCY BE EXCUSED FROM ATTENDING AN IEP TEAM MEETING?

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) has emphasized in a Questions and Answers Document that under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the members who can be excused from attending an IEP Team meeting in whole or in part, subject to the conditions described in the regulation, include a public agency representative. Under the IDEA, a public agency representative is not required to attend an IEP Team meeting in whole or in part, if the parent of the child with a disability and the public agency agree, in writing, that the attendance of the member is not necessary because the member's area of the curriculum or related services is not being modified or discussed in the meeting. When the meeting does involve a modification to, or discussion of, the member's area of the curriculum or related services, the regulation provides that a representative of the public agency may be excused from attending an IEP Team meeting, in whole or in part, if (i) the parent, in writing, and the public agency consent to the excusal; and (ii) the member submits, in writing to the parent and the IEP Team, input

into the development of the IEP prior to the meeting. If a public agency representative is excused from attending an IEP Team meeting, consistent with the IDEA, the public agency remains responsible for implementing the child's IEP and may not use the excusal as a reason for delaying the implementation of the child's IEP.

For more information, please see our [Special Education Rules Implementation Manual](#), our [IEP Resources](#), our [Parent Information Fact Sheets](#), and the [PROGRESS Center at American Institutes for Research / IEP Tip Sheet PLAAFPs](#).

Literacy-focused SPDG Cohort 2 Applications are Open for Districts and Schools to Apply

The State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG), funded by the Office of Special Education Programs, is intended to support educators of students in grades 4-8 by incorporating MTSS instructional practices for upper elementary and middle grades related to adolescent literacy, including students with disabilities. Selected applicants will participate in a three-year professional learning cohort. Participating districts will receive GaDOE-provided services and supports in the form of coaching, technical assistance, and professional learning focused on implementing a continuum of tiered supports to improve reading outcomes.

Applications are due by January 31, 2024 at 5 p.m.

Request for Applications (RFA) and the Application are located on the [GaDOE Competitive Grants website](#).

Contact: Karen Suddeth, ksuddeth@doe.k12.ga.us or gamtss@doe.k12.ga.us.

Important Announcement: Disproportionality Data

Special Education Directors: Your LEA's Disproportionality Data for Identification, Placement, and Discipline is available in the Special Education Applications portal. Please review this data no later than February 9, 2024, and verify its accuracy.

If you have any questions, please contact any of the following individuals:

Linda Castellanos at lcastellanos@doe.k12.ga.us, 404-719-8045

Dawn Kemp at dkemp@doe.k12.ga.us, 678-340-6738

Dominique Donaldson at dominique.donaldson@doe.k12.ga.us, 404-796-4589

SDI District Pilot Application

Through a partnership with American Institutes for Research, the Instruction and Systemic Improvement unit began our Specially Designed Instruction professional learning series with the goal of increasing knowledge and building awareness related to specially designed instruction. As we prepare to round out this year's activities with Cohort I, we are happy to announce the application window for participation in Cohort II is officially open!

The SDI Project partnership focus is on developing and implementing high-quality, specially designed instruction practices to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Through partnership with selected LEAs, the Georgia Department of Education through the Instruction and Systemic Improvement Unit, uses a comprehensive approach that includes supporting LEAs through professional learning, job-embedded training/coaching, implementation and sustainability planning.

The application deadline for submission is March 15. For additional information, please contact Yyanisha Bass Bonner at Yyanisha.Bass@doe.k12.ga.us or Katherine Johnson at Katherine.Johnson@doe.k12.ga.us.

SDI District Pilot Application

Important Budget Announcement: New and Expanding Charter Allocations

The State Board of Education has approved the new and expanding charter allocations. The allocations may be viewed below.

FY24 IDEA 611 Expanding or New Charter LEAs

FY24 IDEA 619 Expanding or New Charter LEAs

Important Budget Announcement: High-Cost Fund for Special Educations Services Grant and Grant for Residential & Reintegration Services

The High-Cost Fund for Special Education Services Grant and Grant for Residential & Reintegration Services submission period opened January 1st. The updated resources for the Georgia High-Cost Fund Grant and Residential & Reintegration Services Grant can be accessed online at the GaDOE

Competitive Grants webpage. The deadline for the submission of these grants is February 15th. Don't hesitate to contact your budget liaison if you have any additional questions.

Important Budget Reminder: Excess Cost Calculation Submission

The Excess Cost Calculation Portal is now open for submissions. The Special Education Excess Cost Calculation, which is part of the local district determination's Timely and Accurate Data Submission Report, is due by January 31, 2024. This submission must be entered into the Consolidated Application and has a two part sign-off for the results and base calculations. Please plan accordingly as both parts must be submitted by the due date. Resources for the calculation can be found on our budget page here. Please contact your budget liaison for further information or technical assistance.



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Bring your students to learn all about our Pathways that we offer at RWS and visit the dorms and Center for Therapeutic Recreation!

March 6th
Available slots from 9:00 - 3:00
★ Deadline to sign up is Feb 21st ★

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