



September 1, 2023 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education

Directors,

Labor Day weekend is such a great break for educators after opening school and beginning to have a routine again. Whether you like to travel for the long weekend or stay home and relax, I hope your weekend was perfect!



Happy Labor Day!

Since moving back to my hometown in North Georgia, Labor Day weekend is all about JeepFest. The sheriff's office hosts a fundraiser to support numerous charities within Pickens County. Jeeps come from everywhere for three days of fun. Roughly 3,000 Jeep owners participate each year. You get to see Jeeps retrofitted for an authentic off-road experience and others only used for driving around town. Trail rides, extreme off-road challenges, food, and other vendors create the entire experience for Jeep owners, friends, and families. Whatever your passion is regarding Jeeps, there is a place for everyone at JeepFest. My husband, Michael, would love to be in the middle of the off-road events. He has owned several Jeeps and Broncos over the years. Thinking about JeepFest reminds me of the first time I was really around Michael. We knew each other because it was (and still is) a small community, and we went to high school together. I was two years younger, so we didn't have the same friends. As luck would have it, I was attending a small New Year's Eve gathering, but did not

want to be there. I was not thrilled when someone in the group suggested "going mudding". I didn't even know what that meant; I worried about where we were going and what we would do. Little did I know, mudding meant taking four-wheel drive vehicles in the woods to places without roads and nearly rolling down the side of a mountain. Just like it sounds, there is a considerable amount of mud involved. Nothing about mudding was fun to me. My impression of Michael was not great because he was the driver on this crazy adventure. I still don't like off-road riding because it scares me, but that is where Michael and I differ. He loves it, and I don't. I am glad my first impression of him was not my last. We are all unique, and what is fun to me may not be to you. Our differences should be celebrated and respected. I hope you found your fun during the Labor Day weekend.

Save the date for two webinars.

-Tuesday, September 26, 2023, from 10-11:30 a.m. The director's webinar will provide an overview of the new rubric for GAA and accompanying resources. This webinar is not a substitute for the comprehensive training planned for the first week of October. The link will be available soon.

-Friday, September 29, 2023, from 10 a.m. – noon. We will provide a webinar on the new general supervision guidance. As you know, OSEP released new guidance in late July to emphasize expectations for General Supervision. Be sure to participate and share with other special education leadership in your district. The link will be available soon.

Our new director spotlight shines brightly on Meadow Krockum, Special Education Director for Rabun County Schools!

The next Director's Forum is scheduled for September 6, 2023, from 10 a.m. - noon. This is the last meeting for the directors selected during Fall 2022. A meeting reminder was sent. New representatives will be selected to participate in the forum for FY24.



Photo from JeepFest

The Center for Leadership in Disability (CLD), which is the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) at Georgia State University (GSU), will offer a 4-day, in-person training on the functional behavior assessment/behavior intervention plan (FBA/BIP) process. Participants will learn the FBA/BIP process from start to finish and will receive free, modifiable FBA/BIP materials for their district's use. Training participants will also have access to follow-up coaching and technical assistance calls. There will be a

maximum of 50 participants per training session.

Please register for the FBA/BIP training for September, extending through February. Seats are still available. Please take advantage of this great learning opportunity.

-September 11-14, 2023: Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior Intervention: West Central

-September 25-28, 2023: Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior Intervention: NW/North Central

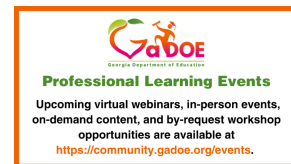
I hope your weekend was full of lots of fun for everyone and that you took time to recharge!

Thank you for all you do for students with disabilities and their families. You are making a difference each day!

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

September 5-6 at 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. Special Education Budget & Data Tools for the Job: Northeast GLRS

September 6 at 10 a.m. Specially Designed Instruction Kick Off: What is SDI, & why we need it

September 6 at 2 p.m. SSIP FY24: Integrating Mathematics Content for SWDs

September 7-8 at 2 p.m. Special Education Budget & Data Tools for the Job: Northwest GLRS

September 11-14 at 8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior Intervention: West Central

September 12 at 1 p.m. Special Education Directors' Webinar

September 12-13 at 8 a.m. - 3 p.m. Special Education Budget & Data Tools for the Job: Middle GLRS

September 13 at 2 p.m. SSIP FY24 PL Series: Integrating Social Studies Content for SWDs

September 13 at 9 a.m. Back to Basic Behavior Edition: North Georgia GLRS

September 14 at 9 a.m. Deaf/Hard of Hearing Core Components Workshop

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



Meadow Krockum, Special Education Director, Rabun County Schools

New Director Spotlight: Meadow Krockum, Rabun County Schools

GaDOE is excited to feature Meadow Krockum for our New Director Spotlight this week.

Meadow Krockum is the Special Education Director for Rabun County Schools and has been in the field of education for 16 years. Ms. Krockum taught special education for 13 years in grades K-5 in Habersham and Rabun County. Then, she became an Assistant Principal at Mount Yonah Elementary School in White County for two years. This FY24 school year is Ms. Krockum's first year as Director of Student Services in Rabun County.

Ms. Krockum shared, "When I started teaching 16 years ago, I was completely lost as a special education teacher. I had planned to go into general education and had not thought about going into teaching special education. My love for teaching special education was apparent after my first year, and I would not want to teach anything else! I met Debra Buchanan in my first year. I was replacing her as a full-time teacher, and she was going to be my mentor and department head for a few years. She taught me everything about how to write IEPs, how to teach special education students, and encouraged me to keep teaching no matter how hard my days were. She had patience when I cried or was discouraged, always knowing what to say. She said it would get easier, and it did. Without her there to encourage me and help me get through those first few years, I am not sure I would have stayed in teaching. Debra passed away in a car accident a few years ago and I still think about her every day. She had an impact on so many students and teachers during her career, and I will certainly be forever grateful for her."

Ms. Krockum's favorite thing to do is go on vacations with family, and though she will go anywhere; she loves the beach and hot weather the most, with cruises being her favorite. Ms. Krockum and her husband, Robin, have two girls, Saylor, 23, and Skylar, 18. Saylor graduated with her nursing degree in May and will be getting married next month. Skylar graduated high school in May as the Valedictorian and will attend college this month. It is an exciting year for their family.

Practice Pointers – Transition Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): The Team



Arrows

To meet the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) transition service's provisions, the IEP must contain the services and supports needed to assist the student in gaining the skills and experiences necessary to reach their desired postschool goals. The local educational agency (LEA), along with the student and the student's family member or representative, are in the best position to determine the most appropriate types of transition assessments to select based on a student's needs. As a student gets older, the IEP Team must consider whether the student's needs have changed, taking into account the student's strengths, preferences, and interests, and develop measurable goals that are focused on the student's life after high school, specifying the transition services needed to help them reach those goals. Decisions about the specific content of postsecondary goals and transition services are the responsibility of the IEP Team, who make these decisions at IEP Team meetings. IEP Teams assess the relationship of the student's postsecondary goals to the student's needs in developing the student's other annual IEP goals.

For more information, please see our [Transition webpage](#), [Transition From School To Work | Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency](#), and the [Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services \(OSER\): Transition Guide](#).

GA STABLE/P2C Matching Scholarship

The Office of the State Treasurer (OST) is partnering with Georgia's Path2College 529 Savings Plan (P2C) and the Georgia STABLE Program to offer the GA STABLE/P2C Matching Scholarship of up to \$2,500 for eligible existing or new Georgia STABLE account owners. The award amount will be a dollar-for-dollar match based on net contributions made to an eligible recipient's Georgia STABLE account between July 1 and December 31, 2023. Net contributions are deposits less withdrawals made during the same period.

To be eligible to receive a Matching Scholarship, applicants must open or have a Georgia STABLE account for ABLE-eligible beneficiaries ages 18 and under. Qualifying existing or new Georgia STABLE account holders may apply for Matching Scholarships by entering the scholarship promo code "MATCH2023" when logging in to their Georgia STABLE account.

GET UP TO
\$2,500
from the
**GA STABLE/P2C
Matching Scholarship**

STABLE qualified Georgia residents ages 18 and under who have net contributions made to their new or existing Georgia STABLE accounts between July 1 and December 31, 2023 are eligible

For more information about the Georgia STABLE Program, call **1-800-439-1653**.



Applications can be submitted by entering the scholarship promo code **"MATCH2023"** when logging in to your Georgia STABLE account at <https://georgiastable.com/gateway>.



Person holding various technology

Assistive Technology (AT) Partnership

Be on the lookout for a "Welcome Back" email from Tools for Life. If you are registered in the AT Partnership Portal, you will receive information about the AT Partnership, AT Portal, uPar, and EdTrade.

What is EdTrade? EdTrade is a platform for districts to "post" assistive technology items that are no longer needed. Accessing EdTrade provides districts an opportunity to borrow and/or possibly purchase AT devices, etc. LEAs can also use this platform as an assistive technology inventory platform. Districts must register to access EdTrade. If interested, [register for EdTrade - Special Education Director](#).

Tools for Life will host a webinar on September 7, 2023, from 3:30 – 4 p.m. to share the process of building Accessible Educational Materials (AEM). The webinar will guide the participant from the request process to the finished product.

Accessible Instructional Materials: The Process Registration

We are looking forward to sharing more information about Georgia's "Take a Minute" initiative specific to assistive technology and accessible educational

materials consideration process.

If you have any questions, please reach out to
Paula.Gumpman@doe.k12.ga.us or Katherine.Johnson@doe.k12.ga.us.

School Psychologists Technical Assistance Webinar

The Division for Special Education Services and Supports will host a technical assistance webinar for school psychologists titled, Dyslexia: FY24 School Psychologist Update.

Dr. Jennifer Lindstrom, Statewide Dyslexia Coordinator, will provide legislative updates related to the forthcoming implementation of S.B. 48 and H.B. 538, including teacher training and professional development opportunities. Findings from the three-year Dyslexia Pilot Program Implementation will also be discussed. The remainder of the session will focus on guidance for screening for dyslexia as part of the MTSS process, and effective reading instruction across all tiers. There will be time allotted for Q&A at the end of the session. This webinar will occur virtually. Please sign up using the registration link below:

[Dyslexia FY24: School Psychologist Update - Registration Link](#)

Date: September 14, 2023

Time: 1 - 2:30 p.m.

Intended Audience: School Psychologists, District Leaders, Special Student Services Staff

Please forward this information to School Psychologists and appropriate personnel in your Local Educational Agency (LEA).

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

Office of Teaching and Learning: August 24, 2023, Right Now Resources

It is our team's pleasure to work alongside you in strategic support. Many of you were at Data Conference and we know that the information gained will be very supportive as you implement work in your districts.

Please review the [August 24, 2023, Right Now Resources](#) newsletter for Teaching and Learning Updates, or subscribe on the Curriculum and Instruction webpage to have them delivered straight to your inbox.

Thank you for your commitment and dedication; we stand ready to support your needs.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Core Components Workshop

GaDOE will be hosting a workshop that will provide a deep dive into the core components of education for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing. Training will include eligibility and assessment, writing effective IEP goals, expanded core curriculum, and team collaboration to support students. Participants will explore foundational information as well as apply what they have learned to individual case studies. Please select the location and date that best suits your needs. Registration is listed in the PL Catalog or can be accessed directly through the following links. Dr. Emily Adams will lead the training.

The following dates and locations are available:

- September 14, 2023, Northwest Georgia RESA
- November 30, 2023, First District RESA
- January 11, 2024, CSRA RESA
- February 2, 2024, Coastal Plains RESA
- March 14, 2024, Chatt-Flint RESA

[Deaf/Hard of Hearing Core Components Workshop Registration](#)

GAA 2.0 Proposed Eligibility

GaDOE Assessment staff will present the new proposed eligibility form for the GAA 2.0 for feedback during the following meeting. If you do not have it on your calendar already, the information is here:

Special Education Directors, ESOL Directors, and System Test Coordinators are invited to attend the State Assessment Training for System Test Coordinators focused on Assessment of Special Populations to be held Tuesday, September 12, from 10 a.m. to noon. GaDOE Assessment staff will review state policies and guidance related to accessibility and accommodations used in all state assessments.

[2023-24 State Assessment Training for System Test Coordinators – Part 2 – Special Populations Registration](#)

Back to Basics Trainings Available

A Guide to Writing IEPs

Join the GaDOE Special Education Results Driven Accountability staff as they provide professional learning that will focus on writing a high-quality Individualized Education Program (IEP). These trainings highlight the top ten common errors identified across the state through the monitoring process. Guidance will be provided as participants walk through the development of the entire IEP step-by-step, emphasizing best practices that support the whole child. All trainings are from 9 a.m.- 3 p.m. Please register for the date and location of your choice. Seats are limited.

[Back to Basics: A Guide to Writing IEPs Registration](#)

A Guide to Writing Transition Plans

Join the GaDOE Division of Special Education Results Driven Accountability staff for Back to Basics Transition. This training will provide the audience with the history of transition planning as a foundation for creating effective, student-centered transition plans. Participants will understand the process for creating compliant transition plans. GaDOE staff will discuss each component of the transition plan in depth. Participants can engage in activities and receive examples and non-examples for future reference. All trainings are from 9 a.m.- 3 p.m. Please register for the date and location of your choice. Seats are limited.

[Back to Basics: A Guide to Writing Transition Plans Registration](#)



Tools for Life logo

Tools For Life: Welcome Back to School

The Tools for Life team would like to welcome everyone back to school! We've been working hard this summer and want to share some of the awesome things with the AT Partnership.

uPAR

We have new software called uPAR by TextHelp!

Universal Protocol for Accommodations in Reading (uPAR) is designed to give educators determine if a student may benefit from an instructional read-aloud accommodation.

Kebbi

Our lending library continues to grow and includes so many different assistive technology devices to help students in the classroom. One of these devices is Kebbi!

For students with autism, transitions can sometimes be tough. By using robotic assistance that is predictable, a teacher can guide a student through short instructional lessons.

With Kebbi, teachers can deliver pre-made, supplemental activities in a Q&A format.



EdTRADE logo

Don't forget to register for EdTrade!

EdTrade is Georgia's new K-12 Assistive Technology Equipment Reuse database. Officially rolled out in May 2023, EdTrade is now an added feature of the AT Partnership between the Georgia Department of Education and Tools for Life.

EdTrade is a secure online K-12 AT database that allows loans, donations, or sales of assistive technology equipment to each other.

Register for EdTrade

Please reach out to the Tools for Life team with any questions about any of their AT devices and services. We hope everyone has a wonderful 2023-2024 school year!

An Administrator's Guide to Discipline: Fall Learning Series

This fall series provides guidance to help district and school leaders support the needs of students with disabilities and appropriately apply disciplinary measures for all students. We will offer a session for each topic listed below from 10-11:30 a.m. We hope you will join us!

-September 5: Prevention and Building Positive Relationships

-September 12: Statewide Discipline Data & Overview of Disproportionality

- September 19: Code of Conduct & Discipline Definitions
- September 26: From Law to Practice
- October 3: Alternatives to Suspension

Section 504 Workshop

The Georgia Council of Administrators of Special Education will conduct a one-day drive-in workshop, “A Guide to Section 504 Legal Obligations: Best Practices from Eligibility to Discipline and Everything in Between. This workshop, presented by attorneys with Parker Poe, will supply you with information you will want to know about this important federal act. Participants will walk away with strong skills to support their system’s legal obligations, eligibility, discipline, and everything else “504”!

The registration fee is \$300 per person, and includes parking, lunch, snacks, and drinks. You do not have to be a member of G-CASE to participate. Please share this information with your school and system-level 504 coordinators. Use the link below to register.

Please direct any questions to Sarah Burbach, Executive Director of GCASE, by phone (706-474-4272) or by email at Sburbach@gael.org.

[A Guide to Section 504 Legal Obligations: Best Practices from Eligibility to Discipline and Everything in Between Registration](#)



Transition Successful Transition for All Blog Series: Expect, Engage, Empower: Successful Transition for All!

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSER) is announcing its “Successful Transition for All Blog Series”. This will be a great platform for transition professionals, directors, and others to have conversations with leaders from the Office of Special Education (OSEP) and Office of Special

Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). The first blog, “Improving Systems to Better Prepare Students for Successful Secondary Transition Experiences,” is available now.



*Georgia Vocational
Rehabilitation Services
(GVRA) logo*

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services (GVRA) Transition Forum for Parents, Students, and Professionals

GVRA will be hosting a transition forum that will assist parents, students, and special education professionals to understand:

- How to access vocational rehabilitation services
- Types of services available
- The importance of beginning the process early

There will be an opportunity for questions. Please share this information with your transition personnel, parents, and students. The first session will be Tuesday, September 12, 2023, from 6 p.m.-7 p.m. Registration is not required.

Join the Transition Forum for Parents, Students, and Professionals.

For more information, check the GVRA website.

Transition: Individualized Training Opportunities

The trainings listed below are available individually for districts and GLRS regions. Contact Elise James at ejames@doe.k12.ga.us to make arrangements for a date.

Improving Indicator 14: Transition Postschool Outcomes

This four-part workshop focuses on looking at multiple aspects of transition that can impact student outcomes. Sessions include hands-on activities and

practical applications for conducting between sessions. These sessions aim to provide districts with the tools and opportunity to adjust programs and practices used in transition planning for students with disabilities. Participants for this training must include special education directors and coordinators who have access to the data and the authority to implement any change needed. Districts can add additional members. Sessions include:

- What We Expect We Inspect: Focuses on sources of data and data-driven decision-making. (Face-to-Face)
- Where Do We Go From Here?: Focuses on findings from the practical application activities and tools for progress monitoring, focusing on student-specific postschool outcomes (Face-to-Face).
- Oh, the Places We'll Go: Focuses on action planning based on data (Virtual or Face-to-Face)
- Are We There Yet!: This session focuses on using current data to evaluate the action plan and revising as needed. (Virtual)

ASPIRE

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 student participation in transition planning and providing instruction in self-determination. Participants should include administrators, 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 the following:

- Component 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

Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction

Self-determination and student involvement principles are the basis of the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI). Teachers use the SDLMI to support students in:

- learning and using self-determination skills such as problem-solving, goal setting, self-advocacy, self-monitoring, self-evaluation;
- setting meaningful instructional goals;
- working toward and achieving goals related to academic and transition domains; and
- achieving better outcomes as they leave school and move into adult life.

This two-part training will provide resources on how to work through the process and materials to assist students in setting and attaining goals for school, life,

and transition.

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September 8, 2023 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education



Blue Moon

Directors,

Did you see the moon last weekend? It was glowing. A spectacular sight as it looked twice as large as a typical full moon. The full moon on August 30-31 was a Blue Moon since it was the second full moon in the same month. Have you ever heard the saying, “It only happens once in a Blue Moon?” It is more than just an expression as Blue Moons are rare. There will not be another Super Blue Moon until 2037. We often take events or even people for granted but should strive to enjoy the beauty of rare happenings or rare people that come into our lives. Take time to gaze up at the sky to see the beauty or find a friend, colleague or family member that should be acknowledged more often. You will be glad you did but the recipient may need to know they are as special as a Blue Super Moon much more than you know.

The September Director’s webinar is Tuesday, September 12 at 1:00 p.m.

Mark your calendars for two special events this month.

- Tuesday, September 26, 2023, from 10-11:30 a.m. The director’s webinar will provide an overview of the new rubric for GAA and accompanying resources. This webinar is not a substitute for the comprehensive training planned for the first week of October. [Special Directors’ Webinar Registration Link](#)
- Friday, September 29, 2023, from 10 a.m. – noon. We will provide a webinar

on the new general supervision guidance. As you know, OSEP released new guidance in late July to emphasize expectations for General Supervision. Be sure to participate and share with other special education leadership in your district. [General Supervision Webinar Registration Link](#)

Virtual Event Focused on Promising Strategies to Promote Recruitment and Retention of Special Education Teachers

Join the PROGRESS Center for a virtual event, Special Educator Preparation: Promising Strategies to Promote Recruitment and Retention on September 12, 2023 from 1:00-3:00 p.m. The two-hour session will include presentations focused on recent research related to special education preparation and lessons learned from Georgia's approach to retaining special education personnel. Register for Virtual Event: [Virtual Event Focused on Promising Strategies to Promote Recruitment and Retention of Special Education Teachers | Progress Center](#). Join the virtual event or share with others in your district. Georgia will be the feature state discussing our teacher and leader retention initiatives.



Appreciation can make a day, even change a life. Your willingness to put it into words is all that is necessary. - Margaret Cousins

Our new director spotlight this week is Brandi Adams, from Pataula Charter Academy, Inc. We are excited to welcome her for her first year as a director!

Please allow me to say how much I appreciate each of you. You have challenging jobs but lead with grace. I admire and respect each of you. You are more special than a Blue Moon to me!

We are here to support your needs. Please do not hesitate to let me know how our team can assist. Thank you for all you do to serve students with

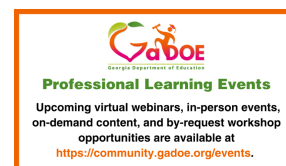
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Keeping students first,
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Brandi Adams, Special Education Director, Pataula Charter Academy, Inc.

New Director Spotlight: Brandi Adams, Pataula Charter Academy, Inc.

GaDOE is excited to feature Brandi Adams for our New Director Spotlight this week.

Brandi Adams is the Special Education Director for Pataula Charter Academy, Inc. and has been in the field of education for 15 years. Ms. Adams started her career as a Special Education Paraprofessional and while intending to become a general education Early Childhood Teacher, somewhere along the way she fell in love with special education and the meaningful work that is done with such a special population. Since that time, Ms. Adams has worked in a variety of roles: Self-Contained Teacher, GNETS Site Coordinator, District Behavior Interventionist, and Special Education Director.

Incredibly excited for the challenges ahead in her first year as a director of Pataula Charter Academy and Spring Creek Charter Academy, Ms. Adams credits her mother as the most amazing teacher that she knows and stated, “I spent my formative years helping in her classroom after school and watching her love for the work and her students, shaped me into the educator that I am today. Even now, she is my voice of reason and the person who keeps me grounded and focused on what matters - helping our teachers so they can do powerful work with our students.”

Ms. Adams, who loves to read and garden when she finds the time, resides in

Bainbridge, Georgia with her husband, English Cocker Spaniel, Huck, and their flock of chickens. The family loves to escape to their remote little mountain getaway in Tennessee every opportunity that they get, with eventual plans to retire there.

Practice Pointers – Transition Services and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)



Arrows

Students with disabilities and their parents should be knowledgeable about the range of transition services available, and how to access those services at the local level. The local educational agency (LEA) should encourage both the student and their parents to be fully engaged in discussions regarding the need for and availability of other services, including application and eligibility for VR services and supports to ensure formal connections with agencies and adult services, as appropriate. The participation of a VR agency representative on the IEP Team helps to ensure that the vocational or employment related provisions in the IEP provide a bridge from receipt of services provided by secondary schools to the receipt of services provided by VR agencies. Representation of the VR agency at the IEP meeting fosters the opportunity for pre-employment transition services to be provided early and in keeping with the student's postsecondary goals. Pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities that are eligible for VR services may include job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling or opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy.

For more information, please see our [Transition webpage](#), [Transition From School To Work | Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency](#), and the [Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services \(OSER\): Transition Guide](#).

Office of Teaching and Learning: August 31, 2023, Right Now Resources

We want to extend our thoughts and concerns to those of you who have been impacted by Hurricane Idalia. We know the impact of times like these, but also know that out of adversity, resiliency emerges. As you and your community rally and recover, please know that we are here to support as needed.

Despite the weather conditions, we had a successful virtual New Curriculum Directors session last Tuesday. Thanks to all of our participants and presenters for pivoting and joining us online yesterday. Dr. Buck sent the notification to those registered on Monday about our change from face to face to virtual as well as follow up plans for upcoming sessions. We spent the day learning and growing together and although it was not in person, it created a space for engagement and future networking.

Please review the [August 31, 2023, Right Now Resources](#) newsletter for Teaching and Learning Updates, or subscribe on the [Curriculum and Instruction webpage](#) to have them delivered straight to your inbox.

Seeing the work that happens in the classroom is still the BEST part of any day! Thank you for your commitment and dedication; we stand ready to support your needs.

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GaDOE will be hosting a workshop that will provide a deep dive into the core components of education for students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing. Training will include eligibility and assessment, writing effective IEP goals, expanded core curriculum, and team collaboration to support students. Participants will explore foundational information as well as apply what they have learned to individual case studies. Please select the location and date that best suits your needs. Registration is listed in the PL Catalog or can be accessed directly through the following links. Dr. Emily Adams will lead the training.

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Join the Transition Forum for Parents, Students, and Professionals.

For more information, check the [GVRA website](#).

Transition Webinar Series

All webinar sessions will be conducted from 3-4 p.m. Sessions will not be recorded.

- What is Supported Decision Making?: September 26, 2023
- Supported Decision Making: Resources for Students, Parents, and District Personnel: October 31, 2023
- Beginning Transition Early Using Charting the Life Course (Three Sessions): November 28, 2023, December 19, 2023, and January 30, 2024
- Entrepreneurship for Students with More Complex Needs: February 27, 2023
- Individualizing Student-Led IEP Initiatives: April 23, 2024

Registration link to come.

Preschool Development Grant: Early Intervention Study

The Carl Vinson Institute of Government at University of Georgia is looking to talk with families with a child between the ages of 0 and 5 who:

- was referred to or uses Babies Can't Wait or Preschool Special Education
- has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)
- uses home visiting services, like Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV)
- uses speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

Discussions will take up to two hours and will be in groups. Discussions may include how you learned about the services your child receives, what will happen when your child ages out of the service, and what you like and don't like about the program.

Participants will receive a \$100 Walmart gift card by mail as a thank you for their participation. Use the following link to sign up: [Preschool Development Grant Sign Up](#)

The Carl Vinson Institute of Government (CVIOG) at the University of Georgia are leading these discussions for the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL). If you have any questions, please contact the researcher on this project, Dr Melinda Moore, at preschooldevelopmentgrant@uga.edu.

JOIN US TO SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE!		JOIN US TO SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE!	
<p>The Department of Early Care and Learning, as part of the Preschool Development Grant, Birth through Five, wants to learn more about what it's like for families to participate in early intervention services. The Carl Vinson Institute of Government at UGA is hosting focus groups so you can share your experiences. If you're not sure if your child gets early intervention services, see below!</p>		<p>The Department of Early Care and Learning, as part of the Preschool Development Grant, Birth through Five, wants to learn more about what it's like for families to participate in early intervention services. The Carl Vinson Institute of Government at UGA is hosting focus groups so you can share your experiences. If you're not sure if your child gets early intervention services, see below!</p>	
<p>Who's invited?</p> <p>Families with children between the ages of 0 and 5 who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> were referred to or uses Babies Can't Wait or Preschool Special Education has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) uses home visiting services, like Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) uses speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), or other programs 	<p>Join us!</p> <p>Tuesday, Sept. 26 at 7-9pm, on Zoom Thursday, Sept. 28 at 7-9pm on Zoom</p> <p>Receive a \$100 Wal-Mart gift card for participating.*</p> 	<p>Who's invited?</p> <p>Families with children between the ages of 0 and 5 who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> were referred to or uses Babies Can't Wait or Preschool Special Education has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) uses home visiting services, like Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) uses speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, or Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), or other programs 	<p>Join us!</p> <p>Tuesday, Sept. 26 at 7-9pm, on Zoom Thursday, Sept. 28 at 7-9pm on Zoom</p> <p>Receive a \$100 Wal-Mart gift card for participating.*</p> 
<p>Interested?</p>  <p>Scan the QR code with your phone OR use the following link to register: surveys.uga.edu/edfamily</p>		<p>Interested?</p>  <p>Scan the QR code with your phone OR use the following link to register: surveys.uga.edu/edfamily</p>	
<p><small>*Participants will be mailed a physical gift card via the postal service after the focus group.</small></p>		<p><small>*Participants will be mailed a physical gift card via the postal service after the focus group.</small></p>	
			
<p>Contact Dr. Melinda Moore at foctgroup@uga.edu with questions and concerns.</p>		<p>Contact Dr. Melinda Moore at foctgroup@uga.edu with questions and concerns.</p>	

Conversations Around Collaboration: Leveling Up

Conversations Around Collaboration: Leveling Up is a collaboration between the Career, Technical, and Agricultural Division and the Division for Special Education Services and Supports. Conversations around Collaboration first debuted in 2021 as an innovative training providing resources for professional school counselors and transition specialists at all grade levels to work together to create successful and intentional transition plans for all students. Join us now as we move to the next level of planning for all students. This session will provide an overview of B.R.I.D.G.E. Law requirements as well as transition planning for students. We will introduce YouScience and Pathful Explore as data-driven tools you can use to provide intentional advising to all students and create transition plans which will allow students to graduate ready to be employed, enlisted, enrolled, or an entrepreneur after graduation. This virtual two-part series will take place on October 19, 2023, and March 20, 2024, from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Participants are expected to attend both sessions.

Conversations Around Collaboration: Leveling Up Registration

Community Mapping

This two-part training will focus on using Google maps and other tools to map out the neighborhoods of students who will need employment and daily living supports from within their community. Community mapping will assist with creating appropriate transition components for all students with an IEP, but specifically for those students with significant cognitive disabilities.

- October 24, 2023: Face-Face (location to be determined) from 9 a.m. -3 p.m.
- February 12, 2023: Virtual:10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Registration link to come

Collaboration with Vocational Rehabilitation: Using Pathful Explore for Transition

The Division for Special Education Services and Supports is collaborating with the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency to provide training on the use of Pathful Explore for transition planning, progress monitoring, and the delivery of pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) to transition personnel and Pathful Explore district designees. There will be four sessions which will include:

- Introduction to Pathful Explore: September 20, 2023
- Aligning Pathful Explore with Transition Components of the IEP: November 30, 2023
- Customizing Lessons in Pathful Explore: January 30, 2024
- Using Pathful Explore Data for Progress Reporting: March 27, 2024

Registration link to come.

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September 15, 2023 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education

Directors,

Earlier this week, Katherine Johnson and I had the opportunity through the American Institutes for Research to share the work of our Teacher/Provider Retention Program (TPRP). Before our part of the webinar, three well-known researchers provided information about attracting and retaining special education teachers. Their findings were interesting. If we could retain the special education teachers that we have, our shortage could be solved. This data was true across the nation. Unfortunately, many special education teachers are leaving to become general education teachers. If the new teacher has a dual certification, they are even more likely to move to general education within the first few years. Although the basis for the TPRP was developed to support special education teachers who enter the field, our data was about Georgia schools, and a little less scientific. It is great to be validated that we are moving in the right direction. Please review the charts below.

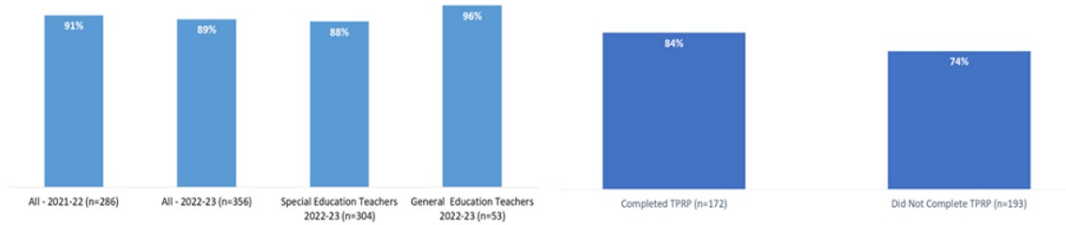
Behind every child who believes
in themselves is a
teacher
who believed in them first.



*Behind every child who believes
in themselves is a teacher who
believed in them first.*

Percentage of TPRP Participants in Agreement that the Professional Learning (Training, Coaching, MRS Labs) Influenced Their Plans to Continue Teaching

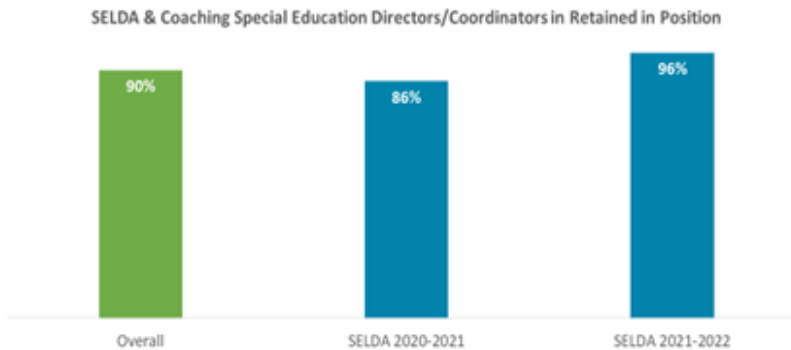
Program Completers: Those who completed 75% or more of the Teacher Induction Program were 10% more likely to be retained.



In a survey of induction program participants, 88% of the special education teachers and 96% of general education teachers agreed that the program influenced their plans to continue teaching. Teachers that completed at least 75% of the TPRP were 10% more likely to be retained. A special shout-out to our GLRS staff across the state. GLRS has made the induction program happen! If your district is participating now, I hope you continue to see great results. If your district is not a part of TPRP, reach out to your GLRS Director to discuss how we can help.

Just a few years ago, special education directors were leaving their positions at a rate of 25-30% each year. Although SELDA had been on place for almost 20 years and received great feedback, something more was needed. An executive coach was added to SELDA to support first year directors. In just a couple of years, our retention rate for new directors has drastically improved. (The results from FY23 will be available around January 2024 following the CPI report.) Hoping the data continues to support the upward trend. Please review the chart below. A 96% rate of retention for new special education directors is awesome! Thank you SELDA leaders as well as our executive coach. Great work!

Retention of Goal 2 Participants: One and two years post-participation



Thank you for attending the Director’s Webinar this week. I know the content for the webinar provided challenging opportunities. You are the leaders for this

time. Together we can make a difference! I appreciate all you do to ensure General Supervision for your district.

Our new director this week is Vamsee Mallineni from Sumter County School District. Please read the full article below to learn more!

Mark your calendars for two special events this month.

-Tuesday, September 26, 2023, from 10-11:30 a.m. The Director's Webinar will provide an overview of the new rubric for GAA and accompanying resources. This webinar is not a substitute for the comprehensive training planned for the first week of October. [Special Directors' Webinar Registration](#)

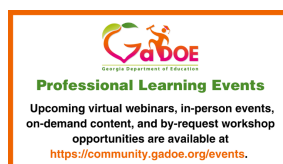
-Friday, September 29, 2023, from 10 a.m. – noon. We will provide a webinar on the new General Supervision guidance. As you know, OSEP released new guidance in late July to emphasize expectations for General Supervision. Be sure to participate and share with other special education leadership in your district. [General Supervision Webinar Registration](#)



Teaching creates all other professions.

Thank you for all you do to support students with disabilities. Your dedication and commitment will make a difference!

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.

Coming Up

September 18 at 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Back to Basics: A Guide to Writing Transition Plans

September 19 at 10 a.m. Administrator's Guide to Discipline: Code of Conduct & Discipline

September 19-20 from 8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. Special Education Budget & Data Tools for the Job: Metro GLRS

September 25 at 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Back to Basic Behavior Edition: Old West Laurens High School

September 26 at 10 a.m. Administrator's Guide to Discipline: From Law to Practice

September 27 at 2 p.m. SSIP FY24: HLP # 14 Cognitive & Metacognitive Strategies

September 27 at 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Back to Basic Behavior Edition: Middle Georgia GLRS

Reminders

-September 22 Timelines- Prong 1 Due (for LEAs not at 100%) SE Applications Dashboard APR Indicators 11 & 12

-September 30 Deadline for IDEA Budget Amendments (Located in the Consolidated Application in GaDOE portal)

-September 30 Grant Period Ends for Federal IDEA Grants and High Cost Grant

Visit GaDOE Community for a complete listing of GaDOE Professional Learning Events.



Vamsee Mallineni, Special Education Director, Sumter County School District

New Director Spotlight: Vamsee Mallineni, Sumter County School District

GaDOE is excited to feature Vamsee Mallineni for our New Director Spotlight this week.

Vamsee Mallineni is the Special Education Director for Sumter County and has been in the field of education for 18 years. Mr. Mallineni has predominantly worked with students with special needs since 2008, including various settings such as self-contained, resource, and co-teaching for seventh-twelfth grades.



Two previous principals from his early years in education, Janice Gamble and Hattie Thomas, have had a significant impact on his professional life. “Like they always say,” Mr. Mallineni said, “Do what is right by the children!”

A married father of one daughter, Mr. Mallineni enjoys reading and learning about various subjects, from science to spirituality, and has a keen interest in technology, staying up-to-date on current trends and innovations.



Arrows

Practice Pointers – Transition Services and Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment can be a helpful option for students in facilitating their transition from secondary school to postsecondary education and the workforce. A student's individualized education program (IEP) team may determine that the student's needs can best be met through participation in Georgia's Dual Enrollment Program. Available to students in grades 10-12 who meet eligibility requirements, Dual Enrollment is designed to prepare students for college and career opportunities that lead them to postsecondary institutions for industry-recognized certification or licensure, associate and/or higher college degrees, and successful employment. Students may enroll on a part-time or full-time basis as a Dual Enrollment student and take college courses at their high school or on a postsecondary campus. Students will receive high school and college credit simultaneously when attending and passing approved college classes. The annual online application is available on [GAFutures](#) and may be completed by high school and home study students who are enrolled and physically attending a participating eligible public or private high school in Georgia or an eligible participating home study program in Georgia.

For more information, please see our [Transition and Dual Enrollment Program](#) webpages, our [Dual Enrollment and Students with Disabilities Tip Sheet](#), and the [Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services \(OSER\): Transition Guide](#).

Office of Teaching and Learning: September 6, 2023, Right Now Resources

As Labor Day has come and gone, it is the unofficial end to summer. Fall is arriving! Football season has arrived and most of us are looking forward to cooler temps and fall weather. We hope you had a great week and that these nuggets below help support your ongoing work.

Please review the [September 6, 2023, Right Now Resources](#) newsletter for Teaching and Learning Updates, or subscribe on the [Curriculum and Instruction webpage](#) to have them delivered straight to your inbox.

Please don't hesitate to reach out so our team can provide service and support. We are intentional in our mission to communicate and collaborate and to ensure that we are engaging and connecting with you and your core work. Thank you for your commitment and dedication; we stand ready to support your needs!

Private School Students and Initial Evaluations

Often questions arise as to whose responsibility it is to conduct initial evaluations and eligibility determinations for students who are parentally-placed in private schools. Information regarding private school students and special education can be located in the Georgia Special Education Rules Implementation manual in the Private Schools section. Pay particular attention to the following information:

Page 2 Child Find

The traditional LEA is required to carry out child find activities to locate, identify, and evaluate children attending the private schools within the jurisdiction of the traditional LEA. The traditional LEA must consult with representatives of the private school to complete child find activities. These child find activities must be similar to activities undertaken for the children in the traditional LEA and must be completed in a time period comparable to that for other children enrolled in the traditional LEA. Child find activities include any parentally-placed private school children who attend a private school within the jurisdiction of the traditional LEA, even if the child resides in a different LEA or in a state other than Georgia. See 34 C.F.R. § 300.131(a).

Page 6 – Question 4

Does the LEA where the private school is located have an obligation to make an offer of a FAPE? The LEA where a child attends private school is responsible for ensuring Child Find and equitable participation. If a parentally-placed private school child also resides within the jurisdiction of that LEA, then the LEA is responsible for making a FAPE available to the child. If the child resides within the jurisdiction of a different LEA, the LEA where the private school is located is not responsible for offering a FAPE to that child.

Page 6 – Question 6

Can a parent request evaluations from the LEA where the private school is located as well as the LEA where the child resides? Yes. A parent could request that different LEAs evaluate his or her parentally-placed private school child if the child is attending a private school that is not in the jurisdiction of the LEA in which the child resides. The LEA where the child resides has the responsibility to provide a FAPE to the child, while the LEA where the private school is located has the responsibility to ensure equitable participation (also called proportionate share services or equitable services). Parents are not encouraged to ask two different LEAs to evaluate their child for different purposes at the same time. The United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) states that “[s]ubjecting a child to repeated testing by separate LEAs in close proximity of time may not be the most effective or

desirable way to ensure that the evaluations are meaningful measures of whether a child has a disability, or of obtaining an appropriate assessment of the child's educational needs." See Questions and Answers on Serving Children with Disabilities Placed by Their Parents in Private Schools, Question and Answer B-4, U.S. Dep't of Educ., Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), April 2011.

Page 6 – Question 7

What are the LEA's responsibilities for reevaluations of parentally-placed private school children? The LEA where the private school is located is responsible for conducting reevaluations of children with disabilities enrolled by their parents in private schools located within the jurisdiction of the LEA. Reevaluations must be conducted in accordance with IDEA and Georgia Rules. See Questions and Answers on Serving Children with Disabilities Placed by Their Parents in Private Schools, Question and Answer B-8, U.S. Dep't of Educ., Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), April 2011.



People giving high fives in a group training

Back to Basics Trainings Available

A Guide to Writing IEPs

Join the GaDOE Special Education Results Driven Accountability staff as they provide professional learning that will focus on writing a high-quality Individualized Education Program (IEP). These trainings highlight the top ten common errors identified across the state through the monitoring process. Guidance will be provided as participants walk through the development of the entire IEP step-by-step, emphasizing best practices that support the whole child. All trainings are from 9 a.m.- 3 p.m. Please register for the date and location of your choice. Seats are limited.

[Back to Basics: A Guide to Writing IEPs Registration](#)

A Guide to Writing Transition Plans

Join the GaDOE Division of Special Education Results Driven Accountability staff for Back to Basics Transition. This training will provide the audience with the history of transition planning as a foundation for creating effective, student-centered transition plans. Participants will understand the process for creating compliant transition plans. GaDOE staff will discuss each component of the transition plan in depth. Participants can engage in activities and receive examples and non-examples for future reference. All trainings are from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Please register for the date and location of your choice. Seats are limited.

[Back to Basics: A Guide to Writing Transition Plans Registration](#)

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September 22, 2023 Email Blast

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

Directors,

Fall officially began on Saturday, September 23, 2023. Pumpkins, colorful mums, football and cooler weather are all signs of fall, but if you look closely, many stores already have holiday items. Fall is my favorite season of the year. The beautiful fall leaves are very special to me. Hope you will find a pumpkin patch, hayride or a pumpkin latte to make you happy!



Pumpkins and mums

**Cherokee County Director, Ware County Parent Mentor Receive
2023 Phil Pickens Awards**

Cherokee County Executive Director for Special Education, Charlette Green, was named the 2023 Phil Pickens Administrator Award Recipient and Ware County Parent Mentor, Kim Gibson, received this year’s Phil Pickens Parent Mentor Award. The announcement was made at the Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership’s annual meeting held on September 14, 2023 at the Robert F. Hatcher Conference Center of Middle Georgia University in Macon. These award recipients were selected from a field of nine nominees representing school districts from across the state. Although these two school districts are nearly 300 miles apart, these two professional women have a shared passion for improving the outcomes of students with disabilities and for the Georgia

Parent Mentor Partnership. Congratulations!

Charlette has served Cherokee County Schools in leadership roles for 16 years. Prior to joining the district, she worked for the Georgia Department of Education and had the pleasure of working for Phil Pickens during her time there. As the recipient of the award, she will be part of moving forward the legacy of her late colleague by serving on the Leadership Council of the GaPMP.

In her 13 years as a parent mentor, Kim has distinguished herself by forging a path for families to be involved and engaged in their student's education and planning for their future beyond school. Ms. Gibson's transition initiative has impacted the lives of nearly 200 students and improved post-secondary outcomes in her district.

The Phil Pickens Award is named after the late Phil Pickens who served as state director of the Georgia Department of Education Special Education Services and Supports and founded the Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership (GAPMP). For a complete list of the nominees go to the [Parent Mentor Partnership website](#).

Mark your calendars for two special events next week.

-Tuesday, September 26, 2023, from 10 – 11:30 a.m. The Director's Webinar will provide an overview of the new rubric for GAA and accompanying resources. This webinar is not a substitute for the comprehensive training planned for the first week of October. [Special Directors' Webinar Registration](#)

-Friday, September 29, 2023, from 10 a.m. – noon. We will provide a webinar on the new General Supervision guidance. As you know, OSEP released new guidance in late July to emphasize expectations for General Supervision. Be sure to participate and share with other special education leadership in your district. [General Supervision Webinar Registration](#)

Join the Georgia Department of Education for "Increasing Instructional Access", two virtual professional learning opportunities on October 4 and 5, 2023 from 9 a.m. - noon. Participants should attend both days as the content is unique rather than a repeat. Focused on providing enhanced access to the Georgia Standards to students with disabilities, sessions will address specially designed instruction, accommodations on the Milestones, the alternate diploma, and the new alternate assessment decision making rubric. Attendees will also have the opportunity to hear from districts who have demonstrated success in reducing and/or maintaining a low GAA 2.0 participation rate.

An update on accessibility features with iOS 17 launched on Tuesday. The new

features would be great for students with visual, speech and cognitive disabilities. Updates provided by Danny Housley with the Shepherd Center.

Assistive Access turns your phone into a smartphone Jitterbug, with giant, easy-to-use buttons and simplified features. If overwhelmed by the complexity of a smartphone but want to use iMessage and Find My, or need to pair an Apple Watch, consider turning on Assistive Access.

Live Speech lets you type to speak. Whatever you type in will be played over the speaker, or if you're on a call, it'll play over the phone.

Personal Voice to use Live Speech with an imitation of your natural speaking voice. Just read aloud on-screen prompts and your phone will create a digital model of your voice.

Detection Mode is a feature of the Magnifier app that can describe the room around you with the camera. There are different detectors you can turn on. People detection tells you how many people are nearby and how close they are; door detection works similarly. Image descriptions will describe the objects it can identify.

Point and speak will read aloud labels on the stove, microwave, etc. when you point to them with your finger.

Please see the Dear Colleague letters and other pertinent information released since September 1, 2023. Feel free to share with appropriate personnel.

-9/14 – [Fact Sheet: Nondiscrimination on Basis of Disability](#)

-9/14 – [Discrimination on the Basis of Disability in HHS Programs or Activities](#)

-9/12 – [American Rescue Plan – Dear Colleague Letter on Homeless Children and Youth](#)

-9/7 – [U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights Resolves Restraint and Seclusion Compliance Review of Spectrum Academy in Utah](#)

-9/6 – [Dear Colleague Letter on Immigrants](#)

Our new director highlight is Nicole Glass from Grady County. She has been in the field of education for 22 years! Read more as she shares about her greatest mentor.

Our district highlight this week is from Bleckley County Schools.

The [Research and Evaluation Unit \(REU\)](#) at the Institute on Human Development and Disability (IHDD) at the University of Georgia (UGA) is conducting a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) on behalf of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) of the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA). We are seeking input from individuals with disabilities, key stakeholders (family, friends, professionals or advocates),

service providers and employers in Georgia regarding competitive, integrated employment for Georgians with disabilities.

The information gathered will inform GVRA's portion of Georgia's Unified State Plan, as well as influence decision-making and delivery of vocational services to individuals with disabilities. You can participate by completing the surveys or participating in interviews/focus groups. Links to the webpage, surveys, and interview participation are below.

Surveys can be found by going to the webpage. Once you are on the webpage, please click on the big icons to select the survey you want to complete. The surveys should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete, and your participation is completely voluntary.

INTERVIEWS OR FOCUS GROUPS

If you would like to participate in an interview or a focus group, please click on the web link to complete the form. One of our study team members will contact you to determine eligibility and schedule at a time convenient for you. Interviews will take about 20-30 minutes, and focus groups will take about 45-60 minutes. Focus groups are tentatively scheduled to meet during Fall G-CASE in Savannah for directors and other leadership. More details soon.

Participate in Interview/Focus Group

If you have questions or need help completing the surveys, please contact the Research and Evaluation Unit (REU) at IHDD by sending an email to researchevaluation.ihdd@gmail.com or calling (706) 542-6089. Thank you in advance for your time and participation!



Fall leaves and a walking path

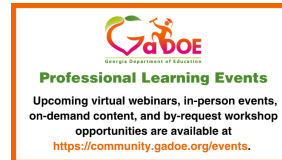
Fall is a season of transition. Much like springtime, fall is full of magnificent colors. The season creates a sense of comfort and warmth. I see many similarities with special education programs. Special education embraces the full brilliance of unique characteristics. Our programs should be safe, comforting environments where students can flourish. Students transition through various stages just like the seasons change. Celebrate fall and all the natural beauty, but most importantly, embrace the opportunities to make a difference in a child's life.

Thank you for all you do each day! I appreciate each of you. Enjoy the season!

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

September 25 at 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Back to Basic
Behavior Edition: Old West Laurens High School

September 26 at 10 a.m. Administrator's Guide to Discipline: From Law to
Practice

September 27 at 2 p.m. SSIP FY24: HLP # 14 Cognitive & Metacognitive
Strategies

September 27 at 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Back to Basic Behavior Edition: Middle
Georgia GLRS

September 27-28 at 8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. Special Education Budget & Data Tools
for the Job: South Central GLRS

October 2-5 at 8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior
Intervention: North Georgia

October 3 at 10 a.m. Administrator's Guide to Discipline: Alternatives to
Suspension

October 4 at 3:30 p.m. Significant Cognitive Disabilities Best Practices Series -
GaDOE Community: Significant Cognitive Disabilities Instructional Strategies

October 4 or 5 at 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Back to Basics: A Guide to Writing IEPs

October 5 at 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Back to Basics: A Guide to Writing Transition
Plans

October 5 at 10 a.m. Effective Co-Teaching and Collaborative Practices

Reminders

-September 22 Timelines- Prong 1 Due (for LEAs not at 100%) SE Applications
Dashboard APR Indicators 11 & 12

-September 30 Deadline for IDEA Budget Amendments (Located in the
Consolidated Application in GaDOE portal)

-September 30 Grant Period Ends for Federal IDEA Grants and High Cost
Grant

Visit GaDOE Community for a complete listing of GaDOE Professional Learning
Events.



District Highlight: Bleckley County Schools

Bleckley County Schools was featured in the news at East Central GLRS's website!

Riley Troili, a Special Education Teacher at Bleckley County Elementary School, understands the importance of collaboration. Riley had a vision to form an alliance with other teachers in Bleckley County and surrounding areas who, like her, also teach special education in a self-contained setting. Through the alliance, she thought it would be a great way to share ideas, give encouragement, and support each other. As she shared her vision with a local agri-tourism business owner of Green Acres Farm, Leigh Ann Greene, an idea was formed to offer a Free Special Needs Day to teachers and their classes who are a part of the Alliance.

But first came the Alliance. Through Riley's vision, the Facebook Group Special Educators Alliance (SEA) was established and has 40 members from 14 counties. The motto of the group is "Catch the Wave to Excellence." And excellence it has achieved.



Nicole Glass, Special Education Director, Grady County School District

New Director Spotlight: Nicole Glass, Grady County School District

GaDOE is excited to feature Nicole Glass for our New Director Spotlight this week.

Nicole Glass is the Special Education Director for Grady County Schools and has been in the field of education for 22 years. Ms. Glass has served in several capacities in her education tenure, which include thirteen years as a Special Education Teacher for middle school - inclusion/resource, four years as an Instructional Coordinator, two and a half years as an Assistant Special Education Director, one and a half years as a Curriculum Director, and this current year as a Special Education Director.

Ms. Glass shares that her greatest mentor in the field of education is Mr. John Wooden. "As principal, he pulled me from the classroom to tackle a leadership

role and has been my cheerleader, encourager, and counselor since day one. He is now enjoying retirement, but still finds the time to check in and remain a steady mentor and encourager.”

Ms. Glass lives in Bainbridge, Georgia with her husband Steve. They have three daughters: Hannah (23), Hadleigh (19), and Haydyn (17) and the especially important Sadie, the 14-year-old min pin! Starting a new role and working on her doctorate does not allow for much downtime but, when possible, Ms. Glass enjoys quick getaways to the beach and fishing days on the Flint River.

Practice Pointers – Transition Planning: Transfer of Rights at Age of Majority



Arrows

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), transfer of parental rights at the age of majority is described as beginning not later than one year before the child reaches the age of majority under State law, the individualized education program (IEP) must include a statement that the child has been informed of the child's rights under Part B of the Act, if any, that will transfer to the child on reaching the age of majority. In Georgia, the age of majority is defined as age 18. The rights transferring include: 1) All rights under IDEA Part B, to include the right to receive notice of and attend IEP Team meetings, right to consent to evaluations/reevaluations, right to utilize dispute resolution processes; and 2) All rights under the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** incorporated in the IDEA to include the right to inspect and review education records, right to request amendment of records, and right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information not meeting FERPA exceptions. To provide “proper and timely” notification to the student, be sure and 1) discuss transfer of rights with the student and parent at least one year before the student reaches age 18 and document the discussion; 2) clearly explain the rights to the student; 3) provide notification to the student in writing and explain in a manner the student can understand; and 4) provide Prior Written Notice to the student and parent a reasonable time before the student reaches age 18 about the upcoming change. Adult students can designate parents as members of the IEP Team as “individuals who have knowledge or special expertise” regarding the adult student. All other rights under State and Federal law reside with the adult student including healthcare, finances, residence, and occupation.

For more information, please see our [Transition webpage](#), our [Transfer of Rights and Decision-Making Options for Adult Students Presentation](#), and the [Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services \(OSER\): Transition Guide](#).

Office of Teaching and Learning: September 13, 2023, Right Now Resources

Mid-way through September and your work is in full swing. I enjoyed my time with Middle GA RESA instructional leaders last week and look forward to being with CSRA RESA leaders tomorrow and Chattahoochee Flint leaders next week. It is always exciting to be with curriculum leaders across the state. So much great work is happening, and I look forward to seeing many of you in Athens at the GaDOE Curriculum Leaders Conference on September 27 and at Fall GACIS on September 28-29. It is going to be a great collaborative learning opportunity.

Please review the [September 13, 2023, Right Now Resources](#) newsletter for Teaching and Learning Updates, or subscribe on the [Curriculum and Instruction webpage](#) to have them delivered straight to your inbox.

Please don't hesitate to reach out so our team can provide service and support. We are intentional in our mission to communicate and collaborate and to ensure that we are engaging and connecting with you and your core work. Thank you for your commitment and dedication; we stand ready to support your needs!

Join the Georgia Department of Education for "Increasing Instructional Access", two virtual professional learning opportunities on October 4 and 5, 2023 from 9-12. Focused on providing enhanced access to the Georgia Standards to students with disabilities, sessions will address specially designed instruction, accommodations on the Milestones, the alternate diploma, and the new alternate assessment decision making rubric. Attendees will also have the opportunity to hear from districts who have demonstrated success in reducing and/or maintaining a low GAA 2.0 participation rate.

[Increasing Instructional Access](#)

Private School Students and Initial Evaluations

Often questions arise as to whose responsibility it is to conduct initial

evaluations and eligibility determinations for students who are parentally-placed in private schools. Information regarding private school students and special education can be located in the [Georgia Special Education Rules Implementation manual in the Private Schools section](#). Pay particular attention to the following information:

Page 2 Child Find

The traditional LEA is required to carry out child find activities to locate, identify, and evaluate children attending the private schools within the jurisdiction of the traditional LEA. The traditional LEA must consult with representatives of the private school to complete child find activities. These child find activities must be similar to activities undertaken for the children in the traditional LEA and must be completed in a time period comparable to that for other children enrolled in the traditional LEA. Child find activities include any parentally-placed private school children who attend a private school within the jurisdiction of the traditional LEA, even if the child resides in a different LEA or in a state other than Georgia. See 34 C.F.R. § 300.131(a).

Page 6 – Question 4

Does the LEA where the private school is located have an obligation to make an offer of a FAPE? The LEA where a child attends private school is responsible for ensuring Child Find and equitable participation. If a parentally-placed private school child also resides within the jurisdiction of that LEA, then the LEA is responsible for making a FAPE available to the child. If the child resides within the jurisdiction of a different LEA, the LEA where the private school is located is not responsible for offering a FAPE to that child.

Page 6 – Question 6

Can a parent request evaluations from the LEA where the private school is located as well as the LEA where the child resides? Yes. A parent could request that different LEAs evaluate his or her parentally-placed private school child if the child is attending a private school that is not in the jurisdiction of the LEA in which the child resides. The LEA where the child resides has the responsibility to provide a FAPE to the child, while the LEA where the private school is located has the responsibility to ensure equitable participation (also called proportionate share services or equitable services). Parents are not encouraged to ask two different LEAs to evaluate their child for different purposes at the same time. The United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) states that “[s]ubjecting a child to repeated testing by separate LEAs in close proximity of time may not be the most effective or desirable way to ensure that the evaluations are meaningful measures of

whether a child has a disability, or of obtaining an appropriate assessment of the child's educational needs." See Questions and Answers on Serving Children with Disabilities Placed by Their Parents in Private Schools, Question and Answer B-4, U.S. Dep't of Educ., Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), April 2011.

Page 6 – Question 7

What are the LEA's responsibilities for reevaluations of parentally-placed private school children? The LEA where the private school is located is responsible for conducting reevaluations of children with disabilities enrolled by their parents in private schools located within the jurisdiction of the LEA. Reevaluations must be conducted in accordance with IDEA and Georgia Rules. See Questions and Answers on Serving Children with Disabilities Placed by Their Parents in Private Schools, Question and Answer B-8, U.S. Dep't of Educ., Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), April 2011.

Back to Basics Trainings Available

A Guide to Writing IEPs

Join the GaDOE Special Education Results Driven Accountability staff as they provide professional learning that will focus on writing a high-quality

Individualized Education Program (IEP). These trainings highlight the top ten common errors identified across the state through the monitoring process. Guidance will be provided as participants walk through the development of the entire IEP step-by-step, emphasizing best practices that support the whole child. All trainings are from 9 a.m.- 3 p.m. Please register for the date and location of your choice. Seats are limited.



People giving high fives in a group training

Back to Basics: A Guide to Writing IEPs Registration

A Guide to Writing Transition Plans

Join the GaDOE Division of Special Education Results Driven Accountability staff for Back to Basics Transition. This training will provide the audience with the history of transition planning as a foundation for creating effective, student-centered transition plans. Participants will understand the process for creating compliant transition plans. GaDOE staff will discuss each component of the transition plan in depth. Participants can engage in activities and receive

examples and non-examples for future reference. All trainings are from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Please register for the date and location of your choice. Seats are limited.

[Back to Basics: A Guide to Writing Transition Plans Registration](#)

Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment Survey



GVRA logo

The Georgia Vocational Rehab Agency (GVRA) is striving to improve the services they provide to individuals with disabilities. To help achieve this goal, the Research and Evaluation Unit of the Institute on Human Development & Disability at the University of Georgia is conducting a Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment on behalf of the State Rehabilitation Council.

Your opinion matters! UGA is seeking input related to services (and gaps in services) for job seekers with disabilities in Georgia. The information you provide will inform GVRA's portion of Georgia's Unified State Plan. It also will influence decision-making and impact the delivery of services to individuals with disabilities. Please take a moment to complete a [survey](#).

Please note you may complete the full survey or only the questions you choose. The survey is anonymous and no identifying information will be collected. Surveys are available for individuals with disabilities, stakeholders, service providers, and employers.

If you have questions about the survey, please contact Research and Evaluation Unit (IHDD, UGA) at researchevaluation.ihdd@gmail.com or call (706) 542-6089.

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September 29, 2023 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education



*Hands holding up letters
spelling respect*

Directors,

Former President Jimmy Carter is quoted as saying, “Learn as much as possible about the things that particularly interest you; be tenacious in fulfilling commitments, whether to others or to yourself; volunteer your time and talents to the community projects, learning all you can about the specific needs of the county or state in which you live; and treat everyone - family, friends and strangers - with honesty and respect.” A young man interested in politics reached out to Jimmy Carter a few years ago for advice. Without hesitation, former President Carter provided the advice above. Although this young man sought advice to become a politician, I believe these words could apply to everyone. Take a moment to reread the quote and think of how this advice can apply to your life. Join me in sending birthday wishes to former President Carter who will be 99 years old on October 1.

Join the Georgia Department of Education for “Increasing Instructional Access”, two virtual professional learning opportunities on October 4 and 5, 2023 from 9 a.m. - noon. Participants should attend both days as the content is unique rather than a repeat. Focused on providing enhanced access to the Georgia Standards to students with disabilities, sessions will address specially designed instruction, accommodations on the Milestones, the alternate diploma, and the new alternate assessment decision making rubric. Attendees will hear from

districts who have demonstrated success in reducing and/or maintaining a low GAA 2.0 participation rate.

1% Rubric Training

Our new director spotlight is shining on Sharlena Carson from Atlanta Unbound Academy. Read below about her love for her job as well as what she has learned from her students.

Our district highlight this week is from Baldwin County Schools. Read all about their installation of sensory rooms for their elementary students and how they have impacted their students.



Honesty

September has been a very busy month and don't expect October to slow down either. I know you are busy fulfilling commitments but try to take time for yourself. If you don't take care of yourself, it is hard to care for others. As former President Carter said, "... be tenacious in fulfilling commitments , whether to others or yourself..." Wise advice to all but I especially like his final words of this quote, "...treat everyone - family, friends and strangers -with honesty and respect." These words ring true with me. Whatever the circumstances may be, honesty and respect will carry you far.

Thank you for all you do to support students with disabilities and their families. You are making a difference each day!

Keeping students first,
Wina

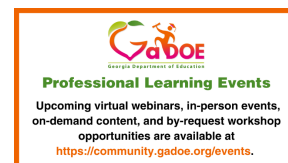
Special Education Events & Due Dates

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

Coming Up

October 2-5 at 8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. Functional Behavior Assessment/Behavior Intervention: North Georgia

October 3 at 10 a.m. Administrator's Guide to Discipline: Alternatives to Suspension



*Professional Learning
Events*

October 4 at 3:30 p.m. Significant Cognitive Disabilities Best Practices Series - GaDOE Community: Significant Cognitive Disabilities Instructional Strategies

October 4 or 5 at 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Back to Basics: A Guide to Writing IEPs

October 5 at 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Back to Basics: A Guide to Writing Transition Plans

October 5 at 10 a.m. Effective Co-Teaching and Collaborative Practices

October 10 at 1 p.m. Special Education Directors' Webinars

October 12 at 1:30 p.m. FY24 Special Education Spotlight on FTE Reports & Errors

Reminders

-September 30 Deadline for IDEA Budget Amendments (Located in the Consolidated Application in GaDOE portal)

-September 30 Grant Period Ends for Federal IDEA Grants and High Cost Grant

-October 1 Budget Submission Deadline - ALL Budgets located in the Consolidated Application in GaDOE portal (IDEA Pre-K 619 IDEA 611)

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

District Highlight: Baldwin County Schools

Baldwin County Schools was featured in the local news for their installation of sensory rooms in elementary schools.



Baldwin County Schools logo

Sensory rooms provide a safe place for students who have sensory processing disorders to have time to self-regulate and take a break. The sounds and lights in a school can at times overload a child's senses. To help their students, last spring Baldwin County installed sensory rooms in all five of their elementary schools. Jamay Meeks, Baldwin School's Disability Service Coordinator, says schools have a lot going on that can trigger a student with sensory processing disorders. While the rooms are mainly used by students in special education, any child is able to use them.

To read more about how the new sensory rooms have impacted students in Baldwin County, visit [13WMAZ](#).



Sharlena Carson, Special Education Director, Atlanta Unbound Academy

New Director Spotlight: Sharlena Carson, Atlanta Unbound Academy

GaDOE is excited to feature Sharlena Carson for our New Director Spotlight this week.

Sharlena Carson is the Special Education Director for Atlanta Unbound Academy and has been in the field of education for 18 years. Across district, private, and charter schools, Ms. Carson has taught Kindergarten-12th grades in special education and general education, including her current role as Director of Specialized Learning and Compliance. In this capacity, Ms. Carson oversees special education and ensures that Atlanta Unbound Academy meets all guidelines according to the Georgia Department of Education and the State Charter Schools Commission. Ms. Carson's passion is special education, as she loves working with students to show that all can and enjoy learning. Ms. Carson takes pride in and loves advocating for ALL students.

Ms. Carson shares that, "I love my job as I get to see my impact across the school. Working in my former middle school early in my career impacted my education career. Out of college I returned to my former middle school as an 8th grade ELA teacher. It was a full circle moment as education was not where I saw myself but here, I was. The students taught me how much of an impact a teacher makes. I was a social worker, nurse, big sister, parent all wrapped up in one. I'm glad I was given the opportunity."

Ms. Carson and her husband are empty nesters, with a blended family of five adult children and enjoy traveling together. Ms. Carson loves shopping, reading, and gardening, her newfound hobby.

Practice Pointers – Transition Planning: Summary of Performance (SOP)

A summary of performance (SOP) is required for each student with an individualized education program (IEP) whose eligibility for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) terminates due to graduation from secondary school with a regular high school diploma or due to exceeding



Arrows

the age of eligibility for a free appropriate public education (FAPE) under State law. The local educational agency (LEA) must provide the student with a summary of the student's academic achievement and functional performance that includes recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting the student's postsecondary goals. This summary of the student's achievement and performance can be used to assist the student in accessing postsecondary education and/or employment services. The timing for completion of the SOP may vary depending on the student's desired postsecondary goals. For example, if a student is transitioning to higher education, the SOP, with additional documentation, may be needed as the student applies to a college or university. Likewise, this information may be needed prior to graduation as a student applies for services from agencies identified in the transition plan. For other students, it may be appropriate to wait until the spring of a student's last year in school to finalize the information on the performance of the student. When developing the SOP, the student should actively participate. Other IEP Team members, family members or other community agencies, involved in this student's transition planning process should also provide input. The SOP becomes the student's resume as he or she transitions to postsecondary settings.

For more information, please see our [Transition webpage](#), our [Summary of Performance Instruction Guide](#), and the [Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services \(OSER\): Transition Guide](#).

Office of Teaching and Learning: September 21, 2023, Right Now Resources

We had a great week that started with school visits for Literacy Leaders recognition. Congratulations to ALL that have earned this award for Achievement and Growth in the area of Reading. Excellent work! The rest of the week afforded multiple opportunities to engage with leadership across the state which have allowed time for collaborative conversations, time to listen to questions about current and future practices, and time to share about the current and newly released resources and supports provided by the Teaching and Learning Team.

Please review the [September 21, 2023, Right Now Resources newsletter](#) for Teaching and Learning Updates, or subscribe on the [Curriculum and Instruction webpage](#) to have them delivered straight to your inbox.

Please don't hesitate to reach out so our team can provide service and support. We are intentional in our mission to communicate and collaborate and to ensure

that we are engaging and connecting with you and your core work. Thank you for your commitment and dedication; we stand ready to support your needs!

How to Identify and Serve ELs with Disabilities

ELs are one of the fastest growing student populations in the country with a variety of unique needs that educators must address for their academic success. Even more factors and nuances come into play when ELs are also identified as having a disability. This article from Education Week highlights approaches discussed during the National Convening on ELs' Civil Rights on how to identify and best serve students with unique needs.

[Read the article on EducationWeek](#)

Office of Whole Child - Better Ed Bulletin: September 21, 2023

We are excited to bring you this edition of the Better Ed Bulletin. The Office of Whole Child Supports (OWCS) offers a variety of professional learning and tools including implementation of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS), health and wellness resources, and school safety guidance. Click the link below to read September 21's bulletin and please contact Dr. Kiley Thompson, Communications Specialist, at kiley.thompson@doe.k12.ga.us if you have questions or would like to be added to the distribution list.

[Better Ed Bulletin - Sept 21](#)

Increasing Instructional Access Training

Join the Georgia Department of Education for "Increasing Instructional Access", two virtual professional learning opportunities on October 4 and 5, 2023 from 9 a.m. - noon. Focused on providing enhanced access to the Georgia Standards to students with disabilities, sessions will address specially designed instruction, accommodations on the Milestones, the alternate diploma, and the new alternate assessment decision making rubric. Attendees will also have the opportunity to hear from districts who have demonstrated success in reducing and/or maintaining a low GAA 2.0 participation rate.

[Increasing Instructional Access Meeting](#)

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