



March 22, 2024 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education

Directors,

The Easter bunny made an early visit to our daughter and son-in-law in Pennsylvania last weekend. We are now proud grandparents to a bunny. I never thought about having a grand bunny, but he is really cute! Don't let those cute looks fool you, he is very nippy. Now we have two granddaughters, a grand dog and a grand bunny. Life is good!



Black bunny



On Monday, I was privileged to attend the graduation program for Marietta City Schools' Special Education New Teacher Retention Academy. As a part of the Teacher/Provider Retention Program, Marietta City Schools (in cooperation with partners Kennesaw State University, the Center on Great Teachers and

Leaders, Metro West GLRS, CEEDAR and the Georgia Department of Education) have concluded their second year of the teacher induction program. The celebration was positive, encouraging and moving. To hear in the students'

own words how their teachers help them was just precious. If you need a reminder of why we are educators, this celebration was certainly a poignant reminder. I am so very proud of Marietta City Schools and all the induction level teachers. A huge thank you to Michele Sayles Harris and Kristal Brown for their commitment to excellence.

Carrollton City Schools (CCS) originally released this feature on February 14, 2024.

The sound of inclusion rings loud and clear at CCS

In a testament to resilience and the unyielding spirit of the human will, Carrollton High School student Jack Lanaeus has a unique way to experience the excitement of high school sports despite his blindness: the Trojan Nation Network (TNN). “TNN has enabled me to listen to many CHS sporting events, something I was unable to do before,” said Jack. TNN features weekly podcasts with teachers, students, administrators, and coaches, with the goal of keeping the community informed about things happening on campus. In addition to podcasts, TNN provides audio coverage for all Trojan football games and select broadcasts for all other Trojan teams.

Born premature, Jack lost most of his eyesight as a four-month-old due to a severe case of retinopathy of prematurity that over a dozen surgeries could not reverse. “Jack has never met a stranger and loves talking about sports and weather with friends wherever he goes,” said Laura Lanaeus, Jack’s mother. “He enjoys being part of the morning broadcast team as the weather reporter and singing in CHS chorus productions.” Last week, Jack had the opportunity to be a special guest host on the TNN broadcast. “I really enjoyed being on TNN,” said Jack. “I have wanted to be on a broadcast since I started listening last fall.” Jack’s mother said though he has faced many challenges in his life, he’s worked hard to overcome them. “Jack has faced many hurdles along the way physically, medically and academically,” said Lanaeus. “He has worked incredibly hard to meet these challenges and continues to find solutions and adaptations that allow him to get the most out of life, and he does it with a level of energy and enthusiasm that is unmatched.”

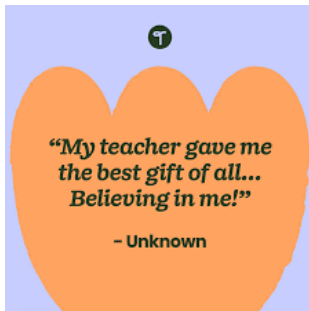
Matt Skinner, TNN host, said he was happy to learn that Jack listens to the broadcasts. “It’s awesome to see how the network has enhanced his experience



Carrollton High School student, Jack Lanaeus, was a special guest host on the Trojan Nation Network last week. Jack is visually impaired and TNN has helped enhance his experience with Trojan sports. Pictured from left are Matt Skinner, TNN host, and Jack Lanaeus, CHS student.

with sports in ways he couldn't access before." In a world so often dominated by visual stimuli, Jack's story shows how determination and innovation can lead to inclusion. It's not only a personal triumph but also a reminder of the need for accessible avenues, ensuring every student can connect with their school community. TNN has seen success in its inaugural year with more than 1,600 app downloads between Apple and Google Play. There are currently 28 podcast episodes and 30 live broadcasts that have been produced.

Thank you, Carrollton City Schools, for including all students in the entire school experience. A big shoutout to Mary Raburn, Director of Student Services, and Matt Skinner, TNN host!



"My teacher gave me the best gift of all...believing in me!" - Unknown

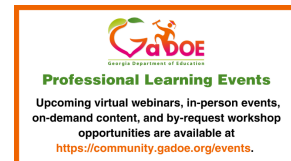
If you need a prompt for our "why," today's eblast is a good reminder of the great work happening across the state each day. You do what you need and love to do, often without realizing the extraordinary impact you are making. It is with great pride that I have the opportunity to share your stories. I am so proud of special education teachers and leaders in Georgia. Thank you for your commitment and dedication to students with disabilities.

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

April 9 at 1 p.m. Special Education Directors' Webinar

April 9 - 12 at 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention: Metro West GLRS

April 25 at 1:30 p.m. FY24 Special Education Summer Data Collections

Reminders

March 28 FTE Cycle 3, Student Class, and CPI Final Transmission Date, Deadline for Superintendent's Sign Off (Data Collections)

April 3 Student Record FY24 Opens (Data Collections) Indicators 1, 2, & 4

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

New Director Spotlight: Kelli Johnson, Chattooga County Schools

GaDOE is excited to feature Kelli Johnson for our New Director Spotlight this week.

Kelli Johnson is the Special Education Director for Chattooga County Schools and has been in the field of education for 19 years. Mrs. Johnson shares that, “Before beginning my journey as an educator, I worked with the Department of Juvenile Justice for three years. During that time, I realized most of the youth whom I worked with received special education services. That experience ignited a passion for students with disabilities and led me to believe that my time was better served in the classroom instead of the courtroom.”

With her entire educational career being in special education, Mrs. Johnson has served as an inclusion and resource teacher in both elementary and middle grades, as well as serving students with Autism and/or moderate intellectual disabilities in the self-contained classroom setting. Mrs. Johnson left the classroom in 2019 to serve as a Special Education Coordinator, focusing on the secondary level and in the 2023-2024 school year, she shared that she was blessed to begin serving as the Director of Special Education for Chattooga County Schools, and absolutely loves going to work each day to support students, families, and educators.

Mrs. Johnson enjoys spending time with her husband, a long-time educator and football and baseball coach. Their two sons are actively involved in the same sports their father coaches, and the couple spend most of their free time, miniature schnauzer in tow, watching the boys on the field.

Office of Teaching and Learning: March 14, 2024 Right Now Resources

It's our LUCKY week! Why you ask? Well, it's really simple..... because we get the opportunity each day to make an IMPACT in the lives of students and educators in the State of Georgia. As I have said before, this is HARD work, but it is the RIGHT work. We appreciate your dedication and as always, please reach out to our team for support as needed.

This week's Right Now Resources continues to be FULL (and long) of important information and updates. Note that the NEW items are indicated, but we did repeat several items to keep this information at your fingertips and on your radar. As always, we aim to provide you with the RIGHT NOW RESOURCES from across the agency that you need to lead strategically in your respective districts.

Please review the [March 14, 2024 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. You are in a place to purposefully impact teaching and learning in your districts, schools and classrooms.

As always, our teaching and learning team is here to serve and support. Continue to reach out as needed and thank you for your continued commitment to Georgia students and educators.

Georgia STABLE/Path2College Matching Scholarship



Georgia STABLE logo

We're thrilled to announce that for the calendar year 2024, OST is once again collaborating with Georgia's Path2College (P2C) 529 Savings Plan and the Georgia STABLE Program to offer the GA STABLE/P2C Matching Scholarship, which can provide up to \$2,500 to eligible children with disabilities.

A Georgia STABLE account is a way for disabled Georgians to save for qualified expenses and invest for future needs without losing eligibility for certain public benefit programs, like Medicaid or SSI. Georgia STABLE accounts provide financial independence and empowerment for individuals with disabilities by dramatically increasing the ability to save and invest. Georgia STABLE accounts are made possible by the Achieving a Better Life Experience "ABLE" Act passed by Congress in 2014.

To learn more about Georgia STABLE and how to open an account, review the [Georgia STABLE/Path2College Matching Scholarship documents](#) and visit the [Georgia STABLE webpage](#).

IDEA Carryover Amendments

Carryover for the IDEA 611 and 619 grants were loaded in December and

finalized late January. If your LEA has carryover and has not submitted a carryover amendment, please submit an amendment as soon as possible.

2025 IDEA Documents Available for Public Review and Comment

In order to meet the requirements as set forth by IDEA 2004 for the annual state application of Georgia's grant award under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for federal fiscal year 2024 (2024-2025), the Georgia Department of Education is publishing the following documents for at least 60 days beginning March 18, 2024 with an opportunity for public comments on such plan to be accepted for at least 30 days.

Your comments should be forwarded to: Wina Low, Division for Special Education Services and Supports at wlow@doe.k12.ga.us

2025 IDEA documents

- Interactive Spreadsheet
- Part B Georgia Fiscal Application
- Notice to Applicants
- State Rules that Exceed IDEA 2004



Trophies

Awards of Excellence 2024

The Division for Special Education Services and Supports is seeking to recognize high school seniors with disabilities who have had academic and/or extracurricular accomplishments. This is a great opportunity to spotlight the outstanding achievement of a senior in your school district, as well as honor the hard work and supports of the family, teachers and staff.

A review of all applications will be completed by the Georgia Department of Education, Division for Special Education Services and Support staff. There will be one winner from each GLRS region, and we will be sure to share the winner's information with district leadership.

There will be a virtual awards ceremony this year on May 3, 2024 at 9 a.m. and it will feature a message from our State Superintendent.

Please complete the **Awards of Excellence 2024** no later than Wednesday, March 27, 2024.

For questions contact Paula Gumpman at pgumpman@doe.k12.ga.us or Lynn Holland at lholland@doe.k12.ga.us.

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