



Federal Programs



February 4, 2022 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education

Directors,

The Pennsylvania groundhog, Punxsutawney Phil, did see his shadow on Wednesday morning so he scurried back in his little house. The nationally recognized groundhog has spoken so it looks like we can plan on 6 more weeks of winter. Our weather in Georgia this week is gray, cloudy, wet, and cold, but there is another way to look at the message from the groundhog. What if we adopted the attitude of “it is only 6 weeks until spring” rather than viewing it as “6 more weeks of winter?” Are you a glass half empty person or a glass half full? Fortunately, we can control our attitude. Just consider a few of these quotes:



Attitude is everything, pick a good one

“People are just as happy as they make up their minds to be.” - Abraham Lincoln

“Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.” - Winston Churchill

“Life is 10 percent what happens to me and 90 percent how I react to it.” - Charles Swindoll

“If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude.” - Maya Angelou

As a leader, we have a big responsibility to lead with a positive attitude. It is

within our control to share a positive attitude or spread negativity. Just remember, *“Attitudes are contagious. Make yours worth catching.”* (Unknown Source)

Our February Director’s Webinar will be on Tuesday, February 9, 2022 at 1:00 pm. Karen Cliett from Federal Programs will provide a comprehensive update on certification, data reporting and in-field status. There will also be information from Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, an update on Virtual Job Shadow and an update from Budget/Grants. Use the link to join the meeting: **February Director's Webinar link.**

A bonus Director’s Webinar has been scheduled for February 22, 2022 at 1:00 pm to continue the guidance on serving students with disabilities while incarcerated. Please use the link to register: **Serving Students with Disabilities While Incarcerated in Local Jails Part 2.**

In this week’s eblast, I am pleased to highlight Taliaferro County School District’s Jaguar Leaders Program. As you read and learn more, you will see self-determination skills, mentoring, career planning and so much more included in this innovative approach. I am so proud of this work!

As a bonus highlight for this week, please join me in celebrating the work being done at Hiram High School in Paulding County Schools as a part of the Accessible Educational Materials Cohort. Learn more about “Take a Minute” and how you can also be a part of this exciting work.

Our staff highlight is one of our well-known rock stars, Evelyn Dixon. Evelyn brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to her position as a Program Specialist. In addition to her responsibilities as a District Liaison, she also provides the programmatic support for Speech-Language Impairment Programs across the state.



You got this

Our eblast this week is full of professional learning opportunities. Please share this information with your administrators and teachers. In a pandemic, encouraging someone to be contagious is a little risky, but if we could spread a positive attitude, just think of what we can accomplish. Be sure your attitude is worth catching! Only 6 more weeks till spring, instead of six more weeks of winter. You are in control!

Thank you for all you do each day for students with

disabilities and their families. I am in awe of your dedication and commitment.

Keeping Students First,
Wina

Special Education Events & Due Dates

Please review for upcoming events and the **Due Dates Calendar** for deadlines and key dates.



Latest news

Coming Up

- February 8** at 1:00 PM – **Special Education Directors Webinar Link**
- February 8** at 3:00 PM – **Assistive Technology Webinar (Supports for writing with Text Help’s WriQ software Registration Link**
- February 9** at 10:00 AM – Lead emBRACE: Logic of Logistics and Targeted Times to Talk **Lead emBRACE Registration Link** (FY22 School-Based Administrators PL Series)
- February 9** at 2:00 PM – **Improving Graduation Rates for Students with Disabilities through CTAE Registration Link** (FY22 SSIP Spring PL Series)
- February 10** at 1:30 PM – **FY22 Special Education Student Record Registration Link** (Recovering Rejected Events)
- February 15** at 3:15 PM – **Significant Cognitive Disabilities and Aided Language Stimulation Link**
- February 16** at 3:15 PM – **The Georgia Brigade - Community of Practice Link**
- February 18** at 10:00 AM or 1:00 PM – Cross Functional Monitoring (CFM) Office Hours (ONLY for LEAs in the FY22 CFM process) **10:00 AM Meeting Link** or **1:00 PM Meeting Link**
- February 23** at 10:00 AM – **Lead emBRACE: Listening Tours for Student Success (FY 22 School-Based Administrators PL Series) Registration Link**
- February 23** at 1:00 PM – **Professional Learning Series for School Psychologists (Prior Written Notice) Registration Link**
- February 23** at 2:00 PM – **The Power of Self-Determination for Students with Disabilities in Secondary Settings (FY22 SSIP Spring PL Series) Registration Link**
- February 24** at 1:30 PM – **FY22 Special Education Student Record (Errors & Impact of Information) Registration Link**

Reminders

February 15 – Post School Outcomes opens for viewing in the Special Education Applications Dashboard (2020-2021 exiters).

February 15 – Grants for Residential and Reintegration Services and High Cost are due.

February 28 – Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) is due for all LEAs.

February 28 – American Printing House (APH) Census is open for entry **Registration and Census** and closes February 28, 2022.

Open through May 31, 2022 – Parent Survey is open in the Special Education Applications Dashboard for LEAs to review results, with hourly updates. Please share the **FY 22 Parent Survey link** in your LEA and encourage participation.



Taliaferro County Schools logo

District Highlight: Taliaferro County

Taliaferro County School District's Jaguar Leaders Program is a student support program designed to promote improved self-awareness, self-confidence, self-motivation, and the active engagement of students in the educational process. Under the leadership of the special education director and associate superintendent, Dr. Andrea Jones, implementation of the program began in 2017 with an emphasis on supportive services for students with disabilities and those requiring intervention. It has since grown to include all 194 students within the single-school district. Yearly, each grade level is assigned a school or community mentor and participates in monthly sessions where students strengthen their social, interpersonal, and leadership capacity through discussion of engaging, age-related topics and participation in relevant activities. A jaguar leader of the month is then selected based on high levels of implementation of the month's character word. Additionally, the district offers weekly small group and one-to-one mentoring sessions for students requiring more intensive support. Mentors are assigned to students referred for additional support based on their individual needs.

Each semester, Jaguar Leader coordinators, Audrey Hawkins & Egypt Thomas, host chat sessions during which students participate in fun activities or interact with guest speakers that reiterate the principles of the program. The highlight of the program each year is Jaguar Futures Day, a post-secondary fair hosted by the district's student services department, federal

programs department, and the parent & family engagement program. Students, parents and community members are afforded the opportunity to visit with or attend small group sessions with colleges, universities, and technical schools, military recruiters, community organizations that provide resources to local families, organizations that support the transition of students and community members with disabilities, and financial professionals. Local entrepreneurs are also invited to showcase their products and demonstrate their processes at the event.



Dr. Andreaana Jones, Special Education Director Taliaferro County

Implementation of the program, along with continued efforts of an incredible special education team of administrators and staff who treat each student as if they were their own and plan individually for each student's success, have led to improved graduation, attendance, and discipline rates among students with disabilities and the district at large.



Evelyn Dixon, Education Program Specialist, GaDOE Special Education and Student Supports

GaDOE Spotlight: Evelyn Dixon

Evelyn Dixon currently serves as the Education Program Specialist in the Division for Special Education Supports and Services at the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE). In this role, she supports the Speech-Language Impairment Program throughout the state of Georgia and serves as a District Liaison for the Metro East Georgia Learning Resources System (GLRS).

She is an American-Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) certified Speech-Language Pathologist and holds a Georgia Secretary of State license for Speech-Language Pathology. With over 20 years of experience, she has gained a plethora of knowledge in the field of education, specifically special education.

Evelyn has held the position of Speech-Language Pathologist at public school districts in the District of Columbia, Georgia, Maryland, and Mississippi. Additionally, she was employed by the Department of Defense Dependent Schools in Okinawa, Japan as a Speech-Language Pathologist Assessor. Her professional experience has led her to serve in various district level leadership positions with one of the top five largest school districts in the state of Georgia. Of which, she was responsible for various special education programs to

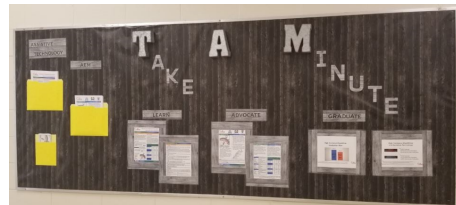
include, but not limited to; Audiology, Behavior and Discipline, Occupational and Physical Therapy, Transition and Speech-Language Impairment.

Throughout her career, she has served on multiple committees in special education (i.e., Dyslexia, Specially Designed Instruction) and communication disorders with a focus of improving student outcomes. While at GaDOE she has co-developed multiple professional learning opportunities, Fireside Chats, Community of Practices, and discipline specific documents for the support personnel around the state. She has also re-established the GLRS Speech-Language Consortiums around the state, increasing participation from six to thirteen consortiums.

Evelyn recently co-developed the Paraprofessional Guidance document for the GaDOE, Division for Special Education Services and Supports. This document provides information regarding the specific roles and responsibilities of the paraprofessional when utilized to assist with certain duties and tasks within a classroom and/or speech-language program. It also provides information regarding how to document services in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) and addresses all paraprofessionals regardless of whether they're assisting the classroom teacher or speech-language pathologist.

Evelyn enjoys playing Senior Softball on the weekends as well as completing interior designing projects.

Bonus Highlight: Hiram High School in Paulding County “Takes A Minute”



Take a minute board

Paulding County, one of GaDOE's Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) Cohort partner's, has continued the "Take a Minute" (TAM) initiative at Hiram High School. They are using the bulletin board to support students and staff as well as weekly announcements specific to assistive technology (AT) and accessible educational materials (AEM). Weekly announcements are happening at East Paulding Middle School as well as Hiram High School. Amy Penn, Paulding County Special Education Director, is also sharing AT/AEM tips in their monthly Exceptional Students Educational Programs (ESEP) monthly lead meetings. What a great way to continue the work supporting students with AT/AEM.

Materials for the "Take a Minute" initiative are available at GaDOE by following this [AEM Cohort page link](#).



Finding Middle Ground flyer

Classroom Conversations Podcast 104: Positive Climate Middle Grades Classroom

This episode features Thomasville City Schools teacher, Clark Ramey. Mr. Ramey discusses the importance of creating a positive climate in his middle school ELA classroom. He does a great job connecting Climate to ELA instruction as he also discusses classroom engagement/management 101 strategies.

You can find all the podcasts on the [Georgia Public Broadcasting website](#).

School-Based Administrator's Special Education Professional Learning Series

The third installment of the School-Based Administrator's Special Education Professional Learning Series will be presented on Wednesday, February 9th at 10:00 AM. The presentation is titled **"Lead emBRACE: Logic of Logistics and Targeted Times to Talk."** In this session, Derrick Butler, principal of Islands High School, shares Four Key Drivers that changed the trajectory for student achievement and teacher growth in his building. He will also discuss the importance of monitoring and accountability of clear and observable expectations for all classrooms, including co-taught classes.



People sitting around a circle table

"Improving Graduation Rates through CTAE Course Completion" is the next presentation in the SSIP Spring PL Series. It will be offered on Wednesday, February 9th at 2:00 PM. Trace Vaughn and Ann Cross, with GaDOE's Systemic Improvement Program, will examine how students with disabilities can achieve improved outcomes when they complete CTAE courses and pathways. They will also share best practices to ensure students with disabilities are enrolled in CTAE courses and the roles of parents, administrators, and counselors in this process.

Support Personnel Professional



People sitting in a group giving high-fives

Development: MTSS & Child Find: Keeping Students First

The time is approaching for the next professional development session for support personnel. This session will cover Multi-tiered Systems of Supports and Child Find and will be held on Thursday, February 10th from 1:00pm-3:00pm. Use the link

below to join the session.

Join the session: **MTSS & Child Find: Keeping Students First**

If you have questions, contact the Program Specialist for your area below.

- Evelyn Dixon, Program Specialist, Speech-Language Pathologists at edixon@doe.k12.ga.us
- Elise James, Program Specialist, Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy at ejames@doe.k12.ga.us
- Alicia Mercer, Program Specialist, School Psychologists at amercer@doe.k12.ga.us

Don't Miss Part 2 of Charting the LifeCourse Principles Professional Learning Series

The Parent Mentor Partnership in collaboration with the GaDOE Transition for Students with Disabilities is inviting transition specialist/personal, Parent Mentors, and lead teachers who work in the area of transition to participate in an overview of the Charting the LifeCourse (CtLC) framework. You will have the opportunity to interact with three of these many principles which help “individuals and families of all abilities envision for a good life, think about what they need to know and do, identify how to find or develop supports, and discover what it takes to live the lives they want to live.” The sessions with the links to join are listed below. No registration is required. For more information, contact Elise James at ejames@doe.k12.ga.us.



Person watching a meeting on a tablet

- Part 2: Wednesday, February 9th at 9:00 AM **Trajectory to a Good Life Meeting Link**
- Part 3: Wednesday, February 23rd at 9:00 AM **Integrated Star for Problem-Solving and Planning Meeting Link**



People watching a presenter

Youth Focus Group For Youth and Young Adults: Transitioning to Adult Health Care

The Department of Public Health is conducting youth/young adult focus groups on Health Care Transition. ALL youth and young adults between the ages of 14 and 22 (with and without disabilities) are invited to attend. Each session will be held virtually lasting no longer than 90 minutes. Participants who attend and complete the full focus group will receive a \$25 gift card. The links below contain the information flyers which include the registration link and the consent form to participate. The electronic consent form needs to be completed electronically or printed, completed, scanned and mailed to Quondalynn Rainey at Quondalynn.Rainey@dph.ga.gov.

For more information contact Quondalynn Rainey at Quondalynn.Rainey@dph.ga.gov.

Transitioning to Adult Health Care: February 21, 2022 at 1:00 PM

Did You Miss Transition Talks with the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA): Virtual Job Shadow Redesign?

The **Virtual Job Shadow Redesign recording** and *PowerPoint* for session one is now available. In addition, training dates and registration links for the remaining sessions are listed below.

- February 28, 2022 at 1:00 PM: **VJS Redesign Session 2**
- March 18, 2022 at 1:00 PM: **VJS Redesign Session 3**
- April 18, 2022 at 1:00 PM: **VJS Redesign Session 4**

For more information, contact Elise James atejames@doe.k12.ga.us.



Woman sitting with her laptop in her lap

New Directors' Webinar Date Added

February 22, 2022 at 1:00 PM GaDOE will host an



People watching a presentation

additional webinar, **“Serving Students with Disabilities While Incarcerated in Local Jails Part 2”**.

One district will share their relationship with the local jail and the successes and challenges serving students who are incarcerated. Please invite your local jail representatives to participate.

Preparing for Your IDEA 2023 Budgets

Join the Budget Unit for a webinar to receive training and updates on FY2023 IDEA budget requirements. Participants will understand how to complete and submit various budget information such as Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CCEIS) and proportionate share documentation. This session will also address keys to successful budget submission by providing participants with tips to avoid common revision requests.



Graphs and data with a calculator

Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022

Time: 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Budget Unit Registration Link

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

The webinar will be recorded and made available later.

For more information, please contact Nicole Croom at ncroom@doe.k12.ga.us.



Parent to Parent of Georgia logo

P2P February Trainings

Webinar: **Supported Decision-Making: A Path to Self-Determination**

Thursday February 10th at 10:00 AM EDT

Supported Decision-Making Facebook Page

Webinar: **Staying in Your Target Heart**

Rate...Stress/Burnout Management Strategies

Monday February 14th at 10:00 AM EDT

Staying in Your Target Heart Rate Facebook Page

Webinar: **Peace, Love, Harmony....and IFSP/IEP?** Monday February 14th at 10:00 AM EDT

Peace, Love, Harmony Facebook Page

Webinar: **Staying in Your Target Heart Rate...Stress/Burnout Management Strategies**

Monday February 14th at 6:00 PM EDT

Staying in Your Target Heart Rate Facebook Page

Webinar: **Georgia's Home and Community-Based Waivers (NOW/COMP)** - will be in both English and Spanish

Thursday February 24th at 12:00 PM EDT

ELA Virtual Learning Community Webinars

Our first month of ELA Virtual Learning Community webinars are live! Access all the webinars via the flyer link below, or join us in one of our GaDOE Community groups!

You can access the webinars directly from **this flyer**.

If you have not already done so, please join the respective communities that interest you. These community leaders are the practicing Georgia educators you see on the webinars, and GaDOE

Community provides a place for you not only to access resources but also to engage in collaboration with your colleagues from across the state. Also, feel free to share this information with your fellow educators who are not currently members of the GaDOE Community.

Feel free to respond to the discussions posed by the community leaders. If you have a great vocabulary strategy, please add it to that week so that fellow educators can benefit! What's that? You are a NWP/GWP Fellow, and you have all the strategies for writing?! That's awesome! Please feel free to add an idea to the discussion that might benefit others! Alternately, you have an idea for a lesson, but you would like to bounce that idea off of someone? Post it! I'm sure with all our years of expertise combined, we can offer something to the discussion.



Virtual Learning Communities snapshot



GaDOE Community logo

English Language Arts

The GaDOE ELA Team invites you to join the **K-12 ELA Exceptional Learners Virtual Learning Community!** Our Virtual Learning Specialist will share High Leverage Practices (HLPs) in a welcoming virtual environment, and educators will have the opportunity to share their classroom expertise and learn from others! The February topic is **Scaffolding ELA Instruction for Exceptional Learners**. We are excited to have you learning with us!

For questions, please contact Franeka Colley at franeka.colley@doe.k12.ga.us.

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Federal Programs

February 11, 2022 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education



Banner saying Happy Valentine's Day

Directors,

On Monday, Valentine's Day will be celebrated around the world. Our thoughts immediately go to hearts, flowers, chocolates, and, most of all, love. Love comes in many different forms, but most would agree everyone needs it. The 1967 hit song, "All You Need Is Love" by The Beatles, conveyed a single idea. The group was asked to provide a song with an easy to understand, universal message. With only those parameters, John Lennon composed lyrics that were deliberately simple for an international audience. The band's manager, Brian Epstein said, "It was an inspired song and they really wanted to give the world a message. The nice thing about it is that it cannot be misinterpreted. It is a clear message saying that love is everything." Fifty years later, this message endures as well as the popularity of the song. As we navigate challenging situations, overworked staff, teacher shortages, and the list could go on, this simple message still stands true. Sharing our love through compassion, kindness, service and friendship would solve or improve most of our tribulations. Let's make Valentine's the day to let someone know you care.

Disproportionality determinations were e-mailed earlier today. If you have any questions, feel free to contact your district liaison or one of the program

managers for Results Driven Accountability. Lynn Holland at lholland@doe.k12.ga.us or Felicia Peavy at fpeavy@doe.k12.ga.us

A bonus Director's Webinar is scheduled for Tuesday, February 22, 2022, at 1:00 pm. (2/22/22 -a date to remember) Dougherty County Schools will continue sharing their journey in collaborating with their local jail. A special guest from the Sheriff's office will be a speaker.

I am pleased to highlight Stephens County Schools this week. Learn more about Brewing Inspirations, a student-led coffee shop, serving almost 100 teachers each Friday. I am so proud of this amazing group of students.

Our staff highlight is Malissa Roberts, our new program manager for Budget and Grants. Most of you know Malissa from her role as a program specialist. Malissa is always kind and patient. Be sure to congratulate Malissa for her new role!

There are numerous professional learning opportunities and resources in the eblast today. Please share with staff as appropriate.



I hope your day is full of love

Sending lots of love and friendship your way. Hope your Valentine's Day extends throughout the year. Be My Valentine!

As always, thank you for all you do. Just like the message of the song, all you need is love. Make your message clear and deliberate.

Keeping Students First,
Wina

Special Education Events & Due Dates

Please review for upcoming events and the **Due Dates Calendar** for deadlines and key dates.

Coming Up

February 15 at 3:15 PM – Significant Cognitive Disabilities and Aided Language Stimulation Link

February 16 at 3:00 PM – Transition Planning for Students with Significant



Latest news

Cognitive Disabilities Part II

February 16 at 3:15 PM – **The Georgia Brigade - Community of Practice Link**

February 18 at 10:00 AM or 1:00 PM – Cross Functional Monitoring (CFM) Office Hours (ONLY for LEAs in the FY22 CFM process) **10:00 AM Meeting Link** or **1:00 PM Meeting Link**

February 22 at 1:30 PM – **Data Collections Open Office Hours** for March 2022 Data Collections

February 22 at 3:00 PM – **Effective Transition and Practices Webinar**

February 23 at 10:00 AM – **Lead emBRACE: Listening Tours for Student Success (FY 22 School-Based Administrators PL Series) Registration Link**

February 23 at 1:00 PM – **Professional Learning Series for School Psychologists (Prior Written Notice) Registration Link**

February 23 at 2:00 PM – **The Power of Self-Determination for Students with Disabilities in Secondary Settings (FY22 SSIP Spring PL Series) Registration Link**

February 24 at 1:30 PM – **FY22 Special Education Student Record (Errors & Impact of Information) Registration Link**

Reminders

Opening the week of February 14 – Timelines Prong 2 opens in the Special Education Applications Dashboard for LEAs that were not 100% in the September 30, 2021 submission. The due date for completion is March 14, 2022

February 15 – Post School Outcomes opens for viewing in the Special Education Applications Dashboard (2020-2021 exiters).

February 15 – Grants for Residential and Reintegration Services and High Cost are due.

February 28 – Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) is due for all LEAs.

February 28 – American Printing House (APH) Census is open for entry **Registration and Census** and closes February 28, 2022.

Open through May 31, 2022 – Parent Survey is open in the Special Education Applications Dashboard for LEAs to review results, with hourly updates. Please share the **FY 22 Parent Survey link** in your LEA and encourage participation.

Open through June 15, 2022 – Student Record Data Collection available in the GaDOE Portal



Stephens County Schools logo

District Highlight: Stephens County

An exciting inclusive activity is happening in

Stephens County!

Brewing Inspiration is a student-led coffee shop that exists to promote a culture of inclusion while providing students the opportunity to discover and develop their unique abilities.



Students providing coffee drinks

Our goal is to build exceptional leaders, one cup of coffee at a time. We currently have two branches of Brewing Inspiration - our original branch at Stephens County Middle School and our newest branch at Liberty Elementary School.

Between the two schools, we have over fifty students that participate as Brewistas and Baking Buddies. We serve almost 100 teachers each Friday. We hope to expand to other campuses in the near future.



Malissa Tyson Roberts, Program Manager, GaDOE Special Education and Student Supports

GaDOE Spotlight: Malissa Tyson Roberts

Malissa Tyson Roberts currently serves as the Program Manager of IDEA Budgets and Grants

managing activities related to budget preparation and supervising the preparation, maintenance, and management of the IDEA division budget. Responsibilities include managing a team of IDEA fiscal program specialists who provide support to LEAs in the preparation and management of State and IDEA federal funds. She also manages oversight of over 11 state and federal grants. She has been a teacher, department chair, teacher support specialist, teacher effectiveness facilitator, and held other leadership roles in Early Intervention Prevention and Special Education. Prior to her career in education, she spent 12 years in budget and finance in various leadership capacities.

Malissa handles guidance and review of the Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan and IDEA fiscal Cross Functional Monitoring of districts, charter schools, and state agencies. She provides professional presentations, trainings, and technical assistance on IDEA fiscal regulatory requirements. She also aids in the development of IDEA fiscal learning modules.

Malissa and her husband, Rick, have been married for nearly 28 years. They have three children, Amanda, Ashley, and Autumn. She loves writing, reading, brisk walking, leading bible studies, watching action movies, and enjoying time with family. Last year, she started a vegetable garden and loves it! It is her new favorite hobby.



People watching a presentation

New Directors' Webinar Date Added

February 22, 2022 at 1:00 PM, GaDOE will host an additional webinar, **“Serving Students with Disabilities While Incarcerated in Local Jails Part 2”**.

Dougherty County will share their relationship with the local jail serving students who are incarcerated. Please invite your local jail representatives to participate.



Three trophies

Announcing the Awards of Excellence

It's time to recognize our outstanding seniors. The Division for Special Education Services and Supports is asking districts to nominate an outstanding senior from your district who have demonstrated excellence while navigating their challenges. Excellence can be categorized as:

- Outstanding Academic achievement
- Outstanding Athletic achievement
- Innovative use of technology
- Exemplary growth in social/peer relationships; participation in organizations and clubs
- Exemplary participation in the Arts (creative writing, visual arts, performing arts)
- Exemplary involvement in the community
- Acceptance into one of the branches of the military

Make your nominations using the **Awards of Excellence 2022 electronic form**. Submissions must be made by Wednesday, March 23, 2022.

Applications will be reviewed by the Georgia Department of Education, Division for Special Education Services and Support staff. **There will be one winner from each GLRS region.** The virtual celebration and recognition of the winners will be in May. The date and time will be announced after the submission deadline.

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

Don't miss this opportunity to spotlight the outstanding achievement of a senior in your school district.



Spotlight shining on a stage

Teacher Spotlight: Call for Submissions

The Division for Special Education Services and Supports welcomes your nominations for Georgia's Star Teachers. Anyone can nominate a Star Teacher or special education team. Email nominations to gamtss@doe.k12.ga.us. Be sure to include the name of the nominee (s), photo, and tell us why you believe they are a star to gamtss@doe.k12.ga.us. Please include *Teacher Tools Nomination* in the subject line.



Graphs and data with a calculator

Preparing for Your IDEA 2023 Budgets

Join the Budget Unit for a webinar to receive training and updates on FY2023 IDEA budget requirements. Participants will understand how to complete and submit various budget information such as Comprehensive Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CCEIS) and proportionate share documentation. This session will also address keys to successful budget submission by providing participants with tips to avoid common revision requests.

Date: Wednesday, February 16, 2022

Time: 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

IDEA 2023 Budgets Registration Link

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

The webinar will be recorded and made available later.

For more information, please contact Nicole Croom at ncroom@doe.k12.ga.us.



*Emory Autism Center
Monarch Program logo*

Monarch 2022: Virtual Winter Workshop

The Emory Autism Center will be hosting the 2022 Virtual Winter Workshop: Transition Programming for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The workshop is intended for high school educators, transition coordinators, GVRA counselors, and other transition service providers in the community. The virtual event will take place on Wednesday, March 9, 2022 from 8:00 AM - 3:00 PM. There is a cost for registration. The deadline for registration is Tuesday, March 1, 2022. For additional information, check the workshop website or contact Sally Delgado at sally.delgado@emory.edu.

Monarch 2022 Virtual Winter Workshop Registration Link



*Graphic of students with
disabilities*

The Basics - Professional Learning for Teachers of Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities

The Georgia Department of Education is offering a two-day sequence of foundational training to support teachers of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Training will occur on March 17 and March 31, conducted by Paula Gumpman, Anne Meyers, and Jessica Moreau.

The first day will focus on instructional strategies, student engagement,

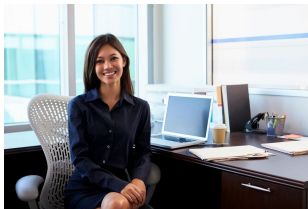
communication and data collection. The second day will be a make-and-take supporting the discussions and strategies from the initial session. Training will be held at the Middle Georgia RESA, at the Central Georgia Technical College - Warner Robbins Campus - 80 Cohen Walker Drive, Warner Robbins, GA 31088.

Attendees will be expected to attend both days. This is a great opportunity for teachers (especially those who are new to instructing students who are on alternate content standards) to receive direct, hands-on experience to support improved instruction for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

There are only 25 seats available so it is a first come, first served registration. Please share this information with your teachers and if appropriate, allow them to register.

If you have questions, please contact Paula Gumpman at pgumpman@doe.k12.ga.us or Anne Meyers at anne.meyers@doe.k12.ga.us.

Teachers of Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities Registration Link



Woman sitting in front of a computer

Cross Functional Monitoring Office Hours

To support districts in preparation for upcoming Cross-functional Monitoring(CFM), the Budget Unit and the Results-Driven Accountability Unit will be offering open office hours to answer questions and provide clarification to LEAs. These sessions are completely optional and designed to meet needs and address any questions surrounding the IDEA component of the CFM process.

The scheduled dates and times are:

Friday, February 18, 2022

10:00 AM - 11:00 AM Meeting Link

1:00 PM - 2:00 PM Meeting Link

Support documents are available on the **Federal Programs Monitoring webpage**.

Additionally, your District Liaison and Budget Liaison are always available to provide any necessary assistance. We look forward to supporting you in this process.



Woman speaking at a podium

Professional Learning Opportunities for Teachers of Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Please remind your teachers of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities that the **Georgia Brigade will meet virtually on February 16, 2022 from 3:15 - 4:00 PM**. During each meeting, attendees explore a specific topic ranging anywhere from instructional strategies to community-based instruction. The goal of the group is to share expertise in teaching and supporting students with significant cognitive disabilities. This is a great opportunity for teachers to network and build capacity to improve outcomes for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Georgia Brigade Community of Practice Link

We are planning for additional supports and professional learning opportunities for teachers of students with the most significant disabilities. To assist us in this process we are requesting your input on the use of the **GAA 2.0 2021-2022 GSE Extended Content Standards** for instruction of students who are assessed using the GAA 2.0. Please complete the one question survey by February 28th.

Extended Content Standards Survey



NEW Professional Development Resources to Support Instruction

CEEDAR Center PD Packs

The CEEDAR Center has several new **professional development packs (PD Packs)** that are designed for collaborative job-embedded learning. Each PD Pack contains a series of videos, leader guides, power point presentations and other resources. The NEW PD packs cover: Data and Outcomes, Mathematics, Strategic Communication, and Virtual Enhanced Practice for Special Educators to Improve their use of Evidence-based Practices.

HLP 15: PROVIDE SCAFFOLDED SUPPORTS

High-Leverage Practices for SWD has released a new video and leader guide for HLP15 Scaffold Supports.

Scaffolded supports provide temporary assistance to students so they can successfully complete tasks that they cannot yet do independently and with a high rate of success. Teachers select powerful visual, verbal, and written supports; carefully calibrate them to students' performance and understanding in relation to learning tasks; use them flexibly; evaluate their effectiveness; and gradually remove them once they are no longer needed. Some supports are planned prior to lessons, and some are provided responsively during instruction. Click on the link provided to view the new HLP professional learning unit.

HLP Video: Scaffolded Supports

CONTENT INTEGRATION RESOURCES UPDATE
JANUARY 2022

RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

ELA - Join our NEW [GaDOE K-12 ELA Exceptional Learners Special Learning Community](#) to engage and learn with our Virtual Learning Specialist and the ELA team! Also, don't forget sign up for our [Science of Reading Professional Learning series](#).

Mathematics - When providing interventions for support, it is essential for the interventions to align where students are so where the success criterion says they should be. We have 2 resources that support teachers in implementing viable, evidence-based interventions, [Georgia Early Numeracy Project](#) and [Georgia Secondary Numeracy Project](#).

CONTENT INTEGRATION Q&A LIVE SESSIONS

Bring your questions and join the Content Integration Specialists for a quarterly Q&A session. See the dates below.

- May 5, 2022 from 11:00-11:30
- July 21, 2022 from 11:00-11:30

Snapshot Content Integration document

Resources from the Content Integration Specialists

Have you checked out our **Content Integration Resources Video Playlist**? This playlist contains a variety of resource videos helpful to leaders, teachers, and families. Don't miss out on this great resource!

Bring your questions and join the Content Integration Specialists for a quarterly Q&A session. See the dates below and click the link to register.

May 5, 2022, from 11:00 - 11:30 AM

July 21, 2022 from 11:00 - 11:30 AM

Don't forget to visit our winter **Content Integration Resource Update one-pager**.

MTSS Snapshot: Clarifying Tiered Interventions

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a prevention framework that provides support matched to the unique needs of students. Additional intervention programs in schools can also be designed to serve students who are at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level expectations. Ideally, all intervention models provide layered instructional supports to help students who are performing below grade level. Georgia's MTSS provides students in need of additional support with evidence-based interventions and progress monitoring to determine growth toward a projected goal.

There are some specific practices that must be included for interventions to be considered as implementation of MTSS. The essential component known as the Multi-Level Prevention System (MLPS) identifies three tiers, commonly referred to as the pyramid of intervention. Providing students with interventions and supports can be aligned and considered tiered supports; however, not all intervention models can be called "MTSS Tier II" or "MTSS Tier III." To determine if the interventions offered at your school are a Tier II or Tier III MTSS model, it is important to consider what is occurring during the time that students receive additional services and supports. Think about the following:

Do you...



If your answer is “yes” to each of these components, then your intervention model is MTSS tiered supports. If your answer is “no” to any of the essential components of MTSS, then the intervention model may be a model of support but would not be considered MTSS with fidelity.

As you work to provide supports and interventions for students, focus on the fidelity of the implementation by using the elements identified in the graphic above. The **National Center on Intensive Interventions (NCII) website** also offers Tools Charts that will assist you in choosing interventions and assessments. For additional information, feel free to reach out to the MTSS regional coaches to learn more.

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February 18, 2022 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education

Directors,

American Olympic bobsledder, Elana Meyers Taylor, has once again represented the United States and Georgia winning another medal in the Winter Olympics. The Beijing Olympics is her fourth appearance at the Winter Olympics, medaling each time. Born in California but raised in Douglasville, Georgia, brings the question of how did she become a medalist in bobsledding? Clearly, she had determination, discipline, and perseverance to reach her goal. Elana is a talented athlete and attended George Washington University on a softball scholarship. When she narrowly missed making the U.S. Olympic softball team, her parents suggested she try bobsled. She had a goal in mind of being an Olympian and despite the fact she lived in a place that rarely sees snow, Elana has competed at the highest levels of this winter sport. When you have a clear goal, barriers can be overcome. Elana sees her journey as being an example to others that goals can be reached. She is certainly an inspiration. As leaders, we have many goals that seem mammoth or even unattainable. If you can be a four-time Olympic medalists in bobsled from



Olympics Beijing 2022

Douglasville, Georgia, goals can be reached. Just get started!

I am excited to bring news that Georgia State University is reopening their Deaf Education Graduate Program. As you know, teachers of deaf and hard of hearing are difficult to recruit. Please take advantage of this program to identify and encourage special education teachers to pursue this opportunity. Details are in the eblast below.

A special Director's Webinar is scheduled for Tuesday, February 22, 2022 at 1:00 pm, "Serving Students with Disabilities While Incarcerated in Local Jails Part 2". Dougherty County will share their relationship with the local jail serving students who are incarcerated. Please invite your local jail representatives to participate.

I am proud to spotlight Colquitt County Schools. Learn more about Victory Day and the special experience provided for children and young adults with disabilities. Be sure to also find out about 15 students receiving a letterman's jacket for their participation in Special Olympics. I am so proud of this work!



Elana Meyers Taylor, American Olympic Bobsledder

Our staff highlight of the week is Dr. Dawn Kemp, our Part B Data Manager. Dawn is an incredibly talented educator. She always goes above and beyond to serve and support. We are very fortunate to have her expertise and dedication.

The deadline for completing Maintenance of Effort (MOE) reconciliation has been extended to Monday, March 14, 2022. If your LEA meets the compliance requirement, no further action is necessary.

Please contact your program specialist with any questions.

As the Winter Olympics end, let's remember the hard-work, dreams, and determination it takes to reach our goals. Whether we are talking about systemic improvement, a personal goal, or especially the goals we develop for the students we serve, our students deserve Olympic size dreams that come with big goals. Even with barriers along the way, set your goals high and help others achieve their dream.

Keeping Students First,
Wina

Special Education Events & Due Dates

Please review for upcoming events and the **Due Dates Calendar** for deadlines and key dates.



Latest news

Coming Up

February 22 at 1:30 PM – Data Collections Open Office Hours for March 2022 Data Collections

February 22 at 3:00 PM – Effective Transition and Practices Webinar

February 23 at 10:00 AM – Lead emBRACE: Listening Tours for Student Success (FY 22 School-Based Administrators PL Series) Registration Link

February 23 at 1:00 PM – Professional Learning Series for School Psychologists (Prior Written Notice) Registration Link

February 23 at 2:00 PM – The Power of Self-Determination for Students with Disabilities in Secondary Settings (FY22 SSIP Spring PL Series) Registration Link

February 24 at 1:30 PM – FY22 Special Education Student Record (Errors & Impact of Information) Registration Link

March 1 at 1:30 PM – Data Collections Open Office Hours for March 2022 Data Collections Registration Link

March 8 at 1:30 PM – Data Collections Open Office Hours for March 2022 Data Collections Registration Link

March 15 at 1:30 PM – Data Collections Open Office Hours for March 2022 Data Collections Registration Link

Reminders

February 28 – Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) is due for all LEAs.

February 28 – American Printing House (APH) Census is open for entry **Registration and Census** and closes February 28, 2022.

Open through May 31, 2022 – Parent Survey is open in the Special Education Applications Dashboard for LEAs to review results, with hourly updates. Please share the **FY 22 Parent Survey link** in your LEA and encourage participation.

Open through June 15, 2022 – Student Record Data Collection available in the GaDOE Portal



Colquitt County Schools logo

District Highlight: Colquitt County

Victory Day

Victory Day is an evening of education, inspiration, and fun on the gridiron for children/young adults with special needs.

Participants are provided with a full “game day experience”. Each child will be partnered with a Colquitt County High football player or cheerleader who will serve as their mentor for the event. They will be given a Victory Day jersey to wear and line up on the 50-yard line with their mentor. The national anthem will then be played by the marching band. The announcer will introduce each child as they run on the field with the band in the end zone. A mock defense will be set up by our varsity football team. Each child will have an opportunity to run or catch a pass for a touchdown with play-by-play announcing. Colquitt County High School staff will have concessions to raise money for our Special Olympics.

This day is designed to inspire future leaders to pursue selfless, servant leadership. On Victory Day, the Colquitt County High School Football Team, Cheerleaders and Marching Band will give back to their community by providing participants an opportunity to live and experience the activities of game day at Colquitt County High.

Honoring the Special Olympics

For the first time ever, Colquitt County High School is honoring their Special Olympics team by giving them their own specialized letterman jacket. The ceremony took place in the high school's gym where the principal presented 15 students a letterman jacket because of their achievements in the Special Olympics.

Students who received the letterman jackets are Special Olympic athletes who have competed on the varsity level in Special Olympics either locally or at the state level for at least two years.

The idea originated from Dan Chappius, Principal of Colquitt County High School.

Faculty, staff, and students helped make the ceremony come to life. FOX 31 spoke with Mitchell McKinney, the Colquitt County local coordinator for the Special Olympics. “We just want to honor the commitment to these athletes who have been participating in the Special Olympics for several years and putting a lot of effort and hard work into it,” says McKinney. McKinney stated the school district plans to continue this tradition for many years to come.

GaDOE Spotlight: Dawn Kemp

Dawn Kemp has worked at the Georgia Department of Education as the Part B Data Manager for a year and a half. Prior to joining GaDOE, she had numerous experiences in the field of special education spanning over 34 years. She was a special education teacher for 12 years in Polk County and Rome City Schools. She served as a special education director for over 19 years in Rome City Schools, Trussville City Schools (Alabama) and Georgia School for the Deaf. While in Rome City, she also served as a human resources supervisor and English Learners program supervisor. She worked in the college and university setting across several years at Georgia Highlands (Psychology), Georgia State University (Special Education), Kennesaw State University (Special Education), and State University of West Georgia (Special Education). She also worked with Northwest Georgia RESA as a TAPP instructor in pedagogy for alternative preparation special and general educators. While working at Georgia State University and Rome City Schools, she published journal articles in emotional and behavioral disorders and textbook chapters in introduction to special education texts.



*Dawn Kemp, Part B Data Manager, GaDOE
Special Education and Student Supports*

In her position with GaDOE, Dawn has worked with the Data & GO-IEP team to support LEAs in using data to inform programming and measure student achievement. The expansion, clarity, and availability of publicly reported special education information are ongoing priorities. While working as a special education director in Rome City Schools, she worked with teachers and educational leaders to increase the graduation rate for students with disabilities with a regular diploma from less than 6% to over 65%. The rate of inclusion for students with disabilities in the general classroom > 80% of the day increased from < 35% to > 75%. A key initiative she implemented was the delivery of multi-sensory literacy training (Lindamood-Bell). The training was provided to PK and K general and special education teachers and Speech-Language Pathologists across several years to enhance evidence-based practices and student outcomes. As a TAPP instructor, she helped prepare well over 100 educators to support students in LEAs across the Northwest Georgia area.

Dawn grew up in Chattanooga, Tennessee and moved to Georgia in middle school. She has been married to her husband, Wallace, for almost 36 years. They have two feisty chihuahuas who keep them busy. She has a wonderful mother, sister, and extended family and enjoys spending time with them. She is also active in her church and community. Her favorite hobbies are working out, cooking, and reading.



Georgia State University logo

Georgia State University accepting applications for Special Education/Deaf Education Program

The graduate application is now open for those who are interested in applying for fall 2022 to the M.A.T. in special education/deaf education concentration.

Graduate Application Webpage

Requirements for admission consideration:

Application Deadline:

- Fall: July 15 (Deaf Education concentration ONLY)
- Spring: Does Not Admit
- Summer: March 1 (Adapted Curriculum & General Curriculum concentrations ONLY)

Select concentration in:

- Adapted Curriculum
- Deaf Education
- General Curriculum (Behavior Learning Disabilities)

When applying to the **Special Education, M.A.T. program**, you will need to submit several documents for review.

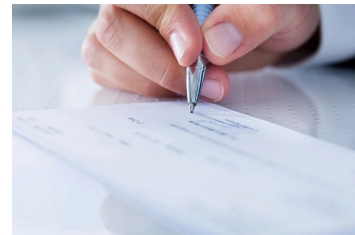
- Online Application
- Application Fee of \$50
- Goals Statement (upload with the application). Brief statement that explains the professional and academic goals that you hope to accomplish by completing this program of study.
- Resume (upload with the application)
- Two Letters of Recommendation (identify your recommenders on the application)
- Official Transcript(s): minimum 2.5 undergraduate GPA required for admission
- Submit official transcripts from all colleges/universities attended either electronically to gradapplytranscripts@gsu.edu or by mailing directly to Georgia State University | Office of Graduate Admissions | P.O. Box 4018 Atlanta, GA 30302

In order to meet certification requirements in Georgia, you will also need to complete the following prior to program admission:

- Georgia Educator Ethics
- GACE Program Admission Assessment
- You may exempt this test if you have received appropriate minimum scores on the ACT, SAT, or GRE.
- **Exemption score details**
- **Information and how to register** for the GACE Program Admission Assessment and the Georgia Educator Ethics

For more information, please contact Dr. Jessica Scott at atjscott96@gsu.edu.

Teacher Recruitment Tax Credit now available for teachers in high- need subject areas at eligible schools



Person filling out an application

Applications for Georgia's Teacher Recruitment Tax Credit, which was created to improve teacher recruitment for rural and low-performing public schools, are now available.

Eligible teachers are those recently hired to teach in a **high-need subject area** at one of 100 **Participating Schools**. High-need subject areas are defined regionally by the state's Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs). Teachers selected to participate in the Teacher Tax Credit program will receive a \$3,000 credit on their state income taxes each year, for five consecutive school years.

The Teacher Recruitment Tax Credit was established by the passage of House Bill 32 in the 2021 legislative session, sponsored by Representative Dave Belton.

"Georgia teachers have an impressive record of recent academic success, as evidenced by our record graduation rate and K-12 scores," **Representative Belton said**. "This program places a laser focus on our rural schools and those performing in the lowest 5 percent. More importantly, it works to restore the all-important profession of teaching."

Teacher recruitment and retention are top priorities for the state and the Georgia Department of Education. In addition to the implementation this year of the tax credit, State School Superintendent Richard Woods is **advocating during the current legislative session** for full funding of a pay raise for teachers, the removal of the threat of certification loss as a punishment for new teachers

identified as “Needs Development” through the teacher evaluation system, the establishment of a pilot to design an evaluation system built on professional progression with embedded supports for educators, and changes to allow districts to utilize retired educators full time to fill high-need teaching positions.

“If we want our students to achieve, it is absolutely essential that we retain our hard-working educators,” **Superintendent Woods said**. “That means creating an environment where those educators can thrive, compensating them appropriately, and treating them as the competent professionals they are. I appreciate Rep. Belton and the Georgia General Assembly making this tax credit program a reality for teachers who answer the call to teach in rural Georgia and in underperforming schools.”

Background Information on Teacher Recruitment Tax Credit

The legislation passed in 2021 requires the Georgia Department of Education to first identify all Qualifying Public Schools in the state – defined in law as any school located in a rural territory and/or performing in the lowest 5 percent of schools in the state. GaDOE published the full list of Qualifying Public Schools on its website in October.

The agency is then required to narrow the list to 100 Participating Schools. This list was published, along with the criteria used to develop it, on GaDOE’s website in December.

These lists, along with the application and other background information, are available via the link below.

Teacher Recruitment Tax Credit Application and Information



Spotlight shining on a stage

Teacher Spotlight: Call for Submissions

The Division for Special Education Services and Supports welcomes your nominations for Georgia’s Star Teachers. Anyone can nominate a Star Teacher or special education team. Email nominations to gamtss@doe.k12.ga.us. Be sure to include the name of the nominee (s), photo, and tell us why you believe they are a star to gamtss@doe.k12.ga.us. Please include *Teacher Tools Nomination* in the subject line.

AEM Center Training Sessions

The best way to ensure that students with disabilities receive their educational materials at the same time as their peers is to have purchasing policies in place that meet accessibility standards for the largest percentage of your students. Get a group together and join the following training sessions presented by The AEM Center.



People working together in a group

Topic: Spring 2022 AEM Tips Series Bring Your Own Procurement Policy Part 1

In BYOPP Part 1, you'll get to know your agency's procurement policy. Specifically, you'll compare the material accessibility language to the AEM Center's recommendations. Think your agency could do a little better at communicating accessibility requirements? This session will give you some pointers to create a pitch for making over lack luster accessibility language. Prepare by reviewing *Communicating Accessibility Requirements*. **And don't forget to bring your agency's policy.**

Date: March 29 at 03:00 PM

Topic: Spring 2022 AEM Tips Series Bring Your Own Procurement Policy Part 2

In BYOPP Part 2, you'll take "pen to paper" and begin marking up your agency's policy with recommended language changes. We're hoping that AEM Center consultant Rick Ferrie (from the Fall AEM Tips series) will be available to join us again.

Date: April 12 at 03:00 PM

BYOPP Calendar Invite

BYOPP Meeting Link

Meeting ID: 853 7484 1129

Passcode: 123

One tap mobile

+16465588656,,85374841129# US (New York)

+13017158592,,85374841129# US (Washington DC)



People watching a

School-Based Administrator's Special Education Professional Learning Series

The fourth installment of the School-Based

presentation

Administrator's Special Education Professional Learning Series will be presented on Wednesday, February 23rd at 10:00 AM. The presentation is titled "Lead emBRACE: Listening Tours for Student Success." In this session, presenters will facilitate a listening tour circle that engages participants in the shared thinking around leading co-teaching. Leaders will be challenged to consider their own practices, processes, and the work of this peer network. This session is designed to model how leader voice will provide new ways of thinking about this work.

Lead emBRACE: Listening Tours for Student Success Registration Link

FY 22 SSIP Spring PL Series

The next session in SSIP's Spring PL Series is scheduled for Wednesday, February 23rd at 2:00 PM. Elise James, Program Specialist for GaDOE's Department of Transition and Post-School Outcomes, will be presenting on "The Power of Self-Determination for Students with Disabilities in Secondary Settings".



People watching a presenter

FY 22 SSIP Spring PL Series Registration Link



Graphs and data with a calculator

Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Reconciliation Extension

As part of the IDEA, Part B application approval process, applicants must comply with 34 CFR 300.203, Maintenance of Effort. The U.S. Department of Education determines compliance with this requirement by comparing actual state and local special education expenditures for the most recent fiscal year to actual expenditures made in the comparison year. Please review the MOE portal to determine if your Local Education Agency (LEA) meets MOE compliance requirements. If your LEA does not meet compliance requirements, your LEA may submit the Exceptions to the Maintenance of Effort Compliance requirement form along with exceptions documentation. The deadline for completing MOE reconciliation has been extended to **Monday, March 14, 2022**. If your LEA meets the compliance requirement, no further action is necessary. Please contact your program specialist with any questions.

MTSS Snapshot: Infrastructure: Engaging Families

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a prevention framework that provides support matched to the unique needs of students. Georgia includes infrastructure as an essential component of MTSS. Included in infrastructure is family and parent engagement. It is important for educators to partner with families to maximize the benefits of tiered supports for students. Georgia's MTSS provides students in need of additional support with evidence-based interventions and progress monitoring to determine growth toward a projected goal. This approach to helping students be successful in the classroom should encourage family engagement. Consider the elements below to learn more about how parents and families can be included:



Celebrate Progress!

- Provide encouragement and celebrate success, even small improvements count.
- Compare the child's progress to his or her own goals, not another student.



Communicate!

- Encourage open communication - parents have information that the school may not have.
- Clarify information from the school about data, tests, and interventions.
- Offer ideas for how parents can support their child at home.



Encourage Patience and Persistence!

- Advise parents that interventions are not a "quick fix." It takes time to see progress.
- Clarify that tiered supports are a problem-solving process. Fine tuning the interventions is to be expected in some cases.

Source: National Center on Intensive Intervention www.intensiveintervention.org

As you work to provide interventions for students, discover ways to include families when planning. This will ensure a partnership that will be strong and collaborative as interventions are provided. For additional information, feel free to reach out to the MTSS regional coaches to learn more.



February 25, 2022 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education



Believe 7 little letters a lifetime of impact

Directors,

I believe in you! What a powerful statement. Those words touched my heart during our Director's Webinar on Tuesday. As special education leadership from Dougherty County Schools shared their journey in serving students incarcerated, Gayla Bentley said to one of the students, "I believe in you." We all crave to hear those words, but this must be truly special when you may not hear encouraging words often. Chief Jailer, John Ostrander, also shared his thoughts that a poor decision should not impact the rest of your life. If you did not have an opportunity to participate on Tuesday, I encourage you to take the time to listen to the recording and share with others that may need to hear this message. Director Gordina Porter has masterfully navigated a challenging situation to support all students regardless of their circumstances. As educators, I can't think of a more powerful message than to ensure our students know we believe in them. Dougherty County Schools is making a difference!

In less than two weeks, the G-CASE Spring Legal Conference will be held in Athens at The Classic Center. The conference opens at 1:00 pm on Monday, March 7th and continues till noon on Wednesday, March 9th. Hope to see you in Athens!

Our district highlight this week is Laurens County School System. Learn more about their effective transition programs to provide work-based learning opportunities. Great work!

Our staff spotlight is shining brightly on Elise James. Elise is our transition expert. Her focus is on post-secondary outcomes for students. By ensuring students have self-determination skills, effective transition can be accomplished. Elise has also led the work of student-led IEPs since the inception in Georgia. Everyone knows that you can always count on Elise for support. She is a true leader focused on positive outcomes for students!

After 16 years with the Georgia Department of Education, Kachelle White, Senior Program Manager, has accepted a position in Rockdale County Schools. Kachelle has led the Results Driven Accountability unit for many years. Her knowledge of compliance is enviable. Thank you, Kachelle, for your dedication to children with disabilities. We wish you the best – now and always.



I believe in you

Sometimes words spill out of our mouths that we would wish to take back. Our words can be powerful. It is often difficult to know, but our students do listen. Make sure your words and actions convey a message of hope and encouragement. Let someone know you believe in them. It could make all the difference.

As always, I appreciate the investment and dedication you have for students with disabilities. Please know that I believe in you!

Keeping Students First,
Wina

Special Education Events & Due Dates

Please review for upcoming events and the **Due Dates Calendar** for deadlines and key dates.

Coming Up



Latest news

March 1 at 1:30 PM – **Data Collections Open Office Hours for March 2022**

Data Collections Registration Link

March 8 at 1:30 PM – **Data Collections Open Office Hours for March 2022**

Data Collections Registration Link

March 15 at 1:30 PM – **Data Collections Open Office Hours for March 2022**

Data Collections Registration Link

Reminders

February 28 – Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) is due for all LEAs.

February 28 – American Printing House (APH) Census is open for entry

Registration and Census and closes February 28, 2022.

March 3 – FTE 3, CPI, and Student Class Data Collections are available in the GaDOE Portal.

March 9 – Disproportionality Compliance Reviews begin ONLY for applicable LEAs.

March 14 – Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Reconciliation is due for LEAs that do not meet the MOE compliance requirements as shown in the MOE portal.

March 15 – Timelines Prong 2 is due for LEAs that were not 100% in the September 30, 2021 Timelines submission.

March 24 – FTE 3, CPI, and Student Class Data Collections end for all LEAs.

Open through May 31, 2022 – Parent Survey is open in the Special Education Applications Dashboard for LEAs to review results, with hourly updates. Please share the **FY 22 Parent Survey link** in your LEA and encourage participation.

Open through June 15, 2022 – Student Record Data Collection available in the GaDOE Portal



Laurens County Schools logo

District Highlight: Laurens County

East Laurens High School & West Laurens High School

Successful transition to the workplace for our students takes much preparation. The Laurens County School System is blessed to have special education teachers who are determined for students to have opportunities to learn the skills needed for successful transition after high school. Mr. Chip Fleming from East Laurens High and Mrs. Brittney Faircloth from West Laurens High have spent countless hours in developing relationships with various businesses in Laurens County. These relationships have been vital in developing opportunities for students to learn and practice job skills.



The students are gaining invaluable knowledge in how to work in various settings such as restaurants, retail stores, a local grocery store, a local gym, and even a movie theater. Our job program would not be successful without the support from our awesome and dedicated special education paraprofessionals. The collaboration among the business owners and the special education personnel is making this important endeavor successful!



*Elise James, Program Specialist, GaDOE
Special Education and Student Supports*

GaDOE Spotlight: Elise James

Elise James has been a Program Specialist with the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), Division for Special Education Services and Supports for 14 years. Her primary responsibilities are as the lead for transition initiatives that support the improvement of postschool outcomes for students with disabilities and the scaling up of self-determination efforts across Georgia. This includes providing training and technical assistance for the ASPIRE Student-led IEP Project (Active Student Participation Inspires Real Engagement) and rolling out the implementation of the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction

(SDLMI) and use of the Self-Determination Inventory (SDI:SR). She works in collaboration with the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency(GVRA) supporting the transition of students with disabilities and the implementation of joint initiatives with GVRA in school districts. Her additional responsibilities include collaborating with other state agencies that serve students with disabilities focused on transition and participating in transition focused community consortium and stakeholder groups.

Elise has worked in special education for over 42 years. Prior to coming to the GaDOE she spent 23 years in Florida schools teaching students with disabilities (ID, LD, and EBD), 2 years as Director of a 21st Century Community Learning Center Initiative (21st CCLC), and 3 years at the Florida Department of Education.

The most important project that Elise has been instrumental in supporting is the implementation of self-determination building initiatives for students with disabilities. With the support of districts across the state, Georgia began the implementation of student-led IEPs (ASPIRE) in 2010 which increased the awareness of the importance of providing intentional instruction in building self-determination in students with disabilities. The increase in focus on self-determination skills including choice-making, decision making, problem-solving and goal setting has given these students the opportunity to exercise leadership skills and act as causal agents in their lives. The involvement of students in the transition process is leading to improving students postschool outcomes.

Elise leans heavily on her faith and uses her gifts as an ordained minister and praise and worship leader to work for the Lord. She is blessed with 8 children (7 inherited through marriage) and 19 grandchildren.



Children running down a school hallway

2022 Instructional Leadership Conference

The Office of School Improvement is pleased to announce their 2022 Instructional Leadership Conference.

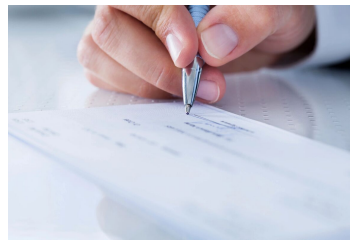
The conference will be held virtually. The primary focus of this year's ILC is

"Implementing Resources and Strategies with Fidelity" utilizing Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement's (GSCI) problem-solving cycle:

- Identify Needs
- Select Interventions
- Plan Implementation
- Implement Plan
- Examine Progress

During this two-day event, participants will receive information on new and practical resources from divisions across the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) and partnering agencies to support district and school effectiveness and improvement efforts. Presentations will focus on evidence-based practices that have been proven successful for Georgia educators, as well as available GaDOE assistance for districts and schools to ensure a high-quality education for the whole child.

2022 Instructional Leadership Conference Agenda and Registration



Person filling out an application

GaPMP Application for Participation

"Parents' voices are critical to the success of our education system. They are our children's first, and most influential teachers," said U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona.

We invite you to join the Ga Parent Mentor Partnership (GaPMP) in FY23. All districts whether returning or coming on for the first time must sign and submit the application by March 1, 2022.

Scan the signed FY23 GaPMP Application and reference your district name in the file name.

A JotForm link has been provided for uploading application for submission. Application submissions are not accepted by email.

GaPMP JotForm Application



*U.S. Department of Education
logo*

Office for Civil Rights Facts Sheet

The U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has issued this fact sheet to remind elementary and secondary public schools of their obligations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to provide appropriate evaluations and services to students with disabilities during the COVID-19 pandemic, including schools’ responsibility to provide compensatory services. Be sure to share with appropriate personnel. Please be reminded that students with disabilities may also have rights under Section 504.

Office of Civil Rights Facts Sheet

MTSS Snapshot: Tier III - Intensive Intervention

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a prevention framework that provides support matched to the unique needs of students. The emphasis is on prevention when discussing the essential component known as Multi-Level Prevention System, commonly referred to as the “pyramid of intervention.” When implementing MTSS, a layered continuum of supports is designed to assist students in closing learning gaps or meeting other needs that may be related to behavior and/or connectedness and wellbeing. Consider the Tier III understandings that are included in the graphic below:



Tier III intensive interventions are not necessarily new interventions that replace the Tier II intervention. Most often the Tier II intervention is intensified for Tier III which is more individualized for the student.



Interventions are tiered, not students. There is no such thing as a Tier III student.



Tier III is not a stationary location or "parking lot" for students with specific plans, i.e., Gifted, EL, SWD, etc. Tier III intensive interventions are offered with more individualized support and weekly progress monitoring.



SST is recommended to be initiated at Tier III; however, SST may be initiated earlier based on educator or parent request.



Although SST is initiated at Tier III (in most cases), all students receiving Tier III interventions are not destined to special education identification and services. In fact, MTSS implemented with fidelity has the potential to reduce the number of students receiving special education services.

As you work to provide interventions for students, it is important to ensure students receive the layers of support needed for him/her to be successful in school. By deepening understandings of Tier III, intensive interventions, educators will be more equipped to support the students in need of interventions. For additional information, feel free to reach out to the MTSS regional coaches or Karen Suddeth, ksuddeth@doe.k12.ga.us to learn more.

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