IDEA 1975 to Present

December 2, 2022 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education

Directors,

November 29, 2022 marked the 47th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Valerie Williams, director of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), shares her thoughts and perspective of where we are 47 years later. **47 Years Later, Are we Delivering on the Promise of IDEA?** Her insight is very thought provoking. I would also encourage reading more about IDEA, the history and OSEP fact sheets.

Related resources:
- About IDEA
- A History of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act
- OSEP Fast Facts

I would further encourage you to think about the last 47 years of progress though IDEA but please don’t be satisfied with our current status. There is so much more to be accomplished through intentional focus for the next 47 years. Lead the change!

Our new director highlight this week is Alice McMaster from Oglethorpe County Schools. She has continued the "family business" by working in the education for 25 years. Be sure to read more about how mentorship kept her inspired to
help families and children navigate the world of education.

Our employee spotlight is shining brightly on Dominique Donaldson. Read all about her impressive experiences as well as the special location she has saved for her bucket list.

Hope everyone had a restful Thanksgiving holiday. The weeks between Thanksgiving and New Year’s can be incredibly busy. Take time to slow down and remember the true meaning of the season.

A special thanks to Dr. Cassandra Hollifield, G-CASE President, and Sarah Burbach, G-CASE Executive Director for an outstanding conference. Every detail was perfectly orchestrated. Many thanks to all who contributed to the success.

Thanks for all you do each day for students with disabilities. You are making a difference!

Keeping Students First,
Wina

Children holding hands in a circle

Special Education Events & Due Dates

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

Professional Learning Events

December 5 at 9:00 a.m. – Back to Basics Behavior Edition
December 6 at 3:00 p.m. – Multisensory Learning & Vocabulary
December 7 at 10:00 a.m. – SESBAA: SpEd Determinations & Disproportionality
December 7 at 3:00 p.m. – Balanced Literacy and Structured Literacy
December 7 at 7:00 p.m. – Unraveling Dyslexia: A Closer Look Series
December 13 at 1:00 p.m. – Special Education Director’s Webinar
December 14 at 3:00 p.m. – Multisensory Learning and Spelling for SWDs
Professional Learning Events

Upcoming virtual webinars, in-person events, on-demand content, and by-request workshop opportunities are available at https://community.gadoe.org/events.

Reminders

**December 15, 2022** – Student Record - Data Cleanse -Closes (Located in the Data Collections)

A Thank You

Coastal GLRS Director, Kim Bennett, was a co-presenter with Islands High School Principal, Derrick Butler, continuing their successful Lead emBRACE professional learning series at the G-CASE Fall Conference in Savannah on November 17, 2022.
New Director Spotlight: Alice McMaster

GaDOE’s Special Education Services and Supports Division is excited to feature Alice McMaster for our New Director Spotlight this week.

Alice McMaster is the Special Education Director for Oglethorpe County Schools and has been in the field of education for 25 years. With education seemingly being a “family business,” Ms. McMaster wanted a different path and was determined to avoid teaching until she realized the fight was inevitable. “I realized that I wanted to be a special education teacher when I was working for DFCS, and I would go into the special education classrooms to see the students on my caseload.” Ms. McMaster began teaching after six years in the workforce and started as a middle school self-contained EBD teacher. An “awesome experience,” as shared by Ms. McMaster, she also taught 6th grade ELA, co-taught 6th and 8th grade ELA, and worked as a school counselor at the high school level, in addition to working for the school district.

While currently serving in her second year as the Director of Special Education, Ms. McMaster shared that, “My current superintendent, Beverley Levine, inspired me to stay in special education. She hired me, she mentored me, and she has stuck with me as my career in education has evolved. Her love of children and teaching is contagious. She makes coming to work and being part of her team challenging and exciting. From the classroom to the board room, we have worked together helping families and children navigate the world of education. She is my inspiration each day.”

Growing up as an only child in a single parent home, Ms. McMaster now finds herself in a family of seven, as she is married with two children, one in college, and one finishing high school. Also in the McMaster family of seven is Ms. McMaster’s mother, a cat, and a dog. In her time away from work, Ms. McMaster loves to read, watch movies, and visit museums. The family spends quite a bit of time in Montreat, North Carolina during the summer months, which is where her husband spent his childhood summers. The other favorite family
destination is Boston, Massachusetts, where Ms. McMaster spent her childhood summers and most Christmas holidays.

GaDOE Staff Highlight: Dominique Donaldson

GaDOE’s Special Education Services and Supports Division is excited to feature Dominique Donaldson for our GaDOE Staff Spotlight this week.

Dominique recently joined GaDOE as a Part B Data Manager for the Division of Special Education Services and Supports. Dominique works 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.

Before joining GaDOE, Ms. Donaldson had numerous experiences in the field of special education spanning over 10 years. Dominique Donaldson began her educational career as a Georgia Teacher Academy of Preparation and Pedagogy (GaTAPP) Teacher who was awarded the 2013 Muscogee County School District (MSCD) Outstanding First-Year Award. During her time with MSCD, she worked as a special education teacher, a special education school-based LEA facilitator, a district regional school-based LEA, and a program manager at the district level advocating and supporting students with special needs. She received her Bachelor of Business Administration and minor in Marketing, and her M. ED in Special Education from Columbus State University. She received an Educational Leadership Add-on from the University of West Georgia and has a Teacher Support and Coaching endorsement. She has also
worked in the college and university setting at Columbus State University as an adjunct instructor. She is also a recipient of the following awards and recognitions: Excellence in Education Award from Columbus State University, MCSD Elementary Teacher of the Year, Student Success Summit Conference Chairperson, and EmpoWEr Conference Chairperson.

Dominique has a passion for creating meaningful educational experiences for all stakeholders through developing and providing professional learning to close achievement gaps for student success. While working as a district special education administrator in MSCD, Dominique worked collaboratively with educational leaders to create a premier special education conference, The Student Success Summit, which gained recognition from GaDOE. The summit, hosted by the MCSD Student Services, Program for Exceptional Students, focused on delivering professional development and resources on the specialized needs of students with disabilities. This conference, the first of its kind to be held in MCSD, brought together parents and guardians, special and general educators, administrators, and community stakeholders. The success of the SSS Conference became the framework for what is now a district-wide initiative, the EmpoWEr Conference.

Dominique hails from New Orleans, LA where she gained a love for the New Orleans Saints football team, riding floats during Mardi Gras with her Mardi Gras Krewe, and a good bowl of gumbo. Dominique is the proud mother of two amazing boys, and she loves to travel and spend time with her family and friends. Dominique’s bucket list includes traveling to the Giraffe Manor in Nairobi, Kenya. She is also passionate about serving and cultivating her community through several volunteer service organizations.

Practice Pointers – USED Guidance on Discipline:

**QUESTION C-5:** WHEN THE PARENT OF A CHILD WITH A DISABILITY AND SCHOOL PERSONNEL AGREE ABOUT CHANGING THE CHILD’S PLACEMENT AFTER THE CHILD HAS
VIOLATED A SCHOOL’S CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT, IS THE CHANGE CONSIDERED A REMOVAL UNDER THE DISCIPLINE PROVISIONS?

The answer is no. If the parent of a child with a disability and the local educational agency (LEA) agree to a specific change in the current educational placement of the child to implement the child’s current individualized education program (IEP), then it is not considered a removal under the discipline provisions. However, where the parent and the LEA agree that a child with a disability requires additional services and supports from those in the current IEP, the IEP must be revised before the new placement is determined. For example, if school personnel and the parent agree that a different educational placement is required to better implement the child’s current IEP in order to ensure the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE), the new placement would not be considered a “change of placement” in the context of the discipline requirements. Such changes in placement remain subject to the placement requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 300.116 and the prior written notice requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 300.503.

For more information, please see the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) guidance found in Questions and Answers: Addressing the Needs of Children with Disabilities and IDEA’s Discipline Provisions as revised July 19, 2022.

Save the Date!: Intentional Teaching Practices for Preschool

Join us for an in-person, day-long workshop designed for teachers of preschool students with disabilities. Intentional Teaching Practices provides developmentally appropriate learning experiences that are taught for preschool children throughout the day, from greeting children in the morning to storytime, small group, and centers. Throughout the session, we will identify a variety of methods to make adaptations and differentiate lessons to meet the various needs of the learners. Teachers will be actively engaged in learning experiences to take back to their classrooms as well as given time to reflect on managing groups of students and how to adapt for the individual needs of
This Best Practices Training, led by staff from Georgia State University’s Department of Early Childhood and Elementary Education, provides professional development tools needed to keep Georgia educators at the forefront of current research and field-tested classroom methodology. Registration for this training for the following dates is available here.

-December 8, 2022: Coastal Plains RESA
-January 20, 2023: Oconee RESA
-January 26, 2023: Georgia State University
-February 9, 2023: Georgia State University
-March 9, 2023: Bibb County Professional Learning Center
-March 16, 2023: Pioneer RESA

If you have questions, please contact Barbara Ross at Barbara.ross@doe.k12.ga.us or Lynn Holland at lholland@doe.k12.ga.us.

**FY23 GaDOE Legal Updates: School Psychologists**

The Division for Special Education Services and Supports is hosting a technical assistance webinar for school psychologists titled, FY23 GaDOE Legal Updates: School Psychologists. Please forward this information to School Psychologists and/or appropriate personnel in your Local Educational Agency (LEA).

Jamila Pollard, Legal Office/Senior Program Manager, will deliver updates regarding current dispute resolution data in Georgia and discuss some common IDEA violations found in formal state complaints and due process hearings. The webinar will place an emphasis on IDEA violations that are related to the work of school psychologists. This webinar will occur virtually on January 19, 2023 from 1:00-2:30 p.m.

**FY23 GaDOE Legal Updates: School Psychologists Registration**

For more information, please contact Alicia Mercer by email at amercer@doe.k12.ga.us.
Back to Basics Behavior Edition

Join us for a one-day professional learning opportunity that will assist both general education and special education teachers in addressing challenging behaviors within the classroom. Participants will explore the science of behavior, discussing developmental norms, static and alterable variables, the function of behavior, and avoiding a power struggle. Presenters will share research on the power of relationship-building and empowerment and dive into Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) and High Leverage Practices (HLP) for Behavior. There will be five locations around the state. The locations and dates are listed below:

- December 5 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.: Northwest GA RESA Georgia Highlands College, 3167 Cedartown Hwy, Rome, GA 30161
- January 24 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.: Coastal Plains RESA, 245 N Robinson, Lenox, GA 31637
- January 30 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.: East GA GLRS, 4683 Augusta HWY S.E., Dearing, GA 30808
- February 1 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.: First District RESA, 201 W Lee St, Brooklet, GA 30415
- February 8 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.: Thompson-Upson Fin Art Center, 268 Knight Trail Thomaston, GA 30286

Back to Basics Behavior Edition Registration

SPP/APR Share Your Voice! Stakeholder Feedback Sessions
The SPP/APR is a report submitted annually to the federal government to examine the progress and status of Georgia in implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for students with disabilities. The input of Georgia's stakeholders in this process is critical!

Families, educators, and students with disabilities are invited to register and participate in one of the stakeholder input sessions below to review the current SPP/APR Indicator data including the areas of graduation, dropout, assessment, and environment. Participants will have the opportunity to provide input on possible baseline and target changes as indicated by the data.

-Session 2: December 7 from 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
-Session 3: December 7 from 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
-Session 4: December 9 from 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

SPP/APR Share Your Voice! Stakeholder Feedback Sessions Registration
Spanish language SPP/APR Stakeholder flyer

MTSS Snapshot: What happens when an intervention is not implemented with fidelity?

As we have reflected on the fidelity of the implementation of our interventions at Tiers II and III, it is important to address the following:
-Understand how to effectively implement the evidence-based intervention, as it is intended
-Gather and organize the resources necessary for implementation (i.e. professional learning for all staff involved, teacher and student resources, observation tools, schedule that allows for exact implementation, time for teams to analyze data and determine next steps, etc.)
-Adhere to the implementation procedures of the intervention
As we continue to consider these critical actions we must also:
- Establish an implementation team to analyze data and to problem-solve barriers with implementation
- Provide initial and ongoing professional learning and support for the implementation of the intervention, based on data
- Use existing guidelines or create explicit guidelines for the implementation process
- Monitor ongoing implementation fidelity through collecting and analyzing student and staff data and determining next steps, Implementing with Fidelity

Collecting ongoing data to determine the effectiveness of these interventions is extremely important. Using existing data reports provided with computerized interventions is very important. This data is used to determine if students are progressing through the intervention as expected. This data may also help to determine whether additional professional learning may be needed for the staff (leaders, teachers and/or paras) implementing the intervention. Effective implementation of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) also focuses on building a solid infrastructure, Infrastructure, for the intervention that provides supports for staff, students and parents. As we continue to reiterate the importance of fidelity, it is important to note that poor fidelity of implementation significantly impacts the reliability of our progress monitoring data and ultimately negatively impacts the academic and/or behavioral progress of our students. We cannot say an intervention did not work, if we did not implement it as prescribed. Hence, a poorly implemented program/intervention can lead to failure as easily as a poorly designed one, IRIS | Page 1: Fidelity of Implementation.
To help support districts and schools with their work of ensuring fidelity of implementation of effective Tier II and Tier III interventions, the Georgia Department of Education is offering a free online application, **Georgia Online MTSS/SST (GO-MTSS/SST)**. It is designed to help districts and schools facilitate data-based decision making within a tiered system of supports for students. Districts and schools can use this tool to help the Student Support Team (SST) adhere to the Student Support Team (SST) State Board rule by providing a format to record and to maintain information and documentation of a student’s response to intervention.

For additional information on GO-MTSS/SST, contact Dr. Rondalyn Pinkney at RPinckney@doe.k12.ga.us, and feel free to reach out to the MTSS regional coaches or Karen Suddeth, ksuddeth@doe.k12.ga.us to learn more.
enable a child to remain in school for the full school day. by the child's IEP Team that may include, when appropriate, the child’s modifications must have in their current placement.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) implementing §§ 300.530 through 300.536 orded the opportunity to continue

The question C-6: Are informal removals, security prison and a daughter who is a crisis counselor. They are a family of provides

Supports Services and Special Education

Jones, Education

Tracy Barber

feature Shawn Larkin for our New Director Spotlight this week.

If you believe the student qualifies, register through the APH census. The have any additional questions.

Blind American Printing House (APH) Annual Census for the

the Data Collections) December 15, 2022

High-Cost Fund Grant and Residential and Reintegration Services Grant both

am honored to serve as the keeper for now knowing candy will still be made

work, I would not want it any other way. Some traditions are meant to last. I this weekend is candy making weekend. Although it is long hours and hard

my children got older and work busier, I often thought why are we making all

took most of a weekend every December, typically the second weekend. As

ted teams called C.A.F. E.'s to bring parents, educators and community

Our sta have rather been watching a holiday movie with a cup of hot chocolate, but

assorted treats together to share for the holidays. We really didn't start small

or finding just one more gift. Time with family and friends should transcend

liked I am being chased by a train with the holiday frenzy. Our lives are fast-

excitement with traditions like watching the

Polar Express

child. If you are like me, I always have plans to enjoy the holiday

The

Directors,

GIMC student registration and online ordering system

Powered by Mad Mimi®
December 16, 2022 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education

Directors,

We wait and wait and finally it is here! The long-anticipated holiday break has arrived. Such a great feeling when the work is paused for a couple of weeks allowing for time with family and friends. Everyone has their own special way of celebrating. Michael and I already have family from Texas visiting this weekend. My nephew and his family are always so faithful to visit during the holidays. Next Thursday, we will fly to Salt Lake City to see Christopher, Cari, Annabelle and Josie. Always exciting to be with the grandchildren. We will return home on December 26 to spend the week after Christmas with Ali and Chris. The next two weeks will be super busy, but I wouldn’t want it any other way. If you are wondering, the candy did get made last weekend along with some cookies, pies and a cake. Several more confections are still to come as everyone should have their favorite treats during the holidays.

Even our staff can have a little holiday fun! There were reindeer games as well as the best sweater contest. Take time for each other. Slow down, sleep late, enjoy all the candy and confections you want. Enjoy your family and celebrate together. These days are precious.
As part of our GaDOE data modernization initiative, all applications/data servers are migrating to the Microsoft Azure Cloud. The move to production/live environment is planned for 12/20 – 12/22. During this time, applications will be down and not be accessible for end users in the school districts. This includes ALL Special Education applications (SE Dashboard, CCEIS, Dispute Resolution, GLRS Project Tracker, GNETS Strategic Plan, Governor’s Reimbursement) in the GaDOE portal and GOIEP, MTSS/SST and PBIS in SLDS platform. Please let us know if there are any concerns.

Please read the recent resolution agreement with Fairfax Public Schools in Virginia due to an OCR investigation. The resolution, released publicly on November 30, 2022, ensures steps are taken to guarantee students with disabilities receive educational services, including compensatory services, resulting for the COVID-19 pandemic. Although this resolution only applies to Fairfax County, the concern is how it may impact other SEAs and LEAs. Please be proactive in addressing the needs of students. U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights Announces Resolution of Investigation into Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia, Related to the Needs of Students with Disabilities During the COVID-19 Pandemic | U.S. Department of Education

The Georgia Department of Education requests stakeholder feedback on proposed Special Education State Board of Education rule changes for the following:

160-4-7-.18 GRANTS FOR SERVICES
- Grants for Services Original
- Grants for Services Redline
- Synopsis for Grants for Services

160-4-7-.03 CHILD FIND PROCEDURES
- Child Find Procedures Original
- Child Find Redline
- Synopsis for Child Find

160-4-7-.16 GEORGIA LEARNING RESOURCES SYSTEM (GLRS)
- GLRS Original
- GLRS Redline
- Synopsis for GLRS

Stakeholders may submit feedback to Wina Low, State Special Education Director, at wlow@doe.k12.ga.us or Amber McCollum, Senior Program Manager, at amccollum@doe.k12.ga.us by January 10, 2023. Parent to Parent of Georgia will also be hosting virtual meetings for stakeholders in addition to written submission of comments. Virtual feedback sessions will be posted on the Parent to Parent of Georgia website as well as the Division for Special Education Supports and Services webpage.
Valerie C. Williams, director of the Office of Special Education Programs, introduced a blog series that will explain topics of interest related to the discipline and behavior guidance package released by her office this past summer. The blog series will expound on topics such as alternatives to exclusionary discipline, informal removals, discipline disparities, and behavior as part of a free appropriate public education. The series will also feature relevant resources for stakeholders to encourage a shift to address challenging behavior proactively, positively and preventatively.

The next Friday email blast will be on January 6, 2023.

Our staff spotlight is shining brightly on Crystal Callaway this week. Crystal, grateful to have you on our team.

Our new director highlight is Brandi Hendrix from Treutlen County Schools. Brandi learned early in her career to listen to her students and allow the student to have ownership in their learning. Wise advice. Thank you, Brandi, for all you do for students with disabilities.

Our district highlight this week is from Clayton County Schools. Read how they are partnering with the Metro West GLRS Team on an initiative to support and retain new teachers.

Hope the holiday magic finds you this season. Reflect and remember those special times waiting for Santa. You are certainly all on the “nice” list to me!

Just remember, you are loved and appreciated. Thank you for all you do for students with disabilities. Have the happiest of holidays!

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
January 4 at 3:30 p.m. – Significant Cognitive
Disabilities Session 4 - GaDOE Community

Reminders

January 1 – High-Cost Grant Applications Available – Submitted to Budget Liaison using Portal email
January 1 – Grant for Residential and Reintegration Services Grant Applications Available - Submitted to Budget Liaison using Portal email
January 4 – American Printing House (APH) Census Opens - Submitted via GIMC website direct link

Annual Event & Cohort Graduation Rate Chart

The Annual Event and Cohort Graduation Rate Chart for FY22 can be accessed at the link below. Numbers below 15 are redacted in the chart per confidentiality requirements. The Annual Event rate does not include students who participated in the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) as regular graduates per the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

Annual Event and Cohort Graduation Rate Chart for FY22

If you have any questions, please contact Dawn Kempdkemp@doe.k12.ga.us, Dominique Donaldson Dominique.Donaldson@doe.k12.ga.us, or Linda Castellanos lcastellanos@doe.k12.ga.us.

New Director Spotlight: Brandi Hendrix

GaDOE’s Special Education Services and Supports Division is excited to feature Brandi Hendrix for our New Director Spotlight this week.

Brandi Hendrix is the Special Education Director for Treutlen County Schools and has been in the field of education for 23 years. Ms. Hendrix graduated from Georgia Southern University with a degree in Secondary Education, Social Science, and began her teaching career at Statesboro High School. While there, Ms. Hendrix taught a variety of history courses, including inclusion classes, coached basketball, cheerleading, sponsored the Y-Club, earned her Master’s in School Psychology, and completed course work in administration.

In 2006, Ms. Hendrix began teaching at Claxton High School where she taught
both inclusion and Honors/AP courses, sponsored the National History Club, coached cheerleading, earned her Specialist Degree in Curriculum and Instruction, as well as served as an Instructional Coach during her last two years. In 2014, Ms. Hendrix took a position with Bryan County Schools as the CTAE Director for five years and as the Secondary Curriculum Coordinator. After four years Ms. Hendrix became the Assistant Principal at Bryan County High School and served as the Special Education Administrator.

Reflecting on her teaching experiences, Ms. Hendrix recalls a situation in her second year of teaching that had a major impact on her philosophy as an educator. At the time, Ms. Hendrix was teaching an inclusion class and recalls a student who was struggling to focus and pass assessments. Having to constantly have the student put away his headphones while doing classwork, one day Ms. Hendrix asked the student why he felt that he needed to listen to music while working. It was during that conversation that the student shared that he was able to focus better when he listened to music, specifically, Motown. From that conversation, Ms. Hendrix began to research the impact of music on students with ADHD and once she discovered the findings, she shared it with her administrator, who gave permission for the student to listen to music within the classroom. Ms. Hendrix shared, “Once we saw his improvement, I purchased a CD player and CDs to use for the entire class. This experience taught me several important lessons: Listen to your students, do not be afraid to try new things, and give students ownership in their learning.”

During the 2000-2021 school year, Ms. Hendrix began working for Treutlen County Schools as the Director of Accountability and when the Special Education Director retired at the end of her first year, she became the Exceptional Student Services Director and is currently serving in her second year in that role.

Ms. Hendrix has been happily married to Patrick Hendrix for 22 years and they have three amazing boys, eleven-year-old Caden, nine-year-old Jase, and eight-year-old Zain. Family time is spent supporting their love of sports through travel and recreation teams. Though seeming to always have a busy schedule, Sundays are reserved for church and family movie nights. Each year, the Hendrixes vacation on Anna Maria Island, Florida, for the beach is Ms. Hendrix’s favorite vacation spot. In addition to spending time with family, Ms. Hendrix also enjoys reading and gardening.

District Spotlight: Clayton County Schools
Clayton County Schools is in year 2 of the New Teacher Induction Initiative with Metro West GLRS. This school year they have two awesome District Coaches - Kanethia Henderson and Gina Fitzpatrick. They are working hand-in-hand with Kimberly Gregory, Metro West GLRS Program Specialist/Coach, to support and retain new teachers. Teachers attended a summer kickoff where Clayton County provided two full professional learning days.

The New Teacher Induction Academy is conducted virtually in the evenings with their teachers monthly. Teachers learn about HLPs and IEPs, while demonstrating their knowledge in joint avatar sessions. Teachers were initially apprehensive when entering the lab, but once in the lab, they say that it is a neat experience, and they enjoy it. During the winter, the team will be engaged in individualized coaching sessions with participants. The team hopes to expand knowledge and capacity around HLPs by training district SDI coaches and lead teachers.

**GaDOE Staff Highlight: Crystal Callaway**

GaDOE's Special Education Services and Supports Division is excited to feature Crystal Callaway for our GaDOE Staff Spotlight this week.

Crystal has worked in the field of education for 37 years. She currently works as a Program Specialist in the Dispute Resolution unit.

Crystal previously worked as a district liaison in multiple counties and was the contact person for the Georgia Alternate Assessment, collaborating with the Office of Assessment and Accountability. She ensured that teachers who instructed students with significant cognitive disabilities had guidance and resources available for them.

Crystal loves old cars, the performing arts, and traveling to other countries to learn about the people and how to cook their food. Her passion for planning events came from helping her grandmother do the same as a child. Crystal has
two adult children and two grand dogs.

Practice Pointers – USED Guidance on Discipline: Question C-7

QUESTION C-7: IS AN IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION CONSIDERED A SCHOOL DAY THAT MUST BE COUNTED WHEN DETERMINING WHETHER A REMOVAL CONSTITUTES A CHANGE OF PLACEMENT?

It depends. It has been the United States Department of Education (USED) longstanding interpretation that an in-school suspension generally would be considered part of the days of suspension unless the child: (1) is afforded the opportunity to continue to appropriately participate in the general curriculum; (2) continues to receive the services specified on the child’s individualized education program (IEP); and (3) continues to participate with nondisabled children to the extent they would have in the child’s current placement. 71 Fed. Reg. 46715 (Aug. 14, 2006). It is important to recognize that even if all three of these factors are met, an in-school suspension still removes the child from the educational placement determined to be appropriate by the child’s placement team, and additional actions may need to be taken by the child’s IEP Team. For example, the repeated use of in-school suspension may indicate that a child’s IEP, or the implementation of the IEP, does not appropriately address their behavioral needs. Therefore, the child’s IEP Team should consider whether additional positive behavioral interventions and supports or other strategies would assist the child in the current placement.

For more information, please see the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) guidance found in Questions and Answers: Addressing the Needs of Children with Disabilities and IDEA’s Discipline Provisions as revised July 19, 2022.

MTSS Snapshot: What are some reflection questions as we refine our Tier I instruction next semester?

The foundation of an effective multi-tiered system of supports is ensuring that an effective Tier I program is meeting the needs of approximately 80% of its students. The foundation of this framework is Tier I, where 100% of students in Georgia receive their daily core instruction based on
the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) and a valid and reliable curriculum. Tier I is considered the most important level of support because it provides the foundation for successful teaching and learning in school.

As we end the semester and reflect the effectiveness of Tier I instruction of our multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS), there are some points that may need to continue to be discussed by leadership teams.

According to Dr. Tessie Rose Bailey, Principal Technical Advisor for the American Institutes for Research, “The greatest threat to MTSS implementation and school success is poor quality Tier I.” Furthermore, she states, “Districts and schools cannot buy or intervene their way out of poor-quality Tier I instruction.” A few points for leadership teams to discuss are below:

- How effective is implementation of the three-part lesson (opening, work period and closing)?
- What do student-centered closings look like throughout our building?
- How effective is vocabulary instruction during our lesson and are the students able to articulate the language of the standard?
- How is formative assessment data used to adjust instruction for all students, during the lesson?
- Is differentiated instruction being used to meet the diverse needs of all students?
- Is there evidence that entire grade-levels have a clear understanding of the standards?
- How effective is the use of High-Leverage Practices | TeachingWorks to support Tier I instruction?
- How effective are our collaborative planning sessions?

These are just a few reflection questions that could provide some rich conversation and help to determine additional professional learning needs to support Tier I instruction.

For additional information, feel free to reach out to the MTSS regional coaches or Karen Suddeth, ksuddeth@doe.k12.ga.us to learn more.