Happy New Year!

January 7, 2022 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education

Directors,

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

**January 10** at 9:00 AM – MTSS Coaching Clinic
**January 11** at 1:00 PM – Special Education Directors’ Webinar
**January 11** at 3:00 PM – Assistive Technology Webinar Series
**January 12** at 10:00 AM – School Based Administrator Academy
**January 12** at 3:00 PM – Transition: Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities
**January 13** at 11:00 AM – Content Integration Live Session Q & A
Reminders

January 15 – Parent Survey opens in the Special Education Applications Dashboard for LEAs to review results, with hourly updates. The Parent Survey Link for parent responses will be posted on the Special Education Services and Supports webpage. Please share the link in your LEA and encourage participation.

January 31 – Timelines Prong 1 data submission is due in the Special Education Applications Dashboard for LEAs that were not 100% in the September 30, 2021 submission.

January 31 – Excess Cost Calculations Submission is due in the Consolidated Application Portal.

January 31 – Disproportionality Compliance Reviews begin ONLY for applicable LEAs in the Special Education Applications Dashboard.

District Highlight: Coffee County Schools

Project Search at Coffee County Schools

Welcome to the world of the innovative classroom with Project Search. I bet you are wondering what Project Search is all about. Well, it is a classroom with a special calling. It’s a classroom that is filled with transformation into life and adulthood. We are not your traditional classroom, our interns experience life first hand. Whenever there is a need, we are there. We are a part of the community. The goal for our interns is to serve, explore, and gain skills that will help them become productive members of the community.

This year has been an amazing year! Our interns have served Coffee Regional Medical Center, Coffee County Food Bank, FireSide and Pearls Bakery. These businesses have provided our interns with the strength and confidence to go out and obtain a job on their own. They have instilled knowledge and life lessons that will take them to future employment.

By increasing the amount of individuals with disabilities in the workforce, others will see the value in having them as employees. This is not just program for students with disabilities, but an opportunity for individuals to gain valuable work skills that will allow them to become productive members of their community.
Karen Suddeth has worked in the field of education for 35.5 years. She currently serves at the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) as a program manager for Georgia's Tiered System of Supports for Students (Georgia's MTSS). She previously worked in School and District Effectiveness, serving as a program specialist for the federal School Improvement Grants (1003g). Prior to joining GaDOE, she served in Carroll County Schools as a high school and middle school teacher, director of secondary curriculum and instruction, and high school principal.

In her current role, Karen along with the Georgia Department of Education recognize the positive effects of MTSS for educators and ALL students, and have placed emphasis on implementing with fidelity a national MTSS model that is widely accepted and practiced. The MTSS team is dedicated to supporting district and school personnel with implementation of MTSS. The resources developed include implementation guidance, MTSS essential components professional learning, online learning modules, webinars, and fidelity rubrics along with worksheets.

Karen's family includes her husband, Mike, of 40 years; two daughters, Samantha and Lindsey; one son, Mike; and six grandchildren, 4 boys and 2 girls. Additionally, her family includes her son-in-law, Kyle, and her daughter-in-law, Meri. She also has two poodles, Louie and Cooper, who are very much considered family members. she and her husband will celebrate two weddings this year as their oldest daughter, Samantha, is engaged, and their oldest grandson, Scout, is engaged.

**Important: Graduation - Annual Event Rate**

As indicated in presentations beginning August 18, 2021 (see Graduation Rate Presentation), the graduation rate required in the Annual Performance Report (APR) for Students with Disabilities by the State and all Local Education Agencies (LEAs) is the Annual Event Rate. The Office for Special Education Programs (OSEP) will no longer allow the Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate from the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to be
used in the APR. The ESSA rate will continue to be used by the State and all LEAs for the CCRPI and accountability measures.

Both the Annual Event Rate and Adjusted Cohort Rate calculations include students graduating with a regular high school diploma as graduates. Students with significant cognitive disabilities entering high school in the 2020-2021 school year or later will be working towards an alternate diploma rather than a regular diploma. Georgia received an ESSA Waiver in 2020 to enable students participating in the Georgia Alternate Assessment who entered high school prior to 2020-2021 to continue receiving a regular diploma during the transition.

The waiver is not applicable to the Annual Event rate used by OSEP. OSEP defines regular graduates as receiving a high school diploma identical to that for which students without disabilities are eligible. The diploma must be fully aligned to State standards and cannot be aligned to alternate academic achievement standards. Students who exited high school with a high school diploma that did not meet the same standards as students without disabilities are classified as receiving a certificate (see p. 7-8, Children with Disabilities Exiting Sp. Education- FS009).

Beginning with the 2021 graduating class, students with disabilities who did not meet the same graduation requirements as students without disabilities will not be included as regular graduates in the Annual Event calculation. This change will impact State and LEA Annual Event Graduation Rates for Annual Performance Reports for Students with Disabilities. LEAs with many students who were regular diploma graduates participating in the Georgia Alternate Assessment will have a lower graduation rate on the Annual Performance Report for Students with Disabilities. Annual Event Graduation Rates will be made available to LEAs soon.

The calculation change will not impact individual students in any manner.

These students will continue to be included as graduated with a regular diploma in the Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates for Students with Disabilities used in the CCRPI.

If you have any questions, please contact Dawn Kemp at dkemp@doe.k12.ga.us or Linda Castellanos at lcastellanos@doe.k12.ga.us.

Important Budget Announcement:
Georgia High-Cost Fund Grant and
Georgia Residential & Reintegration Services Grant

The Georgia High-Cost Fund Grant and Georgia Residential & Reintegration Services Grant submission period opens January 1st. The updated resources for the Georgia High-Cost Fund Grant and Residential & Reintegration Services Grant can be accessed online on the Budget, Grants and Consolidated Application webpage. The deadline for the submission of these grants is February 15th. Don’t hesitate to contact your budget liaison if you have any additional questions.

Important Budget Information: IDEA 619 Adjustment Allocations

The Georgia Department of Education made an adjustment to the FY21 IDEA 619 Ages 3-5 preschool allocations for new and expanding LEA charters. This will include a minor reduction of carryover for several LEAs. Please see the FY21 IDEA 619 Adjustment Allocations document which details the new FY21 IDEA 619 allocations. We will be updating the allocations on our website as well. Additionally, the FY21 IDEA 619 carryover amounts will be loaded into our grants accounting system and available to budget next week. Please contact your Budget Liaison if you have any questions.

Instructional Supports and Teacher Training to Address Readiness in Literacy Grant

Georgia Department of Education is excited to share the Instructional Supports and Teacher Training to Address Readiness in Literacy Grant opportunity.

The purpose of this grant is to provide financial resources for multi-sensory reading training and resources to support early reading assistance programs for struggling readers and those students with risk factors for dyslexia. GaDOE will award competitive, non-renewable grants to LEAs to ensure the necessary
infrastructure and supports are available for teachers to meet the needs and improve outcomes in literacy for every student.

We strongly encourage each district to read the Instructional Support and Teacher Training to Address Literacy Grant Application package and apply for the grant to provide training and resources to teachers as they help support students with readiness in literacy.

Applications must be received no later than 5:00 PM on January 19. Please contact Leigh Ann Cross, Program Manager, at LeighAnn.cross@doe.k12.ga.us with any questions.

Opportunity for Full Waiver of Tuition and Stipend to Earn a Master’s Degree

Interested in earning your master’s degree at Georgia State University? Want to gain expertise in early behavioral intervention? Consider applying for Project BEES! Project BEES provides a specialized, fully-funded, master’s-level training experience in applied behavior analysis (ABA) and early childhood special education (ECSE). Project BEES scholars will learn to address the academic, behavioral and communication needs of young children with high-intensity needs, such as those with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and will receive mentoring and professional development opportunities. For more information, please review the Project Bees Recruitment flyer.

Contact Sarah Hansen at projectbees@gsu.edu with any questions.

Update on Head Start Vaccine and Mask Mandate

On December 21, 2021, 24 States, including Georgia filed a lawsuit against the Office of Head Start, Administration of Children and Families, and the Department of Health and Human Services arguing against the Head Start Vaccine and Mask Mandate, which requires all Head Start staff, volunteers, and contractors to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 by January 31, 2022, and immediate masking of all Head Start individuals two years of age and older. Two exemptions to the vaccine requirement are medical
necessity and legally entitled accommodations, and those granted the accommodations are required to undergo weekly COVID-19 testing. On January 1, 2022, the Court granted the States’ motion for Preliminary Injunction which prevents the implementation of the Head State Mandate pending the final resolution of the case. The Court found that the States are likely to succeed on the merits of the claims that the Agencies do not have the power to impose the Head Start Mandate, that the mandate violates the notice-and-comment requirements, and that the mandate violates the Tenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. For more information, please read the copy of the Court’s order.

Important Budget Reminder: Excess Cost Calculation Submission

The Excess Cost Calculation Portal is now open for submissions. The Special Education Excess Cost Calculation, which is part of the local district determination’s Timely and Accurate Data Submission Report, is due by January 31, 2022. This submission must be entered into the Consolidated Application and has a two part sign-off for the results and base calculations. Please plan accordingly as both parts must be submitted by the due date. Resources for the calculation can be found on our Budget, Grants and Consolidated Application webpage. Please contact your budget liaison for further information or technical assistance.

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:
Tuesday, January 18, 2022
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM Meeting Link
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM Meeting Link

Friday, February 18, 2022
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM Meeting Link
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM Meeting Link

Links to the January 2022 and February 2022 sessions will be available in the Friday blast several weeks prior to each listed date.

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.

**APH Annual Census**

The annual APH census will began on 1/4/2022 and will remain open till 2/28/2022. Please forward this to your teachers of the visually impaired and/or Vision Coordinators.

There are only three criteria for students to qualify for APH quota funding:

1. Blind or Functioning at the Definition of Blind.
2. Enrolled in a school on the first Monday in January.
3. Consent to release PII on file with the GIMC.

**Eye Reports have been waived for this year’s Annual Census, so if you think a student meets the criteria, please register them!**

It is important that all eligible students are counted because districts rely on the consolidated funds to help support the education of the blind.

Instructions for authorizing district representatives, updating and adding student records is available at the GIMC webpage.

If you have any questions or need help registering a student, please contact Justin Harris by email justin.harris@doe.k12.ga.us or by phone at either 478-751-6083 ext. 1145 or 478-283-5116.
Parent to Parent Trainings

Webinar: I Can Do That! A Brief Overview of Assistive Technology for Parents and Families

This webinar will introduce parents of school-age children to assistive technology devices and services; help them determine what assistive technology (AT) their child might need to overcome barriers and achieve their goals, and locate sources for AT.

Tuesday January 25th at 9:00 AM ET
I Can Do That! Registration Link
I Can Do That! Facebook Page

Webinar: Parents & Caregivers on Transitioning to Adult Healthcare

Join us as Debbie Dobbs explains exactly what you need to do to apply for the Katie Beckett Deeming Waiver. She will walk you through the application, step by step. Attending this webinar will empower you with knowledge that will help you fill out the application accurately with all the required components.

Tuesday January 25th at 6:00 PM
Transitioning to Adult Healthcare Registration Link
Transitioning to Adult Healthcare Facebook Link

MTSS Snapshot: GO MTSS/SST Platform

Georgia’s MTSS team continually works to provide resources that are practical and accessible for all districts and schools. One resource that is used by several schools in the state is the GO MTSS/SST platform. The application was designed to support the implementation of MTSS in Georgia. The purpose of Georgia’s Online MTSS/SST (GO MTSS/SST) Application is to help districts and schools to create, monitor, update and maintain a record of a student’s response to interventions.

This tool is available to all Georgia schools, and it helpful for tracking student performance on interventions provided at tier II and tier III. The application also aligns with the SST rule and maintains meeting notes, parent communications, and recommendations for next steps.
Tier II Features:

- Assists teams with creating a record of students identified as at-risk for poor learning and behavioral outcomes.
- Allows users to select from their list of evidenced-based interventions.
- Permits users to assign identified students to Tier II intervention and supports groups.
- Allows users to enter progress monitoring data for each student.
- Supports users in making decisions based on students' responsiveness to Tier II intervention and supports.

Tier III features:

- Ensures Student Support Teams (SST) adhere to the SST State Board rule.
- Allows users to record members of the SST.
- Permits users to schedule SST meetings.
- Allows users to enter student data, intervention details and progress monitoring data.
- Records team decisions and next steps.
- Assists LEAs in developing an educational plan designed to meet the unique needs of students.

A recent development is the integration of GO MTSS/SST and GO IEP. This addition allows users of GO IEP to transfer the information from GO MTSS/SST without having to re-enter all of the details. For a demonstration of GO MTSS/SST, please contact Rondalyn Pinckney at rpinckney@doe.k12.ga.us.

For more information contact Karen Suddeth, Program Manager Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students at ksuddeth@doe.k12.ga.us.