October 1, 2021 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education

Directors,
Hope your Friday has been fabulous on the first day of October! With the first FTE count scheduled for next week, I know you are very busy. In addition to the FTE count, please remember the Federal data is also collected in October in conjunction with FTE. Please make every effort to ensure your data is accurate and represents your district.

There have been continuing questions about the use of distance learning plans as COVID-19 has continued to affect Local Educational Agencies (LEA). This message aims to clarify and remind Directors that they must continue to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for students with disabilities during the pandemic and beyond. Federal requirements in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) have not been waived and students with disabilities must continue to receive FAPE. Previously, during mandatory Statewide school closures, IEP Teams were given the option to document IEP services that would be provided during the time of selective or required school closures through distance learning plans. Distance learning plans are contingency plans used to document the temporary provision of special education services. IEP Teams were also able to amend the students’ IEPs to reflect the services during this time. See GaDOE Guidance on Restart and
Implementation for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) PDF, page 5. Currently, there are no state mandated district closures and LEAs should ensure that IEPs reflect the actual special education services and supports students are receiving. If an LEA chooses to use a distance learning plan for certain students that may require temporary distance/remote instruction, the distance learning plan must also reflect the actual special education services and supports the student is receiving. It is important to remember that no matter what instructional delivery model (e.g., face-to-face, hybrid, full distance/remote) is used, each student with a disability must continue to receive a FAPE.

As a reminder, the budget submission deadline for IDEA Part B budgets has been extended until October 15th to ensure adequate time to provide technical assistance for submitting your budgets. This opportunity includes all IDEA, Part B grants, which are IDEA 611, IDEA 619, IDEA ARP 611, and IDEA ARP 619. The extension will not affect determinations for Indicator 20: Timely and Accurate Reporting.

I know you will enjoy the highlights this week about Newton County’s excellent newsletters created by Brooke Dial, Special Education Director, and Oconee Georgia Learning Resource System (GLRS). Dawn Howell, GLRS Director, has really embraced the Induction High Leverage Practices (HLP) Professional Learning Series. We are so proud to share our highlights this week!

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to students with disabilities. You are making a difference each day.

Keeping Students First,
Wina

**Highlight: Newton County**

This week, we would like to highlight Newton County and their wonderfully comprehensive newsletters. Brooke Dial, Special Education Director, creates them with input from different departments – AT, preschool, parent mentor, etc. These newsletters support general supervision and have been a huge motivator for teachers, paras, and departments that are recognized each week. The SWAY platform allows Brooke to see who read the newsletter, and at what level – skim, deep dive, etc.
The link below provides access to every newsletter from last year to last week. Previous issues are linked in the last section of the newsletter as well as links to Newton County's monthly parent newsletter.

NCSS Special Education Weekly 2021-2022 Sept 20

Highlight: Oconee GLRS HLP Induction

Oconee RESA/GLRS GATAPP candidates are currently participating in the Oconee GLRS Induction High Leverage Practices (HLP) professional learning series, which consists of practical sessions based on high-leverage, research-based strategies, and practices. Presently, 44 teachers have participated in the HLP series; 34 are general education and 10 are special education teachers. The sessions that have been completed are:

- HLP Overview, HLP 7: Establish a Consistent, Organized and Respectful Learning Environment
- HLP 16: Explicit Instruction, and HLP 18: Using Strategies to Promote Active Student Engagement. The HLP Overview provided the participants with a deeper understanding of the essential components of high-leverage practices.
- HLP 7: Provided in-depth knowledge of how to establish an appropriate learning environment to maximize instructional time while giving students maximum advantage for academic and behavioral success.
- HLP 16: Used to support student learning across academic, social, and behavioral tasks in all grade levels and content areas.
- HLP 18: Provides teachers with a deeper understanding of student engagement while utilizing Depth Of Knowledge (DOK) strategies and practices to enhance instruction.
Oconee GLRS’ staff leading an activity for HLP 18. This is their fourth session on HLPs. During this session, cooperative learning and peer tutoring was discussed. One of the activities was reading an article about effective implementation of class-wide peer tutoring and training students to use peer-assisted learning strategies. The participants were divided into groups to complete this activity. The pictures show the teachers presenting a jigsaw activity on an article about using Peer-Assisted Strategies. Each group could choose the way in which they presented the information from their assigned section of the article.

People tossing graduation caps in the air

October is National Dropout Prevention Month

The implications of dropping out are high for students, families, communities, and society as a whole; therefore, it is pivotal that we bridge the gaps for students at-risk of dropping out by utilizing effective interventions and identifying students early (Wilkins & Bost, 2015).

National Dropout Prevention Month challenges our nation to become better informed about how to prevent students from dropping out of school. The School Completion Toolkit contains an abundance of resources that support LEAs in increasing graduation rates and decreasing students who drop-out of school.

To assist users in locating the resources provided under each of the five steps of Georgia’s Systems of Continuous Improvement, a GaDOE School Completion Toolkit Guide is now available. The guide also contains resources developed by LEAs statewide.
Georgia MathCON Encore 2021

The Georgia Department of Education is excited to host MathCON Encore 2021 on **November 9 – 10, 2021, from 10:30 am – 4:30 pm daily.** This is a FREE, virtual conference provided for all mathematics educators in Georgia. The GaDOE Office of Mathematics is dedicated to partner with leaders and teachers to equip and empower all learners in Georgia with a high-quality mathematics teaching and learning experience each and every day. To achieve this mission, we provide ongoing professional learning, resources, and initiatives to help create a community of professional experts throughout the state to support learners in each and every classroom. Join us for this upcoming professional learning conference as session facilitators unpack high leverage instructional practices that can be used in classrooms to support mathematical reasoning and comprehension. Information and resources will also be provided to support the implementation of Georgia’s New K-12 Mathematics Standards in Fall 2023.

We encourage all teachers and leaders to join us for this engaging professional learning event! The conference will include several featured speakers, including State School Superintendent Richard Woods, Dr. Caitlin Dooley, Dr. Jo Boaler, and many more!

More details can be found on the conference website: [www.gadoe.org/mathcon](http://www.gadoe.org/mathcon).
Budget Resource

A revised version of the *proportionate share worksheet* is being provided for clarity. If a prior worksheet was submitted with IDEA budgets already, there is no need to use this revised version. Please contact your budget liaison if you have questions.

FY22 SSIP PL Series

Join us for our continuing FY22 SSIP PL series as Franeka Colley, ELA Content Integration Specialist, leads the webinar with best practices for increasing student outcomes in the area of English Language Arts.

**Integrating ELA Content for Secondary Students with Disabilities**

**Registration Link**

October 6, 2021
2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

GaDOE MTSS 2021-22 PL Calendar

There will be several opportunities for collaboration and learning more about Georgia's MTSS framework in 2021-2022. Professional learning is available online for school teams and leaders. All trainings will be virtual and no cost to educators.

To register for upcoming professional learning opportunities, visit the 2021-
New Paraprofessional Resources

The responsibilities of special education paraprofessionals vary and can include providing instructional support under the direct supervision of the teacher, modifying materials based on student needs, implementing behavior intervention plans, collecting data, providing personal care, and other duties as determined by the local education agency. No matter what the special education paraprofessional does, they are a valued member of the student success team. This Paraprofessional Resource document contains important resources and tools for paraprofessionals.

MTSS Snapshot: Identifying & Implementing Needed Supports for Students

Data-Based Decision Making (DBDM) is an essential component of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). It is a process for making informed decisions about instructional needs, the effectiveness of instruction, and level of intensity necessary to support students in need of interventions. Effective DBDM teams can easily identify strengths and areas of need for individual students which leads to greater gains in a shorter amount of time.

The data-based decision-making process consists of:
* Using data to identify needs of all students.
* Selecting and implementing evidence-based practices and interventions.
* Monitoring the progress of students’ responsiveness to an intervention (RTI).
* Making adjustments based on progress monitoring data, as needed.

When planning for quality instruction, monitoring student progress, and planning/implementing school improvement processes, effective DBDM teams are essential. District and school leadership should plan to provide the support systems and resources necessary to implement DBDM, for example:
* Select universal screeners and create a schedule for administering screeners (a minimum of 2 to 3 times per year - fall, winter, and spring).
* Establish and monitor school-wide data teams focused on student achievement.
* Identify evidence-based interventions and progress monitoring tools needed and plan for tiered supports for students in need of interventions.
* Plan and implement a schedule that will provide protected time for tiered interventions.
* Use a variety of formative and summative data to drive instructional decisions.
* Progress monitor frequently so that the DBDM team can determine the effectiveness of evidence-based interventions as well as student growth in the specific areas addressed with interventions.
* Disaggregate and analyze data at different levels (schoolwide, grade-level, classroom, student, etc.) and utilize it in a timely manner.

For more information, contact Karen Suddeth, ksuddeth@doe.k12.ga.us, Program Manager Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students
October 8, 2021 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs -
Division for Special Education

Directors,

Hope your week has been great! We have been soaked at my house with more than 8 inches of rain since Monday. Looking forward to sunny and cool fall weather.

Our October Director's Webinar is Tuesday, October 12, 2021 beginning at 1:00 pm. Our agenda is packed with information about Adapted PE, Assistive Technology, Accessible Educational Materials and very important information related to the Annual Performance Report/State Performance Plan regarding changes to calculations for graduation and dropout rate. Please use this link to access the webinar: Link.

On Thursday, September 30, 2021, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) released a new guidance document “Return to School Roadmap: Development and Implementation of Individualized Education Programs in the Least Restrictive Environment under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.” This guidance includes information about ensuring individualized education programs (IEPs) are in effect at the beginning of the school year; convening the IEP Team; consideration of special factors, including each child’s need for assistive technology devices and services, and addressing the social, behavioral, emotional, and mental health needs of
children with disabilities; determining appropriate measurable annual goals and considering the child’s need for compensatory services; making Extended School Year Services (ESY) determinations; addressing a child’s secondary transition service needs; making educational placement decisions; and, resolving disagreements regarding the child’s educational program. Please take time to read this very important guidance document and share with personnel in your district. Jamila Pollard, Senior Program Manager/Legal Officer, and Kachelle White, Senior Program Manager, will discuss highlights from the document “Return to School Roadmap: Development and Implementation of Individualized Education Programs in the Least Restrictive Environment under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act” during the General Supervision session at Fall G-CASE Conference in November.

October is Learning Disabilities/Dyslexia/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Awareness, Blindness awareness, National Down Syndrome Awareness, and National Disability Employment Awareness month. The Office of Special Education (OSEP) funds centers that support learning and accessibility needs for students disabilities. They include Bookshare, The NIMAC, The National AEM Center, The National Center on Improving Literacy, The National Deaf-Blind Center, and The TIES Center to name a few. You can learn more about all OSEP funded centers by clicking here.

For many students with dyslexia, accessible books level the playing field, allowing them to achieve their potential in school and become lifelong readers. Take a minute to read the story on Minnesota Honors student, Ella Johnson. A dyslexia diagnosis opened a whole new world of learning through text-to-speech audio. “Reading with your ears or any sort of accommodation is still reading and it counts,” explains Ella. “Any way you can access a book is worthwhile. I love to read! Once you find the tools that work for you, it’s so much easier.” Read Ella’s story. Please share stories of success in Georgia and I will highlight in our Friday messages. In addition, The National Center on Improving Literacy (NCIL) has developed a variety of resources for those affected by dyslexia, including an Understanding Dyslexia toolkit and advice from experts on dyslexia. The resources can be found on the website https://improvingliteracy.org/topic/dyslexia. Please take time this month to check out some of their work.

I am introducing Staff Highlights this week to the Friday Email Blast. To better serve our districts, we will feature a Division for Special Education Services and Supports staff member each week. Please feel free to reach out to me or any staff member when we can be of assistance. I hope you will enjoy getting to know us a little better.

I am delighted to highlight Butts County School System this week for their work with the Culinary Club for students with intellectual disabilities. We are so proud
District Highlight: Butts County

I am delighted to highlight Butts County School System this week for their work with the Culinary Club for students with intellectual disabilities. Nicole James, Nutrition Director in the Butts County School System, developed a culinary club for students using an adapted curriculum in their classes. Once a month, she leads cooking demonstrations and guides students in activities to develop daily living skills needed for independence. She used recipes for students to practice the skills demonstrated in the lesson. She guided them in tours around the school as well as talked about how these lessons apply at home and in different jobs available in the nutrition field. Students were engaged in learning through this program and were excited to see her come each month. Mrs. James will not only visit the high school once a month, but she will add the middle school to her training opportunities this school year through the Nutrition Advisory Council (NAC) Culinary Club. Special Education Director, Ms. Lenora Clarkson, and Special Education Coordinator, Ms. Lynda Sisson, are to be commended for this wonderful example of collaboration with the School Nutrition Director to support students with disabilities.

GaDOE Spotlight: Carson Cochran

Carson has 22 years of experience working as an assistive technology specialist in the school system. He came into education as a speech language pathologist with database management experience from the National Institutes of Health. Carson currently works for the GaDOE Georgia Instructional Materials Center where he consults with local districts on the improvement of delivery for accessible text for all students.

Carson, along with Paula Gumpman is currently leading Georgia's participation in the National Center for Accessible Materials' 4-year cohort. As part of the cohort, Georgia is supporting districts in a new "Take a Minute" initiative. "Take a Minute" is designed to focus attention on
assistive technology (AT) and accessible educational materials (AEM) using three targeted questions during IEP meetings. It is hoped that "Take a Minute" along with direct support to districts will raise awareness of the importance of AT and AEM among IEP teams throughout the state.

Carson enjoys spending time at the cross-fit gym, running, and water skiing. He is often found with his family at the lake or taking a quick trip to Disney when his dog Britt allows him to leave.

Return to School Roadmap: Development and Implementation of IEPs

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) released a Q&A entitled the Return to School Roadmap: Development and Implementation of Individualized Education Programs in the Least Restrictive Environment under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

This second in a series of Q&As builds on the August 24 press release and demonstrates the Department’s continued commitment to support States to ensure they have the information necessary to carry out the full implementation of IDEA requirements.

“The pandemic didn’t alter IDEA's guarantee of a free appropriate public education for children with disabilities,” said OSERS Acting Assistant Secretary Katherine Neas. “As more and more students return to in-person learning, the Department emphasizes the critical role that IEP Teams, including parents, have in making individualized decisions about each child's educational needs, including assessing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on health and safety considerations and on providing appropriate special education and related services.”

Topics covered under this latest Q&A, focusing on Individualized Education Programs (IEP), include:

• Ensuring IEPs Are in Effect at the Start of the School Year
• Convening the IEP Team
• Consideration of Special Factors:
  * Considering the Assistive Technology Needs of a Child with a Disability
  * Addressing the Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Mental Health Needs of Children with Disabilities
* Addressing the School-Related Health Needs of Children with Disabilities with Underlying Medical Conditions

• Determining Appropriate Measurable Annual Goals & Considering the Child's Need for Compensatory Services

• Making Extended School Year (ESY) Services Determinations

• Considering Secondary Transition Services

• Making Educational Placement Decisions

• Resolving Disagreements Regarding a Child’s Educational Program

Read the Q&A on IEPs Under IDEA

**MTSS Snapshot: Myths & Facts**

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a framework intended to support ALL students, and it is considered best practice for teaching and learning. The best intentions of educators are always with students in mind. Occasionally, practices and/or requirements can drift from the intent of the original purposes. When this happens, there can be some confusion. Read on as two myths and facts are revealed:

**1 Myth: Students cannot be referred for evaluation or special education (SLD) until a specific number of data points are collected with MTSS or RTI**

**Fact:** One of three criteria for identifying Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) adopted by the State is it “Must permit the use of a process based on the child’s response to scientific, research-based intervention(s).” There are essential components of MTSS/RTI that must be included: (1) high quality, evidence-based instruction in general education settings; (2) screening of all students for academic and behavioral problems; (3) two or more levels (tiers) of instruction that are progressively more intense and based on the student’s response to instruction; and (4) progress monitoring of student performance. It is important to know that no intervention process, even if it includes the components of MTSS/RTI, may be used to delay or deny the provision of a full and individual evaluation that meets the requirements of IDEA. To do so would be a violation of Child Find if a child is suspected of having a disability. (OSEP Letter to Zirkel, September 10, 2013)

**Answer:** If a child is suspected of having a specific learning disability, the district/school must move forward with the established identification processes, including an evaluation, to determine if the child is eligible. As well, the student should be provided evidence-based interventions in compliance with the description above during the same time frame. It is not necessary or required
that tiered interventions take place prior to being able to refer the child for
determination of a specific learning disability.

2 Myth: Individual teachers can independently implement intensive interventions

Fact: An individual teacher may implement some components of an intensive intervention, but it is recommended that schools use a team-based approach for determining individualized intensive interventions. A Data-Based Decision Making Team would consider the student data and identify intensification strategies for students who do not adequately respond to less-intensive levels of support. This is especially important if the student requires intensive intervention for behavior and academic supports. (National Center on Intensive Intervention at American Institutes for Research)

Answer: Teachers often use excellent processes in their classrooms, but a student identified to be in need of individualized, intensive interventions that is complicated for teachers to provide within the classroom. It is recommended that districts/schools utilize Data-Based Decision Making Teams to determine next steps.

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

Lead EmBRACE: Building Relationships for Achieving Co-teaching Excellence

We are excited to present, the second, “Opening Doors and Closing Spaces Vlog” with Mr. Derek Butler, principal of Islands High School, Savannah-Chatham School District. He is hosting a series of conversations to support special education leaders and school-based administrators in closing gaps by opening spaces for effective general supervision practices and successful co-teaching. The recording will be saved on the Co-Teaching Website. Take a moment to listen and to share with your building level administrators as he shares information around two key questions, “Are students learning?” “Are teachers growing?” and discusses one of the Mighty 8 Leader Shift Moves.

Lead EmBRACE Video Episode 2
Equitable Services

On October 1, 2021, the Budget and Data Units held open office hours to provide answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about equitable services budget and data submission reporting requirements. The recording and FAQ document are now available on the Budget webpage under the section titled Resources for Guidance: Click Here

Data questions should be directed to Linda Castellanos at lcastellanos@doe.k12.ga.us or Dr. Dawn Kemp at dkemp@doe.k12.ga.us. Budget questions should be directed to your Budget Liaison.

Take a Minute” for AT and AEM

Tune in to this month’s Director’s Webinar and learn more about assistive technology (AT) and accessible educational materials (AEM). We will be announcing the “Take a Minute” initiative to support IEP teams when discussing assistive technology (AT), and accessible educational materials (AEM) during IEP meetings. Our LEA partners Marietta City, Hart County, Paulding County, and Tift County are set to launch this unique concept in several local schools.

FY22 SSIP Professional Learning Series

The FY22 SSIP Professional Learning Series focuses on supporting teachers and leaders to increase graduation rates and decrease dropout rates for students with disabilities. The sixth presentation in this series is Wednesday, October 13, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. with Paula Gumpman, Assistive Technology program specialists discusses, “Integrating Accessibility and Assistive Technology Tools with High School Completion Strategies”.

SSIP 6 Registration Link

To view and register for additional webinars, please see the FY22 Professional Learning Series Calendar.

Alert! New Registration Links
The Division of Special Education Services and Supports has changed the technology platform that it uses to provide webinars and trainings. As a result, all sessions that use the “GoTo” platform are being moved to Teams. You will need to register again for the sessions below using the new Teams links.

**Occupational and Physical Therapists’ Community of Practice**

- New dates and times are posted on the Occupational Therapists and Physical Therapists’ website

**FY 2021-2022 SELDA**

- Check the SELDA webpage for the SELDA FY 2021-2022 Virtual Registration Links.

**Special Education Directors’ Webinars**

- Check the Special Education website for the new links at FY2021-2022 Directors’ Webinars

**Support Personnel Professional Learning Series:**

**Communities of Practice:**

- January 13, 2022: Communities of Practice. Topic to be determined. Registration Link

**Professional Learning:**

- October 14, 2021: Reevaluation: What You Need to Know. Registration Link
- December 2, 2021: Related Services: Solving the Mystery. Registration Link
- February 10, 2022: MTSS & Child Find: Keeping Students First. Registration Link

**Transition Professional Development and Technical Assistance 2021-2022**

- Check the transition website for the Transition Professional Learning and Technical Assistance 2021-2022 link.

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

**Parent to Parent of Georgia -Free Workshops**

Date: Tuesday, October 12, 2021
Time: 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM
Registration Link: What a Great IDEA!

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

**An Overview of Special Education for Parents and Families**

Understand the basic components of Special Education and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This course will explain how the process of special education works, including Child Find, Response to Intervention (RTI) and Student Support Teams; making a referral; what to expect from an evaluation; how to prepare for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting and how to resolve disputes.

For more information, contact Denise Music, Disabilities Specialist, via email dmusic@myactionpact.org or via phone 912-285-6289
Or call Parent to Parent of Georgia at 1-800-229-2038. See our Training Calendar for additional trainings and webinars at www.p2pga.org.

All services and resources offered by Parent to Parent of Georgia are free.

**PRESENTS A FREE VIRTUAL WORKSHOP**

**Peace, Love, Harmony…and the IFSP/IEP?**

Date: Tuesday, October 19, 2021
Time: 7:00 PM – 8:00 PM
Registration Link: Peace, Love, Harmony…and the IFSP/IEP?

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

Learn how to use effective communication skills to develop a partnership with your child's IEP/IFSP team. Get tips for preparing for school meetings and how to be an effective member of the team.

For more information, contact Wanda Jenoveese, Parent Mentor, Newton County Schools at 770-788-5263 Ext 4011 or via email jenoveese.wanda@newton.k12.ga.us. See our Training Calendar for additional trainings and webinars at www.p2pga.org.

All services and resources offered by Parent to Parent of Georgia are free.

**2021-2022 GVEST: Stronger Together**
The Georgia Chapter of AER and the GVEST Conference Planning Committee are excited to join together to offer our first joint vision conference!

Our conference for the 2021-2022 school year will be virtual using the Zoom platform. This year's virtual conference will take place over the following two days:

Friday, October 15, 2021 from 12 pm to 3:30 pm EST
Friday, March 11, 2021 from 12 pm to 3:30 pm EST

REGISTER NOW ON EVENTBRITE
Pricing (for 2-day event):
$50 for AER members
$75 for Non-AER members

For more details about session topics and presenters, go to https://www.gvest.org/.
October 15, 2021 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education

Directors,

Hope you had a great week! A huge thank you to everyone attending the Director’s Webinar on Tuesday. If you need access to the recording, it is posted on our webpage or you can access through this link: **October 12 Directors Webinar**.

Many of you will join us over the next couple of weeks to provide stakeholder engagement to assist in establishing targets for the State Performance Plan and the Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR). As discussed in the webinar earlier this week, some calculations will change in the SPP/APR this year. Make sure you are aware of the change in calculations for graduation and dropout.

I will be hosting the Director’s Forums this year. Our meeting dates will be October 28, 2021, January 13, 2022, April 28, 2022 and July 28, 2022. Meetings will be virtual from 12:30 PM – 2:00 PM. As in the past, each GLRS region will designate a Director to attend each session. I look forward to having an open discussion as well as answering questions from your region. Your input is needed and valued.
I am delighted to highlight work from Savannah-Chatham School District this week. The investment in co-teaching and co-planning professional learning will result in improved student success. I am so proud of your work!

I am also proud to highlight Jamila Pollard, Senior Program Manager/Legal Officer. Most of you know Jamila, but may not realize she is a world-class baker. We all miss being in the office to enjoy her cakes and other treats!

October is often a tough month. Along with the FTE count and Federal data collection, it seems October always has increased demands. With the end of the first reporting period, our referrals often increase. Don’t be discouraged. You have the opportunity to make a difference every day! Please let us know the resources, technical assistance or other supports that you need. We are here for you. I appreciate everything you do each day for students, teachers, administrators and families.

Keeping Students First,
Wina

District Highlight: Savannah-Chatham County

I am delighted to highlight Savannah-Chatham County Public School System this week. Sixteen Co-Teaching teams at Richmond Hill High School in Savannah-Chatham School District recently participated in the Coastal GLRS Lead EmBRACE, co-teaching training around co-planning for student success. The EmBRACE stands for Building Relationships for Achieving Co-Teaching Excellence. Teachers were excited about what they learned and believe the training will provide a way to meet students’ needs and yield greater outcomes for all students including students with disabilities.

For more information on Lead EmBRACE training, contact your regional GLRS or Kim Bennett, Coastal GLRS at kbennett@fdresa.org.
GaDOE Spotlight: Jamila Pollard

Jamila Pollard has worked in education for 13 years. She is the program manager senior/legal officer for the Family Engagement and Dispute Resolution Unit in the Division for Special Education Services and Supports at the Georgia Department of Education. She oversees the GaDOE and IDEA dispute prevention and resolution processes including the special education help desk, IEP Team meeting facilitation, mediation, formal written complaints, and due process hearing requests. She also assists with various family engagement initiatives, including the Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership. Prior to joining the GaDOE, Jamila was a staff attorney with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit and a middle grades mathematics and language arts teacher in Georgia.

Jamila coordinates GaDOE’s IEP Team meeting facilitation process, which is a collaborative dispute prevention and resolution process used when members of an IEP Team agree that the presence of a neutral third party would help facilitate communication and problem solving. Since 2015, the GaDOE has provided over 350 facilitated IEP Team meetings to families and districts across Georgia. The IEP Team meeting facilitation process continues to create an environment where IEP Team members can work together effectively and efficiently to create a high quality IEP for students.

In her spare time, Jamila enjoys baking cakes and spending time with family and friends.

Special Education Teacher Spotlight

GaDOE Division of Special Education Services and Supports is improving its Teacher Tools newsletter to highlight the work of Special Education Teachers. We are looking for nominations. The monthly teacher spotlight will include a photo and bio of the teacher along with a quote that recognizes their work from a school/district leader.
Nominate your Star Teachers today by simply emailing us at gamtss@doe.k12.ga.us. Please include Teacher Tools Nomination in the subject line.

2021 School Safety Webinar Series

Bullying Awareness and Prevention: Creating Safer Schools

Please join the Federal School Safety Clearinghouse on October 26 at 3:00 PM ET for an informational webinar on bullying awareness and prevention resources, tactics, and strategies to create safer school environments. This session will provide information and resources to the kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) school community.

The session will feature guest speaker and bullying prevention expert Melissa Mercado Crespo, Ph.D., MSc, MA from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Division of Violence Prevention. She will provide an overview of what bullying is and how to identify it, key strategies and actions schools and school personnel can implement to prevent and address it, and the tools and resources available from the government to support schools in these efforts. She will also describe the different types of bullying (including cyberbullying), their impact on school violence, and the relationship between bullying, suicide, and the well-being of school-age youth.

The discussion will also feature additional school safety-related resources on topics like school climate and mental health access and support and a Q&A session for participants to engage directly with Dr. Mercado Crespo.

**When:** October 26, 2021, 3:00 to 4:00 PM ET  
**Where:** Adobe Connect  
**For:** K-12 School Superintendents and Principals; Counselors and Mental Health Practitioners; School and District Administrators; Teachers and School Staff; School Resource Officers; Parents and Guardians; Students

**Bullying Awareness and Prevention Registration Link**

We hope you can join us for this special event during National Bullying Prevention Awareness Month. If you have any questions, please contact the Department of Homeland Security’s School Safety team at SchoolSafety@hq.dhs.gov.
Parent to Parent of Georgia - What a Great IDEA! Workshop

Date: Thursday, October 21, 2021
Time: 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM
Registration Link: What a Great IDEA!

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

An Overview of Special Education for Parents and Families

Understand the basic components of Special Education and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This course will explain how the process of special education works, including Child Find, Response to Intervention (RTI) and Student Support Teams; making a referral; what to expect from an evaluation; how to prepare for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting and how to resolve disputes.

For more information, contact Kathryn Marous, Regional Coordinator with Parent to Parent of Georgia via email kathryn@p2pga.org or via phone 678-736-7314.
Or call Parent to Parent of Georgia at 1-800-229-2038. See our Training Calendar for additional trainings and webinars at www.p2pga.org.

All services and resources offered by Parent to Parent of Georgia are free.

Parent to Parent of Georgia - Peace, Love, Harmony… and the IFSP/IEP? Workshop

Date: Tuesday, October 21, 2021
Time: 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Registration Link: Peace, Love, Harmony…and the IFSP/IEP?

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

Learn how to use effective communication skills to develop a partnership with your child's IEP/IFSP team. Get tips for preparing for school meetings and how to be an effective member of the team.

For more information, contact Jane Grillo, Parent Mentor, White county schools
See our Training Calendar for additional trainings and webinars at www.p2pga.org.

All services and resources offered by Parent to Parent of Georgia are free.

Dyslexia Professional Learning Opportunities

What Every Administrator Needs to Know About the Science of Reading

This free webinar with Literacy How president, Margie Gillis, and Mentor, Wendy North will explain why every administrator needs to have a working knowledge of the Science of Reading and a basic understanding of Structured Literacy.

Presenter: Margi Gillis and Wendy North
Date: October 20, 2021
Time: 7:00 - 8:00 PM

Science of Reading Webinar Registration Link

IDA Annual Reading, Literacy and Learning Virtual Conference

The IDA Annual Reading, Literacy and Learning Virtual Conference is the cannot miss event in the field of dyslexia! This Annual Conference is packed with education sessions tailored specifically for professionals, families, and those affected by dyslexia. These sessions along with our highly popular Award Lectures provide relevant and tangible take-aways for attendees. The IDA Virtual Exhibit Hall allows attendees to connect with vendors and service providers from coast to coast.

Date: October 21 - 23, 2021

IDA 2021 Conference Registration Link

Systematic and Explicit Phonics Instruction: Facilitated GaDOE Session

Over the 2021 - 22 school year, the Cox Campus for Language & Literacy is offering a comprehensive Science of Reading course sequence. The GaDOE ELA Team has partnered with Cox Campus to offer facilitated courses before the live discussion with the Cox Campus team.

Presenters: Anisha Donald and Franeka Colley
Date: October 26, 2021
Time: 3:30 - 5:30 PM
Facilitated GaDOE Session Registration Link

A Deep Dive Into Practice with Cox Campus: Systematic and Explicit Phonics Instruction

Dive deeper into what you’ve learned in Cox Campus’ self-paced courses by joining our live, monthly discussions.
Date: October 28, 2021
Time: 3:00 - 4:00 PM
Deep Dive Into Practice Registration Link

FY22 Spotlight on FTE Errors & Reports

The Data Presentations, Recordings, and Documents webpage contains numerous special education data collection and reporting resources. Beginning Tuesday, October 19, 2021, resources for the ‘FY22: Spotlight on FTE Errors & Reports’ webinar will be available. The webinar PDF provides a resource to search for descriptions of common errors and/or warnings by using the Ctrl + F (Control Find) function on your computer and entering the number of the error or warning.

If you have questions, please contact Dawn Kemp atdkemp@doe.k12.ga.us

Supporting Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

Our webinar links have changed! Please use the new link provided below to access this webinar that is focused on the differences between Community Based Instruction (CBI) and Work Based Learning (WBL).

Supporting Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities Webinar
Date: October 19, 2021
Time: 3:15 - 4:00 PM
MTSS Snapshot: Is Your Pyramid Upside Down?

One of the five essential components of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is the Multi-Level Prevention System, often referred to as the “Pyramid of Intervention.” As educators continue to seek ways to support all students in their learning, they are faced more and more with students who have a variety of needs and may have gaps in their learning. MTSS is intended to support ALL students, and it is a framework that allows educators to identify and target specific needs of all students, whether that occurs in the form of interventions for those who need more support or enrichment for those who thrived in a virtual setting. During these unprecedented times, educators need strategies and processes that will help them determine next steps. MTSS can be used to identify student needs, select appropriate evidence-base practices/interventions, and examine data to observe student performance and adjust interventions as needed.

![Balanced and Inverted Pyramids](image)

An inverted pyramid represents an overload of students in need of interventions and/or intensive interventions. While approximately 80% of students should be successful in Tier I, the graphics above illustrate what might occur with the wide variety of student learning needs. A first reaction may be to rectify this issue by pulling students from the core classroom setting to begin remediating instruction. However, research suggests there is a more strategic way to impact change. To close learning gaps and restore a more balanced pyramid with quality curriculum and instruction, districts and schools should consider implementing or examining data-driven processes to refine practices, determine next steps, and establish a plan of action. With a focus on Data-Based Decision Making, another essential component of MTSS, educators will be able to leverage data to turn the tiered pyramid right-side-up.

Four Core Actions are recommended to shift the distribution of students within a tiered system of supports and close student learning gaps.
1. Analyze curriculum and ensure it includes a focus on high-quality, rigorous, standards-based instruction. To achieve this, in part, educators should utilize High Leverage Practices (HLPs) and Evidence-Based Practices/Interventions (EBPs; EBIs) that when coupled together can provide necessary supports that result in a rapid response to academic and behavioral needs.

2. Plan ongoing, job embedded professional development that is focused on robust Tier 1 instruction.

3. Ensure the use of assessments to find trends, examine gaps, and identify needs of all students.

4. Create support structures and supplement core curriculum with acceleration to ensure students are on a quick path to achieve grade-level success.  

(Source: Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) and Dr. David Steiner, Johns Hopkins University)

In summary, districts and schools should determine a strategy utilizing informed, educational decisions and develop a plan to support all students. By doing so, educators will be able to witness student progress that will turn the pyramid to a more balanced version that is right-side-up!

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

Resource:
October 22, 2021 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs -
Division for Special Education

Directors,

Our first Director’s Forum of the year will be Thursday, October 28, 2021 beginning at 12:30 PM. If you are representing your GLRS region, please mark your calendar to participate.

I am excited to highlight Murray County Schools’ POWER Program. POWER is an 18-22 year old transition program. I am proud to share Murray County’s work!

This week’s staff spotlight is Kachelle White, Senior Program Manager for Results Driven Accountability. Kachelle is an encyclopedia of knowledge on compliance. Kachelle has been learning to play the piano over the last few years. (I am not sure I remember as much as I should after taking piano lessons for seven years - long, long ago.) I admire her determination.

Your input is needed as we establish targets for the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR). Please join us for one of the stakeholder input sessions shared below.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or any staff member if we can provide
technical assistance, professional learning or other support. We are here to serve our Local Educational Agencies. Thank you for all you do to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

Keeping Students First,
Wina

District Highlight: Murray County Schools

The POWER Program has been in existence since 2010 where it began in a classroom at Murray County High School with 5 participants and has now expanded to include a site at North Murray High School. To date there have been over 35 students who have participated in the POWER Program. The purpose of this program was to allow the Exceptional Students in Murray County, who had reached the ages of 18 to 22, the opportunity to progress from an academic location to a setting that is focused on work-related activities and personal growth to prepare for life after high school. Along with the job-related skills, these students have the opportunity to grow personally and socially through a working environment that stresses team building efforts and leadership skills. They work as a team on projects while focusing on the strengths of each individual that, combined with a group effort, will support the successful completion of a job task. Self-motivation and self-determination skills are stressed throughout the program to enable the young adults the ability of expressing themselves in a positive and effective manner.

An important component of the POWER Program is the opportunity to partner with businesses and organizations in the community to create job sites for the students where they experience the independence and responsibilities of being a part of their local community. The Program has collaborated with over 15 businesses in the local community over the years. There have been great results for the participants in the Program in defining the next step in their future after high school. They are allowed the time to self-evaluate and collaborate with their teachers and family members to find the perfect fit for them when they leave school for the last time.
For further information about the program, please email Lisa Winters, ESS Specialist for Murray County at lisa.winters@murray.k12.ga.us or call at 706-695-2252 ext 6803.

**GaDOE Spotlight: Kachelle White**

Kachelle White has worked at GaDOE for 15 years and is currently a program manager senior in the Division for Special Education Services and Supports at the Georgia Department of Education. During her tenure, she has worked closely with the Georgia Online IEP (GOIEP) platform, Compliance/Results Driven Accountability Unit and the GLRS Network. She has worked to improve General Supervision Processes with Disproportionality, Cross Functional Monitoring, District Determinations and other compliance and results State Performance Plan Indicators to improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities across the State. Previously she was a Special Education Teacher and Lead Teacher in Virginia and a local school district in Georgia.

Kachelle supports the creation and growth of the Special Education Dashboard in the GaDOE Portal, collaborates in updating the Special Education Implementation Manual and provides training on the General Supervision and IDEA Implementation Trainings across the State.

In her spare time, Kachelle enjoys traveling, reading a good book, learning how to play the piano and spending time with family and friends.

**Phil Pickens Award Winners**

Walker County Special Education Director Angie Ingram and Whitfield County Parent Mentor Erin Arledge were named the 2021 Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership Phil Pickens Award recipients at the virtual Kickoff Conference on Sept. 29, 2021.

Angie Ingram, special education administrator, who has served Walker County Schools for 30 years, commented, “I’m just someone who shows up to serve...
our kids.” She credits her success to “shared leadership, shared work.”

Erin Arledge said, “My son is the reason I do this work. I work with a great county, great staff, great director and great parent mentor region partners.” Each year a director and a parent mentor receive this award, named for the late Phil Pickens, who served as state director of the Georgia Department of Education Special Services Dept. and founded the Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership.

This year, the Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership celebrates its 20th year of building home, school and community partnerships to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

Want to see a list of prior recipients? Or learn more about the Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership?

New Virtual American Sign Language (ASL I, II, III, IV) Classes Open for Registration

American Sign Language is the 3rd most common language in the U.S. and a beneficial skill for everyday life. It is a rich language used by the Deaf community. Don't just learn ASL, open your eyes to a whole new culture-Deaf culture!

The Georgia Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing has opened registration for virtual ASL classes. These classes will be offered on Tuesdays and Saturdays starting in January 2022. Please see the links below to register for this opportunity.

Tuesday ASL I, II, III, IV Class Registration
Saturday ASL I, II, III, IV Class Registration

Georgia Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (GCDHH) is a statewide non-profit agency that provides an array of services for Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Deafblind, Speech Impaired and their families.

Parent to Parent of Georgia - What a Great IDEA!
Workshop

Date: Thursday, October 28, 2021  
Time: 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM  
Registration Link: What a Great IDEA!

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

**An Overview of Special Education for Parents and Families**

Understand the basic components of Special Education and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This course will explain how the process of special education works, including Child Find, Response to Intervention (RTI) and Student Support Teams; making a referral; what to expect from an evaluation; how to prepare for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting and how to resolve disputes.

For more information, contact Kathryn Marous, Regional Coordinator with Parent to Parent of Georgia via email kathryn@p2pga.org or via phone 678-736-7314. Or call Parent to Parent of Georgia at 1-800-229-2038. See our Training Calendar for additional trainings and webinars at www.p2pga.org.

All services and resources offered by Parent to Parent of Georgia are **free**.

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**Preschool Special Education Pyramid Trainings**

These trainings will focus on implementing the Pyramid Model in preschool special education classrooms. The Pyramid Model is a framework of evidence-based practices designed to promote positive social and emotional development in young children.

Please note, the trainings on each date are different. The trainings will be recorded. *(Please log into ZOOM by 11:45 to reserve a seat and make sure there are no technical difficulties.)*

**The Pyramid Model Tier 1**

*The Pyramid Model Tier 1: Relationships & Environment Registration Link*  
Date: November 8, 2021  
Time: 12:00 - 3:00 PM
The Pyramid Model Tier 2

The Pyramid Model Tier 2: Teaching Social Emotional Development

Registration Link

Date: November 15, 2021
Time: 12:00 - 3:00 PM
Meeting ID: 873 3903 0127
Passcode: DOE8500

Accessible Materials Tip: AEMs and AMPs

All textbooks from 2006 used in Georgia are required to be submitted in a special electronic format to a central repository. Files, when needed, can be converted to braille, large print, and accessible formats by accessible media producers (AMPs).

You can easily determine if a textbook has been converted into one or more accessible formats using the Louis (Lou-EE) or Louis Plus databases. Louis returns information from the American Printing House (APH) and for-profit media producers. Louis Plus also includes producers Bookshare and Learning Ally.

Louis Database Link
Louis Plus Database Link

FY22 SSIP PL Series: Integrating Mathematics Content for Secondary Students with Disabilities

The FY22 SSIP PL Series continues, October 27, 2021 at 2:00 PM, with Jenise Sexton, Content Integration Specialist for Mathematics, leading a presentation on Integrating Mathematics Content for Secondary Students with Disabilities. She will demonstrate various specially designed instruction strategies and give lots of resources and tools for
Integrating Mathematics Content for Secondary Students with Disabilities

Registration Link

Annual Performance Reports and SPP Feedback Opportunity

Annual Performance Reports & Targets
Several special education directors have requested information about the 2020-2021 Annual Performance Report (APR) targets for areas such as Graduation, Drop Out, and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) (>= 80% Regular Class). These targets are not posted, nor currently available, due to the publication of an updated State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) Measurements Table. The SPP/APR Measurements Table encompasses school years 2021-2026 (FFY 2020-2025) and is published by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). State targets, and subsequently Local Education Agency (LEA) targets, are projected for 6 consecutive years based upon the SPP/APR Measurements Table. Targets are used in making LEA Determinations and providing a status (met, not met) on the APR available at GADOE Public Reports or the landing page of Special Education Applications.

Before Georgia can publish SPP/APR targets for school years 2021-2026 (FFY 2020-2025), stakeholder feedback is required on projected targets. The feedback process began in May 2021 with the State Advisory Panel and continues at this time. SPP/APR targets for school years 2021-2026 (FFY 2020-2025) will be publicly posted for comment at Special Education Services and Supports by November 30, 2021.

State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report: Live Feedback Session & Survey Opportunity
If you would like to participate in a live SPP/APR feedback session, you can participate by registering for a feedback session at SPP/APR Feedback Session A or SPP/APR Feedback Session B. Beginning October 30, 2021, a Stakeholder Feedback Survey link will be available at State Performance Plan (SPP), Annual Performance Reports (APR) and Annual Determinations. An informational document titled, SPP/APR 2020-2025 Target Setting Document, will also be posted.

If you have questions, please contact Dawn Kemp atdkemp@doe.k12.ga.us.
REMINIDER! Time to Collaborate with School Counselors

The Division for Special Education Services and Supports in collaboration with the Division for Career, Technical and Agricultural Education’s Counseling Unit will collaborate on a transition training series focused on the roles of counselors and special education professionals in providing access to instruction, interventions, and activities that will increase positive postschool outcomes (Employment, Education and Training, and, Independent Living). The next session of this three-part workshop will be November 9, 2021, from 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM.

If you did not attend the first session and wish to register your team consisting of counselors, special education teachers, transition personnel, and CTI coordinators from across all grade bands (elementary, middle and high school), contact your school counselor to register through CTERN or Elise James at ejames@doe.k12.ga.us.

The remaining workshop dates are:
• November 9: 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM
• January 20: 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM
• March 10: 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

Using The Self-Determination Inventory as a Transition Assessment

The Self-Determination Inventory measures student’s self-determination. The transition assessment has been validated for students ages 13-22 with and without disabilities. It is an online tool that offers audio presentation of the questions and in-text definitions. The state is offering the use and management of this tool without charge to any district who would like to use it. The overview and training in the use of this product requires a 1-hour commitment. If you are interested in adding The Self-Determination Inventory Dashboard to your cadre of transition assessments, contact Elise James at ejames@doe.k12.ga.us.

Support Personnel Professional Development: Reevaluation: What You Need to Know
Did you miss this presentation? You can access the webinar here: **Reevaluation: What You Need to Know recording**. If you have questions, please contact the Program Specialist for your area listed 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

**Cross Functional Monitoring (CFM) Open Office Hours**

To support districts in preparation for upcoming Cross-functional Monitoring, 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 process.

The scheduled dates and times are:

**Friday, November 12, 2021**
- 10:00 - 11:00 AM
- 1:00 - 2:00 PM

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

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

Links to each specific session 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 your district in this process.
FTE Reporting Update on Private or Home-schooled Students

We have been made aware that you may be required to have a line of enrollment in your SIS to report the Child Find students. We know this is required in Infinite Campus, but are not certain about other SIS vendors. However, GaDOE does not consider private school or homeschooled students to be enrolled. This line of enrollment in the SIS may cause the student status to be reported as something other than C (Child Find). This may result in errors or may result in underreporting of the student count to be considered for proportionate share next year. Please see the guidance posted below in FTE on how to resolve that issue.

This guidance may resolve the issue for some of those students.

10/20/2021 - E0301 and E3161 - If you have a new Child Find student this year and the WD DATE and CODE are not in your SIS, click on the error, then GTID, then Edit Student Record and add WD Date (between 10/6/20 and 10/5/21) and Code (H, K, or Z) for each student online after your last upload, then validate.

10/20/2021 - All error comments need to be submitted by 5:00 PM on Tuesday October 26, 2021, so the FTE Data Collection staff has time to review the comments and districts have time to wrap up FTE by the sign-off deadline.

Additionally, please either “state exclude” or delete the student on the GaDOE website if the student withdrew prior to 10/6/20 and should no longer be counted in your proportionate share for reasons such as those listed below.
- Student is attending a For-Profit Private School.
- Student is no longer attending a Nonprofit Private School in your LEA.
- Student is no longer a homeschooled student living in your LEA.
- Student has been dismissed from Special Education or parent revoked consent for services after withdrawing.

Please share this with others who may be responsible for collecting or reporting this information.

Thank you for your diligence in correctly reporting the students that should be included in your proportionate share for next year based on their status on FTE1 Count Day this October.

MTSS Snapshot: Closing Learning Gaps Using the Best
Tools for your District or School

The regional coaches for Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports are often asked what screener, intervention, or progress monitoring tool should districts and schools use to close learning gaps. This does not need to be a huge task that involves incredible amounts of time spent searching the Internet to find the instructional tools that are the best fit. Identifying the "right" supports is critical and much depends on the circumstances at each school, i.e., screeners, type of intervention, schedule, time needed, frequency, progress monitoring tools, etc. Knowing where to look for resources that support the unique needs of your district or school is half the battle.

Did you know that the National Center on Intensive Intervention (www.intensiveintervention.org) has developed six tools charts to assist with review and identification of screening, intervention, and progress monitoring tools. The intervention and assessment tools on the chart display expert ratings on the technical rigor of assessments and interventions. Additionally, the products submitted by vendors are reviewed by an external Technical Review Committee that is made up of experts. The charts are updated annually so that you can be certain of current considerations.

The Tools Charts can be helpful to you in multiple ways. For example, if you are searching for the best screening tool for your school, you may check the NCII Tools Chart to see the various screening tools available. Another example may be that the intervention tool you are using is not getting the result needed. If that is the case, you may use the Tools Chart for Interventions and identify if your intervention tool is on the chart. If so, what are the criteria of its use to achieve the best outcome, i.e., frequency, dosage, attention to transfer, etc. Take some time to check out the NCII Tools Charts and other valuable resources on the website.
October 29, 2021 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education

Directors,

It is hard to believe that we are wrapping up October on Sunday. Hope you have lots of fun plans this weekend with football and fall festivals. As we transition to November, our thoughts turn to Thanksgiving and the Annual Fall Georgia Council of Administrators of Special Education (G-CASE) Conference. Whether you plan to attend in-person or virtually, I know you will receive valuable professional learning and opportunities to connect with other directors. Please plan to be a part of this event on November 17-19, 2021 in Savannah or with a virtual option.

Our eblast this week is full of great content. Find out more about our Senior Program Manager, Amber McCollum, and her hidden talent to lead ghost tours. I am super excited to share the highlight of the week from Seminole County Schools. Dr. Sandy Malone shares how they implemented Orton-Gillingham to support students with disabilities. Thank you Dr. Malone for your leadership! I am so very proud of your work.

I am also proud to share the work of GLRS District 17 and highlights of their recent Collaborative Communities meeting. Having served as the District 17
District Liaison several years ago, I can tell you this group works hard, but they also know how to incorporate fun! I know you will enjoy seeing their pictures and learning more of their work.

October is Celebrating the Bilingual Child Month. At this time, approximately 9% of our students with disabilities are also English Learners. Learn more about the top five languages spoken in the United States and how that compares in Georgia. There is also a new resource just released on evidence-based practices for English Learners. Please share this resource with appropriate personnel in your district, but especially your teachers.

Wishing you a relaxing weekend and a chance to recharge. You are making a difference each day!

Keeping Students First,
Wina

South GLRS – Learning and building teamwork while also having fun!

Collaborative Communities are a perfect place to build relationships and to find time for laughter. At the Collaborative Communities meeting at South GLRS last week, directors enjoyed a fun and competitive team building activity while learning to network and effectively communicate. Taking time to share and laugh with colleagues is invaluable. A big shoutout to Dane Heard, South GLRS Director, and Belinda Tiller, District Liaison. GLRS District 17 rocks!

Halloween haunted houses
District Highlight: Seminole County Schools

Dr. Sandy Malone, Director of Special Education for Seminole County Schools, realized their placement on the Targeted Support List required action. The low achievement of students with disabilities and being among the lowest performing schools was simply not acceptable. In her pursuit to strengthen the system’s specialized reading instruction, Dr. Malone took a page from her past and turned to the neuro-cognitive-based Orton Gillingham (OG) program.

Having implemented the program some 20 years earlier, she was very familiar
with its effectiveness. OG utilizes many important learning concepts that cross over to every component of learning. Dr. Malone had all their special education teachers commit to the five-day summer training. She felt they needed to understand how to prompt appropriately when a student was struggling in the classroom and consistently utilize the OG methodology. Dr. Malone stated that, “The training was excellent. OG has been a great addition to our special education toolkit – multi-sensory, sequential, direct instruction that is based on the Science of Reading. We now have OG reading being taught at all schools, in addition to offering Lindamood-Bell and Wilson Reading. A hard but very real lesson to learn in special education is that there will never be any one approach that works for all.”

GaDOE Spotlight: Amber McCollum

Amber McCollum is a Senior Program Manager in the Division for Special Education Services and Supports. She has been working with budgets and grants for the past seven years here at GaDOE and has worked in the field of education for 17 years. Prior to this role, she was a teacher and a district leader.

She has been working across Federal Programs to help align equitable services practices across ESSA and IDEA programs with the ES4PS platform. Her goal is to make it easier for LEAs to find, report, and provide equitable services to students across the state of Georgia.

Amber has two dogs, Ruby Raine and Sophie Belle, who are her little heartbeats. She loves traveling and the theatre. Her favorite musical is Wicked and she has seen it in Atlanta and on Broadway in NYC. She used to be a professional guide hosting walking ghost tours by the light of a lantern in Atlanta.
from downtown at the Ellis Street hotel all the way to the Fox Theatre, and loves to share the history she knows.

Celebrating the Bilingual Child Month

October is Celebrating the Bilingual Child Month! Did you know Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Somali are leading languages on states’ “Top Five” lists of languages spoken by K–12 English learners (ELs)? Learn more from Top Languages Spoken by ELs in the U.S.

In Georgia, the top language spoken other than English is Spanish representing 80% of the speakers of other languages, yet there are many other languages.

Top Ten Languages Spoken in Georgia (excluding English)
1. Spanish
2. Vietnamese
3. Arabic
4. Korean
5. Other African
6. Portuguese
7. French
8. Other Indian
9. Ethiopian/Eritrean
10. Chinese

With our English Learner/Students With Disabilities dually identified students representing approximately 9% of the overall students with disabilities in Georgia, this information certainly has significance for your district. When considering the investment of translation for standard documents such as the IEP, this information should be helpful.
Research-to-Practice: Evidence-Based Tier 2 Intervention Practices for English Learners (Brief 2)

Evidence-Based Tier 2 Intervention Practices for English Learners is the second brief in the series Meeting the Needs of English Learners With and Without Disabilities. Brief 2 features the work of Projects ELITE, ELLIPSES, and LEE — model demonstration projects funded by ED’s Office of Special Education Programs — whose interventions support the language and literacy needs of ELs in Grades 3–5, specifically through supplemental intervention (Tier 2) that is culturally and linguistically responsive. Highlights include:

• Design and delivery of Tier 2 intervention for ELs with and without disabilities
• Data analysis and instructional decision-making
• Criteria for identifying students who need Tier 2 intervention

Parent to Parent of Georgia - Crossing the Medical Bridge, Transition to Adult Healthcare for Children & Youth with Special Healthcare Needs Workshop

Date: Thursday, November 4, 2021
Time: 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM
Registration Link: Crossing the Medical Bridge, Transition to Adult Healthcare for Children & Youth with Special Healthcare Needs

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

Learn what health has to do with transition; who makes up the transition team and their roles, how to incorporate health transition into a medical home, healthcare financing, legal issues and timelines.
For more information, contact Vicki Hilpp, Parent Mentor Oconee County School System via email vhilpp@oconeeschools.org or via phone 706-769-5130. Or call Parent to Parent of Georgia at 1-800-229-2038. See our Training Calendar for additional trainings and webinars at www.p2pga.org.

All services and resources offered by Parent to Parent of Georgia are free.

**Parent to Parent of Georgia - Sifting Through Your Parental Rights**

Date: Monday, November 8, 2021  
Time: 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM  
Registration Link: Sifting Through Your Parental Rights

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

Provides basic information about parental rights under IDEA, including confidentiality, notice, consent, surrogate parents, free and appropriate public education (FAPE), least restrictive environment (LRE), evaluations and dispute resolution methods such as mediation and due process.

For more information, contact Vernita Harris, Parent Mentor, Muscogee County Schools, via email harris.vernita.t@muscogee.k12.ga.us or via phone 706-748-2205. Or call Parent to Parent of Georgia at 1-800-229-2038. See our Training Calendar for additional trainings and webinars at www.p2pga.org.

All services and resources offered by Parent to Parent of Georgia are free.

**Preschool Special Education Pyramid Trainings**

These trainings will focus on implementing the Pyramid Model in preschool special education classrooms. The Pyramid Model is a framework of evidence-based practices designed to promote positive social and emotional
development in young children.

Please note, the trainings on each date are different. The trainings will be recorded. (Please log into ZOOM by 11:45 to reserve a seat and make sure there are no technical difficulties.)

**The Pyramid Model Tier 1**

**The Pyramid Model Tier 1: Relationships & Environment Registration Link**
Date: November 8, 2021  
Time: 12:00 - 3:00 PM  
Meeting ID: 838 8825 6620  
Passcode: DOE8500

**The Pyramid Model Tier 2**

**The Pyramid Model Tier 2: Teaching Social Emotional Development Registration Link**
Date: November 15, 2021  
Time: 12:00 - 3:00 PM  
Meeting ID: 873 3903 0127  
Passcode: DOE8500

**FY22 SSIP PL Series: Integrating Mathematics Content for Secondary Students with Disabilities**

FY22 SSIP PL Series is happy to have Trace Vaughn, Systemic Improvement Specialist, present on **November 10, 2021, from 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM on Strategies for Promoting School Attendance.** We have also created a self-guided module on attendance. Please join us by clicking the link to register for this event.

**Strategies for Promoting Attendance Registration**

**Self-guided Module**
GLRS and GVRA Map Updated

The new **GLRS and GVRA map** is available. The map includes the GVRA regions overlaid on the GLRS map with phone number(s) of the district GVRA offices. On the back page, we have listed all the GLRS contact numbers for each GLRS region.

You can find the map on the [Transition Best Practices webpage](#) under Resources.

If you have any questions, contact Elise James at ejames@doe.k12.ga.us.

UDL and Differentiation

Are you having a hard time describing the differences between Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and differentiation to your staff? Here’s an easy and quick way to do so. UDL is how you think about what you do. Differentiation is what you do.

UDL is planning ahead and thinking about the environment, curriculum, materials, technology tools, instructional methods, assessments, and goals-
then predicting any barriers that may exist for any learner e.g., reading deficits, low vision, organization, attention.

Differentiation happens after the fact. In other words, it’s necessary to retrofit a material, environment, etc., to make it work better for a learner after observing that a barrier exists. It’s always better and less work to plan ahead using the UDL framework when purchasing, borrowing, or creating learning opportunities.

**MTSS Snapshot: Historical Timeline of Tiered Interventions**

The concept of tiered interventions was first introduced for behavior with PBIS in 1997, and RTI made a formal debut in 2004 with the reauthorization of IDEA. MTSS entered the timeline ten years afterwards. From the early beginnings of those methods that focused on the use of tiered interventions, the research-based practices have evolved into the MTSS framework.

Research-based Tiered Interventions Timeline:

1997 - Reauthorization of IDEA; PBIS first called for and the creation of a national Center provisioned
2004 - Reauthorization of IDEA; RTI established in IDEA requirements
2014 - National TA Centers begin shifting RTI language to MTSS
2015 - ESSA signed into law; ESSA calls for MTSS
2017 - Georgia's SPDG funded by OSEP; 22 states have implemented MTSS (excluding GA) and SPDG funded to implement MTSS in Georgia
2021 - 49 states have implemented MTSS (including GA)
Don’t be discouraged if your district or school has not fully implemented Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). Full implementation with fidelity takes time to develop, and it is wise to take strategic steps in leading the faculty and staff to a deeper understanding of MTSS through professional learning as implementation occurs. There are five essential components in the MTSS framework that include Screening, Progress Monitoring, Multi-Level Prevention System, Data-Based Decision Making, and Infrastructure. Program evaluation should inform how MTSS is implemented, as well as provide information that relates to improvements in student academic, behavior, and connectedness/wellbeing outcomes. District and school Fidelity of Implementation Rubrics, available on the Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports website, will guide you in identifying areas of strength and areas of needed growth. Know that Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students team is working diligently to provide quality professional learning to aid districts and schools with implementation and fidelity.

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