September 7, 2021 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education

Directors,

Thank you for your well wishes as I transition as the Georgia Part B State Director. I would like to share that Wina Low will serve as the Interim State Director. Wina has supported the Department’s vision in providing high quality supports and professional learning. Join me in celebrating Wina Low on her interim selection.

If you were unable to join the live G-CASE Lunch and Learn on Friday, September 3, you will be able to access the archived recording link and slides, which will be sent out directly from G-CASE. The webinar was free of cost for everyone.

The first Directors’ Webinar will be Tuesday, September 14 at 1 pm. You can register for the webinar using the following link: Click Here.

Check out a new preschool special education resource: Click Here.

In closing, if every student succeeds, then we must give each and every student the tools that he/she needs to be successful. We must continue to address services and supports, self-determination, and specially designed instruction. We learned that student success requires a partnership among teachers,
leaders, and families. It is our responsibility to address explicitly the pipeline by which teachers and leaders are recruited, developed and retained. It is our honor to inform the student pipeline ensuring that improved results and outcomes are inevitable. We know that General Supervision is necessary to provide the infrastructure and supports for leaders, teachers and families to meet the whole child needs of each student. We must unpack the backpack because we will realize the true impact. Yes, everything matters. Continue to keep Georgia’s Students First!

Zelphine Smith-Dixon, Ed.D.

Special Education FTE Updates

We have updated the FY22 Special Education FTE Training with an addendum specific to Adapted Physical Education. The training resources can be located at the website Data Presentations, Recordings, and Documents (gadoe.org) with links for the recording FY22 Special Education FTE Updates and Handout.

New Webpage for Adapted Physical Education

A new webpage for Adapted PE has been recently developed to provide increased awareness for Local Educational Agencies (LEAs). This work is supported through a partnership with GaDOE Teaching and Learning. New Webpage: Click Here

Content Integration Resources Updates

The Georgia Department of Education has four Content Integration Specialists for Special Education. To help increase the awareness of their work, we have created a one-stop shop for all updates! The Content Integration Resources Update will provide professional learning offerings and instructional resources for all content areas as well as information on any collaborative projects. The link to the one pager will be available on the one-stop webpage Integrated Instructional Supports for All Students webpage and updated, as
appropriate, with new resources and professional learning opportunities. Be sure to pass this on to everyone you support!

**Indicator 12 Update**

In the letter released on August 24, 2021, the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) shared that infants and toddlers with disabilities were disproportionately affected by the pandemic compared to their peers without disabilities. As a result, OSERs has provided clarification to stakeholders about expectations and requirements for implementing Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Additionally, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) provided Georgia with technical assistance guidance regarding the Part C to Part B transition. We are sharing critical key points below.

**Key Points Clarified**

The transition process initiates when the LEA is notified that a child is approaching his/her third birthday, NOT at the transition meeting/conference. LEAs should have procedures in place to ensure that they are receiving and accounting for all the students provided to them by their local Part C program.

**Key items to consider for your LEA**

Meet with local Part C program partners to ensure that the notification list of students who may be eligible for preschool special education services is sent to the LEA regularly and received by the appropriate contact person.

Discuss the current steps of the transition process and make any needed adjustments to this process.

Create or revise the transition tracking process based on the notification list of students who may be eligible for preschool special education services. The data should be in a format that allows the data to be analyzed and compared to the list received from BCW.

Update policies and procedures documents/manuals to include these processes.

Provide training to staff and share the recent information released by OSERS and OSEP.
September 17, 2021 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education

Directors,
Hope your week is going well! If you missed the Director’s Webinar on Tuesday, the recording link and PowerPoint are available on the website and below in the weekly messages.

The September SELDA session was also held earlier this week with the recording and PowerPoints available on our website. Please note that while supporting our new Directors, many outstanding resources are created for SELDA. You may find this information very helpful to your practice or to share with others in your district. If you have not viewed the resources under SELDA, please take a moment to review. I hope you will find the information useful.

As a new feature for our weekly messaging, I would love to recognize the great work that is happening across our state and within your districts. Please feel free to send any items that you would like to feature. It could be a picture and description of training you held or maybe even something from your local Special Olympics. We all love to hear from our peers and share information. Really hope you will support this idea and submit items to be featured. We have got to share our story!
Thank you for your dedication and commitment to students with disabilities.
Keeping Students First,
Wina

September Directors' Webinar

Thank you for attending the September Director's Webinar. If you were unable to participate, the recording and PowerPoint can be accessed at the following links:

   September Director's Webinar Recording
   September Director's Webinar PowerPoint

Please contact Wina Low wlow@doe.k12.ga.us or Kachelle White kawhite@doe.k12.ga.us with any questions.

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 fourth presentation in this series is Wednesday, September 22, 2021 at 2 pm. Jody Drum, with Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students, and Trace Vaughn, SSIP Program Specialist with GaDOE, will present on “Secondary MTSS: Implementing and Monitoring an Early Warning System”.

FY22 SSIP Professional Learning Series Registration

Equitable Services – ES4PS Invitations

On September 10, 2021, the GaDOE State Ombudsman staff conducted a live demo of the FY 2022 - 2023 Equitable Services for Private Schools (ES4PS) invitations. For FY22, IDEA will only use ES4PS for sharing invitations. The recording is available on the Ombudsman website on the right-hand side under the section...
ES4PS questions should be directed to ombudsman@doe.k12.ga.us. IDEA-specific fiscal requirement questions should be directed to your Budget Liaison.

**MTSS Snapshot: MTSS, RTI, and SST Clarified**

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), formerly referred to as “Response to Intervention” (RTI), is a large system of tiered interventions widely considered an umbrella framework that includes academics and behavior, as well as connectedness and well-being.

MTSS as a large system essentially combines the previously separate processes into one framework. MTSS addresses ALL students, not just struggling students, and it is NOT the highway to special education identification. In fact, implementation of MTSS with fidelity leads to reduced special education referrals and placement rates.

* Multi-Tiered System of Supports - a system or framework that integrates assessment and intervention within a school-wide, multi-level prevention system (Georgia’s pyramid) to maximize student achievement and reduce behavioral incidents, while enhancing connectedness and well-being. It promotes systems alignment to increase efficiency and effectiveness of resources. (*National Center on Intensive Intervention*)

* Response to Intervention (RTI) is a process within the larger system of an MTSS framework. RTI is part of the data-based decision making process embedded in progress monitoring where team members review data to determine how students are responding to the interventions provided. RTI is a process to observe data and adjust (intensify, select new, or continue) an intervention based on a student’s progress toward an established goal. (*National Center on Intensive Intervention*)

* Student Support Team (SST) - an interdisciplinary team or group that uses a systematic process to address learning and/or behavior concerns of students, PK-12, in a school. SST is unique to Georgia. (*Georgia Department of Education*)

**GAA 1% Participation Application**

Open
The 2021 GAA 1% Participation Application is now available in the secure MyGaDOE portal for district assessment directors to complete in collaboration with special education directors. This application will close at 4:00 p.m. on September 30, 2021. Please work in collaboration with your Assessment Director to complete the application.

The Every Student Succeeds Act places a 1.0% *statewide* cap on student participation in alternate assessments. The U.S. Department of Education approved a one-year waiver extension from this cap for Georgia for 2020-2021. As required by the approved waiver, GaDOE works with districts during the school year to ensure that the Georgia Alternate Assessment 2.0 (GAA 2.0) is used to assess only those students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

The GAA 1% Participation Application serves two purposes:
1. For the 2020-2021 school year, the application allows those LEAs that exceeded 1% participation on the GAA 2.0 to provide justifications that will be made publicly available on the GaDOE website during the fall, and
2. For the 2021-2022 school year, the application allows all LEAs to calculate anticipated 2021-2022 GAA 2.0 participation rates and provide assurances.

The application webinar recording and PPT, as well as the user guide, are available for download by going to the MyGaDOE portal, clicking on CCRPI, choosing CCRPI Resources, and scrolling to GAA Participation Application Resources.

Additionally, complete information was emailed to assessment directors and special education directors on September 15, 2021.

**ASPIREPlus Grant: Implementation**

Implementation of initiatives in the ASPIREPlus grant begins this Fall. All districts participating in the grant must be trained in the management of the Self-Determination Inventory (SDI) dashboard. This training is for districts implementing ASPIRE, ASPIRE with the Self-Determined Model of Instruction, or the control group. Contact Elise James ejames@doe.k12.ga.us to schedule the training for the lead personnel for the grant in your district.
The training and coaching schedule for the 2021-2022 school year is listed below. All sessions will be conducted from 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Districts participating in the groups below will meet during the week of September 22nd. Use the information below to log into your session. If you have questions, contact Elise James ejames@doe.k12.ga.us.

Districts implementing ASPIRE with the SDLMI:

September 22, 2021:

September 22 Meeting Link
Meeting ID: 951 5219 7860
Passcode: 292860

Districts implementing ASPIRE Only

September 23, 2021

September 23 Meeting Link
Meeting ID: 932 4546 8830
Passcode: 459501
September 24, 2021 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education

Directors,
Cooler temperatures are ushering in Fall. It won’t be long until the leaves will begin to change colors. Fall is my favorite season of the year.

It is also time to prepare for the first FTE count as well as our Federal Data Collection. If you need assistance, please feel free to reach out to our staff to assist. We are here for you.

Please join me in wishing Dr. Debbie Reagin the very best in her retirement. Debbie has been an educator for 40 years, serving as a special education teacher and various leadership positions including Special Education Director. While working as a Program Specialist with the Georgia Department of Education, Debbie has collaborated with multiple agencies to support students with disabilities. As the Division’s Autism Specialist, she has acquired world-class professional learning to support teachers, leaders, families and most of all students. Debbie has one of the biggest hearts - sharing love and compassion along the way. Her contributions to the field will have a lasting Impact. Debbie’s last day will be September 30, 2021. Please reach out to let her know that she made a difference!

I am very excited to feature a best practice from one of our local educational
agencies. I know you will enjoy learning more about Valdosta City Schools and their own version of the Friday blast. I am so proud of their work! Thank you for your commitment and dedication to students with disabilities.

Keeping Students First,
Wina

**District Highlight**

Dr. Vakesha Mays, Special Education Director for Valdosta City Schools, shared during Collaborative Communities the details of her Blog that she and her staff send out weekly to keep her staff informed. Here is how the Blog started and what parts of it are her favorite and why.

“While reflecting on my first year as a Special Education Director, I realized we were sending out a large number of emails from the various Program for Exceptional Children (PEC) departments (i.e. behavior specialists, compliance coordinators, FTE secretaries, technology specialists, psychologists, and other related services) to the PEC teachers. I wanted a way to consolidate the information and deliver it once a week. The teachers were feeling overwhelmed and could not keep up with all the different expectations from each department. I also wanted to use this idea to bolster team morale. I shared my ideas with the team and our amazing technology specialist brought it to fruition.”

She also stated that “Each department has a section where they share the important and relevant information as well as reminders. There is also a section where we post community opportunities, fundraising, and parent outreach materials that teachers can share with colleagues and parents. There is a video of the week section where we provide humorous or inspirational videos. We have a complete archive of every blog post that teachers and staff can refer to for important content. Each PEC department has their own section where they post relevant information and reminders. I later added a Shout-Out section at the top of the blog to highlight the hard work going on around the district allowing any PEC teacher, school administrator, or staff member to give praise to a team colleague. The Shout-out section became very popular quickly. The most important part of the blog for me is the PEC procedures manual link because in our positions we all know that it ultimately comes back to policies and procedures. At any time, administrators, teachers, and other PEC staff can access the manual directly from the blog. I must say that it has been one of the highlights of my job and I am ecstatic to think that someone else feels the same way.”
Lead EmBRACE: Building Relationships for Achieving Co-teaching Excellence

Coastal GLRS is thrilled to introduce Lead EmBRACE: Building Relationships for Achieving Co-teaching Excellence talks with Derrick Butler, principal of Islands High School, Savannah-Chatham School District. He will be hosting a series conversations each month to support school-based administrators in closing gaps by opening spaces for effective co-teaching. The recording will be saved on the Co-Teaching Website.

Listen to his 4 minute introduction and share with your school based administrators. Lead EmBRACE Video Episode 1
GaDOE Science Team Opportunity

The GaDOE science team is looking for science and special education teachers with science experience to contract with as we develop new resources in the coming years. We are engaging in a range of projects, such as instructional resources, videos, and assessments, and we need your help! Contracts are paid commitments and vary in size and scope. Please share this information with teachers and leaders in your district. If someone is interested in this opportunity, please have them take a moment to complete this short Interest Survey.

For additional information contact Renee Shirley-Stevens, renee.shirley-stevens@doe.k12.ga.us or Keith Crandall, kcrandall@doe.k12.ga.us

IDEA Supplemental Relief Grant

Please check the status of your FY21 IDEA Supplemental Relief Grant. The IDEA Supplemental Relief grant (program code 2829) period ends on September 30, 2021, and is not eligible for carryover. Please be sure to fully expend grant funds on allowable expenditures prior to the deadline. The funds may be used in the same manner as the regular IDEA grants. The regular IDEA 611 Flowthrough and IDEA 619 Preschool grants will continue to be eligible for 100% carryover.

If you have any questions, please contact your Budget Liaison.
Upcoming Budget Deadlines – September 30 and October 1

September 30: The IDEA FY21 grant period ends and last day for federal budget amendments to be submitted.

October 1: The FY22 budget submission deadline for all special education grants. All FY22 budgets must be submitted and signed off by the superintendent by the end of the day. This affects your timeliness indicator.

Please contact your Budget Liaison if you have any questions.

MTSS Snapshot: Is MTSS Required?

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. Research tells us when implemented with fidelity, MTSS can close learning gaps, improve student achievement, increase on-time graduation, and reduce behavior related suspensions/expulsions. Currently, there are three documents to carefully review when considering if MTSS is required in Georgia’s schools.

(Please click each link to review the entirety of the documents.)

1. GEORGIA HOUSE BILL 740: A Bill to be Entitled an Act

Important to Know: No student in public preschool through third grade shall be expelled or suspended from school for more than five consecutive or cumulative days during a school year without first
receiving a multi-tiered system of supports…

2. GEORGIA BOARD OF EDUCATION RULE - Code: JD 160-4-8-.15

Important to Know: (1) No student in public preschool through third grade shall be expelled or suspended from school for more than five consecutive or cumulative days during a school year without first receiving a multi-tiered system of supports, such as response to intervention…

3. GEORGIA BOARD OF EDUCATION RULE - Code: IGB 160-4-2-.32

Important to Know: The Student Support Team Board of Education Rule, 160-4-2-.32, currently has proposed revisions in process. The Student Support Team requirement to provide interventions has not changed.

In the State of Georgia, public schools with grades PK through 3rd grade must provide MTSS interventions prior to expelling or suspending a student for more than five (5) consecutive or cumulative days of school during a school year. Furthermore, the Georgia Board of Education rules for Student Discipline and Student Support Team also require interventions for students. Both rules include all grade levels.

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

**Best Practices Forum: Building Capacity for a Better Tomorrow**

The registration link for the Best Practices Forum is live. The Best Practice Forum will be held in conjunction with the Virtual Parent Mentor Partnership Conference Kickoff. The dates of the events will be Tuesday, September 28 (Best Practices Forum) through Thursday, September 30 (Parent Mentor Partnership Kickoff). Register for these events using the links below.

**Best Practices Forum Registration**
Parent Mentor Partnership Kickoff (Day 1)
Parent Mentor Partnership Kickoff (Day 2)

**Audience:** GLRS, Special Education Directors/Coordinators, administrators, transition personnel, teachers of students with disabilities, parent mentors, and LEAs implementing ASPIRE (student-led IEPs), and the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction