

Special Education Online State Advisory Panel (SAP) Meeting Minutes Wednesday, September (9-2-2020)

The SAP advises on the unmet needs related to the education of children with disabilities within the State and provides feedback on any rules or regulations proposed by the State regarding special education.

Activity	Next Steps
<p>10:00 am – 10:30 am Welcome/Opening Activity Ganesh Nayak, Chair & Karin Fisher, Co-Chair</p>	<p>The chair and co-chair welcomed State Advisory Panel Members and facilitated introductions. There are 51 State Advisory Panel members-excluding the State Director for Special Education. 40 out of 51 SAP members were present for the meeting.</p>
<p>10:30 am – 11:00 am SAP at a Glance: FY20 Annual Report Ganesh Nayak, Chair</p>	<p>The Chair shared several highlights from the FY20 Annual Report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Panel received 74 public comments last year. Each SAP meeting has a procedure to listen to public comments. Most comments were related to the Georgia Dyslexia Bill, teacher qualifications for special education and restart guidelines for the pandemic. • The Department should continue its focus on the 2020 vision, which is to provide the necessary infrastructure and supports for teachers, leaders, and families to address the whole child needs. <p>SAP membership was allowed the opportunity to provide additional feedback and comments.</p>
<p>11:00 am – 11:30 am Assistive Technology and Transition Updates</p> <p>Wina Low, Program Manager Senior</p> <p>What's new with assistive technology, effective transition practices, and accessible materials?</p>	<p>The SAP membership received several updates regarding assistive technology and transition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GaDOE has a focus on the use of assistive technology to support post-school transition. The GaDOE implemented a partnership with Georgia's Technology Act Center (Tools for Life) to provide equitable access to assistive technology for every district in the state of Georgia. • The priority of the partnership is to build capacity and have a sustainable impact on AT Services for grades K-12 throughout Georgia. The services include AT consultation services, AT/UDL software pilot program, AT lending library, customized training videos, EdTrade, AT Webinar, and Discovery Surveys. • Districts that are interested in participating in the partnership for FY21 will submit assurances no later than September 18. • GaDOE has created a new transition website. There are new transition resources to include a Best Practices Page and Transition-focused Activities and Resources for Distance Learning.



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be a Best Practices Forum for Self-Determination and Transition. New resources are available on the Self-Determination Webpage. ASPIRE lessons and resources will be available. • You can review tools to support transition compliance. • Georgia has been selected to participate in the National Center on Accessible Educational Materials for Learning (AEM Center) cohort along with Missouri, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, and West Virginia. Each state will receive individualized supports and coaching from the AEM Center’s team of Technical Assistance Specialists over a four-year partnership. • The program aims to help each state build a robust and coordinated system for providing AEM and related technologies to all learners with disabilities who need them as they transition across early childhood, K–12, and postsecondary education.
<p>11:30 am – 12 noon Georgia’s Restart Check-in Zelphine Smith-Dixon, State Director</p> <p>What’s new for FY21?</p>	<p>The State Director shared several restart highlights from a national perspective as discussed with the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) during technical assistance meetings.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local school systems should use inclusive messaging to address the awareness needs of all families. During the pandemic, many families shared that they did not receive information relative to their students with disabilities. Inclusive messaging can include general informative statements in the district-wide messages and direct families to more specific correspondence. 2. Local school systems should consider how publicly messaging restart plans specific to students with disabilities might impact Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) for individual students. 3. Local school systems should consider the impact of local restart plans and students’ inclusion with nondisabled peers. 4. Local school systems should consider the differences among homeschooling, use of distance/remote instruction, and homebased instruction. Please ensure that families understand the differences among these areas and how FAPE might be impacted.
<p>12:00 pm – 1:00 pm (LUNCH BREAK)</p>	
<p>1:00 pm – 2:00 pm</p> <p>Dispute Resolution Updates Jamila Pollard, Program Manager Senior and Legal Officer</p> <p>What’s new with dispute resolution, Parent 2 Parent of Georgia Collaboration, Special Education Help Desk, and Facilitator IEP?</p>	<p>GaDOE shared updates from the Family Engagement and Dispute Resolution Process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A continuum of Dispute Prevention and Resolution Processes: Procedural Safeguards, Special Education Help Desk, IEP Facilitation, Mediation, Written Formal Complaint, and Due Process Hearing. • Special Education Help Desk is critical in assisting families, school districts, advocates, and attorneys. The SAP provided feedback that informed this need. The help desk answers questions specific to special education and general questions about the dispute resolution process. The help desk does not provide legal advice but can assist with resources. • The help desk has served 1,347 customers using phone calls, emails, face-to-face meetings, and other strategies.

Activity	Next Steps
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgia has continued its statewide implementation of Facilitated IEP. In general, the outcomes have been favorable. • GaDOE has provided over forty IEP facilitators per school systems and families in Atlanta Public Schools, Ben Hill, Bryan County, Burke County, Camden County, Catoosa County, Chatham County, Cherokee County, Clayton County, Cobb County, Columbia County and Coweta Charter. • During FY20, Georgia had 144 formal complaints filed, which is compared to 204 state complaints filed during the previous school year. Out of 144 state complaints, school systems were out of compliance for 42 instances and compliant for 19 instances. 16 state complaints were denied, and 62 state complaints were withdrawn. 5 state complaints are still pending. • Primarily, the top areas of noncompliance included the following: (1) Development, review, and revision of IEP; Implementation of IEP; Free Appropriate Public Education; Evaluations and Reevaluations; and Least Restrictive Environment.
<p>2:00 pm – 2:30 pm Andrew F. Case Karin Fisher, Co-Chair</p> <p>What would families need to know about the effect of the Supreme Court's ruling on Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)?</p>	<p>The SAP Co-Chair share information regarding the Endrew F. Case.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endrew F. was a fifth-grade student who had autism. He demonstrated multiple behaviors, which limited his access to the general curriculum. • His academic and functional progress stalled. • His parents enrolled him in private school, and he made significant progress. • One general highlight was to consider the role of appropriate documentation of progress monitoring. The school district could not get the behavior under control, which impacted his progress. • <i>IEP goals should be appropriate for the student and rigorous.</i> • <i>If students are not making progress, you should ask for an IEP Team meeting.</i> • Districts must have data to show that everything is being done to address progress and outcomes. • How are IEP Facilitators kept up to date on topics such as Endrew F? <i>All facilitators, mediators, and state complaint investigators receive relevant trainings.</i>
<p>2:30 pm – 3:00 pm Public Comment Public Comment(s)</p>	<p>The SAP received two public comments. Martha Alston (Columbia County)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is necessary to consider strategies to directly inform teachers. Most correspondence goes directly to the local school system and must be forwarded to teachers. • The public comment expressed concerns about serving young children in the same learning environment. She believes that pre-kindergarten students should be grouped by age, and age three students should not be educated with ages four and five.

Activity	Next Steps
	Sara (Gwinnett County) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State should provide more guidance and direction to local school systems regarding restart. • School systems need additional funding to address smaller class size. • Some school systems are using resources to address social communication and engagement with students. This strategy is working well. • School systems need more direction regarding how to address the needs of students with significant cognitive disabilities.
3:00 pm – 3:30 pm SAP Operating Procedures/Next Steps	The SAP membership should consider any instances by which the operating procedures will require updates. An example of a necessary update would be SAP meetings in light of distance/remote meetings.

To Do/Next Steps/Completed Actions

During FY21, the SAP would like to address several areas: (1) Evidence-based Practices/Specially Designed Instruction for students; (2) Progress monitoring technical assistance and resources for families and teachers, (3) Teacher Pipeline for Recruitment and Retention of Special Education Teachers, (4) Dyslexia and Literacy, and (5) equity issues and concerns that impact students with disabilities.

How does GaDOE address equity issues for local school systems and families? Examples include the Parent Mentor Partnership, Georgia Online IEP, Facilitated IEP Process, and Assistive Technology Partnership.

How has the Dyslexia Pilot been impacted by the pandemic?
 What's next for the pilot districts?

How will Georgia continue to support restart for local school districts specific to students with disabilities?

Next SAP Meeting: October 30, 2020

Public Comment(s)

Each SAP meeting includes public comment. If you would like to submit a public comment to be read during the SAP meeting, you may use one of the following strategies.

Printable Form: [Form Link](#)

Online Survey Link: [Survey Link](#).

Public Comments can be **made by phone** by submitting a request to spedsap@doe.k12.ga.us.

All requests to provide Public Comments must be received no later than 10/26/2020 and accommodation requests necessary for participation in the public comment process.