Outreach IDEA
SELDA Presentation

September 27, 2023
MEET OUR TEAM
IDEA Outreach Unit

DR. LATANYA BARKLEY
WASHINGTON
IDEA Ombudsman/Program Manager Outreach Unit

ELISE JAMES
Program Specialist - Transition Postschool Outcomes and Section 504

ANNE LADD
Program Specialist - Family Engagement

TRACY BARBER JONES
Program Specialist - Special Education Helpdesk

TYRA MILLS
Communications and Visibility Specialist
Icebreaker

Word cloud

Question: What was your role prior to becoming a special education director?
Program Manager

Dr. LaTanya Barkley Washington
IDEA Ombudsman/Program Manager Outreach Unit
Division for Special Education Services and Supports
Outreach IDEA Unit Program Manager

Provides support and manages all components of the Outreach IDEA Unit to include:

- Communication and Visibility
- Facilitated IEP Team Meetings
- Family Engagement
- Special Education Helpdesk
- Transition Postschool Outcomes
- Section 504
Learning Outcomes

I understand the components of the IDEA Outreach Unit.
IDEA Ombudsman

Dr. LaTanya Barkley Washington
IDEA Ombudsman/Program Manager Outreach Unit
Division for Special Education Services and Supports
Learning Outcomes

I understand the role of the Ombudsman as a neutral party that connects LEAs and families in the interest of students with disabilities.
IDEA Ombudsman

- Builds a reputation for being a neutral party that is accessible.
- Is a neutral party that connects families, Local Agency Authorities (LEAs) and stakeholders at large in the interest of students with disabilities (SWDs).
- Serves as a source of information regarding state and federal laws and regulations governing special education.
IDEA Ombudsman

- Provides information to parents of SWDs to help them understand and navigate the special education process.
- Provides communication strategies to parents, LEAs and stakeholders at large for resolving disagreements and special education issues in a non-legal manner.
- Assists parents, LEAs, and stakeholders at large with developing strategies and informal options to address issues and concerns.
IDEA Ombudsman

• Promotes collaboration and positive communication between parents and school district personnel in addressing special education issues and concerns.

• Provides information and resources on available options for dispute resolution, such as mediation, state complaints, and due process hearings when collaboration efforts fail.
IDEA Ombudsman

• Serves as a resource for IDEA related information and referrals to available programs and services for individuals with disabilities.

• Identifies, track, monitor, and report to the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) Leadership on suspected systemic patterns of concerns that emerge from constituent contacts regarding special education services in local school districts to aid in addressing noncompliance with special education laws and regulations.
What The IDEA Ombudsman Does Not Do:

• Does not serve in a role that would compromise neutrality.
• Is not an attorney and cannot provide legal advice.
• Does not make decisions or mandate policies.
• Does not have the authority to direct a LEA, parent or stakeholders at large to make decisions.
Fiscal Year 2023 Initial Ombudsman Contacts

228 Initial Contacts. Does not include follow up calls.

- Evaluations FAPE Disciple Formal Complaint Eligibility Transportation
- LRE IEP Enrollment
- SB10 Homeschool
- Educational Records Mediation
IDEA Ombudsman

• Attends GLRS Meetings
• Attends State Advisory Panel Meetings
• Attends SELDA Meetings
• Attends Special Education Administrators Academy Meetings
• Attends Director’s Webinars
• Maintains positive relationships with special education directors to connect families to the district in the interest of the student.
What Did You Learn?
Facilitated IEP Team Meetings

Dr. LaTanya Barkley Washington
IDEA Ombudsman/Program Manager Outreach Unit
Division for Special Education Services and Supports
Learning Outcomes

- I understand the Facilitated IEP Team process (FIEP) process is a dispute preventive initiative.
- I understand that IDEA does not require facilitated IEP Team meetings.
- I understand the role of a facilitator in an IEP Team meeting.
- I understand who can request a FIEP meeting.
- I understand where to locate the form to request a FIEP meeting.
Facilitated IEP Team Meetings (FIEP)

• IEP Team Facilitation is an optional process, not required by the IDEA that state educational agencies (SEA) or school districts may provide to parents and schools.

• A facilitated IEP Team meeting is the same as any other IEP Team meeting, except that a facilitator joins the meeting.
What Is IEP Team Meeting Facilitation?

• IEP Team Meeting Facilitation is a collaborative dispute prevention and resolution process used when members of an IEP Team agree that the presence of a third party would help facilitate communication and problem solving.

• IEP Team Meeting Facilitation can be especially useful when there is a history of communication challenges, or a meeting is expected to be particularly complex or controversial.
What is IEP Team Facilitation?

• In a facilitated IEP Team meeting, an impartial facilitator helps to keep members of the IEP Team focused on the development of the IEP while addressing conflicts and disagreements that may arise during the meeting.

• At the meeting, the facilitator will use communication skills that create an environment in which the IEP Team members can listen to each member’s point of view and work together to complete the development of a high-quality IEP.
What Is The Role Of The Facilitator?

• Helps IEP Team members develop group norms, an agenda, and desired outcomes for the meeting
• Guides discussions by asking student-focused questions
• Keeps the IEP Team on task and the meeting on schedule
What Is The Role of The Facilitator

• Asks questions to clarify points of agreement and disagreement and assists parties in identifying workable solutions

• Does **NOT** make decisions and is **NOT** a member of the IEP Team

• Does **NOT** address issues unrelated to the IEP and does **NOT** need a draft of the IEP prior to the meeting
What Are Some Benefits Of IEP Team Facilitation?

• May build and improve relationships among IEP Team members
• Team members may feel better heard when a facilitator is involved
• Allows all members of the IEP Team the chance to participate fully
What Are Some Benefits Of IEP Team Facilitation?

• The IEP Team may work together more effectively and efficiently to create an IEP that benefits the student and is supported by all IEP Team members

• Keeps decision-making with the IEP Team members who know the student best

• Helps resolve disagreements more quickly than other dispute resolution processes
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• Allows all members of the IEP Team the chance to participate fully
How Do You Request A Facilitated IEP Team Meeting?

• Parents or district personnel may initiate the process by completing the IEP Team Meeting Facilitation Request form.

• Both the parties (district and parents or student if 18 years or older) must agree to participate.
How Do You Request A Facilitated IEP Team Meeting?

• A complete and signed request form and notice of meeting must be submitted to the GaDOE at least 7-10 days before the scheduled IEP Team meeting.

• Upon approval, a facilitator will be provided at no cost to the parent or district
Facilitated Individualized Education Program (FIEP) Team Meeting Request Form
“A Collaborative Dispute Prevention and Resolution Option”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Student</td>
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<td>Grade of Student</td>
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<td>Date of Birth</td>
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<td>Name of School District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of Special Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Director or Designee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name of Parent/Guardian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Address</td>
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<td>Cell</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email</td>
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<tr>
<td>Who initiated the FIEP</td>
<td>Parent, School District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team meeting request?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

An IEP Team meeting is currently scheduled for:

- Date: [ ]
- Time: [ ]
- Location: [ ]
- Purpose: [ ]

Required Signatures: We understand that a Facilitated IEP Team meeting is a voluntary alternative dispute resolution option. We understand and agree to the seven (7) items listed on page one of this request form.

Signature of Parent/Guardian: [ ]
Date Signed: [ ]

Signature of Special Education Director: [ ]
Date Signed: [ ]

Submit the signed FIEP Team Meeting Request Form and copy of the fully executed IEP Team meeting notice to:
Division for Special Education Services and Supports
220 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive, SE, 1870 Trafalgar East
Atlanta, Georgia 30331
Office: 404-314-4403 or Email: spe公共服务@doe.k12.ga.us
Attention: FIEP Request
Electronic submissions are strongly encouraged.

For questions, contact the Special Education Help Desk at 404-451-0468 or spe公共服务@doe.k12.ga.us

30 Richard Woods, Georgia School Superintendent | Georgia Department of Education | Educating Georgia’s Future
Fiscal Year 2023 LEAs That Utilized The FIEP Process
What Did You Learn?

• What are the benefits of the FIEP Process?
Family Engagement

Anne Ladd
Program Specialist, GA Parent Mentor Partnership
Division for Special Education Services and Supports
Together, We Can!

• 21 Years Together 2002-2023
Learning Outcomes

• I can list two benefits of family engagement.
• I can identify who is responsible for family engagement.
• I can name two areas to focus on for to increase family engagement.
What is Family Engagement?

Family Engagement is any way that a child’s family (biological parents, foster parents, siblings, grandparents, etc.) effectively supports the child’s learning and healthy development.
What are the benefits of Family Engagement?

What the Research Says:

One of the most comprehensive research synthesis on Family Engagement was completed in 2002 by Anne Henderson and Karen Mapp. The researchers focused on the relationship between student achievement and family-community involvement.
When Families are Engaged…

Students achieve more, regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background, or the parents' education level.

and

These students also exhibit more consistently higher grades, test scores, better attendance, completed homework; and positive attitudes and behavior. (Anne Henderson & Karen Mapp)
What the Research Says

National and state evidence indicates that a high dropout rate and a wide gap in achievement cannot change without effective family engagement.
What the Research Says

When parents understand the vital role that accommodations play in the success of their child’s classroom education, then they can partner with the IEP team to discuss if the implementations are working successfully. **Source: Epstein**
Who is responsible for Family Engagement?
Focus Areas for Family Engagement

• Two-way Communication
• Show up at school meetings and trainings
• Provide buy-in for priorities
• Change mindset around possible outcomes (raise expectations)
• Collaborate in the IEP process
• Build partnerships
Begin to Build Your Family Engagement Toolkit

- Hierarchy of needs
- National PTA Standards
- Parent/family training
- Vital Behaviors
- Communication strategies
National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

• **Standard 1**: Welcoming all families into the school community
• **Standard 2**: Communicating effectively
• **Standard 3**: Supporting student success
• **Standard 4**: Speaking up for every child
• **Standard 5**: Sharing power
• **Standard 6**: Collaborating with community
Building on Strengths

• *Identifying family strengths is critical to engaging families as partners in their children’s education.* To identify and make use of family strengths, educators may need to shift from a deficit-based model, which focuses on what families are not doing, to a strengths-based model, which acknowledges that families want to help their students succeed (Moore, 2011).
Building on Strengths

• Collaborating with families based on strengths develops strong relationships between home, school, and community. Educators can create opportunities for involvement. When educators recognize families’ strengths, they are more likely to reach out to parents or other family members as true partners. (Moore, 2011)
Families of Students with Disabilities
Sharing the Journey

- Established in 2002
- 88 districts across the state & over 101 mentors
- Family members who have the shared, lived experience
- Provide family training & support
- Statewide reach for information distribution and stakeholder input
- Work to build capacity through collaboration with other agencies and organizations
- Promote family engagement as an integral strategy for school improvement & increased positive outcomes for students
Ga Parent Mentor Partnership

Working to Connect Families, Schools and Communities

The Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership is parents and professionals working together to improve outcomes for students with disabilities by enhancing communication and collaboration between families, educators and the community.

Our Mission

The mission of the Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership is to build effective family, school, and community partnerships that lead to greater achievement for students, especially those with disabilities.

Our Vision

The vision of the Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership is Parent mentors and special education administrators will lead the way in Georgia to bridge the gap between home, school and community partnerships.

Quick Links

- Home
- About Us
- Find A Mentor

Get in Touch

- Email Us
- Facebook
What Did You Learn?
Special Education Helpdesk

Tracy Barber Jones
Program Specialist
Division for Special Education Services and Supports
Special Education Helpdesk

What is it?
• Telephone and email options
• Designed to answer special education-related questions
• Provides useful information and resources

Who can use it?
• Parents
• Teachers
• School and district administrators
• Members of the community
Special Education Help Desk

Types of information provided:

• Explanation of IDEA procedural safeguards (Parents’ Rights).
• Information about, access to, and assistance with the family engagement resources and dispute prevention and resolution processes.
• Discussion of options for addressing concerns or disagreements about a student’s special education program.
Special Education Help Desk

• Information relevant to the education of students with disabilities.
• Information about other agency resources and materials.
Special Education Help Desk

- Who provides the information and support?
  - Members of the Georgia Department of Education Outreach Unit.

- How do I access it?
  - Call: (404) 657-9968
  - Email: SPEDhelpdesk@doe.k12.ga.us
Effective Transition for Students with Disabilities

Elise James
Program Specialist, Transition Postschool Outcomes
Division for Special Education Services and Supports
Learning Outcomes

• I can identify compliance requirements for transition planning.
• I can identify best practices in for transition planning.
• I can list two reasons that transition programs should include self-determination building.
Why Do We Have Transition?

• Changing and expanding expectations for students with disabilities

• Basic structure for preparing students with disabilities to live, work and play in the community, as fully and independently as possible

• Supported by changes in laws and policies to promote equal access and opportunity
Why Do We Have Transition?

• Changes in laws and policies:
  • Educating all Handicapped Children Act (1975): Established free appropriate public education (FAPE)
  • Bridges from School to Work: First conceptual model of transition by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation focused on work (Will 1984)
  • Halpern Model of Transition: Residential, employment and social interpersonal networking focus (1985)
  • The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990: Transition plans required
  • IDEA (2004): Education, employment and independent living focus
Transition for Students with Disabilities

Compliance

LETTER OF THE LAW

Best Practice

SPIRIT OF THE LAW
LETTER OF THE LAW
Transition Services Defined (Sec. 300.43)

• A coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that is designed to be a results-oriented process focused on improving the academic and functional achievement… to facilitate the child’s movement from school to employment, continuing adult education, adult services, and independent living or community participation.

• Based on child’s individual needs and takes into account the child’s strengths, preferences and interests.

• Beginning no later than the first IEP to be in effect by a student’s 16th birthday, the IEP must include transition services.
Sec. 300.43 Transition Services

• (2) Is based on the individual child’s needs, taking into account the child’s strengths, preferences, and interests; and includes—
  • (i) Instruction;
  • (ii) Related services;
  • (iii) Community experiences;
  • (iv) The development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and
  • (v) If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational evaluation.

• (b) Transition services for children with disabilities may be special education, if provided as specially designed instruction, or a related service, if required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education.
State Monitoring of District Plans

- Districts submit State-selected plans for review
- State reviews for compliance
- Non-compliance must be corrected
- Districts develop a Corrective Action Plan to ensure systemic compliance
Transition Planning Checklist

Name: __________________________
Date: __________________________

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**Desired Measurable Post-School/Compromise Completion Goals**

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<td>a) Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) Employment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Independent Living (if appropriate)</td>
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**Annual Transition Goals (Goals based on academics, functional academics, life centered competencies or non-academic/technical or agricultural training and job training)**

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**Achieved/Services**

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Adapted with permission by Dr. Jacob Johnson.

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Transition Documentation Checklist

System: __________________________
Date: __________________________

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Georgia Department of Education
Division for Special Education Services

Transition Documentation Checklist

System: __________________________
Date: __________________________

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Georgia Department of Education
Richard Woods, State School Superintendent
July 24, 2019

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Richard Woods, Georgia’s School Superintendent | Georgia Department of Education | Educating Georgia’s Future
Contact Information

• Results Driven Accountability
  • District Liaison
  • Laurie Ponsell
    • lponsell@doe.k12.ga.us
• Transition Compliance Website
Transition for Students with Disabilities

Best Practice
This is WHY it is Important!

**GRADUATION**

**POSTSCHOOL OUTCOME**

- College or university
- Competitive employment
- Postsecondary training
- Vocational school
Each area is necessary for students with disabilities to transition successfully to their postschool environment.

Every area should be monitored for progress and reporting.

Adapted from “Your Complete Guide to Transition Planning and Services” (Morningstar and Clavena-Deane, 2018)
Georgia’s Systems of Continuous Improvement

• Identify Needs
• Select interventions/Strategies
• Plan Strategy Implementation
• Implement Plan/Strategies
• Examine Progress and Impact
Key Points
Begin with the End in Mind

18-22 Transition Programs

- Coordinated activities and programming
- Results-oriented
- Strength-based
- Interest-based

Elementary School

Middle School

High School

Preschool
Access

• General education curriculum
  • High School Diploma
  • State-Defined Alternate Diploma

• Technology access

• Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education
  • Pathways
  • Career Technical Education
Access

- Dual enrollment
- Interagency collaboration
  - Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA)
  - Georgia Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (GBHDD)
- Intra-agency collaboration and support
  - Counseling
  - Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop Georgia's Economy (B.R.I.D.G.E.)
  - Career and Technical Education (CTI)
  - Transition for all students
Build Self-Determination Skills

- Self-regulation
- Self-advocacy
- Self-awareness
- Self-efficacy
- Choice-making
- Decision-making
- Problem-solving
- Goal setting and planning

- State sponsored self-determination initiatives:
  - Student-led individual education program (SLIEP)
  - Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI)
  - Self-Determination Inventory (SDI)
Why?

The moment Patrick and SpongeBob realize that they live underwater but can’t swim!
With Self-Determination Comes Great Power
Transition Programming Guided by Data

• State Performance Plan
  • Indicator 1
  • Indicator 2
  • Indicator 3
  • Indicator 13
  • Indicator 14

• Student, parent, and teacher perception data

• Progress monitoring of transition plans

• Matching outcome data to students

• Predictors of Postschool Success
Technical Assistance and Webinars

• Check Email Blast for upcoming TA.
Engagement/Quiz
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Elise James
Program Specialist, Section 504
Division for Special Education Services and Supports

U.S. Department of Education
Role of Section 504 Program Specialist

• Guidance for districts and parents
  • GaDOE has no authority
  • Governance and authority belongs to the United Stated Department of Education Office of Civil Rights (OCR)

• Technical Assistance for districts
  • Support in thinking through the process
  • Provide training to follow the law and debunk myths
  • Provide information on changes and precedence set through litigation

• Provide tools and resources for districts and parents
The Basics

• All schools and school districts receiving Federal financial assistance from the United States Department of Education (USED) MUST COMPLY.

• Students who meet the definition of an individual with a disability under Section 504 (not IDEA) are eligible.

• Students must have an equal opportunity to participate in athletics and extracurricular activities.

• Students must not be bullied or harassed based on their disability.
Disability Defined Under Section 504

- A person or students who:
  - (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity;
  - (2) has a record of such an impairment; or
  - (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

- Broad coverage
Major Life Activities

Includes but are not limited to:

• Caring for oneself
• Performing manual tasks
• Walking
• Seeing
• Hearing

• Speaking
• Breathing
• Working
• Learning
Reminder

• Civil rights law
  • “Section 504 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education (ED).”
  • "No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance . . . ."
Reminder

• Educational responsibility
  • “The Section 504 regulations require a school district to provide a "free appropriate public education" (FAPE) to each qualified student with a disability who is in the school district's jurisdiction, regardless of the nature or severity of the disability.”
  • “Under Section 504, FAPE consists of the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services designed to meet the student's individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met.”
Reminder

- Two parts
  - Identify that there is a disability and a need for protection under the law
  - Determine need for an educational plan (504 Plan)
Preschool and Day Care

“A recipient to which this subpart applies that provides preschool education or day care or adult education may not, on the basis of handicap, exclude qualified handicapped persons and shall take into account the needs of such persons in determining the aid, benefits or services to be provided.
Procedural Safeguards Under Section 504

• “Recipient school districts are required to establish and implement procedural safeguards that include notice, an opportunity for parents to review relevant records, an impartial hearing with opportunity for participation by the student's parents or guardian, representation by counsel and a review procedure.”

• “Compliance with the procedural safeguards of section 615 of the Education of the Handicapped Act is one means of meeting this requirement.”
Noncompliance

• “A school district is out of compliance when it is violating any provision of the Section 504 statute or regulations.”

• “OCR does not review the result of individual placement or other educational decisions so long as the school district complies with the procedural requirements of Section 504 relating to identification and location of students with disabilities, evaluation of such students, and due process”
Noncompliance

• “…OCR generally will not evaluate the content of a Section 504 plan or of an individualized education program (IEP),”
  • Decisions should be made by a team
Take Aways

• IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation act are separate laws.
• Separate policies and procedures for Section 504
  • May follow IDEA but not required
  • IDEA requires more
• Read the law to determine procedures
• Provide training for school personnel
• Documentation, oversight, and supervision
Resources

• GaDOE Section 504 Guidance (PDF)
• GaDOE webpage for Section 504 Guidance and Forms
• GaDOE Overview Document
• USED Office for Civil Rights
• USED Office for Civil Rights -504 FAQ
• USED Parent and Educator Resource Guide to Section 504 in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools
Questions are the path to learning
Engagement/Quiz

• True/False
Communications and Visibility

Tyra Mills
Communication and Visibility Specialist
Division for Special Education Services and Supports
Learning Outcomes

• I understand the role of the Communication and Visibility Specialist.
The Role of the Communications and Visibility Specialist

- **Strategic Planning**: Develop communication strategies to communicate the division’s goals and objectives.

- **Public Presence**: Responsible for managing the division’s image.

- **Content Creation**: Creating various forms of content, including written materials, graphics, videos and social media posts.

- **Social Media Management**: Managing the department’s social media presence, including platforms like Twitter and Facebook.

- **Community Engagement**: Work with and engage stakeholders to gather input, share information and build support for the division’s initiatives.
Communication and Visibility

- Help manage already established social media pages (Facebook, Twitter) dedicated to special education news, resources, and success stories.
- Share tips and resources for parents and educators online via social media content and newsletters.
- Highlight success stories of special education students and teachers.
- Run social media campaigns to promote special education awareness and advocacy.
- Partner and showcase with all teams within the Division of Special Education Services and Supports (GaDOE).
Communication and Visibility

• Increase awareness and support for special education stakeholders and students with disabilities through social media.
• Improve the public's understanding of special education students' individual communication needs and preferences, while helping stakeholders and GaDOE staff to adapt new communication strategies to match those needs.
• Fosters collaboration with stakeholders to make all content and marketing materials accessible for the public.
GaDOE Original Content Created
What Did You Learn?

• What are two takeaways from the overall Outreach Unit presentation that you can begin to utilize in your work moving forward?

• Drop your answers in the chat!
Thank You!
Contact Information

LaTanya Barkley Washington, Ph.D.
IDEA Ombudsman/Program Manager Outreach
404-450-0945
latanya.barkley@doe.k12.ga.us
Preparing students for life.

www.gadoe.org

@georgiadeptofed

youtube.com/c/GeorgiaDepartmentofEducation