



December 2, 2022 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education

Directors,



IDEA 1975 to Present

November 29, 2022 marked the 47th anniversary of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Valerie Williams, director of the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), shares her thoughts and perspective of where we are 47 years later. **47 Years Later, Are we Delivering on the Promise of IDEA?** Her insight is very thought provoking. I would also encourage reading more about IDEA, the history and OSEP fact sheets.

Related resources:

- [About IDEA](#)
- [A History of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act](#)
- [OSEP Fast Facts](#)

I would further encourage you to think about the last 47 years of progress though IDEA but please don't be satisfied with our current status. There is so much more to be accomplished through intentional focus for the next 47 years. Lead the change!

Our new director highlight this week is Alice McMaster from Oglethorpe County Schools. She has continued the "family business" by working in the education for 25 years. Be sure to read more about how mentorship kept her inspired to

help families and children navigate the world of education.

Our employee spotlight is shining brightly on Dominique Donaldson. Read all about her impressive experiences as well as the special location she has saved for her bucket list.

Hope everyone had a restful Thanksgiving holiday. The weeks between Thanksgiving and New Year's can be incredibly busy. Take time to slow down and remember the true meaning of the season.

A special thanks to Dr. Cassandra Hollifield, G-CASE President, and Sarah Burbach, G-CASE Executive Director for an outstanding conference. Every detail was perfectly orchestrated. Many thanks to all who contributed to the success.



Children holding hands in a circle

Thanks for all you do each day for students with disabilities. You are making a difference!

Keeping Students First,
Wina

Special Education Events & Due Dates

Please review the information below and the Due Dates Calendar for deadlines and key dates.



Latest news

Professional Learning Events

December 5 at 9:00 a.m. – Back to Basics Behavior Edition

December 6 at 3:00 p.m. – Multisensory Learning & Vocabulary

December 7 at 10:00 a.m. – SESBAA: SpEd Determinations & Disproportionality

December 7 at 3:00 p.m. – Balanced Literacy and Structured Literacy

December 7 at 7:00 p.m. – Unraveling Dyslexia: A Closer Look Series

December 13 at 1:00 p.m. – Special Education Director's Webinar

December 14 at 3:00 p.m. – Multisensory Learning and Spelling for SWDs



Professional Learning Events

Upcoming virtual webinars, in-person events, on-demand content, and by-request workshop opportunities are available at <https://community.gadoe.org/events>.

Professional Learning Events

Reminders

December 15, 2022 – Student Record - Data Cleanse -Closes (Located in the Data Collections)



A Thank You

Coastal GLRS Director, Kim Bennett, was a co-presenter with Islands High School Principal, Derrick Butler, continuing their successful Lead emBRACE professional learning series at the G-CASE Fall Conference in Savannah on November 17, 2022.



*Alice McMaster, Special
Education Director,
Oglethorpe County Schools*

New Director Spotlight: Alice McMaster

GaDOE's Special Education Services and Supports Division is excited to feature Alice McMaster for our New Director Spotlight this week.

Alice McMaster is the Special Education Director for Oglethorpe County Schools and has been in the field of education for 25 years. With education seemingly being a “family business,” Ms. McMaster wanted a different path and was determined to avoid teaching until she realized the fight was inevitable. “I realized that I wanted to be a special education teacher when I was working for DFCS, and I would go into the special education classrooms to see the students on my caseload.” Ms. McMaster began teaching after six years in the workforce and started as a middle school self-contained EBD teacher. An “awesome experience,” as shared by Ms. McMaster, she also taught 6th grade ELA, co-taught 6th and 8th grade ELA, and worked as a school counselor at the high school level, in addition to working for the school district.

While currently serving in her second year as the Director of Special Education, Ms. McMaster shared that, “My current superintendent, Beverley Levine, inspired me to stay in special education. She hired me, she mentored me, and she has stuck with me as my career in education has evolved. Her love of children and teaching is contagious. She makes coming to work and being part of her team challenging and exciting. From the classroom to the board room, we have worked together helping families and children navigate the world of education. She is my inspiration each day.”

Growing up as an only child in a single parent home, Ms. McMaster now finds herself in a family of seven, as she is married with two children, one in college, and one finishing high school. Also in the McMaster family of seven is Ms. McMaster's mother, a cat, and a dog. In her time away from work, Ms. McMaster loves to read, watch movies, and visit museums. The family spends quite a bit of time in Montreat, North Carolina during the summer months, which is where her husband spent his childhood summers. The other favorite family

destination is Boston, Massachusetts, where Ms. McMaster spent her childhood summers and most Christmas holidays.



Dominique Donaldson, Part B Data Manager, GaDOE Division of Special Education Services and Supports

GaDOE Staff Highlight: Dominique Donaldson

GaDOE's Special Education Services and Supports Division is excited to feature Dominique Donaldson for our GaDOE Staff Spotlight this week.

Dominique recently joined GaDOE as a Part B Data Manager for the Division of Special Education Services and Supports. Dominique works with the Data & GO-IEP team to support LEAs in using data to inform programming and measure student achievement. The expansion, clarity, and availability of publicly reported special education information are ongoing priorities.

Before joining GaDOE, Ms. Donaldson had numerous experiences in the field of special education spanning over 10 years. Dominique Donaldson began her educational career as a Georgia Teacher Academy of Preparation and Pedagogy (GaTAPP) Teacher who was awarded the 2013 Muscogee County School District (MSCD) Outstanding First-Year Award. During her time with MSCD, she worked as a special education teacher, a special education school-based LEA facilitator, a district regional school-based LEA, and a program manager at the district level advocating and supporting students with special needs. She received her Bachelor of Business Administration and minor in Marketing, and her M. ED in Special Education from Columbus State University. She received an Educational Leadership Add-on from the University of West Georgia and has a Teacher Support and Coaching endorsement. She has also

worked in the college and university setting at Columbus State University as an adjunct instructor. She is also a recipient of the following awards and recognitions: Excellence in Education Award from Columbus State University, MCSD Elementary Teacher of the Year, Student Success Summit Conference Chairperson, and EmpoWEr Conference Chairperson.

Dominique has a passion for creating meaningful educational experiences for all stakeholders through developing and providing professional learning to close achievement gaps for student success. While working as a district special education administrator in MSCD, Dominique worked collaboratively with educational leaders to create a premier special education conference, The Student Success Summit, which gained recognition from GaDOE. The summit, hosted by the MCSD Student Services, Program for Exceptional Students, focused on delivering professional development and resources on the specialized needs of students with disabilities. This conference, the first of its kind to be held in MCSD, brought together parents and guardians, special and general educators, administrators, and community stakeholders. The success of the SSS Conference became the framework for what is now a district-wide initiative, the EmpoWEr Conference.

Dominique hails from New Orleans, LA where she gained a love for the New Orleans Saints football team, riding floats during Mardi Gras with her Mardi Gras Krewe, and a good bowl of gumbo. Dominique is the proud mother of two amazing boys, and she loves to travel and spend time with her family and friends. Dominique's bucket list includes traveling to the Giraffe Manor in Nairobi, Kenya. She is also passionate about serving and cultivating her community through several volunteer service organizations.



Arrows

Practice Pointers – USED Guidance on Discipline: Question C-5

**QUESTION C-5: WHEN THE PARENT OF A CHILD WITH A
DISABILITY AND SCHOOL PERSONNEL AGREE ABOUT
CHANGING THE CHILD'S PLACEMENT AFTER THE CHILD HAS**

VIOLATED A SCHOOL'S CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT, IS THE CHANGE CONSIDERED A REMOVAL UNDER THE DISCIPLINE PROVISIONS?

The answer is no. If the parent of a child with a disability and the local educational agency (LEA) agree to a specific change in the current educational placement of the child to implement the child's current individualized education program (IEP), then it is not considered a removal under the discipline provisions. However, where the parent and the LEA agree that a child with a disability requires additional services and supports from those in the current IEP, the IEP must be revised before the new placement is determined. For example, if school personnel and the parent agree that a different educational placement is required to better implement the child's current IEP in order to ensure the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE), the new placement would not be considered a "change of placement" in the context of the discipline requirements. Such changes in placement remain subject to the placement requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 300.116 and the prior written notice requirements in 34 C.F.R. § 300.503.

For more information, please see the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) guidance found in [Questions and Answers: Addressing the Needs of Children with Disabilities and IDEA's Discipline Provisions](#) as revised July 19, 2022.



Save the Date!: Intentional Teaching Practices for Preschool

Join us for an in-person, day-long workshop designed for teachers of preschool students with disabilities. Intentional Teaching Practices provides developmentally appropriate learning experiences that are taught for preschool children throughout the day, from greeting children in the morning to storytime, small group, and centers. Throughout the session, we will identify a variety of methods to make adaptations and differentiate lessons to meet the various needs of the learners. Teachers will be actively engaged in learning experiences to take back to their classrooms as well as given time to reflect on managing groups of students and how to adapt for the individual needs of

children.

This Best Practices Training, led by staff from Georgia State University's Department of Early Childhood and Elementary Education, provides professional development tools needed to keep Georgia educators at the forefront of current research and field-tested classroom methodology. Registration for this training for the following dates is available [here](#).

- December 8, 2022: Coastal Plains RESA
- January 20, 2023: Oconee RESA
- January 26, 2023: Georgia State University
- February 9, 2023: Georgia State University
- March 9, 2023: Bibb County Professional Learning Center
- March 16, 2023: Pioneer RESA

If you have questions, please contact Barbara Ross at Barbara.ross@doe.k12.ga.us or Lynn Holland at lholland@doe.k12.ga.us.

FY23 GaDOE Legal Updates: School Psychologists

The Division for Special Education Services and Supports is hosting a technical assistance webinar for school psychologists titled, FY23 GaDOE Legal Updates: School Psychologists. Please forward this information to School Psychologists and/or appropriate personnel in your Local Educational Agency (LEA).

Jamila Pollard, Legal Office/Senior Program Manager, will deliver updates regarding current dispute resolution data in Georgia and discuss some common IDEA violations found in formal state complaints and due process hearings. The webinar will place an emphasis on IDEA violations that are related to the work of school psychologists. This webinar will occur virtually on January 19, 2023 from 1:00-2:30 p.m.

FY23 GaDOE Legal Updates: School Psychologists Registration

For more information, please contact Alicia Mercer by email at amercer@doe.k12.ga.us.



People reviewing applications

Back to Basics Behavior Edition

Join us for a one-day professional learning opportunity that will assist both general education and special education teachers in addressing challenging behaviors within the classroom. Participants will explore the science of behavior, discussing developmental norms, static and alterable variables, the function of behavior, and avoiding a power struggle. Presenters will share research on the power of relationship-building and empowerment and dive into Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) and High Leverage Practices (HLP) for Behavior. There will be five locations around the state. The locations and dates are listed below:

- December 5 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.: Northwest GA RESA Georgia Highlands College, 3167 Cedartown Hwy, Rome, GA 30161
- January 24 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.: Coastal Plains RESA, 245 N Robinson, Lenox, GA 31637
- January 30 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.: East GA GLRS, 4683 Augusta HWY S.E., Dearing, GA 30808
- February 1 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.: First District RESA, 201 W Lee St, Brooklet, GA 30415
- February 8 from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.: Thompson-Upson Fin Art Center, 268 Knight Trail Thomaston, GA 30286

Back to Basics Behavior Edition Registration



People reviewing feedback

SPP/APR Share Your Voice! Stakeholder Feedback Sessions

The SPP/APR is a report submitted annually to the federal government to examine the progress and status of Georgia in implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for students with disabilities. The input of Georgia's stakeholders in this process is critical!

Families, educators, and students with disabilities are invited to register and participate in one of the stakeholder input sessions below to review the current SPP/APR Indicator data including the areas of graduation, dropout, assessment, and environment. Participants will have the opportunity to provide input on possible baseline and target changes as indicated by the data.

-Session 2: December 7 from 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

-Session 3: December 7 from 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

-Session 4: December 9 from 8:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

[SPP/APR Share Your Voice! Stakeholder Feedback Sessions Registration](#)
[Spanish language SPP/APR Stakeholder flyer](#)

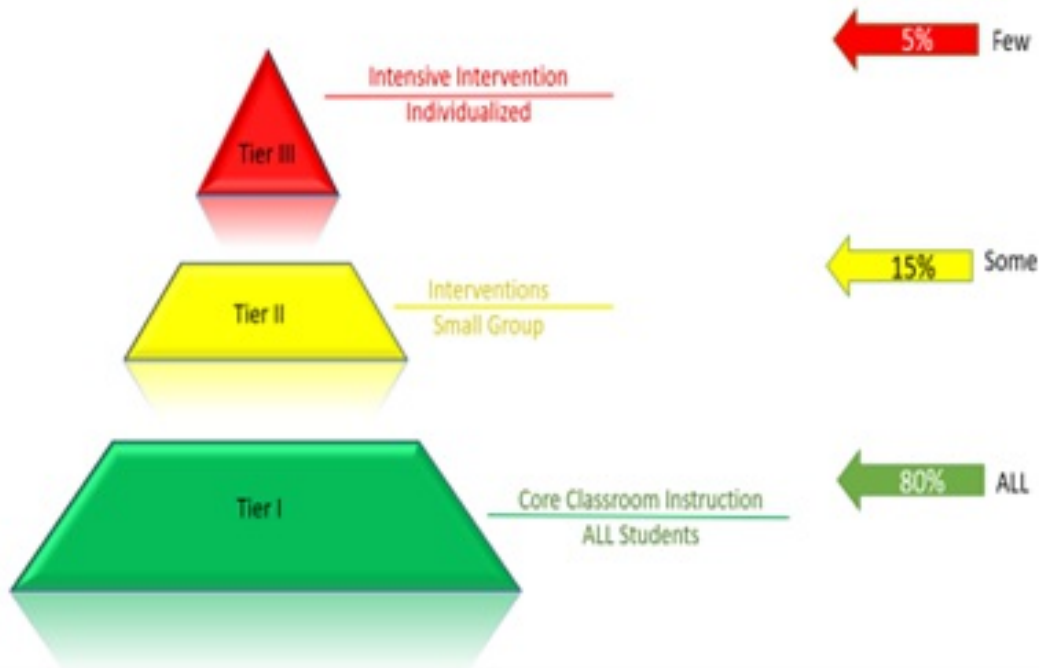


People in a group giving high fives

MTSS Snapshot: What happens when an intervention is not implemented with fidelity?

As we have reflected on the fidelity of the implementation of our interventions at Tiers II and III, it is important to address the following:

- Understand how to effectively implement the evidence-based intervention, as it is intended
- Gather and organize the resources necessary for implementation (i.e. professional learning for all staff involved, teacher and student resources, observation tools, schedule that allows for exact implementation, time for teams to analyze data and determine next steps, etc.)
- Adhere to the implementation procedures of the intervention



As we continue to consider these critical actions we must also:

- Establish an implementation team to analyze data and to problem-solve barriers with implementation
- Provide initial and ongoing professional learning and support for the implementation of the intervention, based on data
- Use existing guidelines or create explicit guidelines for the implementation process
- Monitor ongoing implementation fidelity through collecting and analyzing student and staff data and determining next steps, Implementing with Fidelity

Collecting ongoing data to determine the effectiveness of these interventions is extremely important. Using existing data reports provided with computerized interventions is very important. This data is used to determine if students are progressing through the intervention as expected. This data may also help to determine whether additional professional learning may be needed for the staff (leaders, teachers and/or paras) implementing the intervention. Effective implementation of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) also focuses on building a solid infrastructure, Infrastructure, for the intervention that provides supports for staff, students and parents. As we continue to reiterate the importance of fidelity, it is important to note that poor fidelity of implementation significantly impacts the reliability of our progress monitoring data and ultimately negatively impacts the academic and/or behavioral progress of our students. We cannot say an intervention did not work, if we did not implement it as prescribed. Hence, a poorly implemented program/intervention can lead to failure as easily as a poorly designed one, IRIS | Page 1: Fidelity of Implementation.

To help support districts and schools with their work of ensuring fidelity of implementation of effective Tier II and Tier III interventions, the Georgia Department of Education is offering a free online application, [Georgia Online MTSS/SST \(GO-MTSS/SST\)](#). It is designed to help districts and schools facilitate data-based decision making within a tiered system of supports for students. Districts and schools can use this tool to help the Student Support Team (SST) adhere to the Student Support Team (SST) State Board rule by providing a format to record and to maintain information and documentation of a student's response to intervention.

For additional information on GO-MTSS/SST, contact Dr. Rondalyn Pinkney at RPinkney@doe.k12.ga.us, and feel free to reach out to the MTSS regional coaches or Karen Suddeth, ksuddeth@doe.k12.ga.us to learn more.

Office of Federal Programs, Division for Special Education

CONTACT INFORMATION

Wina Low
State Director
Division for Special Education Services and Supports
Cell Phone: 470.316.8636
Email: wlow@doe.k12.ga.us


[@GaDOEsped](https://twitter.com/GaDOEsped)

©2022 Georgia Department of Education | 1562 Twin Towers East 205 Jesse Hill Jr. Dr., SE
Atlanta, Georgia

[Web Version](#)

[Preferences](#)

[Forward](#)

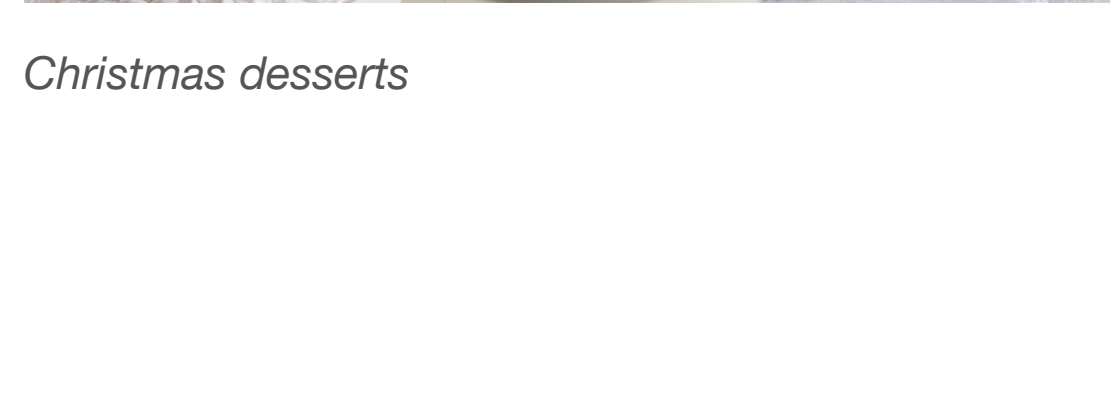
[Unsubscribe](#)

Powered by [Mad Mimi®](#)
A GoDaddy® company

Federal Programs

December 9, 2022 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education



Christmas desserts

Directors,

The *Polar Express* is a much-loved holiday movie enjoyed by adults and children. If you are like me, I always have plans to enjoy the holiday excitement with traditions like watching the *Polar Express* yet at times I feel like I am being chased by a train with the holiday frenzy. Our lives are fast-paced, and we often really forget that it is not about the perfect decorations or finding just one more gift. Time with family and friends should transcend the other competitors for our time yet that is easier said than done. More than 40 years ago, my mother and I started a tradition of making candy and assorted treats together to share for the holidays. We really didn't start small but over time it got bigger and bigger. I will say there were years that I would have rather been watching a holiday movie with a cup of hot chocolate, but candy making called. My mother was an excellent cook and loved to share her cooking and baking. Clearly, feeding people was a love language for her. I also recognize that I am just like my mother. Our candy and treat operation took most of a weekend every December, typically the second weekend. As my children got older and work busier, I often thought why are we making all this candy to give away? I guess obligation was what I felt at times rather than joy during the candy making weekend. During our glory days, we probably made 3000-4000 pieces of candy and assorted baked goods to share. We even roped my grandmother and daughter into helping roll peanut butter balls and wrap chocolate covered cherries. I might have even been guilty of thinking that one day I would just stop the madness with making candy at the holidays. You probably know how this story ends. As my mother got older, most of the work was up to me. She could not stand the thought of changing the candy making tradition. Even when she was in assisted living the last few years, I would make the candy and she would help roll the candy in getting ready to dip in chocolate. One year I dared to suggest maybe it would be okay to cut back, but my mother assured me that everyone expected that we would make Christmas candy especially my nephew, Judson. Although my mother has been gone now for five years, I have not let her down yet. One way or the other, the candy kitchen has stayed operational. Clearly, this candy factory was never meant to be a job for just one person so I have recruited help as needed. Michael complains but he is a really good roller for the peanut butter balls. Last year, I had help from our granddaughters, Annabelle and Josie. For many years, Ali was a chief confectioner, but she lives in Pennsylvania now, so we still make candy together but have to share the adventure virtually with Ali making candy in her kitchen while I do the same in mine. As you may have guessed by now, this weekend is candy making weekend. Although it is long hours and hard work, I would not want it any other way. Some traditions are meant to last. I am honored to serve as the keeper for now knowing candy will still be made for many years to come.

The American Printing House Annual Census for the Blind opens on January 2, 2023. Additional details are in the newsletter below. A major change this year is that eye reports for students meeting the definition of blindness have been waived for the 2023 Federal Quota Census. Please ensure all students meeting the criteria are registered. Student registration can be accessed through the link. GIMC student registration and online ordering system webpage.

High-Cost Fund Grant and Residential and Reintegration Services Grant both open for applications on January 1st. Please reach out to the budget team with any questions.

Join me in welcoming our new director in the spotlight, Shawn Larkin. Shawn is the Special Education Director in Seminole County Schools. He brings experience as a director from serving in the same role in Florida for 15 years. We are so glad to have you in Georgia supporting students with disabilities.

Our staff spotlight is Tracy Barber Jones. Tracy is new to the division but not new to this work. Tracy has served as a parent mentor in South Georgia and led teams called C.A.F.E.'s to bring parents, educators and community partners together. We are so happy to have Tracy on our team!



Gingerbread house

For many of you, next week will be the last week of school before the holidays. Please remember the Director's Webinar for December is Tuesday beginning at 1:00 p.m.

The last email blast for 2022 will be next Friday, December 16. We will send out the first email blast for 2023 on Friday, January 6.

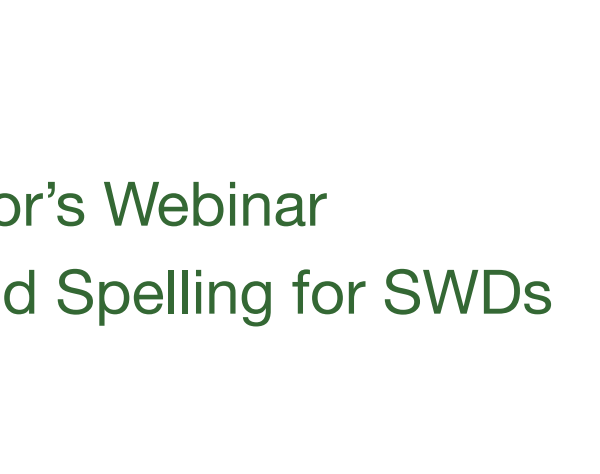
As you plan your activities for this weekend and the next in leading up to the holidays, take time to enjoy the season. Continue traditions or start a new one! If you need me, I will be making candy, cookies, cakes and pies. Keep the holiday feeling alive all year.

Thanks for all you do each day for students with disabilities. I am grateful for each of you.

Keeping Students First,
Wina

Special Education Events & Due Dates

Please review the information below and the Due Dates Calendar for deadlines and key dates.



Professional Learning Events

Professional Learning Events

December 13 at 1:00 p.m. – Special Education Director's Webinar
December 14 at 3:00 p.m. – Multisensory Learning and Spelling for SWDs

Reminders

December 15, 2022 – Student Record - Data Cleanse -Closes (Located in the Data Collections)

American Printing House (APH) Annual Census for the Blind

The annual APH Census for the Blind opens on January 2, 2023. Please share this critical information with staff responsible for registering blind students for the annual quota census. Please note this important change: *Eye reports for students who meet the definition of blindness (MDF) and doctor's notes for students that function at the definition of blindness (FDB) have been waived for the 2023 Federal Quota Census.*

If you believe the student qualifies, register through the APH census. The student count will begin the first Monday in January. Records can be accessed through the GIMC student registration and online ordering system webpage.

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

The Georgia High-Cost Fund Grant and Georgia Residential & Reintegration Services Grant submission period opens January 1, 2023. The updated resources for the Georgia High-Cost Fund Grant and Residential & Reintegration Services Grant can be accessed on the Budgets, Grants and Consolidated Application webpage. The deadline for the submission of these grants is February 15th. Don't hesitate to contact your budget liaison if you have any additional questions.

New Director Spotlight: Shawn Larkin

GaDOE's Special Education Services and Supports Division is excited to feature Shawn Larkin for our New Director Spotlight this week.

Shawn Larkin is the Special Education Director for Seminole County Schools and has been in the field of education for 30+ years. Mr. Larkin, while in Florida, spent eight years as a teacher for students with emotional disturbances, three years as a teacher for low cognitive students on supportive employment, four years as an Assistant Principal, and 15 years as the Director of Special Education. Here in the state of Georgia, Mr. Larkin has also served one- and one-half years as the Director of Student Services.

While serving in a previous district, Mr. Larkin experienced being involved in a detailed Due Process, which lasted close to five years. The magnitude of that process led to more focus in the areas of provision of services for students with disabilities, as well as the use of updated data to drive the present levels of performance and goals. Mr. Larkin also placed more focus on Risk Management and Special Education Law.

When not working on all things Special Education, Mr. Larkin likes to focus on family and time outdoors, especially being at the beach.

District Spotlight: Marietta City Schools

Marietta City Schools, as part of the New Teacher Induction Initiative with Metro West GLRS, kicked off their new year with SENTRA (Special Education New Teacher Retention Academy). They have two amazing coaches - Tasha Bowen and Alexandra Foster. Beverly Maxwell, Metro West GLRS Program Consultant/Coach, works with their coaches to provide professional learning and technical support. The teachers love the informal gathering time at the beginning of each session, where dinner is provided.

During this time, they get to connect with one another and the MCS SENTRA coaches. Teachers love that the avatar lab is individualized and report that the content is always timely. The coaching sessions attached to each content day has been their favorite part. They also received instructional support materials and were giddy to unpack them in their respective classrooms.



Tracy Barber Jones, Education Program Specialist, GaDOE Division of Special Education Services and Supports

GaDOE Staff Highlight: Tracy Barber Jones

GaDOE's Special Education Services and Supports Division is excited to feature Tracy Barber Jones for our GaDOE Staff Spotlight this week.

Tracy has worked for Georgia families and students for 18 years. She currently works as an Education Program Specialist within the Division of Special Education Supports and Services/Outreach Unit. Her role is to provide supports to districts and families.

Some of Tracy's greatest moments were as a parent mentor. She had the opportunity to work with five districts in southwest Georgia and assist them in bringing together teams to focus on educational issues that impact student achievement, graduation, and post-school outcomes. These teams were called C.A.F.E.s (Circle of Adults Focusing on Education). The outcomes that derived from bringing together parents, educators, and other community partners to focus on identified issues and pulling together to solve those issues always gave her a sense of accomplishment and pride. If she can make an impact in the lives of a few students or a few parents, her heart is content.

Tracy meets no strangers! She is very outgoing and loves learning about others. She has a wonderful husband who is a unit manager at a medium security prison and a daughter who is a crisis counselor. They are a family of service leaders. They work hard to make lives better for others. They also have an adorable Maltese named Colby.

Practice Pointers – USED Guidance on Discipline: Question C-6



Arrows

QUESTION C-6: ARE INFORMAL REMOVALS, SUCH AS ADMINISTRATIVELY SHORTENED SCHOOL DAYS, CONSIDERED A SCHOOL DAY WHEN CALCULATING A DISCIPLINARY CHANGE IN PLACEMENT?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) implementing regulations define school day as any day, including a partial day, that children attend school for instructional purposes. Additionally, school day has the same meaning for all children in school, including both those with and without disabilities. 34 C.F.R. § 300.11(c). In the discipline context, administratively shortened school days occur when a child's school day is reduced solely by school personnel, rather than the child's individualized education program (IEP) Team, in response to the child's behavior. In general, the use of informal removals to address a child's behavior, if implemented repeatedly throughout the school year, could constitute a disciplinary removal from the current placement. Therefore, the discipline procedures in 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.530 through 300.536 would generally apply unless all three of the following factors are met: (1) the child is afforded the opportunity to continue to appropriately participate in the general curriculum; (2) the child continues to receive the services specified on the child's IEP; and (3) the child continues to participate with nondisabled children to the extent they would have in their current placement. 71 Fed. Reg. 46715 (Aug. 14, 2006).

In general, a school day for a child with a disability should not be longer or shorter than a school day for children without disabilities. However, if a child's IEP Team determines a child needs a longer or shorter school day in order to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE), then appropriate modifications should be incorporated into the IEP by the child's IEP Team to ensure that the child continues to receive a FAPE. These modifications must be based on the unique needs of the child, such as when the nature or severity of the child's disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily and a shortened school day is warranted. This determination would be made by the child's IEP Team that may include, when appropriate, the child's medical provider or other treatment specialists. In addition, a practice of shortening a child's school day as a disciplinary measure could be considered denial of a FAPE if the child's IEP Team does not also consider other options such as additional or different services and supports that could enable a child to remain in school for the full school day.

For more information, please see the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) guidance found in Questions and Answers: Addressing the Needs of Children with Disabilities and IDEA's Discipline Provisions as revised July 19, 2022.



December 16, 2022 Email Blast

Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education



Santa Claus in a flying sleigh with reindeer

Directors,

We wait and wait and finally it is here! The long-anticipated holiday break has arrived. Such a great feeling when the work is paused for a couple of weeks allowing for time with family and friends. Everyone has their own special way of celebrating. Michael and I already have family from Texas visiting this weekend. My nephew and his family are always so faithful to visit during the holidays. Next Thursday, we will fly to Salt Lake City to see Christopher, Cari, Annabelle and Josie. Always exciting to be with the grandchildren. We will return home on December 26 to spend the week after Christmas with Ali and Chris. The next two weeks will be super busy, but I wouldn't want it any other way. If you are wondering, the candy did get made last weekend along with some cookies, pies and a cake. Several more confections are still to come as everyone should have their favorite treats during the holidays.



Even our staff can have a little holiday fun! There were reindeer games as well as the best sweater contest. Take time for each other. Slow down, sleep late, enjoy all the candy and confections you want.

Enjoy your family and celebrate together. These days are precious.

As part of our GaDOE data modernization initiative, all applications/data servers are migrating to the Microsoft Azure Cloud. The move to production/live environment is planned for 12/20 – 12/22. During this time, applications will be down and not be accessible for end users in the school districts. This includes ALL Special Education applications (SE Dashboard, CCEIS, Dispute Resolution, GLRS Project Tracker, GNETS Strategic Plan, Governor’s Reimbursement) in the GaDOE portal and GOIEP, MTSS/SST and PBIS in SLDS platform. Please let us know if there are any concerns.

Please read the recent resolution agreement with Fairfax Public Schools in Virginia due to an OCR investigation. The resolution, released publicly on November 30, 2022, ensures steps are taken to guarantee students with disabilities receive educational services, including compensatory services, resulting for the COVID-19 pandemic. Although this resolution only applies to Fairfax County, the concern is how it may impact other SEAs and LEAs. Please be proactive in addressing the needs of students. [U.S. Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights Announces Resolution of Investigation into Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia, Related to the Needs of Students with Disabilities During the COVID-19 Pandemic | U.S. Department of Education](#)

The Georgia Department of Education requests stakeholder feedback on proposed Special Education State Board of Education rule changes for the following:

160-4-7-.18 GRANTS FOR SERVICES

- Grants for Services Original
- Grants for Services Redline
- Synopsis for Grants for Services

160-4-7-.03 CHILD FIND PROCEDURES

- Child Find Procedures Original
- Child Find Redline
- Synopsis for Child Find

160-4-7-.16 GEORGIA LEARNING RESOURCES SYSTEM (GLRS)

- GLRS Original
- GLRS Redline
- Synopsis for GLRS

Stakeholders may submit feedback to Wina Low, State Special Education Director, at wlow@doe.k12.ga.us or Amber McCollum, Senior Program Manager, at amccollum@doe.k12.ga.us by January 10, 2023. Parent to Parent of Georgia will also be hosting virtual meetings for stakeholders in addition to written submission of comments. Virtual feedback sessions will be posted on the Parent to Parent of Georgia website as well as the Division for Special Education Supports and Services webpage.

Valerie C. Williams, director of the Office of Special Education Programs, introduced a blog series that will explain topics of interest related to the discipline and behavior guidance package released by her office this past summer. The blog series will expound on topics such as alternatives to exclusionary discipline, informal removals, discipline disparities, and behavior as part of a free appropriate public education. The series will also feature relevant resources for stakeholders to encourage a shift to address challenging behavior proactively, positively and preventatively.

The next Friday email blast will be on January 6, 2023.



A snowman

Our staff spotlight is shining brightly on Crystal Callaway this week. Crystal, grateful to have you on our team.

Our new director highlight is Brandi Hendrix from Treutlen County Schools. Brandi learned early in her career to listen to her students and allow the student to have ownership in their learning. Wise advice. Thank you, Brandi, for all you do for students with disabilities.

Our district highlight this week is from Clayton County Schools. Read how they are partnering with the Metro West GLRS Team on an initiative to support and retain new teachers.

Hope the holiday magic finds you this season. Reflect and remember those special times waiting for Santa. You are certainly all on the “nice” list to me!

Just remember, you are loved and appreciated. Thank you for all you do for students with disabilities. Have the happiest of holidays!

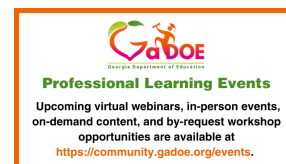
Keeping Students First,
Wina

Special Education Events & Due Dates

Please review the information below and the Due Dates Calendar for deadlines and key dates.

Professional Learning Events

January 4 at 3:30 p.m. – Significant Cognitive



*Professional Learning
Events*

Reminders

January 1 – High-Cost Grant Applications Available – Submitted to Budget Liaison using Portal email

January 1 – Grant for Residential and Reintegration Services Grant Applications Available - Submitted to Budget Liaison using Portal email

January 4 – American Printing House (APH) Census Opens - Submitted via GIMC website direct link

Annual Event & Cohort Graduation Rate Chart

The Annual Event and Cohort Graduation Rate Chart for FY22 can be accessed at the link below. Numbers below 15 are redacted in the chart per confidentiality requirements. The Annual Event rate does not include students who participated in the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) as regular graduates per the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

Annual Event and Cohort Graduation Rate Chart for FY22

If you have any questions, please contact Dawn Kempdkemp@doe.k12.ga.us, Dominique Donaldson Dominique.Donaldson@doe.k12.ga.us, or Linda Castellanos lcastellanos@doe.k12.ga.us.

New Director Spotlight: Brandi Hendrix

GaDOE's Special Education Services and Supports Division is excited to feature Brandi Hendrix for our New Director Spotlight this week.

Brandi Hendrix is the Special Education Director for Treutlen County Schools and has been in the field of education for 23 years. Ms. Hendrix graduated from Georgia Southern University with a degree in Secondary Education, Social Science, and began her teaching career at Statesboro High School. While there, Ms. Hendrix taught a variety of history courses, including inclusion classes, coached basketball, cheerleading, sponsored the Y-Club, earned her Master's in School Psychology, and completed course work in administration.



*Brandi Hendrix,
Special Education
Director, Treutlen
County Schools.*

In 2006, Ms. Hendrix began teaching at Claxton High School where she taught

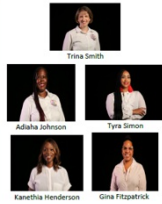
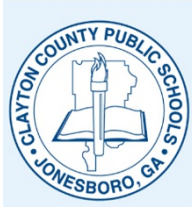
both inclusion and Honors/AP courses, sponsored the National History Club, coached cheerleading, earned her Specialist Degree in Curriculum and Instruction, as well as served as an Instructional Coach during her last two years. In 2014, Ms. Hendrix took a position with Bryan County Schools as the CTAE Director for five years and as the Secondary Curriculum Coordinator. After four years Ms. Hendrix became the Assistant Principal at Bryan County High School and served as the Special Education Administrator.

Reflecting on her teaching experiences, Ms. Hendrix recalls a situation in her second year of teaching that had a major impact on her philosophy as an educator. At the time, Ms. Hendrix was teaching an inclusion class and recalls a student who was struggling to focus and pass assessments. Having to constantly have the student put away his headphones while doing classwork, one day Ms. Hendrix asked the student why he felt that he needed to listen to music while working. It was during that conversation that the student shared that he was able to focus better when he listened to music, specifically, Motown. From that conversation, Ms. Hendrix began to research the impact of music on students with ADHD and once she discovered the findings, she shared it with her administrator, who gave permission for the student to listen to music within the classroom. Ms. Hendrix shared, "Once we saw his improvement, I purchased a CD player and CDs to use for the entire class. This experience taught me several important lessons: Listen to your students, do not be afraid to try new things, and give students ownership in their learning."

During the 2000-2021 school year, Ms. Hendrix began working for Treutlen County Schools as the Director of Accountability and when the Special Education Director retired at the end of her first year, she became the Exceptional Student Services Director and is currently serving in her second year in that role.

Ms. Hendrix has been happily married to Patrick Hendrix for 22 years and they have three amazing boys, eleven-year-old Caden, nine-year-old Jase, and eight-year-old Zain. Family time is spent supporting their love of sports through travel and recreation teams. Though seeming to always have a busy schedule, Sundays are reserved for church and family movie nights. Each year, the Hendrixes vacation on Anna Maria Island, Florida, for the beach is Ms. Hendrix's favorite vacation spot. In addition to spending time with family, Ms. Hendrix also enjoys reading and gardening.

District Spotlight: Clayton County Schools

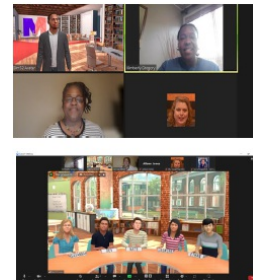


Clayton County Schools logo and the Clayton County PL team for New Teacher Academy

Clayton County Schools is in year 2 of the New Teacher Induction Initiative with Metro West GLRS. This school year they have two awesome District Coaches - Kanethia Henderson and Gina Fitzpatrick. They are working hand-in-hand with Kimberly Gregory, Metro West GLRS Program Specialist/Coach, to support and retain new teachers. Teachers attended a summer kickoff where Clayton County provided two full

professional learning days.

The New Teacher Induction Academy is conducted virtually in the evenings with their teachers monthly. Teachers learn about HLPs and IEPs, while demonstrating their knowledge in joint avatar sessions. Teachers were initially apprehensive when entering the lab, but once in the lab, they say that it is a neat experience, and they enjoy it. During the winter, the team will be engaged in individualized coaching sessions with participants. The team hopes to expand knowledge and capacity around HLPs by training district SDI coaches and lead teachers.



Crystal Callaway, Program Specialist, GaDOE Division of Special Education Services and Supports

GaDOE Staff Highlight: Crystal Callaway

GaDOE's Special Education Services and Supports Division is excited to feature Crystal Callaway for our GaDOE Staff Spotlight this week.

Crystal has worked in the field of education for 37 years. She currently works as a Program Specialist in the Dispute Resolution unit.

Crystal previously worked as a district liaison in multiple counties and was the contact person for the Georgia Alternate Assessment, collaborating with the Office of Assessment and Accountability. She ensured that teachers who instructed students with significant cognitive disabilities had guidance and resources available for them.

Crystal loves old cars, the performing arts, and traveling to other countries to learn about the people and how to cook their food. Her passion for planning events came from helping her grandmother do the same as a child. Crystal has

two adult children and two grand dogs.

Practice Pointers – USED Guidance on Discipline: Question C-7

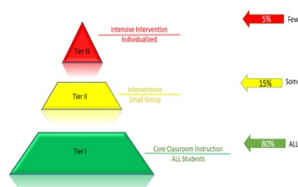


Arrows

QUESTION C-7: IS AN IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION CONSIDERED A SCHOOL DAY THAT MUST BE COUNTED WHEN DETERMINING WHETHER A REMOVAL CONSTITUTES A CHANGE OF PLACEMENT?

It depends. It has been the United States Department of Education (USED) longstanding interpretation that an in-school suspension generally would be considered part of the days of suspension unless the child: (1) is afforded the opportunity to continue to appropriately participate in the general curriculum; (2) continues to receive the services specified on the child's individualized education program (IEP); and (3) continues to participate with nondisabled children to the extent they would have in the child's current placement. 71 Fed. Reg. 46715 (Aug. 14, 2006). It is important to recognize that even if all three of these factors are met, an in-school suspension still removes the child from the educational placement determined to be appropriate by the child's placement team, and additional actions may need to be taken by the child's IEP Team. For example, the repeated use of in-school suspension may indicate that a child's IEP, or the implementation of the IEP, does not appropriately address their behavioral needs. Therefore, the child's IEP Team should consider whether additional positive behavioral interventions and supports or other strategies would assist the child in the current placement.

For more information, please see the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) guidance found in *Questions and Answers: Addressing the Needs of Children with Disabilities and IDEA's Discipline Provisions as revised July 19, 2022*.



MTSS Snapshot: What are some reflection questions as we refine our Tier I instruction next semester?

The foundation of an effective multi-tiered system of supports is ensuring that an effective Tier I program is meeting the needs of approximately 80% of its students. The foundation of this framework is Tier I, where 100% of students in Georgia receive their daily core instruction based on

the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) and a valid and reliable curriculum. Tier I is considered the most important level of support because it provides the foundation for successful teaching and learning in school.

As we end the semester and reflect the effectiveness of Tier I instruction of our multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS), there are some points that may need to continue to be discussed by leadership teams.

According to Dr. Tessie Rose Bailey, Principal Technical Advisor for the American Institutes for Research, “The greatest threat to MTSS implementation and school success is poor quality Tier I.” Furthermore, she states, “Districts and schools cannot buy or intervene their way out of poor-quality Tier I instruction.” A few points for leadership teams to discuss are below:

- How effective is implementation of the three-part lesson (opening, work period and closing)?
- What do student-centered closings look like throughout our building?
- How effective is vocabulary instruction during our lesson and are the students able to articulate the language of the standard?
- How is formative assessment data used to adjust instruction for all students, during the lesson?
- Is differentiated instruction being used to meet the diverse needs of all students?
- Is there evidence that entire grade-levels have a clear understanding of the standards?
- How effective is the use of [High-Leverage Practices | TeachingWorks](#) to support Tier I instruction?
- How effective are our collaborative planning sessions?

These are just a few reflection questions that could provide some rich conversation and help to determine additional professional learning needs to support Tier I instruction.

For additional information, feel free to reach out to the MTSS regional coaches or Karen Suddeth, ksuddeth@doe.k12.ga.us to learn more.