



February 9, 2024 Email Blast

## Office of Federal Programs - Division for Special Education



Directors,

Next Wednesday is Valentine's Day. I always look forward to this special day as it seems to brighten even the cold winter. In the words of Helen Keller, "The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart." Another favorite quote of mine is often attributed to A.A. Milne, "Winnie The Pooh, "Piglet: How do you spell love? Pooh: You don't spell love...you feel it." Hope you feel the love being sent your way!

*Happy Valentine's Day*

Our Federal Programs Conference will be February 13-14, 2024, at the Georgia International Convention Center. Please take advantage of the numerous offerings of professional learning.

Two sessions will be offered for the GAA 2.0 at the Federal Programs Conference - A Path to Success: Identifying Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities, with Anne Myers as the presenter, and Breaking Barriers: Enhancing Accessibility in Assessment, with Dr. Mary Nesbit-McBride leading the session.

The Georgia Sensory Assistance Project (GSAP) is our state's OSEP-funded

deafblind project, providing support to educators, providers, and families of children and youth with combined vision and hearing loss, ages birth to 21 years. We are required to submit an annual child count report and need your assistance! During February, we will send requests via email to teachers and administrators to review and update records for currently registered students. In addition, please contact us to register newly identified students with combined vision and hearing loss. GSAP is available to provide information, resources, consultation, and professional development to our students' education teams, including paraprofessionals who serve them. Please visit our webpage for more detailed information about child count, registering students, training opportunities, and GSAP supports available to education teams. If you have any questions or would like to discuss possible referrals, please email us at [gsap@uga.edu](mailto:gsap@uga.edu).

## GaDOE Portal Update

Applications within the MyGaDOE portal and SLDS will be undergoing maintenance starting on Friday, February 9 at 5 p.m. through Sunday, February 11. All applications will be available on Monday, February 12.



*Hearts spelling out LOVE*

Roosevelt Warm Springs is offering the Summer Grow program. To attend Summer Grow 2024, a student must be enrolled in a public school and have a 504 plan or IEP. Students that have graduated from high school and are no longer enrolled in a Georgia public school will not be eligible. Please see the full announcement in the eblast. The application deadline

is April 14.

Thank you for all you do. You are amazing dedicated leaders.

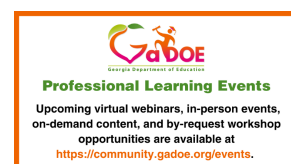
Be my Valentine!

Keeping students first,  
Wina

## Special Education Events & Due Dates

Please review the information below and the [Due Dates Calendar](#) for deadlines and key dates.

## Coming Up



*Professional Learning  
Events*

**February 21** at 10 a.m. Special Education and School

Administrator Academy: Best Practices from the Field for the School-based Administrator

**February 22** at 1 p.m. FY24 GaDOE Legal Updates: School Psychologists

**February 22** at 1:30 p.m. FY24 Special Education Student Record Errors and Impact of Information

## Reminders

**February 15** Post School Outcomes Opens for Viewing (FY 22-23 Exiters)

Located in the SE Applications Dashboard - APR Indicator 14

**February 15** Final Date to submit Grant for Residential and Reintegration

Services Application (Submitted to Budget Liaison using Portal email)

**February 15** Final Date to Submit High Cost Grant Application (Submitted via [www.gahcf.org](http://www.gahcf.org))

Visit [GaDOE Community](#) for a complete listing of GaDOE Professional Learning Events.



*Dubois Integrity Academy logo*

## New Director Spotlight: Taneka Eaton, Dubois Integrity Academy

GaDOE is excited to feature Taneka Eaton for our New Director Spotlight this week.

Taneka Eaton is the Special Education Director for Dubois Integrity Academy and has been in the field of education for 22 years. In 2001 as an interrelated special education teacher in a public high school, Ms. Eaton quickly realized that she wanted to ensure that students with special needs were not overlooked, neglected, or excluded because of their differences. Ms. Eaton shared, "I felt it was important for me to understand the different dynamics in elementary, middle, and high school because it seemed like gaps were never closing. My desire to learn and grow lead me to become a department chair, then consultative teacher, and now a special education director."

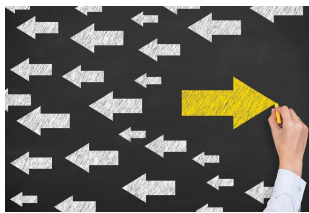
Dr. L. Washington and Ms. S. Lewis were both special education teachers when Ms. Eaton was in high school; the passion they had for their students and fulfillment they found in their work intrigued her. That, coupled with a visit to a small group class of students

with disabilities while in college, pulled at Ms. Eaton's heartstrings; there is no other group of students she'd rather work with.

Ms. Eaton is huge on memories and is constantly creating them with her family. They are avid readers who enjoy holiday cruises during Thanksgiving.



*Taneka Eaton, Special Education Director, Dubois Integrity Academy*



*Arrows*

## **Practice Pointers – Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team Excusals: General Education Teacher**

### **QUESTION C-3: MUST THE PUBLIC AGENCY RECEIVE CONSENT FROM A PARENT TO EXCUSE MULTIPLE GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IF AT LEAST ONE GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHER WILL ATTEND AN IEP TEAM MEETING?**

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) has emphasized in a Questions and Answers Document that under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the public agency must ensure that the IEP Team includes “[n]ot less than one [general] education teacher of the child (if the child is, or may be, participating in the [general] education environment) . . .” Neither the IDEA nor its implementing regulations require that an IEP Team include more than one general education teacher. Therefore, if an IEP Team includes more than one general education teacher of the child, the excusal provisions under the IDEA would not apply if at least one general education teacher will be in attendance at the IEP Team meeting.

### **QUESTION C-4: IF THE DESIGNATED GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHER IS EXCUSED FROM ATTENDING THE IEP TEAM MEETING, WOULD AN ALTERNATE GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHER BE REQUIRED TO ATTEND?**

If the public agency designates a particular general education teacher as the person who will participate in the IEP Team meeting pursuant to the regulation,

and that individual is excused from attending the meeting, consistent with the requirements in the IDEA regulations, the public agency would not be required to include a different general education teacher in the IEP Team meeting.

For more information, please see our [Special Education Rules Implementation Manual](#), our [IEP Resources](#), our [Parent Information Fact Sheets](#), and the [PROGRESS Center at American Institutes for Research / IEP Tip Sheet PLAAFPs](#).



*Trophies*

## **Awards of Excellence 2024**

The Division for Special Education Services and Supports is seeking to recognize high school seniors with disabilities who have had academic and/or extracurricular accomplishments. This is a great opportunity to spotlight the outstanding achievement of a senior in your school district, as well as honor the hard work and supports of the family, teachers and staff.

A review of all applications will be completed by the Georgia Department of Education, Division for Special Education Services and Support staff. There will be one winner from each GLRS region, and we will be sure to share the winner's information with district leadership.

There will be a virtual awards ceremony this year on May 3, 2024 at 9 a.m. and it will feature a message from our State Superintendent. Please complete the Awards of Excellence 2024 no later than Friday March 24, 2024.

For questions contact Paula Gumpman at [pgumpman@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:pgumpman@doe.k12.ga.us) or Lynn Holland at [lholland@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:lholland@doe.k12.ga.us).

## **Technical Assistance Webinar: FY24 GaDOE Legal Updates: School Psychologists**

The Division for Special Education Services and Supports is hosting a Technical Assistance online webinar for School Psychologists titled, FY24 GaDOE Legal Updates: School Psychologists.

Jamila Pollard, Legal Officer/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 February 22, 2024 from 1:00-2:30 pm.

For more information, please contact Alicia Mercer by email at [amercer@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:amercer@doe.k12.ga.us).

FY24 GaDOE Legal Updates: School Psychologists Registration

## **Office of Teaching and Learning: February 1, 2024 Right Now Resources**

Happy February to all of our fabulous Instructional Leaders! It was great to be with some of you in Athens at Winter GAEL. Join me in officially welcoming Felica Purdy in the official role of Director of Curriculum and Instruction. Our team continues to be ready to serve and support. We will be out on the road providing updates and information to support all aspects of Teaching and Learning - come join us at Heart of GA RESA on March 12 or at Oconee RESA on March 22. Visit their respective websites for additional information and registration.

Please review the February 1, 2024 Right Now Resources newsletter for Teaching and Learning Updates, or subscribe on the Curriculum and Instruction webpage to have them delivered straight to your inbox. You are in a place to purposefully impact teaching and learning in your districts, schools and classrooms.

As always, our teaching and learning team is here to serve and support. Continue to reach out as needed and thank you for your continued commitment to Georgia students and educators.

## **\$5,000 Scholarship Opportunity for Deaf or Hard of Hearing High School Seniors**

Quota Atlanta offers the John T. Wheeler Memorial \$5,000 Scholarship to Georgia Deaf or Hard of Hearing High School Seniors who have a diagnosis of moderate to profound hearing loss in both ears. Applicants must be an American citizen, plan to attend college in the upcoming school year, excel academically and be active in extra-curricular activities including, but not limited to, school clubs, community organizations, employment and volunteering. For more information, please reach out to Sarah Moore at [SarahHouseMoore@gmail.com](mailto:SarahHouseMoore@gmail.com).

Completed applications should be mailed as one packet to:  
Sarah Moore, Quota Atlanta, Inc. 6465 Bridgewood Valley Road Sandy Springs,  
GA 30328, or emailed to [SarahHouseMoore@gmail.com](mailto:SarahHouseMoore@gmail.com). Applications must be  
postmarked or emailed by 5 p.m. on March 1.

The winning applicant will be notified on or before April 1.

Quota John T Wheeler Memorial Scholarship Application

## **Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA): Bud McCall Post-Secondary Vocational Rehabilitation Grant**

The Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) is pleased to announce the availability of the Bud McCall Post-Secondary Vocational Rehabilitation Grant, which allows up to \$17,725 to be awarded annually to eligible students with disabilities seeking post-secondary and other Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services.

Candidates for the grant must have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan. To be eligible, they also must have a permanent disability that results in a substantial impediment to employment and be eligible for GVRA services. To apply, visit the [GVRA website](#).

GVRA's announcement of the grant follows policy changes that removed the financial-needs assessment as a requirement for individuals with disabilities seeking post-secondary opportunities. The changes became effective on January 1. In addition to removing that barrier, GVRA increased the maximum grant amount to match funding offered through the Pell Grant. The Bud McCall Grant provides up to \$7,395 for tuition, \$9,430 for maintenance (room, board, and meals), and \$900 for books annually.

The Bud McCall Grant is named in memory of the first-born son of former State Representative Tom McCall and Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Services Board Member Jane McCall, whose love for others served as an inspiration to his family, friends, and the entire community.

## **SDI District Pilot Application**

Through a partnership with American Institutes for Research, the Instruction and Systemic Improvement unit began our Specially Designed Instruction professional learning series with the goal of increasing knowledge and building

awareness related to specially designed instruction. As we prepare to round out this year's activities with Cohort I, we are happy to announce the application window for participation in Cohort II is officially open!

The SDI Project partnership focus is on developing and implementing high-quality, specially designed instruction practices to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Through partnership with selected LEAs, the Georgia Department of Education through the Instruction and Systemic Improvement Unit, uses a comprehensive approach that includes supporting LEAs through professional learning, job-embedded training/coaching, implementation and sustainability planning.

The application deadline for submission is March 15. For additional information, please contact Yyanisha Bass Bonner at [Yyanisha.Bass@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:Yyanisha.Bass@doe.k12.ga.us) or Katherine Johnson at [Katherine.Johnson@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:Katherine.Johnson@doe.k12.ga.us).

SDI District Pilot Application

## **Important Budget Announcement: High-Cost Fund for Special Educations Services Grant and Grant for Residential & Reintegration Services**

The High-Cost Fund for Special Education Services Grant and Grant for Residential & Reintegration Services submission period opened January 1. The updated resources for the Georgia High-Cost Fund Grant and Residential & Reintegration Services Grant can be accessed online at the [GaDOE Competitive Grants webpage](#). The deadline for the submission of these grants is February 15. Don't hesitate to contact your budget liaison if you have any additional questions.

## **Important Budget Announcement: FY23 Maintenance of Effort Compliance Results Now Updated in the GaDOE Portal**

The FY23 Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Compliance results are now updated. The MOE results can be viewed in the GaDOE Portal by going to Special Education Programs > Special Education MOE. LEAs that do not meet compliance may take allowable exceptions, if applicable, to reduce effort. Please see the [Exceptions to MOE Requirement document](#). If your LEA determines there are applicable exceptions, please complete and return the



form to your Budget Specialist with supporting documentation by March 14, 2024. **This is the final deadline.** Reconciliations must take place before this deadline. Please begin the reconciliation process as soon as possible. This process can be time-consuming and may require the support of your Finance Office. If eligible exceptions are not determined, repayment may be required. Please note, that budget amendments will be delayed until MOE Compliance is met.



*Parent to Parent of Georgia  
logo*

## Parent to Parent February 2024 Trainings

### Webinar: Crossing the "Medical Bridge" Transition to Adult Healthcare for CYSHCN

Learn what health has to do with transition; who makes up the transition team and their roles,

how to incorporate health transition into a medical home, healthcare financing, legal issues and timelines.

Date: Thursday, February 15, 2024

Time: 12 p.m. - 1 p.m.

### Webinar: Cruzando el puente hacia la Edad Adulta

Este entrenamiento de dos horas de duración le enseñará como planificar una transición exitosa hacia la edad adulta, incluyendo temas como seguros médicos, actividades y alternativas para después de la escuela, guardia legal y muchos más.

Fecha: jueves, 15 de febrero de 2024

Hora: 12 p.m. - 1 p.m.

## Sign up for Summer Grow at Roosevelt Warm Springs

In order to attend Summer Grow 2024, a student has to be enrolled in a public school and have a 504 or IEP. Want to sign up a student? Please fill out the Summer Grow 2024 Application and email it to [RWS\\_Summer\\_GROW@gvs.ga.gov](mailto:RWS_Summer_GROW@gvs.ga.gov) by April 12.

SIGN UP FOR SUMMER GROW AT

# ROOSEVELT Warm Springs



## Criteria

- Pre-Ets Permission form
- Current IEP
- Enrollment in High School
- Independent in all activities of daily living
- Able to ambulate and navigate campus
- Able to self-monitor behavior

\*\*\*\*\*In order to attend Summer Grow 2024, a student has to be enrolled in a public school and have a 504 or IEP. Students that have graduated from high school and are no longer enrolled in a GA public school, will not be eligible.

## Dates

- June 3rd -6th (18 years and older)
- June 10th -13th (18 years and older)
- June 17th -20th (14-17 years)
- June 24th-27th (14-17 years)

Want to sign up a student? Send an email with application to the address below....

[RWS\\_Summer\\_GROW@gvs.ga.gov](mailto:RWS_Summer_GROW@gvs.ga.gov)

Find us on  
FB →



Deadline to sign up is April 12th! 706-542-9579 OR 706-620-0073

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