

State Advisory Panel for Special Education (SAP)

Minutes: May 3-4, 2018

Georgia Alternate Assessment 2.0 (GAA)

Presenter - Crystal Callaway, GADOE Program Specialist

GAA is designed to assess students with the most significant cognitive disabilities unable to participate in Georgia Milestones or End of Course assessments. IEP teams meet annually to decide on participation. GAA 1.0 was piloted in 2005-2006 school year; in 2016-2017 12,142 students were assessed using GAA. The GAA 1.0 uses a portfolio assessment; tasks are scored based on student progress.

GAA 2.0 will be piloted in May 2018 to measure 634 students in 34 districts. Statewide roll-out is planned for Spring 2019. GAA 2.0 is a structured portfolio assessment. Scores are based on student performance, not progress, and does not rely on teachers' documentation skills. Assessment aligns with instructional practices and statewide standards to assess and improve student achievement.

Panel recommends that the GADOE should provide information to families to learn about GAA. Approximately one percent (1%) of all Georgia students are expected to participate in GAA 2.0. Historically, GAA statewide participation has been about 1.4%. The students participating are disproportionately living in poverty and African American. GADOE Assessment website can be found at <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/default.aspx>

Dispute Resolution

Presenter - Paula Gibson, GADOE

Family Engagement:

- Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership
- State Advisory Panel for Special Education
- Parent 2 Parent of Georgia

Dispute Prevention:

- Procedural safeguards (parents' rights) distributed at district level.
- Special Education Help Desk for parents & districts: answers questions, provides information about dispute resolution process, discusses options for addressing concerns or disagreements about a student's special education program, etc. Help Desk can be reached at 404-657-9968, SPEDHelpDesk@doe.k12.ga.us
- IEP Facilitation: Can help IEP teams relieve pressure or anxiety associated with complex or controversial meetings & assist IEP teams who have had a history of difficult meetings. IEP facilitation process guides discussions, helps create agenda, form group norms, and encourages full participation of all IEP team members. During 2017-2018 school year, 20 schools participated in facilitated

IEP process. The GADOE received 60 requests for facilitation, and 49 meetings were held. More districts will be offering facilitated IEPs in 2018-2019.

Dispute Resolution:

- Mediation – voluntary process to resolve disagreements between parents & districts regarding any matter under IDEA & state special education rules. Results in a legally binding, written mediation agreement.
- Formal written complaints – can be submitted by anyone or any organization.
- Due process hearing requests – written document used to request formal hearing before an administrative law judge regarding any matter related to the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or provision of FAPE.
- Resolution sessions – meeting held between the parent & district after notice of a due process hearing request to resolve issues listed in request. The meeting is mandatory unless parties agree to not have the meeting or to use mediation instead.
- Formal State Complaints – Findings of noncompliance were most likely in the areas of Implementation of IEP; Development, review and revision of the IEP; FAPE; Personnel Qualifications; and Parent Participation.

SAP Feedback/ Discussion:

- It would be great if every parent who is about to go to his/her 1st IEP meeting could be assigned a veteran parent to help that parent (new to the IEP) through the process
- Districts could offer trainings or explanation on parents' rights, IEP process, etc.
- P2P offers a 2-hour video on parental rights
- There's a short, "abbreviated" explanation of the parental rights on the GADOE website
- Districts need training on parental safeguards.
- The department may want to consider IEP Facilitators who know ASL, speak other languages, etc.
- Questions/ information for future discussions: How many parents submitting a complaint have an attorney or an advocate? How many districts file suit?

Significant Disproportionality: Implementation of New Regulations

Presenter: Carol Seay, GADOE

Disproportionality exists when students in a racial or ethnic group are more likely to be identified as a student with a disability, identified as a student with a disability, placed in a more restrictive setting, and suspended or expelled at a higher rate –compared to students in other racial or ethnic groups.

Risk: How likely a certain outcome is to occur

Risk ratio: How the risk for one racial/ethnic group compares to the risk for all other racial/ethnic groups

Alternate risk ratio: Uses district level risk for racial/ethnic group in the numerator and the state level risk for the comparison group (mostly smaller districts)

To be identified as a “significant risk” the risk ratio needs to be above 3.0. A district must have a minimum of 10 students in the subgroup (numerator) and the denominator must be minimum of 30. The district must have a risk ratio of more than or equal to 3.0 for 3 consecutive years to be identified as disproportionate. Disproportionality data is collected to analyze placement setting, identification, and discipline, which includes in school and out of school suspensions.

U. S. Department of Education is considering delaying the required implementation of new regulations but in the meantime, Georgia is moving forward with implementation beginning July 2018.

Public Comments

There were 14 public comments submitted to the SAP. All were read to the SAP.

Committee Meetings

SAP Best Practices

- Consider having a parent to help mentor new parent SAP members
- Write District Number (congressional district) on SAP name tag
- Provide members with some preparation on agenda – background info or websites for people to read before the meeting
- How can we be most helpful? Going to look at other SAPs, especially on indicators that we want help on. What data would be meaningful to the Department of Education?
- Are there things in other states that we can look at that might inform SAP practice in Georgia?
- Please help advise on looking at SAP practices from other states.

Family Engagement

- Committee members will go through the public comments data and look for themes, trends, and geographical spread. How will we use this information to inform the process?
- Is there benefit to having somebody do the public comment in person? Individuals might be more likely to come if they thought their specific issue would be addressed.
- Emphasize importance of input
- People want to have their voices heard and have something done about it
- Transportation is biggest barrier for individuals to present in person
- Reach out to parent mentors in meeting area to increase participation of public comment
- Build list serv for public comments to create email blasts (with opt-out option)

Inter-Agency Collaboration

- The committee likes a report out time from all agency representatives. Committee recommends that this is added to the agenda at every meeting. The agency reports should also include upcoming events.
- Suggest Survey monkey additional questions to frontload, what is upcoming, etc. from each member
- New member orientation. Everyone can be involved in the new member orientation (Wednesday).
- Closing communication loops, commitment is to advising state (How are minutes shared and available?)
- Increase procedures on Robert's Rules of Order for meeting efficiency because of growing size of panel
- Discussion about how to get agency representation from Federally mandated partners. Dr. Smith-Dixon can contact agencies; chair can reach out to members who haven't been coming.

Flexibility and Accountability

- Received feedback from Dr. Smith-Dixon regarding committee recommendations from last mtg.
- Different members attend each mtg; may not need to be a standing committee

Annual Report

- Committees analyzed previous year's minutes regarding items to include in the annual report.

Certificates

- SAP thanks the members who finished serving their term including: Ganesh Nayak, Diana Cross, Beth Burns, Juliette, and Susan Moody

Miscellaneous Recommendations:

- The committee likes having GADOE staff to answer questions
- Consider a photo directory for SAP members