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DIVISIONS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES and SUPPORTS

DECEMBER 2008 DL UPDATE

Welcome

The Division for Special Education Supports is pleased to announce the addition of a new staff member, Elise Lynch, who will work as an education program specialist in the Professional Learning Unit. Formerly with the Florida Department of Education, Elise has a range of experiences in improving outcomes for students with disabilities through providing technical assistance and training to local districts. Her special interests are orthopedic impairments, OT/PT and other related services, standards development and secondary reform. Please join us in welcoming Elise to Georgia!

High School Course Numbers

In response to several recent questions regarding course numbering, we wanted to remind you that course numbers for current high school students are governed by two different board rules. Those students who were enrolled in high school for the first time prior to Fall 2008 are under IDA(2). First time 9th graders in Fall 2008 and those entering after that are under IDA(3). There are some differences in the approved course listings between these two rules.

Special education directors should be aware that the use of "90." to denote a non-credit special education course **should not be used for any student who was a first-time 9th grader this year**. There are still many options in the new IDA(3) rule for elective courses for students who need additional specially designed instruction to meet individual need outside the core courses. Likewise, the Access courses should be used **only** for the students who are first-time 9th graders this year and in subsequent years. All other students should follow the numbering system specified in IDA(2). The complete text of these rules can be found on the GADOE website at http://www.gadoe.org/pea_board.aspx?PageReq=PEABoardRules.

It is anticipated that proposed changes to the rules (including addition of courses) will be posted for public comment in mid-December. Be sure to review this information and submit any comments you may have. If you have specific concerns or questions, please contact Lynn Holland at lholland@doe.k12.ga.us or 404.657.9960.

Assessment Update

The upcoming holiday break is an opportune time to review accommodation and technology needs for students being assessed on the **CRCT/EOCT/GHSGT**. Reviewing the types of accommodations that are to be administered during these state mandated assessments and assuring that the appropriate accommodations are occurring in the classroom during instruction and classroom tests will assist in the application of the accommodations during the upcoming testing windows. If a student requires specific formats in order to participate in these assessments, such as the test in Kurzweil, the process for submitting requests should be reviewed to ensure that all information is provided and timelines are met. The process for requesting assessments in the alternate formats is found in the 2008-2009 Student Assessment Handbook, beginning on page 121. The list of contacts for each state mandated assessment is found on the Assessment website (www.gadoe.org/ci_testing.aspx) using the "Staff Contact" link.

Many systems are opting to review evidence for the **GAA** collected to date. Because the testing window for the **GAA** runs until March, 2009, it is not expected that teachers will have collected all pieces of evidence to complete an entry. Students on the **GAA** need multiple opportunities over a long period of time to show progress in skills to be documented through the portfolio. Therefore, the review of evidence collected to date should focus on ensuring that teachers and students are "on the right track" and are working toward progress of specific skills within the appropriate standard/elements.

Those reviewing the evidence might find the "Checklist for Teachers and Portfolio Reviewers" helpful. This checklist, found on page 51 of the 2008-2009 **GAA** Examiner's Manual, goes through important aspects related to the Entry Sheets and evidence collected for the **GAA** portfolio. The review of evidence collected for the **GAA** can happen many times within the assessment window, and changes can be made to ensure that the standard, activities, and student skill all align (link) to provide access to the curriculum and a way for the student to gain skills. It is possible to implement changes now that will provide the opportunity to collect and submit evidence which meets the needs of the student, more closely fits the requirements of the **GAA**, and still falls within the testing window.

Timelines FY 08

Recently, letters were mailed to systems with timeline data at 95% or below in one or more of the following areas: Initials, Reevaluations, and BCW transition. Systems were notified of the requirements for corrective action, which included developing strategies for improvement in your Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP). If your system has been asked to address timelines in your CLIP, we ask that you make those amendments by January 6, 2009. If you have any question regarding this process, please contact, Julie Moilanen at 404-657-9952, jmoilanen@doe.k12.ga or Harry Repsher at 404-657-9968, hrepsher@doe.k12.ga.us.

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) Elluminate Webinars

The GaDOE PBS unit has facilitated a number of webinars via Elluminate Live! to assist schools with behavioral issues. These sessions were designed to support district leadership with successful school-wide implementation of PBS and all have been recorded for continued access. Many of the topics were recommended by PBS District Coordinators and Coaches.

Below is the schedule of all PBS Elluminate Sessions for 2008. If your PBS school/district would like to suggest future support topics please contact: Justin Hill at juhill@doe.k12.ga.us

Training Date	Topic
Jan. 7, 2008	Developing and Implementing FBAs and BIPs
Jan. 28, 2008	Positive Behavior Supports Overview
Feb. 25, 2008	Using Data to Make Positive Changes in Behavior
Oct. 16, 2008	PBS Coaches: No Cost/Low Cost Incentives
Nov. 13, 2008	PBS Coaches: PBS on the Bus
Dec. 11, 2008	PBS Coaches: Developing PBS Lesson Plans

Please go to: <http://elluminate.gavirtualschool.org/doe/index.html> for access to recorded sessions. Passwords are no longer required.

GaDOE/G-CASE Spring Conference: Save the Date

The GaDOE and G-CASE will be co-sponsoring a Spring Conference on March 24 and March 25, 2008, in Athens, Georgia at the Classic Center. The GaDOE will be conducting all of the annual training related to data collection, budget, consolidated application, disproportionality, and targeted technical assistance for system improvement, as well as other informational sessions. Systems may want to consider the possibility of bringing a team to the conference so as to cover the various sessions. Information regarding hotel accommodations will be sent to special education directors as soon as it is available. The New Special Education Directors' Mentor Academy will be held on Monday, March 23, prior to the spring conference.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Specific Learning Disabilities

Processing issues: There is a common misunderstanding about students who are deaf or hard of hearing also having specific learning disabilities. There can be a processing issue concomitant with a hearing loss of any level, and students can be found eligible in both categories.

Exclusionary factors: A sensory impairment is an exclusionary factor when considering a learning disability in that the sensory impairment must be eliminated as the **cause** for the processing issues. The challenge is being able to identify with any amount of certainty the cause of the academic difficulty, particularly with reading. Learning disabilities are most frequently identified as a reading disability, and most reading disabilities are identified as insufficient phonological processing ability. A great majority of students who are deaf or hard of hearing lack the ability to take advantage of phonological information.

Response to Interventions: To identify the issues, we must have thorough response to intervention data for the student being assessed as well as for the other students in the class and in the school. We must consider the student's access to sufficient language at school and at home. With language access established, we must consider if the student has had access to solid Tier 1 instruction. Even if the student is significantly behind same age/grade hearing peers what is the student's RATE of progress compared to peers?

Interventions: Start with research-based interventions that are valid for hearing students and supplement these with interventions for deaf students that, while they may not have a strong research base, are theoretically sound and compliment (not replace) what the general population is receiving.

Placement: Individual special education placement decisions and related services are not determined by the category(ies) of eligibility. The label does not dictate where or how a student is served. The interdisciplinary team makes placement and intervention decisions based on the student's individual needs.

Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Update

When a student returns to a local school system from a DJJ facility, the receiving school should request all educational records from the DJJ facility. The parent/guardian receives a withdrawal form from DJJ that contains information on grades, coursework, etc. that should be shared with the receiving school. It is the receiving school's responsibility to request the records. Attached to this update, you will find a list of educational clerk's contact information for all DJJ facilities that may be used to obtain records.

A student's most current IEP must be followed when he or she returns from the DJJ. For example, a student has an IEP from a local school system and leaves to attend a DJJ facility. While at DJJ the student received an updated evaluation and/or a new IEP was developed. The student comes back to the local school system and the "old" IEP is still less than a year old from the local school system. The school system must use the most current IEP from DJJ because DJJ is considered a school system within Georgia. The IEP can be amended if necessary.

Enhancing Teacher Quality: Improving Recruitment and Retention of Highly Qualified and Effective Teachers

The effectiveness of a teacher is the number one factor in a student's academic success. Therefore, recruiting, training and retaining highly effective teachers are crucial factors to closing the achievement gaps and promoting learning for all students. As we look to the future and face a national shortage of teachers, it is critical for school administrators and educational leaders to look at ways to attract teachers for hard-to staff subjects as well as promote and support novice teachers within the first three years of their career through quality induction programs.

Moreover, addressing the shortage of special education, math and science teachers is paramount to providing quality instruction for students in both high-performing and high-poverty schools. Teacher leaders, businesses and administrators should support efforts for students to learn more about the opportunities in the career of teaching. Establishing partnerships between school districts and the local universities and colleges in their area will better prepare a teacher candidate as he/she transitions into the world of teaching.

Ms. Emily Jenette serves as an Education Program Specialist in the Division for Special Education Support. Her role in our federal State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) is to help local school districts and universities prepare, recruit and retain teachers in special education. The purpose of her position is to serve as a resource to you, your school districts, universities and other agencies. She hopes to support efforts to ensure an adequate number of highly qualified personnel are being employed as educators to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Please do not hesitate to contact her at: ejennette@doe.k12.ga.us or 404.463.0411, if she can be of service to you or your LEA. Feedback and suggestions are also welcomed.

Georgia Transition Website: www.gatransition.org

For those of you who are seeking ideas and information to assist in improving your data for Indicators 13 and 14 (Measurable Transition Goals and Post-secondary Outcome), our new website www.gatransition.org is a great resource. A joint effort in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Labor/Tools for Life, this site offers transition assessment information and a teacher discussion forum along with resources on how to start your own Interagency Transition Council. We encourage everyone with an Interagency Transition Council to add your council to the resource map and include your next meeting on the calendar of events.

We appreciate all of you who participated in the first live webinar on www.gatransition.org, and remind those who missed it that is archived on the site. Contact Lu Nations-Miller (bnations@doe.k12.ga.us) if you have questions regarding this website or any other issue related to transition

Georgia Project for Assistive Technology (GPAT) Update

GPAT initiated a statewide Consortium this year to support local school systems in building assistive technology teams and in developing local school capacity to deliver quality AT services to support students with disabilities. There are four statewide meetings scheduled for this year. The first meeting occurred on Nov. 14, 2008, with the others scheduled for Jan. 13, 2009, Feb. 24, 2009 and May 7, 2009.

The response for this initiative has been overwhelming! There are 85 systems participating in the consortium, hosted at seven Educational Training Centers across the state. Those centers include Dalton State College ETC, Albany State College ETC, University of Georgia ETC, Atlantic Armstrong State University ETC, West Georgia RESA ETC, Macon State College ETC and National Science Center ETC. The ETC centers host the use of the POLYCOM video conferencing network, so all the centers can be linked together for a portion of the day.

ATSTAR (Assistive Technology: Strategies, Tools, Accommodations, and Resources), an On-line Assistive Technology training has been provided for systems that participate in the Consortium. This program is an on-line curriculum that teaches multidisciplinary school-based teams and helps those teams make informed evidence based decisions about the assistive technology needs of students. GPAT is proud to announce that over 500 educators across the state are participating in this online curriculum. For further information, please contact Gina Gelinas at ggelinas@doe.k12.ga.us.

Dispute Resolution Tip: December 2008

The GaDOE is responsible for verifying that local systems comply with the requirement to offer the Early Resolution Session (ERS) within 15 days after a due process hearing is requested. In order to gather accurate data, the GaDOE will be sending the local system a copy of the form below from the legal department on the fifteenth day following the due process request. Please complete this form and return by fax to the Carol Cannon. The fields in **large bold print** will be populated at the GaDOE before the form is sent to the local system. Upon return receipt the GaDOE staff will enter the information provided into a database established for the purpose of tracking compliance with the ERS requirement.

EARLY RESOLUTION SESSION (ERS) INFORMATION

Attention: _____

School System: _____

Case Name:		
OSAH Docketing Number:		
Docketing Date:		
Was ERS waived by both parties	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
ERS Date:		
Was an agreement reached?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
If applicable, will agreement cancel complaint?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>
Will mediation be required?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>

The information contained in this form is necessary to comply with federal law regarding Due Process Hearing requests and the 15 day Early Resolution Session requirement. Please complete the applicable portions of the form, sign and date, and return to:

To:.....Legal Services
Attention:.....Carol Cannon
Fax Number:.....404-657-8376
~~No cover sheet is required~~

If you have questions or concerns regarding this matter please contact Debbie Gay at 404-657-7329 or Carol Cannon at 404-651-7705.

As we work to establish a statewide integrated system to track requests for formal complaints, mediations and due process hearings, a common student identifier must be used. Please be sure the individual who processes these requests for your system understands how to locate the student GTID number. It is important that the GTID number of the student is entered correctly on all forms submitted to the state for the purpose of making these requests related to disputes.

G-CASE Scholarships

Every year the Georgia Council of Administrators of Special Education (G-CASE) offers two scholarships to members of the Georgia Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). The Tony Molinaro Scholarship provides two \$1,000 scholarships for attending the National CEC conference, this year located in Seattle, Washington April 1 - 4, 2009. The Theodore Smith Scholarship provides two \$500 scholarships toward continuing education toward special education certification. This scholarship is available for teachers and paraprofessionals. Please go to the G-CASE website www.gcase.org and click on scholarships for more information and on-line applications. The dead line for applications is January 16, 2009.

Georgia CEC Seeking Nominations for 2009 Awards

The Georgia State Unit of the CEC is seeking nominations for the 2009 Awards. Georgia CEC seeks to honor those outstanding individuals or organizations whose work is consistent with CEC's mission: "CEC is an international community of educators who are the voice and vision of special and gifted education. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals with exceptionalities and their families through professional excellence and advocacy."

There will be seven categories for this year's awards:

- Special Education Teacher
- Co-Teaching Team **(New!)**
- Special Education Paraprofessional **(New!)**
- Leadership
- Business
- Contributor
- Student (Yes I Can!)

The awards will be presented at the 2009 Georgia CEC Conference to be held February 27-28, 2009 in Athens, Georgia. All nomination packets are due to the Georgia CEC Awards Committee by January 23, 2009. The nomination packet is attached at the back of this update.

The Traumatic Injury Update: A Primer on Spinal Cord Injury in Children and Youth

brought to you by the Children & Youth Subcommittee of the Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission

What is spinal cord injury?

A spinal cord injury (SCI) is caused by a jolt, blow or penetrating injury to the spinal cord. The severity of SCI depends upon the level of injury or the area of the spinal cord that was damaged. The most severe SCI's result in a total loss of control or functioning from the neck down and may require the use of a ventilator to breathe, while children with more moderate SCI's may retain partial use of their feet and/or legs.

How many children have spinal cord injuries?

It is estimated that more than 12,000 Americans sustain a SCI each year, however, because there have been no overall incidence studies of SCI in the United States since the 1970's it is not known if this number has changed. A review of Georgia's Central Registry data may indicate that the incidence of SCI has risen, given that each year more than 650 Georgians sustain a SCI, including 765 in 2006 (207 of which also sustained a TBI). This includes more than 130 children who sustained an SCI in Georgia in 2006.

What are the causes of spinal cord injuries?

In Georgia, children age 21 and younger are more likely to sustain an SCI from a motor vehicle accident rather than falls while for adults the reverse is true. Other causes of SCI are gunshot wounds, violence and assaults, industrial or work-related injuries, and sports-related injuries.

To learn more about spinal cord injuries in children we recommend:

- Improving school support for children with spinal cord injury:
<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/2008/09/30/109571/children-returning-to-school-with-spinal-injuries.html>
- *For Your Child's Needs: A Guide to Recovery After Traumatic Injury*, July, 2008:
www.bsitf.state.ga.us

SAT Online for Teachers (General and Special Education)

Please share this information with your teachers! SAT Online is a web-based tutorial the state of Georgia makes available to all students grades 9-12 and all high school teachers, counselors and administrators. SAT Online gives students access to six practice SAT tests and provides students with explanations of answers to all questions in the online course. Plus, the program allows students to work through 18 interactive lessons which cover the SAT math, critical reading, and writing sections. The lessons feature interactive activities and multimedia content. The lessons are accompanied with practice quizzes. All quizzes, essays and online tests in the program are computer scored, immediately. Students receive scores and detailed personalized feedback within seconds. Educators may receive student, class, and school reports to follow students' progress in SAT Online. The detailed reports provide educators with views at the item, quiz and test levels.

All of our high school teachers may establish SAT Online accounts as educators, by requesting a teacher activation code. To request a code, email satonlinecourseschool@collegeboard.com. Upon receipt of your code, go to www.satonlinecourseschool.com.

- On the right-hand side of the web page in the "Educators" section, click on "**Register Now!**"
- On the next web page, enter the activation code and the six digit College Board testing code for the high school.
- Each code may be used only once by an individual teacher.
- Once you have successfully created an Educator account, you can proceed to The Official SAT Online Course. On all subsequent visits, you will use the username and password you created.

With your educator account, you can print activation codes for students by entering SAT Online, clicking on the Class Management Tab. On the Class Management web page, look to the left-hand side and click on Manage Student Accounts. This option will let you print activation codes for students.

Students follow the same registration process as educators, but must register under the "student" section on the homepage of SAT Online.

Questions? Contact the SAT support unit at GaDOE: Georgia McSwain, gmcswain@doe.k12.ga.us, 404-657-9799; or Bonnie Marshall, bmarshall@doe.k12.ga.us, 404-656-6854.

Dates to Remember

December

8 Special Education Directors' Elluminate, Kim Hartsell and Nancy O'Hara, Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports

January

8 Directors' Discussion Forum with Kim Hartsell and Nancy O'Hara, Bibb County

30-31 Georgia Vision Educators Lit-R-C Weekend, Georgia Academy for the Blind, Macon

31 Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA), Macon State College
Macon, Georgia

February

1 Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA), Macon State College
Macon, Georgia

1 New Special Education Directors' Academy, Renaissance Waverly Hotel,
Atlanta, Georgia

1-3 Georgia Association of Educational Leaders (GAEL), Renaissance Waverly Hotel,
Atlanta, Georgia

9 Special Education Directors' Elluminate with Kim Hartsell and Nancy O'Hara
Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports

27-28 Council for Exceptional Children Conference, Athens, Georgia

March

3-6 Exceptional Children's Week with the theme "Raising the Bar"

6-7 Georgia Vision Educators Lit-R-C Weekend, Georgia Academy for the Blind, Macon

23 New Special Education Directors Mentoring Academy, Classic Center, Athens, Ga.

24-25 GaDOE/G-CASE Spring Conference, Classic Center, Athens, Ga.

April

24-25 Georgia Vision Educators Lit-R-C Weekend, Georgia Academy for the Blind, Macon