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DIVISIONS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES and SUPPORTS

JUNE 2009 DL UPDATE

Budget Reminders: FY 09 Budgets and ARRA Grants

June 1 is the final date for amendments to this year's FY09 Flowthrough, Federal and State Preschool grants. Check with your bookkeeper to ensure all state funds are expended. If all funds have not been expended, the bookkeeper should move like expenditures from the federal grants to zero out the state grants. The Office of Programs and Budgets within the Governor's office looks at these state budget expenditures and could impact future allocations due to unbudgeted or unspent funds.

REMINDERS for the ARRA Grants:

- The 7 ARRA expanded questions must be approved prior to submitting your 2 ARRA budgets.
- Once you access your ARRA Flowthrough grant in the 2009 Consolidated Application portal, click on Program Information and then Exceptional Students to complete your Proportional Share amounts for 3-5 and 3-21 SWDs based on your December census plus any new private/home school SWDs that may be included since then. These amounts must be part of the appropriate ARRA Preschool and/or IDEA Flowthrough budgets.
- The Personnel and EIS tabs should be marked N/A unless your system "did not meet" targets or was found disproportionate for 2010. The disproportionate systems and those choosing to use Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS) will need to complete the EIS form with activities and budgets summarized for ARRA funds in the preschool and flow through grants at the 15% maximum amount shown on the special education portal FY 2010 budget. In addition, the optional EIS districts must upload the EIS form from the Special Education website under Budgets and Grant Applications 2010 Consolidated Application Attachments to indicate the amount of funds to be used for EIS from 1% up to 15%.
- Systems that have the opportunity to reduce their local MOE by 50% of the increase from the previous year's initial allocation **MUST** copy and use the Upload tab to attach this permissive form. To find this form, go to the Special Education website, click on Budgets/Grant Applications and find the Consolidated Application 2010 attachments. **DO NOT FIGURE** the difference in your 2009 versus your 2010 Flowthrough only allocations, just put in your figure shown in the special education portal budget under the 50% reduction in local effort column for your system.

- Be specific in your descriptions for the ARRA budget funds.
- Don't forget to work with GNETS, consider the needs of the LEA's charter schools and SB 618 schools.

Selecting Research-Based Interventions and Instructional Strategies

If you're considering research-based interventions for RTI or selecting research-based strategies as a basis for professional learning as you update the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP), you may want to review the narrated PowerPoint titled *Selecting Research-Based Interventions and Instructional Strategies* posted at http://www.gadoe.org/ci_services.aspx?PageReq=CIServRTI. Once on the RTI page, look in the Interventions section and click on the first link.

This presentation, based on work done by the Regional Education Laboratory Southeast (REL-SE) operated by the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina, includes a Critical Reading Protocol for summarizing research and an Intervention Review Protocol for compiling the results and determining if there is a match with the local needs identified by data review and utilization. As districts are selecting interventions for Coordinated Early Intervening Services, implementing the Student Achievement Pyramid of Intervention, and designing professional learning based on the CLIP, this presentation could provide useful guidance and tools.

Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and Surrogate Parents from LEAs

It is strongly recommended that school systems work collaboratively with local DJJ representatives to ensure that students who require surrogate parents continue the relationship when students are in the custody of DJJ. Once a surrogate has developed a relationship with a student, it is in the best interest of the student for the surrogate to continue in that role while the student is being served through DJJ. Depending on the situation, surrogates may be involved via telephone conferences or on-site visits.

Students Placed by Systems in Private Schools

Each year, students are placed in private schools, either by agreements with the family or by due process, via an IEP from a local school system. These students also are counted on the December 1 count using the code "5" or "7". As these students receive FTE and are a part of the local school system, that system must ensure that ALL of the requirements of FAPE are provided (34 CFR 300.146 Responsibility of SEA).

While the development of the IEP, annual goals and, if appropriate, short term objectives, and monitoring of progress are clearly required for these students, there are other aspects of FAPE that must be provided. These aspects include receiving services from a certified teacher, having access to and being taught the state curriculum (GPS) for the grade level in which the student is enrolled, and being assessed using the state-mandated test for that grade. A memo from Dr. Martha Reichrath, dated September 8, 2008, provided guidance for the assessment of special needs students placed in facilities, including the provision of the assessment, training of staff, and implementing accommodations. Please remember that these students still "count" within the system, and programs are set up and maintained so that these students have access to and make progress in Georgia's general curriculum as well as meet their educational goals.

Brief Notes Regarding Assessment:

- Please remember that students who are taking the retest of CRCTs or GHSGTs must have accommodations provided as outlined in their IEP during the administration of the assessment. These students should also be provided with the classroom accommodations listed during any remediation or ESY services. This may mean providing additional information to school personnel (school testing coordinators, special and general education teachers) who are not familiar with the student.
- GAA score reports are due to systems on June 1. Not unlike the CRCT or GHSGT, the GAA score reports on the school and system level can be used to identify areas of strength, needs, and, by compiling data from the past three years, implementation trends. Utilizing score reports to target teachers needing further assistance, strong teachers who can serve as mentors or supports, and schools that provide a variety of opportunities for students to learn outside their special education classroom can be beneficial when planning personnel development activities for the upcoming school year.

LRE Initiative: Application Deadline Wednesday, June 17.

The 2009-2010 LRE Initiative Application was emailed to systems on June 2. Priority will be given to systems not making AYP due to students with disabilities as well as to schools that did not meet the target for serving students in general education classrooms for over 80% of the day. The initiative for this next year will continue to focus on working with school leadership teams to build capacity at the school level for establishing and maintaining highly skilled co-teaching teams. This initiative will provide team training, paired with on site coaching from GaDOE consultants, as well as online support. An additional feature this year will be administrative mentoring and support aimed at central office leadership and local principals.

Please encourage schools with this need to apply. If you have any questions about this initiative please contact Susan Brozovic at 404-657-9956 or sbrozovic@doe.k12.ga.us.

Graduation/Dropout Prevention Project: Application Deadline Friday, June 12

The Graduation/Dropout Prevention Project is a collaborative effort to create schools where students with disabilities and other struggling students stay in school and graduate. Schools participating in the first two years of this five year project through the State Personnel Development Grant, have improved attendance, cut disciplinary referrals and suspensions, increased the numbers of students passing their classes, and seen disengaged students become active participants in school activities. Applications were emailed to superintendents and special education directors in early June. Applications should be returned to Dr. Julia Causey via email, jcausey@doe.k12.ga.us or by FAX 404-651-6451 by Please contact Dr. Causey if you have questions.

Parent to Parent of Georgia's Impact Awards

High School Principal Dennis Medders Receives Statewide Award

Congratulations to Dennis Medders, Principal of Manchester High School in Meriwether County, and winner of Parent to Parent of Georgia's Education Impact Award. Parent to Parent of Georgia, an organization that provides support and information to parents of children with disabilities kicked off a statewide virtual award and recognition program earlier this year designed to recognize individuals who demonstrated outstanding leadership in supporting families and including children and young adults with disabilities in their communities.

Twelve finalists were selected out of sixty nominations in two categories; Community Impact designed to recognize volunteers and Education Impact designed to recognize professionals working in the disability field. The finalists were asked to create their own videos to highlight some of their accomplishments. There was a three week voting period when the public could go to Parent to Parent of Georgia's website to view the videos and vote for their favorite nominee.

Congratulations also to the following nominees who work in Georgia's public schools and were selected as finalists:

Gabriela Smith, a Parapro at Youth Elementary School in Loganville (Walton County)

Leah Bodnarchuk, a special education teacher in Gray (Jones County)

Becky Bryant, a Parent Mentor from Richmond Hill (Bryan County)

Deborah Moore, the Special Education Director for Elbert County Schools

For more information on Parent to Parent of Georgia, Georgia's Impact Awards and to view the videos, please visit www.parenttoparentofga.org.

Dispute Resolution Tip of the Month

The new IDEA federal regulations effective December 31, 2008 provide to parents the right to revoke consent for continued special education services. As you know, the revocation must be in writing and the school system must respond to the revocation with prior written notice meeting the requirements of 34 CFR 300.503. The comments issued with the regulations clarify that these are IDEA regulations and do not address protections under Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Remember that on January 1, 2009, the new 2008 ADA Amendments went in to effect. With the new 504/ADA requirements the central question remains as whether a student is substantially limited by impairments and is in need of some accommodations within the regular education environment to obtain equal access to educational programming and activities. The local system may want to review their procedures for 504/ADA plans in light of these changes.

Additionally, local systems may want to consider this question: Would a student previously determined by the system to have a disability require some accommodations within the regular education environment to obtain equal access to educational programming and activities following the removal of the special education services? If so, the local system may want to consider a process for ensuring the opportunity for parents to establish a 504 plan following a revocation of consent for special education services.

New Preschool Inclusion Information

Bright From the Start (GA Pre-K) has created three models of Inclusion, as well as guidance on implementation (see attached). We are truly excited that Bright From the Start has taken the initiative on this endeavor. We endorse these models and are encouraged that they will create more inclusive opportunities for our preschool children with disabilities. For more information about these, please contact your system GA Pre-K Director.

Problems in Children with TBI? *brought to you by the Children & Youth Subcommittee of the Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission*

As we have described in previous updates, traumatic brain injury (TBI) in children is often difficult to identify and its symptoms often mimic those of other types of learning disorders. Thus, it is critical that schools work closely with parents to determine whether TBI is the cause of a student's problems in school and then develop specific plans to support the student.

Once you know that you have a student with TBI in your classroom it is critical that you obtain as much medical information available about the student as possible. Talk with the parents, as well as the school administrator who worked with the hospital to facilitate the student's transition to home and school. Hospitals often complete a neuropsychological evaluation, which can provide a baseline upon which an initial school plan can be developed.

The second most important thing that you can do is get training. The needs of students with TBI are complex and varied and you will need to have at least a basic understanding of what strategies are effective in working with children with TBI. There are many online resources for TBI training for educators, including the resources listed below. In addition, the Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission has been working with the Department of Education to develop Elluminate and other types of training on TBI in the classroom.

The following list will provide a basic outline of the types of strategies that are most effective in working with students with TBI and can be useful until further, more comprehensive training is received.

1. Acknowledge that students with TBI learn differently, and at different rates, from students who do not have TBI. Modify your expectations to ensure their success.
2. Meet with the family to develop a learning plan that is individualized, builds on the student's abilities, and addresses the student's particular cognitive and behavioral deficits.
3. Provide individualized attention to the student with TBI. This may include:
 - a. Assisting the student to organize their tasks and manage their time effectively.
 - b. Presenting and repeating new information slowly.
 - c. Encouraging the student to repeat instructions to ensure they were understood.
 - d. Meeting with the student after class to reinforce lessons or clarify instructions.
 - e. Providing written instructions for homework, or faxing homework assignments to the parents.
4. Provide structure in the classroom. Students with TBI have more difficulty processing changes in their environment or schedule and will benefit from a structured classroom and learning schedule.

5. Minimize distractions for the student with TBI as much as possible. This may include ensuring that the student's seat is in a place where outside distractions are minimized.
6. Allow breaks, when necessary, for the student with TBI. Students with TBI often experience fatigue, which may make it difficult for the student to pay attention or complete assignments in class. Students with TBI may need to be allowed to have an abbreviated day, or extra time to complete assignments and tests.
7. Be flexible, understanding that learning and behavioral strategies may need to be adapted over time as the child continues to develop or as new issues surface.
8. Provide appropriate behavioral interventions and redirection as needed. Students who experience behavioral problems caused by TBI often respond well to redirection.
9. Assign a "buddy" to the student with TBI to help him plan for the day, get questions answered, and travel safely through the school building.

Again, it is critical that teachers, including those in the general classroom, receive training on TBI to understand how to support children with TBI most effectively.

To help you learn more about the needs of children with brain injury the Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission has produced the following resources:

Georgia's Neurobehavioral Crisis: Lack of Coordinated Care, Inappropriate Institutionalizations, October, 2007 (www.bsitf.state.ga.us)

For Your Child's Needs: A Guide to Recovery After Traumatic Injury, July, 2008

Brain Injury: A Guide for Educators, edited by Marilyn Lash, Brain Injury Association of New Jersey, Inc. 2001. (see also www.bianj.org)

Brain Injury: a Guide for Families About Schools, edited by Marilyn Lash, Brain Injury Association of New Jersey, Inc. 2001. (see also www.bianj.org)

(Adapted from "Concussion: Carry-Over in the Classroom," Phil Hossler, July, 2007)

Dates to Remember:

June

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| 15-18 | GaDOE Autism Academy, Herman Ragin Conference Center, Perry |
| 20-21 | Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA), Valdosta State University, Valdosta |
| 23-26 | GaDOE Autism Academy, Herman Ragin Conference Center, Perry |
| 24-26 | Georgia Sensory Assistance Project Summer Institute
Communication and Literacy for Children with Vision and Hearing Loss and Multiple Disabilities, Georgia Academy for the Blind, Macon |

July

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| 31 | Timeline Summary Reports Due |
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