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DIVISIONS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES and SUPPORTS

MARCH 2009 DL UPDATE

Welcome

The Division for Special Education Services is pleased to announce the addition of a new staff member, Dr. Donna Drakeford, who will work as a school improvement specialist in the Elementary Curriculum/School Improvement Unit. As a former special education director for Randolph-Clay Counties, Donna has demonstrated outstanding leadership to improve performance for students with disabilities. Please join us in welcoming Donna to the GaDOE family!

Spring Special Education Leadership Meeting 2009

This meeting is designed to replace the GaDOE special education regional trainings and meetings typically held in the spring throughout the state on a variety of important topics. Your system's attendance in two of the sessions will be required and assigned to ensure the opportunity for participation by all special education directors. These sessions include budget development (new information- stimulus package), completion of the consolidated application (new information), student record data collection (new reporting requirements) and updated information on the Georgia Continuous Improvement Monitoring Plan (GCIMP) process.

Additionally, there will be required targeted technical assistance sessions for some systems identified by their data or disproportionality determination. Optional sessions focused on a wide variety of topics will also be included. Topics include positive behavior supports, mathematics and ELA improvement, transition planning, assessment issues, autism services, ELL and SWD, Career Paths and conducting early resolution sessions.

Please see the meeting description attached to this update for details including registration, lodging, and the tentative agenda.

Federal Programs: "Additional Allocations"

FY 08 federal carryover funds from unspent FY 07 funds have been added to your IDEA and Preschool grants. The amount of FY 08 carryover will be shown as an "additional allocation" in the Consolidated Application portal and as an "unbudgeted balance". In addition, the Grants Accounting On-line Report System (GAORS) will report your total funds.

Please submit your amendments for these additional funds and any other corrections so that you have budgeted all funds. These additional funds must be obligated by June 30, 2009.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing: Georgia Hands & Voices Meeting

Columbus, GA: Saturday, April 25, 2009 1 p.m. - 5 p.m.

The Mission of GA Hands & Voices: GA Hands and Voices is dedicated to supporting families with children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing without a bias around communication modes or methodology. They are a statewide parent-driven, non-profit organization providing families with the resources, networks, and information they need to improve communication access and educational outcomes for their children. Our outreach activities, parent/professional collaboration, and advocacy efforts are focused on enabling Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing children to reach their highest potential.

Where: North Columbus Branch Library, located at 5689 Armour Road, Columbus, GA

Who: Families, professionals and adults who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing who communicate manually and/or orally. From American Sign Language to cochlear implants, this organization represents people from all different approaches to, and experiences with, deafness or hearing loss. Anyone who is supportive, educated, motivated and dedicated to improving communication access, and improving the social and educational outcomes for our children allowing them to reach their highest potential is welcome.

Please distribute the flyer attached to this update to families of children who are deaf and hard of hearing, professionals who serve these children, and adults who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Illuminate LIVE! Special Education Professional Learning Series Reminder

To support local school systems in providing training to teachers and administrators on various topics regarding special education, the Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports continue to conduct an ongoing series of on-line learning sessions through Illuminate Live. The sessions are intended to provide current information on the issues that affect students with disabilities and their families. Many systems have developed PLU courses around these sessions. The Illuminate sessions are also being used by systems in order to train new faculty and staff on various topics. The training is divided into sections (e.g., Transition, Co-teaching, Positive Behavior Supports, Compliance, IEPs, Access to GAA, Academic Performance, Family Engagement, Assistive Technology, etc.) so training and/or PLU courses can be designed around many different topics according to faculty and staff needs. **Please remember to share this information with all of your schools.**

This month the following sessions will be live starting at 3:30, you may join thirty minutes before the sessions begin:

March 10, 2009	3:30-5:00	Writing Powerful Transition Plans for the 08-09 School Year
March 12, 2009	3:30-5:00	Last Minute Tips-Presentations by Core Access
March 16, 2009	3:30-5:00	Introduction of SLP Consultant: Program Updates
March 17, 2009	3:30-5:00	Summary of Performance-What's It All About
March 18, 2009	10:00	SIA Mathematics: Graphic Representation, Flexible Groups (PAL)

In order to access these sessions please go to gadoe.org>georgiastandards.org>training>illuminate live>session login under standards, instruction and accountability OR <http://illuminate.gavirtualschool.org/dae/index.html>. Passwords are no longer required.

Georgia's Grant Application for Part B IDEA Funds

In order to meet the requirements as set forth by IDEA 2004 for the annual state application of Georgia's grant award under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act for Federal Fiscal Year 09 (2009-2010), the following documents are being published on the GaDOE web site for a 60 day notice period beginning March 2, 2009 and running through April 30, 2009:

1. Submission Statement with Assurances for Part B of IDEA
2. Assurances related to Policies and Procedures and certifications; and
3. Description of the Use of Funds Under part B of the IDEA.

A 30 day comment period will run from April 1, 2009 through April 30, 2009. Please direct comments to Ms. Nancy O'Hara, Director, Division for Special Education Services, at 404-657-9959 or by email nohara@doe.12.ga.us.

The Traumatic Injury Update: What Are the Needs of Children with Spinal Cord

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

The needs of children who sustain a spinal cord injury are really complex. The Brain & Spinal Injury Trust Fund Commission has produced the following resources to help you learn more about the needs of children with spinal cord injury:

Brain and Spinal Injuries in Georgia: A Needs Assessment and State Action Plan, July, 2008
For Your Child's Needs: A Guide to Recovery After Traumatic Injury, July, 2008

Both of these resources can be accessed from the Commission's website: www.bsitf.state.ga.us.

2009 Awards of Excellence Applications Due March 16

Please remember that the deadline for submitting nominees for the 2009 Awards of Excellence Recognition Program for Students with Disabilities is **March 16th, 2009**. This year the Divisions will recognize high school seniors with disabilities who have had academic and/or extracurricular accomplishments. The Awards of Excellence Recognition application is available on the GaDOE website at www.gadoe.org on the Special Education page. It is also attached to this update. Please complete the form for each student nominated and return by March 16, 2009, to the address below:

Frank Nesbit
Division for Special Education Services
1870 Twin Towers East
Atlanta, GA 30334
FAX: 404-657-9963
fnesbit@doe.k12.ga.us

Only applications submitted to the GaDOE by GLRS directors or special education directors will be accepted. You will receive final details of the award recipients and the June recognition activity. Complete information regarding this award is in the February 2009 DL Update.

Transition Elluminate

Please remember that the next Elluminate Session on Transition will be held March 17th at 3:30 PM. This session will answer many questions concerning accommodations and documentation of students with disabilities preparing for post secondary schools in Georgia. It will also address Summary of Performance (SOP) concerns. The title of this session is "Summary of Performance -What's It All About?" Please tune in or watch the session archived.

Vocational Rehabilitation/Collaborative Agreement

Many districts have contacted the GaDOE/Division of Special Education Services concerning the VR/Collaborative Agreement. Directors, please keep this program in mind so you can decide to have a "dedicated VR School Counselor of your own". The paperwork and instructions necessary to participate in this important program will be available this month. If you have any questions, please contact Dru.Fenton@dol.state.ga.us or Lu Nations-Miller (bnations@doe.k12.ga.us)

Occupational and Physical Therapy Educational Relevance Tool: Update and Clarification

In the February update, it was reported that GaDOE staff met with a local OT and PT consortium to discuss the issues and concerns facing districts regarding the provision of OT and PT for students with disabilities. The department used the meeting as an opportunity to hear some of the concerns of this group and their ideas about developing a tool that would assist therapists in determining educationally relevant therapy. As a result of their concerns, the GaDOE is convening a group of stakeholders from around the state to continue this discussion and to begin to develop appropriate guidance. In order for this process to be effective, we need people who represent the various areas around the state.

Invitations will be sent out to participants to continue the discussion of the first group. This stakeholder group will work out the details and frameworks for the end product and choose the sub group that will complete the product. The date of the next meeting has not been set, but will more than likely be after the administration of the statewide assessments. Please submit the names of OTs and PTs who would like to be to Elise Lynch at klynch@doe.k12.ga.us.

School Districts Choosing to Spend IDEA Funds for Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS): Required Tasks

Districts may choose to spend up to 15% of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funds to provide Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS) to support struggling students. These districts must complete the following tasks:

1. Complete the CEIS worksheet in the FY 2010 IDEA budget.
2. Review, and revise as needed, policies, practices, and procedures to ensure compliance with IDEA and publicly report changes to policies, practices, and procedures.
3. Monitor the progress and special education eligibility status of new students participating in CEIS funded programs.
4. Send a three-member team to the Spring Special Education Leadership Meeting at the Classic Center in Athens, Georgia.

If your district elected to use IDEA funds to provide CEIS during FY 2009, then you must submit student data in the CEIS portal application by August 1, 2009. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Dr. Zephine Smith-Dixon by e-mail at zsmith@doe.k12.ga.us or (404) 463-0678.

DATES TO REMEMBER!

March

- 1 Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA), Atlanta Area School for the Deaf, Clarkston
- 10 Writing Powerful Transition Plans for the 09-10 via Elluminate Live! 3:30-5:30 p.m.
- 12 Last Minute Tips-Presentations by Core Access via ElluminateLive! 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.
- 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
- 16 Awards of Excellence Applications Due
- 16 SLP Consultant Introduction-Program Updates via ElluminateLive! 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.
- 17 Summary of Performance: What's It All About? via ElluminateLive! 3:30 - 5:30 p.m.
- 18 High School Mathematics: Graphic Representations, Flexible Groups (peer assisted learning) 10:00 a. m.
- 23 Pre-Conference for the GaDOE/G-CASE Spring Leadership Conference
Classic Center, Athens, 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
New Special Education Directors Mentoring Academy
GLRS Pre-Conference Meeting
GNETS Pre-Conference Meeting
- 24-25 GaDOE/G-CASE Spring Leadership Conference, Classic Center, Athens

April

- 22-24 Georgia Association of School Psychologists Conference (GASP), Sea Palms, St. Simon Island. See www.gaspnet.org for details.
- 24-25 Georgia Vision Educators Lit-R-C Weekend, Georgia Academy for the Blind, Macon
- 25 Georgia Hands and Voices Meeting: Columbus, Ga
- 30 Directors' Discussion Forum with Kim Hartsell and Nancy O'Hara, Bibb County

May

- 29-30-31 Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA), Atlanta Area School for the Deaf, Clarkston

June

- 20-21 EIPA, Valdosta State University, Valdosta