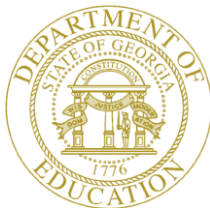


Georgia's Disproportionality Stakeholder Committee Meeting
March 15, 2011



Focus: Technical Assistance for Districts

Summary: Bonnie Dye began the final session with an overview of calculation methods and criteria for each area of disproportionality. The committee advised the State on recommendations and revisions. Immediately following a break, Dr. Donna Drakeford shared Georgia's Newly Revised Self Assessment Monitoring Protocol with the committee. The GaDOE revised the previous protocol based upon recommendations from the stakeholders. The stakeholders endorsed the revised self assessment and concurred that it would provide districts with a clear process to examine compliance-based practices occurring in their districts.

Next, Susan Durant provided guidance for the committee about the correction of noncompliance. The State Educational Agency is obligated to support local districts in eliminating disproportionality and addressing noncompliant issues. The input of the stakeholders, regarding the provision of technical assistance, was critical in establishing future activities to support local districts.

During the afternoon, the committee divided in workgroups to identify technical assistance that would best benefit districts. Each workgroup made recommendations regarding the type of technical assistance that would support the particular area of disproportionality. Susan Durant facilitated the reporting out of groups, and Debbie Gay discussed next steps with the committee.

Recommendations:

Identification and Placement Stakeholder Workgroup Recommendations

- Regional training:
 - Team training members should include the following: special education teachers, general education teachers, special and general education administrators, Student Support Team leaders, Response to Intervention leaders, principals, assistant principals, school psychologists, and school counselors.
 - Regional workshops may be hosted by GaDOE in collaboration with Georgia Learning Resource Systems, Regional Educational Service Agency, Parent to Parent, Student Support Team Association for Georgia Educators, and Georgia Association of Educational Leaders.

- Face-to-face trainings should be provided with teams from targeted districts:
 - Myths in addressing cultural differences,
 - Data Analysis,
 - Reevaluation process, and
 - Technical resources and supports.

Discipline Workgroup Recommendations

- Districts should complete a self-study when determined “at-risk”. Districts should verify completion of the review but not submit information to the state.
- More involvement from parents should be encouraged.
- Develop toolkits to supplement technical assistance for districts.
- Extend technical supports for districts.
- Keep the superintendents informed about these issues (e.g., GAEL, Bootstrap).
- Professional organizations should begin addressing this problem as it relates to all children-not just students with disabilities.
- In order to affect real change, special education should partner with School Improvement and Title One.
- The GaDOE should consider making disproportionality determinations in a consolidated manner without sending multiple letters to districts.

Overwhelmingly, the committee shared that effective professional learning and technical assistance were paramount in helping Georgia to eliminate disproportionate practices. Some suggested professional development topics included: cultural sensitivity awareness and training, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports training, and appropriate assessment of students with varying learning styles. We were extremely proud of the accomplishments of this collaborative effort and have every confidence that the productivity of this group will catapult real change in the area of disproportionality for the State of Georgia. The Georgia Disproportionality Stakeholder Committee was very instrumental in:

- 1) Establishing new disproportionality determination criteria to reflect a more aggressive approach to ensuring equality in local education agencies;
- 2) Making the Georgia Self-Assessment Protocol a more credible and compliance-based document; and
- 3) Identifying effective technical assistance strategies that would be most beneficial to districts according to their areas of need.

Note: The following stakeholders attended the committee meeting.

Alston, Cori	GaDOE, Education Program Manager (English Speakers of Other Languages)
Brooks, Kristina	Oconee County, Director of Special Education
Burrell, Denise	Griffin-Spalding County, Associate Superintendent
Drakeford, Donna	GaDOE, Education Program Specialist (School Improvement Specialist)
Durant, Susan	Southeast Regional Resource Center (SERRC)
Dye, Bonnie	GaDOE, Education Program Specialist (Data Manager)
Falk, Jennifer	Parent to Parent of Georgia, Advocate
Freer, Paula	GaDOE, Education Program Specialist, (Emotional and Behavioral Disorders)
Fretwell, Quentin	DeKalb County, Director of Student Relations
Garcia, Mikki	Chatham County, Special Education Director
Gay, Deborah	GaDOE, Director (Division for Special Education Services and Supports)
Gibbs, Mary	Stewart County, Parent Mentor
Henderson, Jasolyn	GaDOE, Education Program Specialist (PBIS)
Hodges, Jeff	GaDOE, Education Program Specialist (Safe and Drug Free Schools)
Horton, Chris	Georgia Council of Administrators of Special Education (GCASE), President Fayette County, Special Education Director
McNair, Deborah	Cook County, Special Education Director
O'Connell, Ginny	GaDOE, Education Program Manager (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports)
O'Connor, John	DeKalb County, Executive Director of Special Services
Ryan, Donna	Assistant Superintendent for Special Services and Assessment
Schreiner, Lodus	Georgia Learning Resources System (GLRS) Metro East, Program Specialist
Smith, Cristy	GLRS Metro East, Director
Smith-Dixon, Zelfphine	GaDOE, Education Program Manager (Elementary Curriculum/School Improvement)
White, Lynda	Butts County, Superintendent