



**DIVISIONS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES and SUPPORTS**

**FEBRUARY 2010 DL UPDATE**

**Spring Special Education Leadership Meeting**

Once again this year the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports, will partner with the Georgia Council of Administrators of Special Education (GCASE) to sponsor the Special Education Leadership Meeting on March 22- 24, 2010. The meeting will be held in Athens at the Classic Center. Your district's attendance in at least three of the sessions will be required and assigned to ensure the opportunity for participation by all special education directors. The assigned sessions include budget development/completion of the consolidated application, student record data collection and transition. Additionally, there will be targeted technical assistance sessions for some districts identified by their data for disproportionality determination or designated areas for technical assistance based on district level data. Optional sessions focused on a wide variety of topics will also be included. Some of these topics include positive behavior supports, alternative discipline, assistive technology, mathematics and ELA resources, assessment issues, accessible instructional materials, autism services, parent engagement and dispute resolution.

**Registration:** February 1, 2010 through February 26 2010 - **\$195.00**

**Late Registration:** February 27, 2010- March 12, 2010 - **\$250.00**  
Registration will be available on the GAEL website at [www.gael.org](http://www.gael.org)

**No registration will be available after March 12, 2010**

**Preconference Date:** Monday, March 22, 2009 (GLRS, New Special Education Directors' Academy and G-CASE Executive Board and Board of Directors' Meetings). All Preconference Meetings will be from 10:00 AM – 2:30 PM.

**Conference Dates:**

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Monday, March 22, 2010</b>    | 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm General Session<br>4:40 pm - 6:00 pm GCASE Reception and Poster Session |
| <b>Tuesday, March 23, 2010</b>   | 8:00 am - 8:45 am General Session<br>9:00 am - 5:00 pm Breakout sessions                  |
| <b>Wednesday, March 24, 2010</b> | 8:00 am – 4:30 pm Breakout Sessions   |

**Special Education Directors' Forum**

The January Special Education Directors' Forum was conducted via Elluminate LIVE! on January 14, 2010. Representatives from each of the GLRS regions discussed key special education issues with Nancy O'Hara and Kim Hartsell, Directors of the Divisions for Special Education at the Georgia Department of Education. Discussion topics included the proposed amendments to the State Special Education Rules and the proposed rule on the use of restraint and seclusion. A public input session on the amendments to the Special Education Rules is scheduled

for the February State Board of Education meeting with adoption as early as March. The Department is continuing to seek input from stakeholders on the proposed rule on restraint and seclusion and it is likely that the rule could be initiated as early as April.

The proposed revision to the GaDOE special education website was also discussed. Feedback was requested regarding changes that would make the site "more user friendly". The possibility of posting the directory of special education directors on the website was also discussed. Several directors mentioned that they would like to see the directory posted on the website as they often have difficulty locating contact information for directors in other districts.

Other topics addressed at the meeting included class sizes for special education, the 2% assessment, standards-based IEPs, and special education compliance. Representatives in the forum are encouraged to share information addressed in the forum at their next regional meetings.

### **Timelines Summary Report**

The Timelines Summary Report and Directions for FY10 are now available on the portal. Please note the changes to the form from the FY09 Report. The directions include general information as well as instructions for completing initial, redetermination, and Babies Can't Wait (BCW) timeline summaries. The report is due no later than **July 31, 2010** to Kathy Giddens ([kgiddens@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:kgiddens@doe.k12.ga.us)).

Here are a few highlights of the Timelines Summary Report:

1. Indicator 12 (BCW): A title to the BCW column has been added above the BCW data column entitled "SPP/APR Indicator 12". As you know, Indicator 12 refers to the percentage of children referred by Part C prior to age three who are found eligible for Part B, and who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthday. The percentage completed on time by age three (line 8) under BCW, will be the percent reported for your district on the public report.
2. Indicator 11: Indicator 11 refers to child find and includes data for both initials and BCW. This new section entitled "Summary Report-SPP/APR Indicator 11" has been added to the report. This section will automatically calculate using the data you enter in each category. You do not enter any information in this section. The percent completed on time (line 8) will be the percent reported for your district on the public report.
3. There are some additional Exceptions noted for BCW referrals based on OSEP required changes. They will be discussed at the March Spring Leadership Meeting.

### **Local Determinations**

Each year, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) makes Local Determinations using district level data for both compliance and performance indicators. The indicator data is reviewed to determine if the district met or exceeded state targets. The data used in making the determinations is available on the Special Education Annual Reports located on the GaDOE website. Districts will receive their Determination by March 1 indicating one of four levels: Meets Requirements, Needs Assistance, Needs Intervention, or Needs Substantial Intervention. The Determination for FY 10 is based on the data for the 2008-2009 school year.

There has been an amendment to the rubric used for Determinations based on several factors:

- Feedback from the Determinations Focus Group that met last summer
- Changes from OSEP in the data collection timeline and requirements for indicators that were originally outlined to rollout this year

This year, you will receive the rubric indicating the detail for FY 10 and listing the final determination your district received in FY 07- FY 09. The Rubric for FY 10 entitled "**FY10 Determination Attachment**" is attached as a separate document to this update. We will review the specific changes during the Director's Elluminate scheduled for Monday, February 8, 2010.

### **Dispute Resolution Tip- February 2010**

There are some important steps to consider when the local district or the parent believes a student should be re-evaluated to determine if a student continues to be eligible for special education services. The IDEA requires a school district to consider reevaluation every three years, however, you can assess students more frequently if the parent or district believe the eligibility re-determination is needed. The first step in considering eligibility re-determination is to obtain informed parental consent and conduct an assessment. (See Georgia State Board Rule 160-4-7.04 for exception) The next step is to provide notice for a meeting in accordance with Georgia State Board Rule 160-4-7-.06. At the meeting, **review the data** to determine if the assessment shows the child no longer meets eligibility requirements. Eligibility for special education is a two-pronged inquiry and assessments must show that the student: 1) meets eligibility requirements for a specific disabling condition; and 2) requires special education services as a direct result of that disabling condition. If the IEP Team determines the assessments and data show a student is ineligible, **provide prior written notice** (including a copy of parental rights) to the parents during or immediately following the IEP meeting at which you've discussed the student's eligibility determination. Documentation of every step in this process is critical. If parents disagree with an ineligibility determination, the district can stop providing services. The parents may then decide if they want to pursue due process

As students with disabilities show improvement, special education services are generally reduced and provided in a less restrictive environment. If the student continues to do well, this information provides additional data related to the eligibility determination. When students are found ineligible but show signs of struggling after they exit special education, take advantage of any available general education interventions. Then, assess the student and hold a 504 meeting to determine if the student is "disabled" within the meaning of Section 504 and requires Section 504 services or accommodations.

### **Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Services For Visually Impaired Students**

The GaDOE has received questions regarding the type of certifications necessary to provide Orientation and Mobility Services (O&M) to students who are blind or visually impaired. A person is not qualified to provide O&M unless he or she has completed a college program in O&M including practicum and has received a certificate from the college or university. The Georgia Professional Standards Commission does not offer certification in O&M, therefore it will be the responsibility of the school district to ensure that the O&M specialist has the appropriate documentation of certification from the university where the O&M program was completed.

In addition, after completing their college degrees, some O&M specialists obtain national certification through the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation for the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER) as a Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS). COMS certification is certainly an acceptable credential for O&Ms in Georgia; however, it is not required. There are approximately 25 COMS in Georgia listed on the AER website.

Teachers of the Visually Impaired who do not hold this additional O&M certification are not qualified to provide O&M services. For more information on this issue contact Kathy Segers, Program Specialist for Visual Impairments at [ksegers@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:ksegers@doe.k12.ga.us) or 478-751-6208.

### **State Board of Education Recognition Awards of Excellence**

The State Board of Education recognizes groups of outstanding students in various subject areas of achievement. The 2010 Awards of Excellence Recognition Program for Exceptional Students will be held in Atlanta on June 10, 2010 at 9:30 am, during the State Board of Education Meeting, Department of Education, 20th floor Board Room, Twin Towers East.

This year the Division for Special Education Services and Supports is seeking to recognize high school seniors with disabilities who have had academic and/or extracurricular accomplishments, as shown by:

1. Earning a scholarship to a four-year, two-year, or vocational technical school;
2. Earning a Regular Education Diploma with outstanding extracurricular involvement in school/community;
3. Earning a Special Education Diploma with transition to career education and/or employment.

Georgia Learning Resources System (GLRS) centers and local school districts are asked to nominate qualifying students for this year's recognition award. The Awards Recognition application will soon be available on our website at [www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org) on the Special Education home page, and is also attached to this update. Please complete the form for each student nominated, and return by **March 16, 2010**, to the address below:

Frank Nesbit  
Division for Special Education Services and Supports  
1870 Twin Towers East  
Atlanta, GA 30334  
PHONE: 404-844-8741  
FAX: 404-651-6457  
[fnesbit@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:fnesbit@doe.k12.ga.us)

**Only applications submitted to the GaDOE by GLRS directors or  
Special Education Directors will be accepted.**

### **Georgia Braille Challenge Results**

The Georgia Academy for the Blind hosted the state's Regional Braille Challenge for fifty-two students who are blind or visually impaired on January 28, 2010. The competition tested students' skills in reading, writing, proofreading and spelling in Braille. This competition is the only event of its kind for Georgia students, and it marked the first step in qualifying for the National Braille Challenge competition in June.

Kathy Segers, Program Specialist for Visual Impairments at the GaDOE, stated that the challenge gives students a chance to build their confidence and self-esteem while showing off their academic talents. They can do just as good a job, they just do it in Braille instead of print." An eighth grader from Roswell says she's been competing for eight years, and qualified for the national competition three times. She says she traveled to Macon Thursday for the fun of the event, but says the most important part is the message the event says to everyone."It demonstrates that people who are blind can also be literate, can read and write like everyone else," the student said.

Winners in the 2010 Braille Challenge were from Bibb, Bleckley, Catoosa, Clayton, Cobb, Dade, DeKalb, Fayette, Floyd, Fulton, Hall, Irwin, Johnson, Jones, Muscogee, Paulding, Putnam, Walker, and Wilkes counties and the Georgia Academy for the Blind.

### **2010 CEC Annual Conference**

The 2010 Georgia Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Annual Conference will be held at the Classic Center in Athens on February 26-27, 2010. The pre-registration deadline is February 19, 2010. Additional information on the conference is contained in the accompanying brochure entitled "**CEC Brochure**".

### **Georgia Vision Educators Consortia Meeting**

The February Vision Educators Consortia meeting will be held on February 19, 2010 from 9:00- 12:00 at ETC sites around the state. The host site will be the Valdosta State ETC. Consortia handouts will be available for download on or after February 17, 2010 from the GIMC website. Each participant needs to download the handouts and bring them with them to the consortia meeting. See the GIMC website at [www.gimc.org](http://www.gimc.org) for more information.

## **Co-Teaching in Secondary Schools Webinar**

Training for co teaching in secondary schools is being provided through a three part Illuminate Webinar series facilitated by Dinah Martin, Program Specialist, North Georgia GLRS, and Janet Peeler, Consultant for the GaDOE LRE project and retired Associate Superintendent for Cobb County Schools. Both Dinah and Janet have experience implementing LRE in secondary education.

The schedule of sessions with titles is listed below. Each session will be archived for those who will not be able to participate in the live training session. All sessions will run from 3:30pm-5:00pm. Please log on no later than 15 minutes before.

### *Training Schedule:*

*Session 1- January 13, 2010: Dinah Martin,*

#### **Co-Teaching for Secondary Schools: Professional Roles and Responsibilities**

This session will focus on the following topics: LRE, access to the general curriculum, continuum of services in GA, popular approaches to co-teaching, and effective instruction.

*Session 2 - February 3, 2010: Dinah Martin,*

#### **Co-Teaching for Secondary Schools: Tools for Success**

This session will focus on the following topics: Co-teaching and school improvement initiatives, IEP services in co-teaching environments, co-planning (long-range and short-term), and administrative support for improvement

*Session 3- February 5, 2010: Janet Peeler,*

#### **Co-Teaching for Secondary Schools: Scheduling for Co-teaching in Secondary Schools**

This session will focus on the following topics: The impact of scheduling on co-teaching and exploring scheduling formats to meet the varying secondary school structures.

Follow these directions to access the sessions:

1. Go to [www.georgiastandards.org](http://www.georgiastandards.org)
2. Click on the Illuminate! logo in the box at the bottom (center) of the page.
3. Click on Sessions
  - a. Click recordings if viewing an archived session
4. Click on the date in the calendar at the top right of the page
5. Find the session name in the listings that appear below and click on the session
  - a. There is no password.

## **Deaf and Hard of Hearing Family Engagement**

The Georgia Hands & Voices Meeting will be held on March 20, 2010 at the Athens Regional Library in Athens from 1 p.m. till 4 p.m.

- What:** Hands & Voices Georgia, a state chapter for the national organization providing advocacy and support to families with children who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing without a bias around communication modes or methodology, is hosting its first Athens, Ga. event to introduce resources and opportunities to families and professionals in the region.
- Where:** Athens Regional Library on Baxter Street in Athens  
2025 Baxter Street · Athens, Georgia 30606  
(706) 613-3650
- 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, our 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.

How: Childcare will be provided and Interpreters will be available. Please RSVP to [Info@gahandsandvoices.org](mailto:Info@gahandsandvoices.org) by March 17 so that we can ensure we have adequate and appropriate childcare and seating. RSVPs should include how many we can expect (adults and children) and if an interpreter is needed.

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. We're 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.

For any questions please contact:  
Terri Patterson at [terri@gahandsandvoices.org](mailto:terri@gahandsandvoices.org) -or- Frank Nesbit at [fnesbit@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:fnesbit@doe.k12.ga.us)  
Please visit our website at [www.gahandsandvoices.org](http://www.gahandsandvoices.org)

### **Dates to Remember**

#### **February**

- 2 Co-Teaching for Secondary Schools: Tools for Success Webinar
- 5 Co-Teaching for Secondary Schools: Scheduling for Co-Teaching in Secondary Schools Webinar
- 8 Special Education Directors' Elluminate Session  
Kim Hartsell and Nancy O'Hara 10:00-11:30 a.m.
- 19 Georgia Vision Impaired Consortia Meeting  
Host Sites: Georgia ETCs, Hosted at Valdosta State ETC
- 22 SSTAGE Drive-In Workshop: Evaluating Fidelity of Interventions, Forsyth County Board of Education, [www.sstage.org](http://www.sstage.org)
- 23 SSTAGE Drive-In Workshop: Evaluating Fidelity of Interventions, Central Georgia Site To Be Announced
- 26-27 Georgia CEC 2010 Annual Conference, Classic Center, Athens

#### **March**

- 3 Grant for Residential and Reintegration Services (GRRS) - applications due
- 6-7 Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment, Atlanta Area School for the Deaf, Clarkston
- 19 Georgia Deaf Education ~~CONFERENCE~~ *Cancelled* Technology Centers
- 20 Georgia Hands & Voices Meeting, Athens Regional Library, Athens
- 22 Special Education Leadership Development Academy (GCASE/GaDOE), site TBA
- 22-24 Spring Special Education Leadership Meeting, Classic Center, Athens

#### **April**

- 1 Grant for High Cost Fund (GHCF) - applications due
- 22 Special Education Directors' Discussion Forum  
Location: Bibb County, Career Center Annex at Hutchings

**May**

**7** Georgia Vision Impaired Consortia Meeting, Host Site: Pioneer RESA ETC

**10** Special Education Directors' Elluminate Session

**15-16** Educational Interpreter Performance Assessments, Largo Tibet Elementary School, Savannah

**June**

**9-10-11** Educational Interpreters Performance Assessment, Valdosta State University, Valdosta

**10** State Board of Education Recognition Awards of Excellence, Department of Education, Atlanta