



DIVISION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES and SUPPORTS

MAY 2011 District Liaison (DL) UPDATE

GPAT's Annual Summer Institute

GPAT's annual Summer Institute at St. Simons Island, Georgia, will be June 7 - 10, 2011. On-line registration materials are posted on the GPAT website (<http://gpat.org/>). During the institute, invited presenters will conduct sessions on a variety of assistive technology topics. Participants may earn two PLUs and/or 20 contact hours by attending the institute.

Grant for Residential and Reintegration Services

The FY2011 Grant for Residential and Reintegration Services was passed by the State Board last week. These state funds are for partial reimbursement of the cost of SWD placements in residential facilities and must be processed/expended by the end of June. The district's Consolidated Application administrator will need to configure, or add, the residential and reintegration budget to the existing FY11 grants in order for this residential and reintegration budget to be submitted.

Georgia Department of Labor: Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program Annual Collaborative Agreement

The application packet for the VR Annual Agreement must be completed by the local superintendent in collaboration with the VR Program Regional Director. The packet was sent electronically to your Superintendent on April 27, 2011. In order to facilitate this collaborative effort, please collect the information needed to complete the packet along with the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program Regional Director ahead of time so the entire packet can be submitted in a timely manner. Currently, 78 local school districts are taking advantage of this funding opportunity. Please remember that collaborative participation requires that the local school district provide local and/or state funds equaling \$13,000 of the total amount, with the remaining \$48,033 coming from federal VR funds.

Illuminate Date Change: "The Roles and Responsibilities of Speech-Language Pathologists in Schools"

The previously scheduled Illuminate for Wednesday, April 20, 2011, regarding "The Roles and Responsibilities of Speech-Language Pathologists in Schools" was canceled. The new date for this Illuminate will be **Wednesday, May 11, 2011**, from **2:00 pm - 3:00 pm**. We apologize for any scheduling inconveniences and look forward to providing helpful guidance in this session.

Illuminate link: http://illuminate.gavirtualschool.org/doe/join_meeting.html?meetingId=1258875994263

Reminder! The last session of the **National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) 2010-2011 Professional Development Series** is scheduled for May 4, 2011, on the topic of Virtual Special Education: Issues and Answers

To access the session:

- Open your web browser to <http://pd.nasdse.org/>
- Click on the conference you would like to view
- When asked for an access code, enter Georgia's access code: 1011GA5

GaDOE 2011 AUTISM ACADEMY: *Building Our Tool Box for Addressing Behavior and ASD*

The Division for Special Education Services and Supports (DSESS) will present the third annual Autism Academy this summer. Registration is posted on the DSESS website in the "What's New" box, as well as on the Autism page. There is no cost for the academy; and participants may register for one, two, or three days. **Registration must be completed separately for each day to be attended.** Day one will focus on students with Low Functioning Autism; Day two will focus on the Full Autism Spectrum; and Day three will focus on students with High Functioning Autism. Training will provide in depth information regarding verbal behavior, behavior analysis, developing and writing behavior goals, as well as on proactive behavior intervention plans. Attendance is recommended for classroom teachers, speech and language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and behavior specialists who have attended the previous Autism Academy and/or GATTAP regional team meetings. For additional information contact Dr. Alice Murphy mmurphy@doe.k12.ga.us or 404-657-9957.

Location: The Rutland Academy 1250 Oglethorpe Avenue, Athens, Georgia 30306

June 22 – *Verbal Behavior and Low Functioning Autism*

June 23 – *Behavior Issues Across the Autism Spectrum*

June 24 – *Challenging Behavior of High Functioning Autism and Asperger's Syndrome*

Registration Link:

<http://admin.doe.k12.ga.us/gadoe/trngadmin2.nsf/frnCourseSchedule?OpenForm&CourseName=AUTISM+ACAD+EMY+2011&parentunid=43F78D198A4DA1A385257863004405D7>

2011 Parent Surveys

Completed Parent Surveys are due to the vendor by June 1st. Please send a final reminder of this approaching deadline to your parents and administrators. Districts in the FY11 group received surveys in early November. Schools are chosen for participation based on a formula that provides an annual valid sampling of parents in the state. Measuring parent satisfaction is a federal performance indicator from the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Programs.

New Parent Mentors

Welcome to five parent mentors hired since January. The new parent mentors are: Deshonda Washington, Atlanta Area School for the Deaf; Edith Abakare, Atlanta Public Schools; Katherine Kennedy, Georgia School for the Deaf; Sandra Kelly, Richmond County School District; and Leslie Gavin, Monroe County School District.

GCASE Spring Leadership Conference Surveys

Of the 571 registered attendees at the spring leadership conference in Athens in March, 265 responded to the follow-up evaluation survey. A summary of those responses is attached.

The Dispute Resolution Continuum: Due Process Hearings

This year a series of articles described the dispute resolution continuum. This month focuses on the more formal and fixed third party resolution option of a due process hearing.

Due process hearings are formal, quasi-judicial proceedings in which the parties present arguments and evidence to a hearing officer. The hearing officer makes a determination of facts and legal rights and responsibilities. He/she then renders a decision based on federal and state statutes and regulations as well as on precedents established through other due process hearings or court decisions. Decisions may be based on substantive issues as well as procedural requirements. Parties who do not prevail in due process hearings may seek redress in the federal district and appellate courts. The United States Supreme Court is the final arbiter and interpreter of IDEA disputes (Feinberg et al. 2002).

When a parent and the school district disagree over the identification, evaluation, placement, or provision of FAPE, either party may request a due process hearing. A due process hearing must be conducted and a decision issued

within 45 days of the request for a hearing. Extensions may only be allowed when both parties agree and the extension does not violate the rights of the student.

When a request for a due process hearing is made, the parties will be asked if they would consider participating in either an Early Resolution Session or Mediation prior to the hearing. In Georgia, due process hearings are conducted by the Office of State Administrative Hearings (OSAH). Once a request is received by OSAH, an administrative law judge (ALJ) will be assigned to conduct the due process hearing. That ALJ will contact both parties and begin to set up the arrangements for an impartial due process hearing. Below are some considerations regarding due process hearings.

- The initiating party should inform the other party and the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) of the request for a due process hearing.
- The district is responsible for relaying the hearing request to the GaDOE Legal Services on the day the request is received by the district.
- The request should contain the name of the student, the school and district in which the student is enrolled, contact information for the family, and school district contact information. The request should also contain a description of the problem(s) with a proposed resolution. The form provided by GaDOE should be used.
- An expedited due process hearing may be requested if the request is related to a manifestation determination or placement in an alternative educational setting.
- If the district has not provided prior written notice to the requestor regarding the issues in the request, they must provide such prior written notice within ten days.
- If the district has provided prior written notice, they must respond to the due process request within 10 days.
- If the district feels that the due process request is insufficient, the district must notify the ALJ within fifteen days of receiving the request. The ALJ has five days to determine whether the request is sufficient. If sufficient, the timeline moves forward. If insufficient, the parent must re-file the request.
- Options for an Early Resolution Session or Mediation must be available.

The GaDOE webpage for due process hearings can be accessed using the link below. Additional information regarding district and parent responsibilities can be found on this page along with the form to request a due process hearing.

http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/ci_exceptional.aspx?PageReq=CIEXCDueProcessHearings

Decisions from fully adjudicated due process hearings in Georgia can be reviewed and downloaded using the following link:

http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/ci_exceptional.aspx?PageReq=CIEXCHearingDecisions

By recognizing the different stages of conflict along the continuum, the parties in a special education dispute may be able to employ appropriate strategies in an effort to settle disagreements before reaching the more formal due process hearing stage. Because of the highly technical, complex, time consuming, and adversarial nature of due process hearings, resolving disputes before reaching this stage is desirable.

Said another way, in the area of dispute resolution, an ounce of prevention can truly be worth a pound of cure. If you have tips to share or questions to ask, please email mblake@doe.k12.ga.us. Thanks for reading the articles this year.

Feinberg, E, Beyer, J.D. & Moses, P. (2002). Beyond mediation: Strategies for appropriate early dispute resolution in special education. A briefing paper from The Consortium for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE).

2011 Calendar of Events

May

- 2 Elluminate – Inclusive Opportunities for Preschool/GA Pre-K, 2:00-3:30pm
- 5 Georgia Vision Educators Statewide Consortia/Georgia National Agenda Taskforce Educational Technology Centers: Kennesaw State-Host Site, 9:00am-4:00pm
- 19 Elluminate – Showcase of Transition Around the State, 3:30-5:00pm
- 31 Parent Surveys Completed

June

- 1 All Special Education Budget Amendments Due
- 7-10 GPAT 2011 Summer Institute – St. Simons Island
- 15 Final Student Record Submission – Including Special Education Record and GNETS Program Record
- 30 Disproportionality Documentation Form/CEIS Student Data for the Portal

July

- 31 Preschool Exit Data (FY11 Data)
Postsecondary Survey (FY09-10 Exiters)
Timelines (FY11 Data)
**July 31st is a Sunday; therefore, all reports must be submitted by August 1.*