



DIVISION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES and SUPPORTS

OCTOBER 2010 DL UPDATE

Goodbye

The Georgia Department of Education Division for Special Education Services and Supports says goodbye to an individual who has played a vital leadership role in the state for many years. Nancy O'Hara retires after 30 years of service to the school districts and families of Georgia. Nancy came to the Department in 1997, and served in many capacities before becoming the Director of the Division for Special Education Services in 2007. In the spring of 2010, Nancy was appointed Associate Superintendent of Innovative Instruction; and she has continued her work on behalf of the children of Georgia in this role. During her tenure as a Director, Nancy led the effort to establish new Special Education State Board Rules in June of 2007, and in March of 2010. She leaves a legacy of great work; and she will be remembered for her willingness to work to solve any problem for parents and systems, for her kindness, and for her lifelong dedication to children. We all wish her well as she moves to a new phase of her life.

Welcome

The Division for Special Education Services is pleased to announce the addition of a new staff member, Mr. Ron Washington. Ron is a program specialist in the compliance review unit. As a Special Program Assistant (Special Education Administrator) with the Atlanta Public Schools (APS), Ron facilitated the compliance, instructional delivery and individual services for students with disabilities. In addition, he assisted in the delivery of district level professional learning initiatives and in building level coaching; and he modeled, for caseload managers, the best practices for writing effective IEP's and eligibilities. Prior to joining APS, Ron worked as a special education teacher with Henry County Schools. He has also worked as a general education second grade teacher in a metro area charter school. Please join us in welcoming Ron to the GaDOE family.

Georgia's Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process: Timeline Verification, Record Review Follow-Up, and Record Reviews

Timeline Verifications

Systems have already been randomly selected and notified if they are required to submit their supporting documentation (logs and/or other information) from FY10 for initial referrals, re-determinations, or Babies Can't Wait referrals. This information is due to Kathy Giddens by October 18. Kathy can be reached at 404-463-5280 or by email at kjiddens@doe.k12.ga.us.

Record Review Follow-Ups

Systems who had a Record Review in FY10 and were not in compliance at that time will be receiving a Record Review Follow-Up prior to the one year anniversary date of their original Record Review visit. Records will be reviewed as a desk audit. These systems will be asked to submit records based on the original findings. At a minimum, systems will submit copies of IEPs. Eligibilities will be requested if related findings were noted in the original Record Review Report. Systems will be contacted by Kathy Giddens when it is time to submit their documentation.

Record Reviews FY 11

Schedules have been set for systems receiving a Record Review for the FY11 year. Systems will be notified approximately one month prior to the review. Most reviews will be completed on site during a one day visit with the District Liaison and Kathy Giddens, Program Specialist for Compliance.

Georgia Council for Exceptional Children

The Georgia Council for Exceptional Children (GCEC) is proud to host its Annual Conference at the Classic Center in Athens, on Friday and Saturday, February 25-26, 2010. The conference will include sessions from a variety of speakers, subdivision meetings and student events. This year's theme will be "Celebrating Diversity." As the roles of Special Education professionals change and evolve, it is the goal of GACEC to continue to provide timely information and resources that ensure an appropriate education for all students.

Please consider sharing your knowledge and expertise with educators, related-services professionals, parents, students and administrators from across Georgia by submitting a proposal. Presentations may be in the form of a workshop, panel, lecture/discussion, poster or demonstration; and presenters may request either single or double sessions. Please use the attached form to submit your presentation proposal(s) no later than November 18, 2010. Please note that all presenters must register for the conference. If you have any questions, please contact one of the convention chairpersons: Dr. Julie Reffel at 229-259-5132 or email her at jreffel@valdosta.edu or Dr. Rebecca C. McMullen at rebecca.mcmullen@gcsu.edu.

Guidance Regarding the Designation of the Mathematics Support III Course as a Core Credit

The Georgia Department of Education believes that all students can be successful in the Georgia Performance Standards for mathematics as presently written. The Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT) for Mathematics item descriptors, study guide, and course blueprints for spring 2011 already exist. We want to do all we can for students to be successful on this GHSGT. Therefore, the State Board of Education has given districts the flexibility to choose whether Mathematics II students progress to Mathematics III or Mathematics Support III, which has recently been designated a core credit by the State Board of Education. Both Mathematics III and Mathematics Support III will prepare the students to be successful on the mathematics GHSGT.

The Mathematics Support III class is a tier 2 intervention and will be offered for core credit during the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 school years only. Students will be determined to be at risk based on their performance in Mathematics I and Mathematics II. Once this determination is made, districts should allow students flexibility in mastering the mathematics content of three core courses (Mathematics I, Mathematics II, and Mathematics III) over a four year period by taking Math Support III as an additional core credit in Mathematics. Thus, 2012 and 2013 graduates may meet the four mathematics requirements for graduation by taking Mathematics I, Mathematics II, Mathematics Support III, and Mathematics III. During the Mathematics Support III class, students will focus on mathematics content from Mathematics I, Mathematics II, and Mathematics III. Completion and mastery of Math Support III will provide the mathematics support necessary to pass the GHSGT. As students are recommended for the Mathematics Support III class, mathematics teachers and guidance counselors will provide information regarding the impact on post-secondary options. Students taking Mathematics Support III during their junior year, may, in their senior year after completing Mathematics III, have the option of participation in Mathematics IV or another fourth year option.

Finally, this change in the designation of Mathematics Support III from elective to core credit does not in any way change the graduation rule. Therefore, special education students must satisfy the standing graduation rule by completing Mathematics III. Mathematics Support III does not address the same content as Mathematics III and is therefore NOT an equivalent course.

The Dispute Resolution Continuum

Dispute resolution is an important component of IDEA 2004. Having a clear understanding of how the dispute resolution process is designed and how each component operates is essential for improving the chances of successful early resolution of disputes. Using a model developed by Feinberg, et al. (2002), the process follows a continuum of conflict resolution options with five phases along the continuum:

<u>Phase</u>	<u>Example of Options</u>
I. Prevention	Active stakeholder collaboration
II. Disagreement	Local director, parent to parent assistance
III. Conflict	Mediation
IV. Procedural Safeguards	Formal Complaint Due Process Hearing Request
V. Legal Review	Formal Hearing

Flexible early intervention strategies can prevent disputes from moving along the continuum towards more formal third party resolutions. An example of a Phase I prevention strategy is an effective committee of stakeholders who serve as advisors for state and local special education programs. Focusing upon sound programs and services with meaningful stakeholder input can serve as a strong prevention strategy. If disagreements arise (Phase II), the early, direct involvement of the special education director or other administrative staff can resolve many disputes without the need for third party intervention. If third party intervention becomes necessary, consider parent to parent assistance from resources such as a parent mentor (if the district employs one) or a referral to Parent to Parent of Georgia. Once disputes move farther along the continuum, third party intervention becomes necessary and can include mediation, a formal complaint, and/or a due process hearing.

The five phases of the dispute resolution process will be explored further in later editions of the DL Update. In the area of dispute resolution, an ounce of prevention is truly worth a pound of cure. If you have tips to share or questions to ask, please email Mike Blake at mblake@doe.k12.ga.us.

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).

FY11 Parent Surveys

Surveys to measure parent satisfaction will be mailed to participating school systems in October (see attached listing of the selected districts and schools). Additional instructions for distribution will be emailed to directors in participating districts next week.

This is the final year of a five-year distribution cycle based on a formula developed to obtain a fair representation of parents of Georgia's students receiving special education services across the state. The results from the annual surveys are used to meet Indicator #8, which measure parents' satisfaction with special education services. Overall, statewide parent survey satisfaction results continued to improve for the 2009-2010 school year; however, the state did not reach its Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) target of 36 percent in parent satisfaction. The state's parent satisfaction rate was 30 percent for 2009-2010, a six percent increase from 2008-2009.

Surveys for 2010-2011, should be distributed to parents of children receiving special education services (including speech) in the designated schools. Since the school list is updated from the most recent FTE count available, some school changes may not yet have been noted. Please contact Patti Solomon, Family Engagement Specialist, psolomon@doe.k12.ga.us, if there has been a change to your school list. If the school has closed, in most cases, the distribution number will be subtracted from your district's total count. These surveys are due back to the survey research unit at the University of Georgia (UGA) by May 30, 2011.

District Representative for OT/PT Contact Meetings

Special Education Directors were asked to submit the name, email and phone number of the occupational or physical therapist who will represent their districts for the quarterly meetings. The deadline for the submissions was September 30, 2010. If you have not yet submitted this information, please email your representative's name to Elise Lynch, (klynch@doe.k12.ga.us) as soon as possible. Information about the first meeting will be sent to these representatives the first week in October.

Autism Regional Team Meetings

As a continuation of professional learning opportunities offered to enhance teacher expertise and build state capacity to serve students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), the Regional Autism Team Meetings will be conducted during the 2010-2011 school year. Regional meetings are planned for Bibb County, Pickens County, Dougherty County and Liberty County.

Two meetings will be held in each region. During these meetings, members will have the opportunity to share concerns and effective strategies with each other as well as with staff from the Divisions of Special Education Services and Supports. The local system is responsible for funding and providing substitute teachers as needed for each of the two, one-day meetings.

It is recommended that two or more representatives from each school district, such as a teacher and SLP capable of assisting with training for school systems, attend these meetings. Although the teams may or may not be the same staff who attended the autism academy, the regional meetings will build on those skills developed during the academy.

The dates and locations for the Fall meetings are posted and registration is currently open. All Team Meetings will be from 8:30 – 3:30.

Please register for your meeting of choice by going to the GaDOE Special Education webpage and selecting “Conferences.” Seats are limited so early registration is encouraged.

Savannah Region	October 14 – Low Functioning	October 15 – High Functioning
Albany Region	October 25 – Low Functioning	October 26 – High Functioning
Jasper Region	October 28 – Low Functioning	October 29 – High Functioning
Macon Region	November 4 – Low Functioning	November 5 – High Functioning

Locations:

Savannah Region – Liberty County Board of Education, 200 Bradville Street, Hinesville, GA 31313, phone 912-876-2161

Albany Region – SW Georgia GLRS, 9155 McKinley Street, Albany, GA 31701, phone 229-431-1230

Northwest Region – North Georgia RESA, 4731 Old Highway 5 South, Ellijay, GA 30540, phone 706-276-1114

Macon Region – Monroe County Board of Education Training Building, 433 US Hwy 41 South, Forsyth, GA 31029, phone 478-994-2031

Thank you for your collaboration in developing our teams across the state. For questions or additional information please contact Dr. Alice Murphy at 404-657-9957 or mmurphy@doe.k12.ga.us.

FTE and CPI Fall Transmission Dates

The Fall FTE and CPI transmission dates are posted on the data collections website and are attached. Please adhere to the timelines.

The Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership (GaPMP)

The Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership (GaPMP) will hold its 9th annual state conference on Oct. 13th and 14th, at The Georgia Center, the University Conference Center and Hotel, in Athens. Registration is available at <http://www.georgiacenter.uga.edu/conferences/2010/Oct/13/gpmp.phtml>.

School systems not participating in the GaPMP are welcome to register to learn more about the Partnership and family engagement strategies. In addition, three pre-sessions will be held Oct. 12th, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., on positive behavior supports, self-led IEPs and mini C.A.F.E. DIALOGUES to reduce dropout (Circles of Adults Focusing on Education).

A statewide family engagement website hosted by the Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership showcases family, school and community partnerships: www.parentmentors.org. This is a hands on learning tool for parents and teachers.

Dates to Remember

October

- 6** Elluminate: Special Education Directors
- 6-8** Georgia Vision Educators Statewide Training (GVEST), www.GIMC.org
- 9-10** Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment® (EIPA)
- 12** Elluminate: FTE 2011
- 12-14** Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership Annual Conference
- 14-15** Autism Regional Team Meeting - Savannah
- 24-25** Autism Regional Team Meeting - Albany
- 26** Elluminate: Transition - When You Don't Want to Stay Home: Better Options for Severe Disabilities
- 27** Final transmission date for FTE and CPI Cycle 1 data
- 28-29** Autism Regional Team Meeting - Jasper

November

- 3** Elluminate: Special Education Directors
- 4-5** Autism Regional Team Meeting - Macon
- 10-12** Georgia Council of Administrators of Special Education Fall Conference - Savannah, GA
- 10** Special Education Leadership Development Academy (SELDA)

January 2011

- 27** Georgia Regional Braille Challenge