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**DIVISIONS FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES and SUPPORTS**

**NOVEMBER 2009 DL UPDATE**

**Farewell**

Lynne Williams will be retiring from the Georgia Department of Education on October 30, 2009. At the department, Lynne has worked in compliance and has been a professional learning program specialist for the past six years. She has served as the coordinator for the Georgia Learning Resources System and has been actively involved in a range of statewide initiatives including the Student Achievement in the Least Restrictive Environment project and the State Personnel Development Grant's Graduation/Dropout Prevention Project.

Lynne has also lead the New Special Education Teachers' Mentor Academy and has coordinated the Special Education Leadership Development Academy (SELDA). She co-authored *Students Can Make AYP: What Every School Leader Should Know*, a book published by the GaDOE. Prior to coming to department, Lynne worked as a developmental disabilities consultant in Kentucky and as a teacher and education supervisor at the Georgia School for the Deaf. She retires with 33 years of educational experience in Georgia.

Those of you who have had the pleasure to work with Lynne over the years know what an impact she has had on improving outcomes for students with disabilities in our state. Her positive and generous nature, high degree of professionalism and tremendous work ethic have brought about changes in how we all view student achievement and professional learning. She will be very much missed by all her friends and coworkers who have been fortunate to know her. Congratulations and best wishes to Lynne as she starts this new phase of her life!

**Alternate Assessment Based on Modified Achievement Standards**

The Georgia Department of Education will administer the Alternate Assessment Based on Modified Achievement Standards (AA-MAS), often called the 2% assessment, for the first time in the 2010-2011 school year for grades three through eight in Reading, English/Language Arts and Mathematics. The department will provide professional learning and resources for school administrators, educators and IEP teams during the rest of the 2009-2010 school year. In addition, we will continue to develop and field test items.

The AA-MAS is an assessment that is based on grade level standards and covers the same breadth of the curriculum as the regular assessment. It is modified in the achievement expectations for students. Additional information and guidance will be provided in the near future. In the meantime, students for whom this may be appropriate should continue to receive high quality grade level instruction to prepare them for the future assessment option.

### **2010 Special Education Parent Surveys**

As you are aware, the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs through the State Performance Plan (SPP) requires measurement of parent involvement and the results of the parent involvement. This Indicator 8 requires the reporting of "the percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who reported that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities". Georgia utilizes the NCSEAM parent survey to collect this information. Each system must participate at least once in the five year sampling plan and any system with 50,000 or more students must participate annually. In addition, each year the sample must be representative of the state. Therefore, most of systems will participate more than one time in the schedule. The sampling plan focuses on schools, so if you are participating it will be specific schools that should receive the survey. It is anticipated that Parent Surveys will be mailed to the district special education directors for distribution to schools beginning in January. **Attached is a list of school districts and schools that will be participating in the 2010 parent survey.**

If you have questions please contact Patti Solomon at [psolomon@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:psolomon@doe.k12.ga.us) or 404 657-7328.

### **Georgia Instructional Materials Center (GIMC)**

Digital versions of accessible instructional materials (AIMs) are now available for students who have a need for them based on a qualifying print disability as documented in their IEPs. The GIMC will assist in obtaining these materials or will provide them directly to the LEA. These accessible versions of books are available in DAISY audio, DAISY text, or accessible PDF formats depending on the need of the student. The GIMC is part of the Division for Special Education Supports of the Georgia Department of Education with a mission of making AIMs available to qualified students in Georgia's public schools. For more information please visit [www.gimc.org](http://www.gimc.org) or call Jim Downs or Chris Ritts at 404-298-3653 or 866-245-1048 (toll free).

### **Transition Elluminate Date Changes**

Please note that the following Transition Elluminate Sessions will be offered on dates which have changed due to speaker availability. Sessions begin at 3:30 P.M..

The January Elluminate (January 21, 2010) will help special education teachers and administrators plan and carry-out Transition Plans through the eyes and ears of transition professionals that comply with special education regulations and lead to better post secondary outcomes.

The February Transition Elluminate Session (February 11, 2010) will help anyone involved with Adult Services navigate the "system".

Final Dates:

January 21,2010 - Transition Plan Writing-Beyond Dotted I's and Crossed T's

February 11, 2010 - Adult Services-CHAPTER TWO-The Rest of Your Life

### **Georgia Deaf Education Achievement Forum 2010**

A consortium series will be presented via the Educational Technology Centers for teachers, educational interpreters, parents, related services providers, and others who work with students who are deaf and hard of hearing. Topics for the **November 20, 2009** session include: **Cochlear Implants 101**: What are they, who is a candidate, what can persons with hearing loss expect, and how can you support clients in learning more; and **Georgia Hands And Voices**: Providing parent support and improving family engagement.

The meeting lasts from 9:00 to 12:00. There is no charge to participate in this consortium. Interpreters will be provided.

On-line registration for the November 20, 2009 meeting is now available:

<http://admin.doe.k12.ga.us/gadoe/trngadmin2.nsf/frnCourseSchedule?OpenForm&CourseName=Georgia+Deaf+Education+Achievement+Forum+2010+&parentunid=E9FC0BC265CF437485257656005476D4>

Select your location of choice and register by November 18 to receive the handouts in advance. The next consortium meetings will be January 22 and March 19, 2010.

### **The Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment® (EIPA)**

**Who?** Any candidate may register for the assessment, but professional training and experience are highly recommended. If you were recently assessed with this instrument, you may be subject to a wait period of 6 to 12 months.

**Cost?** \$125

**How?** See [www.task12.org](http://www.task12.org) Click on "EIPA Registration", and then select the date and location desired to access the registration form.

#### **When and Where?:**

November 7-8, Atlanta Area School for the Deaf, Clarkston

January 16-17, Rutland Academy, Athens

March 6-7, Atlanta Area School for the Deaf, Clarkston

May 15-16, Largo Tibet Elementary School, Savannah

June 9-10-11, Valdosta State University, Valdosta

**More information about the EIPA:** Go to [www.classroominterpreting.org](http://www.classroominterpreting.org).

**Questions:** Contact Dr. Frank Nesbit at 404-657-9976 or [fnesbit@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:fnesbit@doe.k12.ga.us)

### **GPAT Assistive Technology Specialist E-mail List**

The Georgia Project for Assistive Technology (GPAT) is in the process of updating its listing of LEA Assistive Technology Specialists. This email list is kept as a means of informing local assistive technology specialists of information that may be beneficial to your system as you develop and maintain your assistive technology programs. This information can include information such as new assistive technology devices and/or programs, upcoming continuing education opportunities, internet resources and statewide initiatives being developed by GPAT.

As a part of this e-mail update request, GPAT would like to ask local Special Education Directors to send the following information to DeeDee Bunn ([dbunn@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:dbunn@doe.k12.ga.us)):

- Your local school system name
- The name of your local assistive technology specialist
- Contact information for your specialist (email address, mailing address and work phone number)

If you have any questions about this e-mail list, please contact Gina Gelinias, GPAT program manager, at [ggelinias@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:ggelinias@doe.k12.ga.us).

### **Dispute Resolution/Tip of the Month**

The IDEA requires the State Education Agency to provide the mediation process to families and school systems at no cost. (34 CFR § 300.506) In Georgia, this process is provided to support schools systems and families in resolving issues whenever both parties agree to participate. Recently, I have spoken with several individuals (both parents and school system personnel), who understood the mediation process was only available once a request for due process hearing had been filed or in response to a state complaint. The IDEA requires the GaDOE to offer mediation in those circumstances. However, it is an option to consider in resolving conflicts when they are related to the IDEA. There are several advantages associated with utilizing the mediation process. It is confidential, voluntary, occurs in a short period of time, is provided free of charge and has a high success rate.

Reports issued by the Center for Alternative Dispute Resolution (CADRE) conclude that successful agreements paving the way for positive working relationships with families occur when conflicts are resolved in the early stages and in a timely manner. Please consider sharing this information with families and using this process before a situation escalates to the more formal dispute resolution processes. Additional information regarding the process of mediation and the request procedures is available on the GaDOE website at: [http://www.gadoe.org/ci\\_exceptional.aspx?PageReq=CIEXCDispute](http://www.gadoe.org/ci_exceptional.aspx?PageReq=CIEXCDispute) or if you have questions, please contact Debbie Gay at [dgay@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:dgay@doe.k12.ga.us) or by phone at 404 657 7329.

## **Support for NI Schools to Improve the Performance of Students with Disabilities**

The Divisions for Special Education are collaborating with the Division for State-Directed Schools to provide technical assistance to improve the performance of Students with Disabilities (SWD) in targeted Needs Improvement (NI) Schools. Based on the 2008-2009 data, approximately 75 districts did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the SWD subgroup, and 10 of the 75 districts failed to make AYP exclusively for SWD.

Dr. Donna Drakeford, Special Education School Improvement Specialist, will work with selected State Directors to support technical assistance in the following NI schools: The B.E.S.T. Academy at Benjamin Carson, Coretta Scott King Young Women's Leadership Academy, Turner Middle School and Dekalb-Rockdale Psycho-educational Center (GNETS). As a result of the collaboration, the Special Education School Improvement Specialist and State Director will be able to develop a toolkit that can help other schools address the educational needs of SWD (e.g., needs assessment, implementation of action plan template and strategies to build capacity). Both Divisions are excited about this partnership and look forward to sharing additional updates in the future.

### **Dates To Remember**

#### **November**

- 2-4** GA Assn. of School Psychologists fall conference, Savannah Marriott Riverfront.
- 5** ElluminateLive! Webinar: *Giving Access to Science Standards--Linking Science and life Skills and Experiences*
- 7-8** Educational Interpreter Performance Assessments, Atlanta Area School for the Deaf, Clarkston
- 9** Special Education Directors' Elluminate Session  
Kim Hartsell and Nancy O'Hara 10:00-11:30 a.m.
- 10-11** State Advisory Panel for Special Education, Savannah
- 10** ElluminateLive! Session: *Giving Access to Social Studies Standards-Relating Themes in Social Studies to Relevant Life Skills and Experiences* 3:30 p.m.
- 11** Special Education Leadership Development Academy (GCASE/GaDOE), Savannah
- 12-13** GCASE Fall Conference, Savannah
- 17** ElluminateLive! Session: *Data Warehouse/SPED Cube/SPED Level Record* 8:30 a.m.
- 20** Georgia Deaf Education Achievement Forum (GDEAF), Educational Technology Centers

**January 2010**

- 13 SSTAGE drive-in conference: *Best Practices in SST/RTI* Athens Classic Center  
[www.sstage.org](http://www.sstage.org)
- 14 Special Education Directors' Discussion Forum  
Location: Bibb County, Career Center Annex at Hutchings
- 16-17 Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment, Rutland Center, Athens
- 22 Georgia Deaf Education Achievement Forums (GDEAF), Educational Technology Centers
- 23 SSTAGE Drive-In Workshop: Evaluating Fidelity of Interventions, Forsyth County Board of Education, [www.sstage.org](http://www.sstage.org)
- 28 Georgia Regional Braille Challenge, Georgia Academy for the Blind
- 31 Special Education Leadership Development Academy (GCASE/GaDOE), Atlanta

**February**

- 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 Site: 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

**March**

- 6-7 Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment, Atlanta Area School for the Deaf, Clarkston
- 19 Georgia Deaf Education Achievement Forums (GDEAF), Educational Technology Centers
- 22 Special Education Leadership Development Academy (GCASE/GaDOE), site TBA
- TBA Spring Special Education Leadership Meeting

**April**

- 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