**FY 14 GaPMP Kickoff Conference**

**Presented by the Georgia Department of Education,**

**Division for Special Education Services and Supports**

**September 11-13, 2013**

Th**e Classic Center, Athens, GA**

**Session Descriptions**

**Wednesday, September 11, 2013**

**Pre-Conference Sessions**

**11:00 – 2:00 p.m. Athena A**

***Setting the Pace to Graduate***

*Presenters: Laura Brown, PhD., Director of College and Career Readiness, SPDG; Debbie Currere, Parent Support Specialist, SPDG & April Lee, Parent Mentor, Wayne County Schools*

Pacing yourself in a race is important in order to finish. The same applies for students with disabilities and their families as they prepare to graduate. How can schools keep a pulse on students with disabilities and those at risk so that they don’t fall through the cracks and drop out? What supports are needed to do this? How do we scaffold communication to those students and their families to make each student College and Career Ready? You will hear information on graduation that will answer those questions plus easy to implement activities that you can bring back to your district.

**11:00 – 2:00 p.m. Athena B**

**Transition is more like a Marathon than a sprint….**

*Presenters: Lu Nations-Miller, GaDOE; Carol Smith, Parent Mentor, Candler County Schools; Jackie McNair, Parent Mentor, Gwinnett County Schools and Cyndi White, Parent Mentor, Barrow County Schools*

Athletes competing in marathons train and build the endurance to complete those 26 miles. Athletes competing in triathlons train to do the same but they also practice *transition*, moving from one activity to the next. To be successful these athletes must have their gear and equipment in place in the *transition zone* in order to move successfully to the next stage of the race. Like these athletes, our students with disabilities and their families need the right gear in place to transition from school to adult life. Session presenters will cover not the components of a compliant transition plan as well as some of the tools and equipment needed for a quality driven and successful transition including easy to implement activities that will help students and families **Get *Set*** for transition.

**11:00 – 2:00 p.m. Athena C**

***Administrator’s Pre-Session – Connecting the Dots to Data***

*Presenter: Lynne Williams, GaDOE /SPDG Consultant*

With so many initiatives and goals that need your attention and focus, how do you get the most out of the work your parent mentor is doing and reporting? How does the GaPMP Accountability Plan/Report fit into what already needs to be done? This session will bring some insight on how to be **On your Mark** to start the new school year that will have you **Getting Set** to support and give feedback to your mentor so you can **GO** forward with great projects that engage families and improve results for your students.

**Conference Welcome & Keynote**

**3:00 – 5:00 p.m.**

**Conference Welcome Athena F-J**

*Ms Debbie Gay, State Special Education Director, GaDOE, Division for Special Education Services and Supports*

**Conference Keynote Athena F-J**

**“W.E.A.P.O.N.S. of Mass Construction: Keys to unlocking the potential of Students with Disabilities”**

*Keynote: Jemellah Coes – Teacher of the Year*

The discussion focuses on the idea that every student is capable of success once we tap into their unique gifts and interests. It also highlights the importance of the partnership between parents, schools, and communities which creates an environment that produces positive outcomes for students.

**7:30 – 9:00 p.m.**

**MAPS Facilitation Firehall**

*Facilitators: Stacey Ramirez, Director of Individual and Family Supports, CLD & Debbie Currere, Parent Support Specialist, SPDG*

The intention of this optional group activity is to give the parent mentors who were recently trained on the person centered planning tool, MAPS (Making Action Plans) an opportunity to refine their facilitation skills. Those who attend will have either the option to be the focus person and have a MAP facilitated for them personally, to be part of the planning circle that supports the focus person or to observe to see the process in action. The MAPS person centered planning tool can be used as an assessment to define goals for the IEP and Transition Plan. We invite you to stop by and catch the fever of the person centered planning process!!

**Thursday, September 12, 2013**

**8:30 – 9:30 a.m.**

**Conference Keynote Athena F-J**

**“A little potato and hard to peel”**

*Presenter: David Harrell*

Using humor, candor, and 80’s pop culture references, David will share his heartwarming story about more than living with a disability but about the universal experience of overcoming any obstacle!

**Breakout Sessions – Round 1**

**9:45 – 10:45 a.m.**

**If You Build It, They Will Learn Athena A**

*Presenter: Cynde Snider, Professional Learning Specialist, Special Education Services & Supports, GaDOE*

If we want to improve student outcomes, we need to design curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of a wide variety of students from the very beginning.  Universal Design for Learning allows us to do this.  Come learn how.

**Person Center Planning & ASPIRE Athena B**

*Presenters: Elise James, Program Specialist, GaDOE & Stacey Ramirez, Director of Individual and Family Supports, Center for Leadership on Disabilities*

ASPIRE (Active Student Participation Inspires Real Engagement) and Person-Centered Planning support students to focus on their interests, strengths and abilities and understand they can use them in school, their communities, and their lives.  Both of these tools empower students with disabilities to take charge of defining the direction for their future.  This session will discuss the power of self-determination and the value of person-centered planning in the student-led IEP process.

**The Black Tie Tiger Club Athena C**

*Presenter: Carol Smith, Parent Mentor, Candler County Schools*

This session will include an overview of the experiences of implementing and facilitating a new, highly successful transition program at Metter High School in Candler County. The Black Tie Tiger Club equips students with disabilities with learned skills to become work-ready productive citizens after high school graduation. This club was formed with a dual purpose in mind: to provide students with cognitive disabilities a sense of belonging on “club day” and a means to become ready for employment after graduation.

Round 1 – 9:45 – 10:45 and repeated Round 4 – 3:00 – 4:00

**When a Band-Aid Isn't Enough: Responding to Youth in Crisis Athena D**

*Presenter: Cheryl Benefield, Family Engagement Coordinator/ Parent Mentor, Haralson County Schools*

You may know CPR and the Heimlich Maneuver. You can call 911. But can you administer first aid in a mental health crisis? Youth Mental Health First Aid teaches participants the risk factors and warning signs of a variety of mental health challenges common among adolescents, including anxiety, depression, psychosis, eating disorders, AD/HD, disruptive behavior disorders, and substance use disorder.  YMHFA won't train you to provide therapy or counseling, or even to diagnose these issues. What you will learn is how to support adolescents who are developing signs and symptoms of mental illness or who are in an emotional crisis. Come learn more about it!

**Breakout Sessions – Round 2**

**11:00 – 12:00 noon**

**Collaborative Communities – Facilitating Critical Conversations Athena A**

*Presenter: Kimberly Simmons, Education Program Specialist, GaDOE*

Discover different approaches to providing a shared context for people to communicate in a way that builds understanding and insight. See strategies to enable dialogue between others for exploration of new possibilities and solving challenging problems. Collaborative Communities is a way to capture and diffuse existing knowledge to help improve practice.

**A Parent's Guide to IEPs:  Who Knew? Athena B**

*Presenter: Margo L. Habiger, Ed.D.; Program Specialist, GaDOE Compliance Unit*

 This session will focus on compliance requirements regarding specific sections of the IEP as well as parent questions regarding those, and other, sections.  Handouts will be provided with examples of the information discussed during the session.

**Plan, Lead, Succeed – Steps for Youth-led Community Summit Athena C**

*Presenter: April Lee, Parent Mentor, Wayne County Schools*

Students have unique gifts and talents. When given the opportunity to learn, practice, and demonstrate leadership skills they have the ability to lead their peers and community in important conversations that impact whether a student graduates or drops out of school. The presenter will share step by step the year long plan which engaged students, families and community members to partner together for meaningful school and community planning, discussing important issues impacting education; such as school atmosphere, illegal activities, need for communication, and the economic impact on youth.

**Let’s DO It Together – Increasing Parental Involvement and Collaboration Athena D**

Presenters: Dr. Audrey Armistad, *Associate Superintendent of Schools*

Dr. Kimberly Gore, *Director of Instructional Programs*

April Smith, *Parent Mentor*

This session will focus on initiatives that will increase parental knowledge of DJJ schools, increase parental involvement and collaboration. The Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) is the 181st school system in the state of Georgia. Most recently, we changed our school’s name to Georgia Preparatory Academy, to decrease the stigma associated with students that return to the community. Each facility within the DJJ system offers a comprehensive educational program to detainees. One of our goals for FY ’14 is to increase parental involvement and collaboration to support youth, as we work to increase student achievement; Let’s DO It Together!!!

**12:15 – 1:30 p.m.**

**Lunch & Learn Keynote**

**Connecting the Dots of Family, School and Community Through Special Olympics Georgia Athena F-J**

*Presenter: Georgia Milton-Sheats, CEO, Special Olympics Georgia*

Special Olympics Georgia offers sports training, competition, free health screenings and family networking to individuals with intellectual disabilities statewide AND year round.  Learn more about how we INSPIRE teamwork throughout communities, in schools, in families as well as transitioning out of the school system.  Become a part of a movement that provides opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage while building self esteem and friendships.  We know that building relationships with others in the community can be life changing so come and hear about the unified sports programs that are offered on community and state levels.

**Breakout Sessions – Round 3**

**1:45 – 2:45 p.m.**

**If You Build It, They Will Learn Athena A**

*Presenter: Cynde Snider, Professional Learning Specialist, Special Education Services & Supports, GaDOE*

*Session Repeated from Round 1*

**ENCORE:  Planning the Road Trip of a Lifetime! Athena B**

*Presenters:  Sonya Dotson-Powell, Parent Mentor, Gwinnett County Schools and Tatum Young*

Description:  The presenters will share an overview of the ENCORE, which is a series of interactive modules designed by Parent to Parent of Georgia for high school students with the goal of gaining greater decision-making and independence skills.  These modules are facilitated by an adult trainer and a co-trainer who is a youth or young adult with a disability.  This brief overview will highlight a few of the topics and tools students discuss and actively participate in doing such as making a budget; reading a paycheck; role playing the idea of teamwork and doing a mock interview.  Statistics and student feedback from ENCORE events will also be shared.

**Transition Learning Group for Life After High School Athena C**

*Presenter: Jackie McNair, Parent Mentor, Gwinnett County Schools & Cyndi White, Parent Mentor, Barrow County Schools*

Increase parent participation in the Transition Plan by hosting a Transition Leaning Group (TLG) for parents of high school students with disabilities. The Transition Compliance checklist identifies several items for parents to complete. By identifying those items to parents and providing learning opportunities for them to complete them, more meaningful transitions to the community can occur. The TLG curriculum involves parents reading a student’s Transition Plan, listening to guest speakers, attending a Transition Expo/Fair, and writing a Letter of Intent for the student. Following participation, families are prepared to actively participate in future Transition Plans.

**How to Work Effectively with Families of Your Students with Special Needs Athena D**

*Presenter: Gail McGhee, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Emory University School of Medicine*

No one knows a child with special needs better than their parent, and research supports the fact that children progress most when intervention and education are provided consistently across all settings. This workshop will provide practical strategies for promoting effective communication between educators and parents so that they may work effectively as a team to maximize each child’s learning opportunities.

**Breakout Sessions – Round 4**

**3:00 – 4:00 p.m.**

**Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports for All Students Athena A**

*Presenter: Shannon Hammond, Director of Federal Programs, Oconee County Schools*

Participants will be provided with the rationale, framework, features, and school examples about the implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) within a school setting.

**A Parent's Guide to IEPs:  Who Knew? Athena B**

*Presenter: Margo L. Habiger, Ed.D.; Program Specialist, GaDOE Compliance Unit*

Session Repeated from Round 2

**Building Parent Capacity: Increasing Student Achievement through Family Engagement Athena C**

*Presenters:  Michelle Sandrock, Parent Engagement Program Manager & Nate Schult, Parent Engagement Specialist*

 Federal law requires that Title I schools build parent capacity, but what does this mean? This presentation will look closely at Georgia’s adopted family engagement standards: The National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships.   Learn how capacity building can be accomplished by educators as they work to support families and increase student achievement!

**When a Band-Aid Isn't Enough: Responding to Youth in Crisis Athena D**

*Presenter: Cheryl Benefield, Family Engagement Coordinator/ Parent Mentor, Haralson County Schools*

Session Repeated from Round 1

**Friday, September 13, 2013**

7:30 -8:45 a.m.

**Working Breakfast meetings**

Special Education Administrators **Olympia 1 & 2**

Parent Mentors **Parthenon 1 & 2**

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.

**Working Breakouts**

As we approach our conference finish line, we will cool down and reflect. How do we connect the information from the conference to or work on our “focus indicator?” Breakouts will form around your chosen “focus indicator” with facilitated conversation.

**On Your Mark!**

What does your “focus indicator” really mean? Facilitators will specifically outline each indicator to be sure we are all on our mark.

**Get Set!**

What information from the conference ties into your “focus indicator”? We will take time to process the information obtained during the conference and directly link it to our “focus indicator” to be sure we are set to go!

**Go!**

What is your action plan? Given the information you’ve received, we’ll make a plan with action steps to hit the road running and get us over the finish line!

1. **Indicator # 1&2 Graduation Athena A & B**
2. **Indicator # 13 & 14 Transition Athena C & D**
3. **Indicator # 8 Parent Satisfaction Athena E**
4. **Other Indicators seated by tables Athena E**

10:15 – 11:00 a.m.

**Parent Satisfaction Panel Athena F-J**

Panelists: JoEllen Hancock, Parent Mentor, Cherokee County Schools

Amanda Locke, Parent Mentor, Evans County Schools

Pam Moore, Parent Mentor, Madison County Schools

Shanitha Jones, Parent Mentor, Marion County Schools

11:00 – 11:50 a.m.

**Closing Keynote**

**“You Don’t Know Unless You Try” Athena F-J**

*Keynote: Mike Fredenburg*

What do an athlete, a coach and a special education teacher have in common? Mr. Fredenburg will share his experiences as an athlete and coach that prepared him to meet the challenges of teaching students with Autism.  His dedication to his students and their success will inspire you and make you ready to *Go!* to work supporting Families, Schools and Communities.