

# ROOTED AND ROBUST: GROWING WITH PURPOSE



Middle Georgia State University, Macon, GA  
Tuesday, September 30 – Wednesday, October 1, 2025  
8:30am-3:00pm

## DAY 1

**8:30 am – 9:00 am Registration and Networking** **Pre- Function**

### 9:00 am – 9:50 am Morning General Session

**Welcome** - Bonnie Morris (Walton County) & Anne Ladd (GaDOE)

**Greetings from the State** - Dr. Charity Roberts (GaDOE)

**Keynote** - Dr. MaryKay Berry (GCASE)

**Room 211**

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS – ROUND 1

**10:00 AM - 10:50 AM**

### Conversation with State Director (Directors/Designees only)

Dr. Charity Roberts (GaDOE)

**Room 211**

### Holding Parents' Hands Through First Steps

Missy Sullivan (Carrollton City) & Karen Tharpe (Appling County)

**Room 237**

### From Concern to Support: Helping Families Understand Dyslexia & HB 307

Catherine Gossett (GaDOE) - Repeats in Round 2

**Math Auditorium**

### RWS 2.0: Reimagining the Student Experience & Pathways to Partnerships

Dennis "Chip" Medders (GVRA), Shannah Mabry (GVRA), Vince Bass (GVRA), Leigh Thrailkill (GVRA),  
Dr. Brandi Pardo (Houston County) - Repeats in Round 3

**Room 212**

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS – ROUND 2

**11:00 AM - 11:50 AM**

### NOW & COMP Waivers: Eligibility, Application, Services

Allen Morgan (DBHDD), Sarah Vidal McMurtry (DBHDD) - Repeats in Round 3

**Room 237**

### From Concern to Support: Helping Families Understand Dyslexia & HB 307

Catherine Gossett (GaDOE) - Repeat

**Math Auditorium**

### Supporting Families of Preschool Children

Barbara Ross (GaDOE)

**Room 239**

### Managing PMP Finances & Navigating CFM Indicator 17.5

Andrew Britt (GaDOE)

**Room 211**

### Cultivating Transition with GVRA

Rebecca Williamson (GVRA) & Elise James (GaDOE) - Repeats Day 2, Round 1

**Room 212**

## LUNCH

**12:00 PM - 1:00 PM**

### General Session

**Greetings & Introduction** - Shaun Owen, (GaDOE)

**Keynote** - Superintendent Richard Woods (GaDOE)

**Phil Pickens Leadership Award Nomination Announcement** - Superintendent Richard Woods (GaDOE),  
Jodie Zeuke (Oglethorpe County)

**Room 211**

## WHOLE GROUP SESSION

**1:15 PM - 2:15 PM**

### Supporting Families with Literacy Strategies & Materials

Dr. Amy Denty (GaDOE)

**Math Auditorium**

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS – ROUND 3

2:30 PM - 3:30 PM

### RWS 2.0: Reimagining the Student Experience & Partnerships

Dennis "Chip" Medders (GVRA), Shannah Mabry (GVRA), Vince Bass (GVRA), Leigh Thrailkill (GVRA), Dr. Brandi Pardo (Houston County Schools) - Repeat

Room 212

### Home Harmony: Partnering with Parents to Manage Behaviors at Home

Tiera Bowen (Putnam County), Crystal Williams (Putnam County), Catreshia Brundage (Putnam County)

Room 237

### NOW & COMP Waivers: Eligibility, Application, Services

Allen Morgan (DBHDD), Sarah Vidal McMurtry (DBHDD) - Repeat

Room 211

### Rooted in Relationships, Growing Through Collaboration

Jennifer Brown (Monroe County), Christina Holland (Candler County)

Room 239

### Rooted in Indicator 8: Harvesting Insights to Grow Engagement (Panel Discussion)

Jane Grillo (White County), Dawn Albanese (Gwinnett County), Doricia Thompson (DJJ), Anne Ladd (GaDOE)

Math Auditorium



## DAY 2

8:30 am – 8:45 am Muffins and Networking

Pre- Function

8:45 am – 9:30 am Understanding the GAA 1% Rule

Mary Nesbit-McBride (GaDOE)

Room 211

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS – ROUND 1

9:40 AM - 10:30 AM

### Empowering Growth: Toolkit for Purposeful Transition Planning

Dayna Holbel (Emory Autism Center) - Repeats in Round 2

Math Auditorium

### School Social Work & SB 123: Partnering for Student Attendance

Lindsey Oliver (GaDOE) - Repeats in Round 2

Room 211

### Reporting 101: GaPMP Framework & Toolkit

April Lee (GaDOE) - Repeats in Round 2 and Round 3

Room 239

### Cultivating Transition with GVRA

Rebecca Williamson (GVRA) & Elise James (GaDOE)

Room 212

### Rooted in Support: The Parent Resource Room

Genevieve Harris (Douglas County), Tosanna Rahim (Henry County), Katherine Rule (Henry County)

Room 237

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS – ROUND 2

10:40 AM - 11:30 AM

### Georgia's High School Diploma & State-Defined Alternate Diploma

Elise James (GaDOE)

Room 212

### Empowering Growth: Toolkit for Purposeful Transition Planning

Dayna Holbel (Emory Autism Center) - Repeat

Math Auditorium

### School Social Work & SB 123: Partnering for Student Attendance

Lindsey Oliver (GaDOE) - Repeat

Room 211

### Reporting 101: GaPMP Framework & Toolkit

April Lee (GaDOE) - Repeat

Room 239

### Supporting Families of English Learners with Disabilities (Panel Discussion)

Margaret Baker (GaDOE), Antoinette Ricardo (Forsyth County), Yesenia Lopez (Paulding County), Erin Arledge (Whitfield County), Mariella Holmes (Whitfield County)

Room 237

## LUNCH

11:40 AM - 12:40 PM

### General Session

**Visionary Award Presentation** - Elise James (GaDOE), Anne Ladd (GaDOE)

Room 211

**Keynote** - Patti Solomon (GaPMP Founder)

**Phil Pickens Leadership Award** - Amy Wadley (Barrow County), Missy Sullivan (Carrollton County), PPA Award Committee

## CONCURRENT SESSIONS – ROUND 3

12:50 PM - 1:40 PM

### Rooted for Resilience: Supported Decision-Making

Dana Lloyd (GA Advocacy Office), Grace Sherman (GAO Youth Ambassador),  
Malachi Parker (GAO Youth Ambassador)

Room 212

### Reporting 101: GaPMP Framework & Toolkit

April Lee (GaDOE) - Repeat

Room 239

### Parent to Parent of GA: Cultivating Collaboration

Anika Johnson (P2P), Melinda Evans McKendrick (P2P)

Room 211

### Dispute Prevention & Resolution in Special Education

Jamila Pollard (GaDOE)

Room 237

## CLOSING SESSION

### 1:50 pm - 2:45 pm Keynote: Language as a Missing Link

Dr. Garry McGiboney (Sharecare)

Room 211

### 2:45 pm - 3:00 pm Closing

GaPMP Leadership Council

Room 211