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Georgia CEC Newsletter

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"A teacher who loves learning earns the right and the ability to help others learn."

Ruth Beechick

President's Message

By: President, Michelle Starley

Greetings, Georgia CEC Members!

I hope your new year is off to a great start! I am so excited about the great things that will be happening with GaCEC in 2020! GaCEC is growing and it is so encouraging to see! New chapters are in the process of starting up in Marietta City Schools, Walton County, and White County. Seeing the growth of our chapters and the consequential increase of support to our teachers statewide is greatly encouraging. Our National CEC Convention will be underway February 5-8 in Portland, OR. GaCEC will be hosting a social event in Portland for GaCEC members who are attending. Be sure to listen out for more details. We would love to see you there! You will find information in this newsletter about Exceptional Children's Week and Mini-Grants we will be offering. We would love to see pictures and hear reports about events your chapters are sponsoring for ECW, and I hope many of you apply for the fantastic Mini-Grants! If you have any questions or would like additional information about starting a chapter in your area, please do not hesitate to contact me!



Exceptional Children's Week

By: Vice President, Dr. Karin Fisher

Help us celebrate Exceptional Children's Week by nominating a deserving student for a **Yes, I Can Award**. Nominations are now open in 7 categories. Do you know a student with a Yes, I Can spirit? If so, nominate a student today at

<https://community.cec.sped.org/ga/awards/yesican>

Georgia CEC is hosting their annual student contest.

Submissions must focus on this year's theme, **Vision 2020: See My Abilities** and may be presented in a format chosen by the student-electronic (i.e. Video, PowerPoint, Google Draw, Prezi, Essay, etc.) or created by the student (original artwork, 3D, written work). Go to the GaCEC webpage for more information.

Exceptional Children's
Week is March 2-6, 2020

Theme:



Want more ways to celebrate ECW at your school? Check out these awesome suggestions:

<p>Host an award ceremony honoring educators, parents, students, and local community members. Examples: Outstanding Educator, Outstanding Employee, Student awards following the Yes I can format.</p>	<p>Profile historical and famous people with disabilities. Read the profiles during the morning announcements.</p>
<p>Sponsor a movie night. Find movies using this database: https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/films/</p>	<p>Invite local college students and professionals who have disabilities to speak to students.</p>
<p>Encourage all students to read books about individuals with disabilities. Use this resource for ideas of books: https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resources/books/</p>	<p>Feature student-made projects. Create T-shirts, buttons, stickers, or bracelets Let students with disabilities lead the Pledge of Allegiance.</p>
<p>Invite Georgia CEC members to present at a meeting or event</p>	<p>Promote Person-First Language</p>
<p>Hold an awareness day where individuals can stimulate various disabilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach sign language • Write using a mirror or non-dominant hand • Do an activity with a blindfold 	<p>Invite Special Education Teachers, RESA, or Professors to provide professional development on different teaching strategies</p>



A Message from the Past-President

By: Past-President, Leslie Allen

Dear GA-CEC Members,

In the fall, I was asked to present a briefing on the State of the Special Education Profession Survey Report completed by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) Pioneers Division. The briefing presented to the Georgia State Advisory Panel reviewed five themes from the survey. The Georgia State Advisory Panel advises the GADOE Special Education Division on the provision of special education and related services for students with disabilities.

The survey looked at five themes: *Use of the IEP, Respondents' feelings of competence, Importance of family engagement, Need for systems-support for delivering special education, and What teachers need to be successful with their students.* Nearly all respondents reported they consulted the IEP. More than half referred to the IEP on a frequent basis (daily to weekly). Two-thirds of the respondent (69%) reported they and the related service personnel (68%) were very or extremely well-prepared to help students meet IEP goals. Of concern is the fact that very few respondents rated highly the preparation of the general education colleagues or the paraprofessionals, who are often charged with supporting special education services.

In the area of family engagement, respondents were less likely to rate themselves as highly confident. These findings become even more concerning when they rated their sense of confidence in meeting the needs of families who differed from them demographically. Few respondents rated support from their district as very high for engaging families and even fewer for involving families in the IEP process. As for systems-support for the delivery of services nearly half of the respondents reported frequent use of collaborative approaches by their school for teaching students with exceptionalities. Of concern is that fewer respondents rated their general education district administrators or building principals as prepared to support them in their work in comparison to their special education supervisors and administrators.

Another concern raised is that special educators are not evaluated on IEP outcomes. The three issues ranked as most important to special educators' success were adequate resources to meet IEP requirements, smaller class size/caseload, and administrators who support the IEP process. Paperwork was not viewed as the problem as respondents reported that the IEP and related paperwork are essential, but they did stress needing more time to get this done.

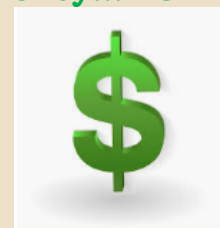
For a full review of the report, visit: <https://www.cec.sped.org/Special-Education/Topics/State-of-the-Profession>

My hope is that GA CEC can help special educators in the areas addressed in the report. I challenge special education administrators to review the findings and to start a local CEC chapter to help grow leaders in special education. CEC provides professional development, public policy information, leadership skill development and networking opportunities for special educators who take advantage of it.



Sign up for CEC Mentoring Program and become a mentor or mentee!

**Money, Money,
Money...MONEY!**



CEC members have an opportunity to receive grants of up to \$500. How you ask?

Apply by going to <https://community.cec.sped.org/ga/minigrants>

Complete the application.

Deadline to submit application is March 15, 2020!

The Student Chapter at Georgia Southern is hosting a mini conference on April 4. All special educators, administrators and service providers welcome. It is free and lunch will be provided. Please sign up at this link: <https://forms.gle/tbSPwtmFRKMvZtWR9>

Post-Secondary Transition Program

By: Dr. Julie Pickens

EAGLE Academy is an Inclusive Post-Secondary Educational Program at Georgia Southern University. The program is one of nine inclusive programs at colleges and universities in Georgia. Inclusive post-secondary programs have been increasing across the country with 281 programs in every state except West Virginia. EAGLE (Equal Access to Gainful Learning and Employment) Academy is a comprehensive transitional program for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Students are given an individualized academic program based on their interest and skill set. Students also prepare for gainful employment through internships or paid jobs both on campus and in the community. Through the program, students become fully immersed in campus life and have easy access to all campus amenities both through living on campus and engaging in campus activities.

For more information, visit <http://coe.georgiasouthern.edu/eagle-academy/>



Local CEC Chapter Spotlight

The Ellen Maltais Chapter of the Council for Exceptional Children serves the Houston County area. Meetings are held four to five times a year. Meetings are tailored to trending topics and requests of educators. During the 2019-2020 school year, topics have focused on co-teaching strategies and behavior/academic interventions. The chapter holds numerous fundraisers throughout the year including local restaurants fundraising nights and selling of wrapping paper. The monies earned allow the chapter to fund mini grants for classrooms in the servicing area. Learning and raising money aren't the only focus! The chapter also focuses on teacher care. During each meeting, an activity is done geared toward relieving stress for teachers. The year ends with the Exceptional Children's Week reception. The reception is held during Exceptional Children's Week. Recognition is given to local businesses, school administrators, district staff, paraprofessionals, and students. Winners are highlighted during the ceremony. The reception is an opportunity for the chapter to highlight the awesome individuals and to celebrate successes!

Advocacy-What's the Deal?

By: CAN Coordinator, Kelly Standridge

Georgia CEC Advocates!

Advocate: Merriam-Webster identifies *advocate* as both a noun and a verb. I ask though, can one be an advocate without action? As special educators, we are advocates for our children with exceptionalities and their families. Advocacy takes many shapes and comes in all sizes. In our classrooms, we support our students' academic, social, and emotional growth in countless ways with creative lessons, strategic interventions, and positive outlooks. In our schools, we promote positive, inclusive settings that foster relationships with colleagues, students, and families. In our communities, we act as liaisons to provide a bridge to further education, sustained employment, and community participation. Our words, our deeds, and our actions define who we are - **special education advocates!**

Indeed, CEC's mission is to improve, through excellence and advocacy, the education and quality of life for children and youth with exceptionalities and to enhance the engagement of their families. CEC website includes a Policy and Advocacy section. With a simple click, you can expand your advocacy outreach to a national level. Check out the Take Action page at <http://cqrcengage.com/cek/?5>, sign up for a weekly Policy Insider Blog, and find out how you can influence legislation to get more funding for special education and gifted education.

Advocate: one who supports, one who promotes, one who defends a cause or interest of another group. Together, we can be advocates in our classrooms, in our school buildings, in our communities, and in our legislative houses. If you are interested in being part of a Georgia CEC Advocacy Network, please contact: Kelly Standridge at kstandridge1@student.gsu.edu. **To be an advocate is to advocate!**



Focus on HLP #16-Explicit Instruction

By Dr. Damita James

The Council for Exceptional Children in conjunction with the CEEDAR Center developed 22 High-Leverage Practices in Special Education. One of the practices is the Use of Explicit Instruction. Explicit Instruction has been identified as the use of explicitly showing and telling students what to do or think while solving problems, enacting strategies, completing tasks, and classifying concepts while making sure the content, skills and concepts are presented to students in a systematic and strategic manner.

For example, to explicitly teach students vocabulary, teachers can use visuals and pair them with written words to help model and scaffold the understanding of new words. This explicit method helps to eliminate misconceptions and helps to highlight the essential concepts needed for the content. When explicit instruction is provided, students are introduced to the new word, provided review of the new word, given guided practice for the new word, given corrective feedback and independent practice for the new word. Our goal as special educators is to work on closing the gap for our students with disabilities. The use of explicit instruction is a great way to start and we can do this by making it plain and providing opportunities for practice so our students can go far.

For more information, check out these resources:

<https://highleveragepractices.org/>

<https://explicitinstruction.org/video-elementary/elementary-video-4/>

CEC Student Chapter Spotlight

Georgia State University has a new chapter. They have been expanding their outreach to promote the field of special education. Through a speaker's bureau, students were able to learn about transition services for students with disabilities and gain first-hand knowledge of community programs. Special T-shirts will be given to December graduates with the motto, **Be Exceptional!**



Contact Us:

<https://community.cec.sped.org/ga/home>

Contact a Membership Committee Member:

GeorgiaCECmembership@gmail.com

CEC Officers:

President: [Michelle Starley](#)-Houston County Schools
President Elect: [Damita James](#) (Middle Georgia GLRS)
Vice President: [Karin Fisher](#) (Georgia Southern University)
Past President: Leslie Allen -Retired-Houston County Schools
Secretary: [Larissa Beecher](#) -Houston County Schools
Treasurer: [Heather Lewis](#) -Gwinnett County Schools