Instructional Support Services (ISS) Program Manual

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Gail Robertson, Director

Updated August 2023
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Mission and Vision

The Instructional Support Services (ISS) Department at Georgia Cyber Academy believes that all students can learn and deserve to achieve academic success. We support students served in our department by:

- providing targeted, small group Tier 2 instruction and domain-specific, individualized Tier 3 instruction
- improving student engagement through targeted behavioral interventions
- providing appropriate accommodations through 504 plans and Hospital Homebound Services, and
- helping eliminate linguistic barriers through our comprehensive ESOL program.

We will continually analyze student progress to build and implement comprehensive services and programs that are designed to meet students where they are and support them on their individual learning path toward high school graduation.

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Multi-Tiered System of Supports

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Program Summary
This section serves to provide information about the function and purpose of the Response to Intervention (RTI) and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) program.

Georgia Department of Education
According to the GADOE, Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students (Georgia’s MTSS) is a framework that integrates assessment and intervention within a school-wide, multi-level prevention system to maximize student achievement and reduce behavioral problems. In Georgia, a three-tiered prevention system, based in the general education classroom, guides teachers and leaders to routinely implement a strong and rigorous standards-based learning environment.

All students participate in general education learning. Students requiring interventions to meet individual learning expectations will receive support through a systematic and purposeful process also known as Response to Intervention or RTI. RTI is embedded within Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students. The number of students requiring interventions will decrease as the level of intensity of the intervention increases.

Goals of a RTI System include:
• For the school and staff to provide effective teaching that fits the needs of each student.
• For the school and staff to make sure the classroom environment is the best possible for every student.
• To help all students meet grade level standards.
• To use student data to identify students who may be struggling.
• To *add to* general education instruction, not *replace* with something different.
• To provide interventions (“help”) as a natural, ongoing part of education that doesn’t wait until the student is struggling.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires the use of evidence-based interventions and suggests that schools and districts implement a tiered system of support. ESSA also allows state flexibility in using grant funds to implement a MTSS framework for literacy in kindergarten through grade 12 [Sec 2224(e)(4)].

House Bill 740 requires local school systems to use a multi-tiered system of supports and reviews prior to expelling or assigning a student in preschool through third grade to out-of-school suspension for more than five consecutive or cumulative days during a school year.

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Overview

Pyramid of Supports
Source: Georgia Department of Education\Multi-Level Prevention System

Response to Intervention (RTI) is embedded throughout Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students (Georgia’s MTSS) framework. RTI is embedded within the Multi-Level Prevention System to provide support matched to student need to maximize student achievement and improve behavioral outcomes.

Georgia’s MTSS includes schoolwide implementation that focuses on the “what and how of instruction” and the provision of services and supports to students that meet their unique, whole child needs.

Until now, Georgia was the only state to have a four-tiered pyramid. Now, Georgia operates within a three-tiered, multi-level prevention system. Students will receive services at all levels, depending on their needs. When all components are implemented, research shows results include strengthened Tier I instruction with 80% of students responding to core curriculum.

Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students represents a cross-divisional effort among Teaching and Learning, School and District Effectiveness, Federal Programs, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, and Special Education.

A multi-level prevention system is an essential component of Georgia's MTSS. The component includes three levels of intensity or prevention that is designed to improve high-quality core instruction, evidence-based interventions, and supports when used effectively within the framework.

The triangle graphic depicts the progression of support across the multi-level prevention system. The triangle represents three levels of prevention and the percentage of students that are expected to benefit from the levels of prevention in an effective system.

The levels are Tier I: Primary Level - Instruction/Core Curriculum, Tier II: Secondary Level – Intervention and Tier III: Tertiary Level - Intensive Intervention.

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Tier I: Primary Level – Instruction/Core Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS</th>
<th>ALL Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INSTRUCTION</td>
<td>District curriculum and instructional practices that are research based; aligned with state or district standards; and incorporate differentiated instruction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SETTING</td>
<td>General education classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSESSMENTS</td>
<td>Screening, continuous progress monitoring, and outcome measures or summative assessments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tier II: Secondary Level – Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS</th>
<th>Students identified as in need of enrichment/acceleration or who are at risk for poor learning and/or behavioral outcomes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INSTRUCTION</td>
<td>Targeted, supplemental instruction delivered to small groups (evidence-based interventions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SETTING</td>
<td>General education classroom or other education settings within the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSESSMENTS</td>
<td>Progress monitoring, diagnostic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tier III: Tertiary Level - Intensive Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOCUS</th>
<th>Students who have not responded to primary or secondary level prevention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INSTRUCTION</td>
<td>Intensive, supplemental instruction delivered to small groups or individually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SETTING</td>
<td>General education classroom or other appropriate setting within the school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSESSMENTS</td>
<td>Progress monitoring, diagnostic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Roles and Responsibilities

MTSS Supervisor
The MTSS Supervisor is a highly qualified, state certified educator responsible for maintaining MTSS processes and procedures in an online environment. The MTSS Supervisor provides support and guidance to district staff and helps manage the learning process by focusing on students’ individual needs. Supervisors monitor student learning and take appropriate action to support students who are struggling.

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progress through various platforms and work closely with School Level MTSS Intervention Coordinators, Intervention Specialists, teachers, students, and parents/Learning Coaches to advance each student’s learning toward established goals. While the MTSS Instructional Supervisor monitors Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention, the MTSS Compliance Supervisor monitors the Student Support Team (SST) and initial eligibility processes.

**MTSS Intervention Coordinator**
The MTSS Intervention Coordinator is a highly qualified, state certified educator responsible for implementing MTSS processes and procedures in an online environment. Coordinators provide support and guidance to school-based staff, and help manage the learning process by focusing on students’ individual needs. Coordinators monitor student progress through various platforms and work closely with Intervention Specialists, teachers, students, and parents/Learning Coaches to advance each student’s learning toward established goals.

**MTSS Academic Intervention Specialist**
The MTSS Intervention Specialist is a highly qualified, state certified educator responsible for delivering specific course content in an online environment. Specialists provide instruction and support, manage the learning process, and focus on students’ individual needs. Specialists monitor student progress through various platforms and work closely with teachers, students, and parents/Learning Coaches to advance each student’s learning toward established goals.

**MTSS Behavior Intervention Specialist**
The MTSS Behavior Intervention Specialist is a highly qualified, state certified educator responsible for delivering specific behavioral interventions in an online environment. Specialists provide support and guidance, manage the learning process, and focus on students’ individual behavioral needs. Specialists monitor student progress through various platforms, and work closely with teachers, students, and parents/Learning Coaches to advance each student’s behavior toward established goals.

**Glossary of Commonly Used Terms**

*Terms From Georgia Department of Education Website*

**Acceleration** – interventions that are implemented to increase the speed at which students acquire skills.

**Assessment** – broad term used to describe the collection of information about student performance in a specific area. Assessments or tests can be formal or informal.
**At Risk** – students who have poor learning and/or behavioral outcomes. Also, students in jeopardy of being retained or students who may not be on track to graduate on time.

**Benchmark** – measures that are used to determine student progress and to guide instruction. For example, measures may assess a specific skill such as number of correct words read per minute (reading fluency).

**Best Practices** – evidence-based teaching strategies that generate positive student response.

**Collaboration** – a team process of working together cooperatively to achieve a goal or complete a task. MTSS requires a team approach to positively impact student outcomes.

**Components** – a comprehensive set of services, resources, and cohesive strategies that are essential to implement the MTSS framework as intended and to meet the needs of all learners.

**Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching** – integrating instructional resources and tools that include the student’s native language and/or rhetoric and experiences to eliminate learning barriers.

**Data-Based Decision Making** – an essential component of Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students: a process for setting/evaluating goals; the ongoing process of analyzing and evaluating student data to inform educational decisions, including but not limited to approaches to instruction, intervention, allocation of resources, development of policy, movement within a multi-level system, and disability identification.

**Differentiated Instruction** – broad term referring to recognizing and responding to students’ varying interests, readiness levels, and learning needs.

**Effective Teaming** – a critical element of Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students; a team of people who work collaboratively to accomplish goals by reviewing data and determining next steps.

**Evidence-Based Practices** – an essential component of Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students; an educational practice or strategy that has factual evidence for results.

**Evidence-Based Intervention** – an intervention for which data from scientific, rigorous research studies have demonstrated or validated the results.

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Family and Community Engagement – a critical element of Georgia’s Tiered System of problem-solving process and in decisions regarding adjustments to interventions to improve academic and behavioral outcomes.

Fidelity (Fidelity of Implementation) - the accurate and consistent delivery of instruction or assessment in the way it was designed or prescribed according to research findings and/or developers’ specifications.

Framework – intended plan or model for articulating teaching/learning activities, assessment/tests, processes, and desired results that can maximize student achievement. This may include long-term understanding/knowledge, essential questions, tasks/activities, culminating tasks, rubrics, and resources.

High Leverage Practices (HLP) – teaching strategies that are used by teachers to support student learning.

Infrastructure – an essential component of Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students; knowledge, resources, and organizational structures of a school that support the effective use of an MTSS framework.

Integration – to bring together and become part of a larger group, task or project. Interventions – instruction that is based on student need; supplements the general education curriculum and is made up of evidence-based instructional strategies and techniques.

Leadership - a critical element of Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students; the ability of an individual or organization to lead or guide individuals, teams, or processes. Multi-level Instruction – school-wide instruction delivered to all students in various forms and methods that are designed to meet each students’ needs.

Professional Learning - a critical element of Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students; district and school leadership provide a supportive environment for teachers’ learning which helps to ensure highly qualified staff, quality instruction, and implementation of evidence-based practices.

Progress Monitoring – an essential component of Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students; scientifically based practice that is used to assess students’ academic and behavioral performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction; can be implemented with individual students or an entire class.

Multi-Tiered Prevention System - an essential component of Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students; a school-wide framework with support systems and resources designed to provide support matched to student need to maximize student achievement and reduce poor behavioral outcomes.

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Screening - an essential component of Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students; conducted to identify students who may need additional instruction or help so that early intervention can occur. Screening assessments or tests typically are brief and usually are administered with all students at a grade level.

Academic Tiers of Support

Tier 1- Standards Based Learning

Primary Level-Instruction/Core Curriculum-Standards-based instruction, universal screening, and progress monitoring are the critical foundation elements of the Response to Intervention model. Every public school in Georgia is mandated to teach the standards to all students based on their grade level and/or content area. Universal screening helps teachers identify students who will need more individualized assistance. Progress monitoring allows teachers to assess the effectiveness of instruction and to differentiate their assistance based on the instructional and/or behavioral needs of the students. When a variety of Tier 1 strategies are utilized, and the student is not showing significant improvement, this should be the trigger that activates the school’s RTI plan to bring more focused attention and more intensive instructional assistance that comprises Tier 2.

Any student enrolled at Georgia Cyber Academy receives Tier 1 interventions on a regular basis. Tier 1 interventions include live class sessions, access to content through the online learning platform, small group instruction, access to class recordings, and access to notes and PowerPoints. Student achievement is measured and monitored through class assignments, Interim Assessments, benchmark assessments (MAP), and Milestones assessments.

Tier 2-Needs Based Learning

Secondary Level-Intervention-Tier 2 is characterized by the addition of more concentrated small-group or individual interventions that target specific needs and essential skills. All Tier 2 Interventions must be evidence-based and aligned to the needs of the student and resources of the school. Interventions may involve an increase in intensity, frequency, and duration of the strategies utilized in Tier 1, or they may be entirely different based on information shared among staff members. Collaboration by staff in delivery of rigorous instruction and appropriate Tier 2 interventions is vital to ensure a transfer of learning from Tier 2 to Tier 1 activities. Teachers use evidence-based interventions, goal setting, and ongoing progress monitoring to measure student response to interventions and to guide the decision-making process. Progress monitoring is more frequent and is vital to judge the effectiveness of interventions based on the student’s response to them. If such interventions, implemented with fidelity and for an established duration, are not effective, then the staff must call upon the assistance of the Student Support Team (SST) and may refer the student for Tier 3 support.

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Students who are not successful at Tier 1 may require additional support and progress monitoring at Tier 2. Students are identified for Tier 2 through consideration of their benchmark and Milestones scores, educational history, and teacher input. Once a student is elevated to Tier 2, he or she will begin meeting with his or her Academic Intervention Specialist for additional remediation sessions each week. The teacher should develop rigorous yet realistic, measurable goals for the student. The teacher will provide targeted instruction and will collect weekly data points to monitor student growth and progress.

**Tier 3-Student Support Team**

Tertiary Level-Intensive Intervention-If a student is not making adequate progress or showing appropriate growth at Tier 2, the MTSS team may determine that he or she needs additional support at the Tier 3 level. In order to elevate a student to Tier 3, the MTSS team (School Level Coordinator, Intervention Specialists, content teachers, and parent when possible) will hold an SST meeting to review student data. If the student’s progress monitoring data from Tier 2 shows little or no growth, the team may decide to elevate the student to Tier 3. The SST team should develop realistic yet rigorous, measurable goals for the student.

Once elevated, the student will receive a higher frequency and intensity of interventions and support structured to the individual needs of the student. The intervention specialist will meet with the student in a small group each week to provide individualized remediation in the necessary areas, while also collecting data on the student’s progress. Progress monitoring data is collected weekly to analyze the student’s response to interventions. SST meetings are held every six weeks to review the data and determine if growth has occurred. Students may stay at the Tier 3 level and continue receiving Tier 3 support or move to Tier 2 if data indicates substantial growth. When students have received interventions for an adequate period of time and little to no growth has been made, they may be referred for further evaluation and Special Education consideration.

**Behavior Tiers of Support**

**Tier 1: Primary Level-Classroom Management**

Classroom management, school-wide behavior expectations, and progress monitoring are the critical foundation elements of the Response to Intervention model for Behavior. Georgia Cyber Academy has established developmentally-appropriate behavior expectations for each grade band. In the classroom, these expectations are modeled by teachers and practiced by all students. Georgia Cyber Academy uses a Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Framework to support all students at Tier 1. Progress monitoring allows teachers to assess the effectiveness of classroom management and to differentiate their assistance based on the behavioral needs of the students. When a variety of Tier 1 strategies are utilized, and the student is not showing significant improvement, this should be the trigger that activates the school’s RTI plan to bring more focused attention and more intensive behavior assistance that comprises Tier 2.

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**Tier 2: Secondary Level-Intervention**

Tier 2 is characterized by the addition of concentrated small-group or individual interventions provided by a Behavior Intervention Specialist that target specific behavioral needs. All Tier 2 Interventions must be evidence-based and aligned to the needs of the student and resources of the school. Interventions may involve an increase in intensity, frequency, and duration of the strategies utilized in Tier 1, or they may be entirely different based on information shared among staff members. Behavior Intervention Specialists use evidence-based interventions, goal setting, and ongoing progress monitoring to measure student response to interventions and to guide the decision-making process. Progress monitoring is more frequent and is vital to judge the effectiveness of interventions based on the student’s response to them. If such interventions, implemented with fidelity and for an established duration, are not effective, then the staff must call upon the assistance of the Student Support Team (SST) and may refer the student for Tier 3 support.

Students who are not successful at Tier 1 may require additional support and progress monitoring at Tier 2. Students are identified for Tier 2 through consideration of the following, but not limited to: attendance, engagement/participation, assignment completion, impact of diagnoses, and other behaviors that negatively impact them in the classroom setting. Once a student is elevated to Tier 2, he or she will begin participating in the GCA Check-in/Check-out program. The Behavior Intervention Specialist should develop goals that are realistic and measurable for the student. The Behavior Intervention Specialist will provide a weekly Check-in session and will collect weekly data to monitor student growth and progress.

**Tier 3: Tertiary Level-Intensive Intervention**

If a student is not making adequate progress or showing appropriate growth at Tier 2, the MTSS team may determine that he or she needs additional support at the Tier 3 level. In order to elevate a student to Tier 3, the MTSS team (School Level Coordinator, Intervention Specialists, content teachers, and parent when possible) will hold an SST meeting to review student data. If the student’s progress monitoring data from Tier 2 shows little or no growth, the team may decide to elevate the student to Tier 3. The SST team should develop realistic yet rigorous, measurable goals for the student.

Once elevated, the student will receive a higher frequency and intensity of interventions and support structured to the individual needs of the student. The Behavior Intervention Specialist will meet with the student in a small group or individually each week to continue providing weekly Check-in/Check-out sessions. Tier 3 support will add an extra layer of support including classroom observations and an engagement contract, while continuing to collect data on the student’s progress. Progress monitoring data is collected weekly to analyze the student’s response to interventions. SST meetings are held every six weeks to review the data and determine if growth has occurred. Students may stay at the Tier 3 level and continue receiving Tier 3 supports or move to Tier 2 if data indicates substantial growth. When students have received interventions for an adequate period of time

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and little to no growth has been made, they may be referred for further evaluation and Special Education consideration.

Summary
In summary, the SST is mandated by federal court order and our MTSS model is a systemic process to bridge behavioral and academic gaps. Ultimately, the success of any SST relies on the foundation of Tiers 1 and 2. Success is attainable when schools analyze their data to identify school-wide, classroom and individual student needs, and by their use of evidence-based strategies and interventions led by ongoing professional learning, coaching, and measurement of student response to these supports. The Georgia Multi-Level Prevention System is a robust school improvement framework which is guided by data-driven decision making and time-proven practices to proactively address the needs of all Georgia students in the 21st Century.

Special Education Referral
After providing interventions and collecting data for 6-8 weeks, the SST team will reconvene and review student data. If a student has not made adequate progress after an appropriate period of time and has been provided with appropriate instruction, a request for an educational evaluation may be initiated. At that time, the team may decide to continue supporting the student at Tier 3 or may decide to refer the student for a psychoeducational evaluation and Special Education consideration.

Solving Learner Concerns-Processes and Procedures
Identification
*Tier 1* - General population of students- Universal screeners and benchmark assessments are administered periodically throughout the year to determine students in need of more targeted instruction.

*Tier 2* - The MTSS team uses a variety of sources to identify students for Tier 2 support. The team considers iReady Diagnostics, MAP scores, and Milestones scores, as well as retention history and teacher recommendation. These students are required to attend all live class connect sessions.

*Tier 3* - Students who have 4 or more data points and who do not make adequate progress at Tier 2 are considered for Tier 3 support. The Student Support team considers academic history, GA Milestones, MAP scores, Interim Assessments, current grades, pretest scores, enrollment history, and Tier 2 data when elevating a student to Tier 3. If data shows the need for elevation, the student is referred to Tier 3.

Progress Monitoring
*Tier 1* - Students are monitored three times per year through NWEA MAP, iReady Diagnostics, and Interim Assessments.

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**Tier 2**- Students in grades K-5 meet with AIM Intervention Specialists four times per week and receive interventions in the areas of reading and math. Middle school students meet with AIM teachers twice weekly per content. Students in grades K-8 are monitored weekly in i-Ready, while high school students are monitored through a variety of tools including IXL and our AMP mentoring program. If the Tier 2 Intervention Specialist determines that the student is not making adequate progress, he or she should discuss Tier 3 elevation with his or her direct supervisor.

**Tier 3**- Students continue to attend their Tier 2 intervention sessions, but also work with a Tier 3 Intervention specialist one time each week per content. The Tier 3 Intervention Specialist identifies and utilizes more intensive interventions and student specific progress monitoring.

**Differentiated Instruction**

**Tier 1**- All students participate in general education classes. If a student is meeting benchmarks and progressing in the curriculum according to data, the student is able to have a flexible schedule. If a student does not meet these markers throughout the year, tiered instruction may be applied.

**Tier 2 & 3**- Students are required to attend live class sessions based on performance indicators. Students are taught a concept in class. Teachers analyze data from assignments. Students who are found to struggle with a concept are invited to additional classes and taught the concept again. Students who continue to struggle are invited to additional sessions for further specialized support.

**Universal Screeners**

The purpose of the Universal Screeners is to screen and identify students needing additional academic and/or behavior support, prior to failing. Students who are identified by a Universal Screener or other data that identifies a potential of experiencing difficulty with content instruction in Tier 1 are considered in need of additional support.

- **Georgia Milestones**- The Georgia Milestones Assessment System (Georgia Milestones) is a comprehensive summative assessment program spanning grades 3 through high school. Georgia Milestones measures how well students have learned the knowledge and skills outlined in the state-adopted content standards in English Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

- **NWEA MAP**- MAP Growth reveals how much growth has occurred between testing events and, when combined with our norms, shows projected proficiency. Educators can track growth through the school year and over multiple years.

- **i-Ready Diagnostic**- The i-Ready Diagnostic provides each student with an overall grade level equivalency, nationally normed percentile ranking, and Lexile/Quantile measures.

**Data Analysis**

The data team will meet frequently to confirm the fidelity of interventions through review and analysis of data. Additional interventions may be required if little or no

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progress is documented. The data team will follow established data analysis protocols to determine if additional interventions should be implemented and assess student progress and determine if continued support through Tier 2 is required, additional Tier 2 interventions are required, or if Tier 3 support, in addition to Tier 1 and Tier 2, is required.

At Tier 3, data from consistent progress monitoring is used to guide the intensity, duration, and frequency of instruction and vary based on individual learning goals.

Meetings
For students receiving Tier 2 support, teachers and School Level Coordinators meet regularly to review student progress. Students not making adequate progress are referred to the Student Support Team. The Student Support Team will schedule a meeting to review data and implement Tier 3 interventions and supports. Initial meetings are held, and subsequent SST meetings are held approximately every six weeks to review progress and determine effectiveness and response to the intervention.

Direct Parent Referrals (DPR)
The Office of Special Education has the responsibility of identifying, evaluating, and providing specialized instruction to eligible students in the least restrictive environment. Child Find activities are conducted on behalf of all children with disabilities. We are required to ensure that each identified child has access to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Please see the Georgia Department of Education website for Georgia State Board Rules regarding Child Find Procedures and FAPE.
If a student is experiencing academic, behavioral, or social difficulty, he or she is referred to the Student Support Team (SST). This team may include teachers, counselors, parents, administrators, special educators, speech pathologists, and psychologists. School staff members or parents may make a referral to the SST. The SST committee discusses the student’s difficulties and brainstorms in order to come up with possible strategies or interventions that may help the child perform in the regular classroom. The SST monitors the child’s progress and reviews the case periodically to change strategies if necessary. Written parental consent is obtained prior to any assessment to determine if a child is eligible for special education. The strategies and progress monitoring process will continue during the special education evaluation process, per Georgia State Board Rules. Parents are always welcome and encouraged to attend SST meetings regarding their child. Parents maintain their due process right to request an evaluation. However, referral and eligibility for special education should not be considered without documentation of prior instructional interventions. A Student Support Team bypass procedure does exist (see Georgia Rule 160-4-2-.32) for rare cases when indicated by the severity of the disability or extreme circumstances.
If a parent requests their student to be evaluated due to a suspected disability, the Tier 3/SST team must consider that there may be one or more factors internal to the student (e.g., needs, fears, attitudes, serious weaknesses, processing problems) that are the primary reasons for lack of adequate success. If the team finds solutions for these supposed factors, then the student proceeds back down the pyramid tiers to

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ongoing progress. The Tier 3/SST team closes the case and terminates it from their active caseload. If after educational/behavioral evaluation, analysis, and intervention their best efforts at remediation repeatedly fail, then they must consider that the student may have a disability. It is at that point a referral for a Special Education comprehensive evaluation is appropriate. It is important to note that this is not to say that the SST team has, by referring, diagnosed a disability. However, it is also not their prerogative to decline to refer students because they doubt that the student would qualify for a disability category.

Additional information regarding the special education evaluation process can be found on the Georgia Department of Education website.

**DPR Procedures**

If a parent makes a direct request for evaluation to a staff member, the staff member should immediately complete the [Staff Referral for Student Support Survey](#). After the survey is submitted, the SST will schedule a meeting to honor the guardian’s request.

The Progress Monitoring Coordinator will log the request in the contact log of Infinite Campus and on the DPR tracker. The Progress Monitoring Coordinator will schedule a DPR SST Meeting and invite the guardian at least 10 days prior to the scheduled meeting. The Progress Monitoring Coordinator will log the the date that the guardian was notified on the DPR Tracker and in the contact log of Infinite Campus.

**Before the SST Meeting**

The Progress Monitoring Coordinator will send the following documents to the legal guardian:

- SST Notice of Meeting
- DPR Parent Letter
- 3300 Medical Form
- Student Background and Developmental History
- Learning Coach Intervention Form
- Speech/Language Questionnaire (if applicable)

The Progress Monitoring Coordinator will request that the guardian return all documentation prior to the SST meeting, if possible.

The Progress Monitoring Coordinator will send a Google Calendar Invitation to the following SST members, notifying them of the SST Meeting:

- Special Education Eligibility Coordinator
- Speech/Language Pathologist (if applicable)
- MTSS Compliance Supervisor
- Student’s General Education Teachers
- Student’s AIM Teachers (if applicable)
- Student’s Tier 3 Intervention Specialist (if applicable)

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• Student’s Behavior Intervention Specialist (if applicable)
• Student’s FEL
• Anyone else who works with the student (504 Coordinator, ESOL, Social Worker)

The Progress Monitoring Coordinator will review all returned documentation and complete a SST meeting form for the student prior to the SST Meeting.

The Progress Monitoring Coordinator will send an email reminder to the guardian prior to the SST meeting (24 hours in advance).

During the SST Meeting
If the parent attends, the Progress Monitoring Coordinator will present all data in the SST Form, including parental concerns. The SST will identify areas of concern and develop a plan of action including interventions and areas for data collection. The MTSS/SE Eligibility Coordinator will review the Special Education evaluation process and procedures. She will then present the following documents and allow the parent to decide how to proceed:
• Consent to Evaluate—Parent should sign “yes” or “no” in the meeting, indicating their decision
• Prior Written Notice

The Progress Monitoring Coordinator will note in detail how the parent wishes to proceed.

If the parent doesn’t attend, the Student Support Team will review all present information and make an informed decision on how to support the student. The team may decide to add AIM or Tier 3 support. If the data reviewed does not warrant tiered intervention at this time, the team will send the minutes to the parent and continue to follow up with the request by phone every ten days until there is a resolution.

After the SST Meeting
Parent Attends and Agrees to Data Collection before Evaluation:
• Schedule follow up SST Meeting six weeks from initial meeting date
• Email guardian the following documents:
  ○ Copy of SST Meeting Minutes (password protected with student’s six-digit birthday)
  ○ Copy of signed Consent Form (In Infinite Campus)
  ○ Copy of Prior Written Notice (In Infinite Campus)
  ○ SST Notice of Meeting for next SST meeting (to be held within six weeks)
  ○ 3300 and/or Medical Document (if needed)
• Send Google Calendar invitation to SST for next meeting
• Move student from “Inquiry” tab to “DPR” tab on tracker
• Complete Add/Drop AIM Survey and include a note to add the DPR flag

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- Notify Grade Band MTSS Compliance Supervisor, MTSS Intervention Coordinator, and Intervention Specialists of SST Plan
- Request Teacher Feedback and Work Samples prior to next SST Meeting
- Review data weekly to ensure student is working at appropriate level

Parent Attends and Signs Consent to Evaluate:
- Follow All steps as outlined above
- Notify MTSS Compliance Supervisor and Special Education Eligibility Coordinator of signed consent immediately so that the referral can be entered
- Add Student to Initial Eligibility Tracker

Parent Does Not Attend SST Meeting:
- Email guardian the following documents:
  - Copy of SST Meeting Minutes (password protected with student’s six-digit birthday)
  - SST Notice of Meeting for next SST meeting (if applicable)
  - 3300 and/or Medical Document (if needed)

Follow up with the parent by phone and then email every ten days until the parent agrees to attend an SST meeting or withdraws their request to evaluate. If the parent does not respond after 5 attempts, send a certified letter asking for the parent to respond as soon as possible.

**Interventions**

**Primary Grade Band (K-2) and Elementary Grade Band (3-5)**

*Tier 2 Interventions*

Content specific, researched-based intervention strategies and progress monitoring tools, approved by the school district, are used with the student. The student meets for RTI/MTSS in a small group with the Intervention Specialist four times per week for targeted instruction and progress monitoring. Progress is reviewed by the teaching team and MTSS team. Other school-based assessment data is reviewed along with this data to determine if the student should be referred to the Student Support Team for a meeting with the parent and recommendations for further interventions and progress monitoring.

*Tier 3 Interventions*

Content specific, researched-based intervention strategies and progress monitoring tools, approved by the school district, are used with the student. After the Student Support Team meeting, the student continues to meet for RTI/MTSS in a small group with the Intervention Specialist for targeted instruction and progress monitoring plus an additional small group session with the intervention specialist, which is held via webcam for additional student observation. Data is collected and recorded for up to 12 weeks. Data is reviewed periodically during this 12-week period by the Student Support Team. Other school-based assessment data is reviewed along with this data.

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to determine if the student should be referred for more intensive support, which may include a change in interventions and progress monitoring as well as a decision to recommend an evaluation to determine eligibility for special education services. At the elementary school level, an evaluation for phonological processing or speech/language therapy may also be included if the progress monitoring data and webcam observations raise other learning or behavior concerns.

**Middle Grade Band (6-8)**

**Tier 2 Interventions**

When students do not adequately respond to Tier 1 instruction, targeted services and interventions are added as the next layer of support. The goal is to reach students who are at-risk by providing interventions to help fill in the gaps before more specialized instruction is needed. At the Tier 2 level, GCA Middle School teachers invite students to small groups sessions twice weekly and use evidence-based interventions and tools including iReady to supplement Tier 1 instruction. This is done in addition to Tier 1 instruction. Progress Monitoring is conducted weekly to determine what impact the intervention is having on the targeted concern. Data Points are collected weekly.

**Tier 3 Interventions**

When students do not adequately respond to Tier 2 targeted interventions, an SST meeting is held to determine the next layer of support, Tier 3 is applied, while Tier 2 supports are continued. Tier 3 includes intensive research-based interventions provided individually or in small groups. Tier 3 is distinguished from Tier 2 by frequency of sessions, smaller group size and the expertise of an intervention specialist. Current Tier intervention tools include iReady.

Students are monitored and SST meetings are held every six weeks to determine next steps. Students who demonstrate growth may stay at Tier 3 or move down to Tier 2. Students who are not showing growth may require more intensive interventions or if interventions at this level prove to be inadequate, students may be considered for specialized services.

**Secondary Grade Band (9-12)**

**Tier 2 Interventions**

The MTSS team uses universal screeners (MAP and Milestones scores) to determine if a student may need Tier 2 interventions and support. Once identified for Tier 2, the student is enrolled in the Study Skills elective course where they participate in academic and/or behavioral interventions based on student-specific needs. Intervention Specialists review student data and set realistic yet rigorous goals for their students. Students should work on assigned interventions or lessons and should then complete a weekly probe to measure student progress or growth.

Once a month, the MTSS team will review Tier 2 data and determine which students should remain on Tier 2 and which students may need additional support.

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Students who have met their goal or are showing progress may stay at Tier 2 or move down to Tier 1. Students who are showing minimal or no progress may need additional intervention at the Tier 3 level.

**Tier 3 Interventions**

If a Tier 2 student is showing minimal or no progress with his or her current interventions, an SST (Student Support Team) meeting may be scheduled to review data and determine more appropriate supports. If a student is elevated to Tier 3, he or she will continue attending Tier 2 sessions with the content teacher but will also receive Tier 3 intervention with the school-level Intervention Specialist. The Intervention Specialist will provide more individualized intervention while collecting data on the student’s progress. Interventions Specialists will utilize IXL for Tier 3 interventions and progress monitoring.

Every six weeks, the Student Support Team will reconvene to review the student’s Tier 3 data and determine how to proceed. The team may decide that the student has made sufficient progress and can return to the Tier 2 level. However, if the student shows little or no progress, the team may decide to adjust interventions or implement new ones. The team may also decide to refer the student for a psychoeducational evaluation to determine eligibility for Special Education services.

**Behavior Interventions**

**Tier 2 Interventions**

At GCA, students receive Tier 2 interventions through a once a week Check-In with a Behavior Intervention Specialist. The student’s Check-In will focus on Attendance and Assignment Completion. Behavior Intervention Specialists may also complete classroom observations as needed to observe on-task and off-task behavior.

**Tier 3 Interventions**

Students receiving Tier 3 interventions continue to participate in the Check-In, Check-Out system by attending an additional session per week with a Behavior Intervention Specialist. An Engagement Contract is introduced to the student, which outlines specific and individualized behavior expectations for the student. Scheduled observations will also be implemented for students receiving Tier 3 support for behavior.

Student Support Team (SST) meetings are held for these students every six weeks to progress check and make decisions based on progress monitoring data collected through classroom observations and Check-In, Check-Out sessions.

**Frequently Asked Questions About MTSS**

*From GaDOE Website*

**For Parents**

Updated August 2023
What is Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students?
A tiered system of supports is being implemented statewide and has five essential components, including: Screening, Progress Monitoring, Multi-Level Prevention System, and Data-Based Decision Making. Georgia added Infrastructure as a fifth component to help districts and schools develop a systemic and preventive educational framework. The critical elements of Infrastructure are Leadership, Effective Teaming, Professional Learning, and Family & Community Engagement.

Why does Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students matter?
When all the essential components are implemented as intended, results include sustained academic improvement, more efficient use of resources and staff, decreased inappropriate special education services, and a reduction in student grade retention. Schools and districts have also seen a drop in expulsions, behavioral referrals, and suspension rates.

What is required to improve outcomes for students?
- In order to be successful, everyone must be involved in the process (parents, teachers, administrators, community members etc.).
- The framework improves response times and helps educators rapidly respond to student needs.
- The framework aligns teams and school systems, helping to streamline information and resources necessary to improve student learning.
- Educators and families must work together to prevent poor outcomes for all students and ensure students have the tools to be successful.
- ALL students are screened to identify those who may be at risk for poor academic or behavioral outcomes.
- Progress monitoring provides information that allows teachers to better target student needs and appropriately match instruction, resources, and supports.
- Teams are focused on prevention to make decisions that ensure all students are continuing to improve.

How can parents and students get involved?
- Frequently communicate with your child’s teacher(s).
- Attend school functions such as parent-teacher conferences.
- Monitor and assist with your child’s homework assignments.
- Find out what skills and knowledge your child is expected to learn.
- Ask school team members the following questions:
  - What are the targeted supports that my child’s school is using if he/she is struggling in the classroom?
  - What are the formal guidelines my child’s school is using to identify progress toward goals?

Updated August 2023
○ How will I be informed of the progress my child is making?
○ What happens if my child is not making progress?

What if my child is recommended to receive additional support?
○ Attend team meetings. Remember the importance of your voice in your child’s education.
○ Help plan interventions for academic and/or behavioral needs.
○ Practice and reinforce any strategies or educational plans at home.
○ Always ask questions when things are not clear.

Where to go for more information:
● Contact your child’s teacher, the school principal, or visit the Georgia’s Tiered System of Supports for Students website.

For Teachers

What do I do if a parent says they think their student needs an IEP?
Assure the parent GCA has a multi-tiered system of supports and a process in place for determining proper instructional and behavioral supports to ensure the least restrictive environment and to also use this process to determine if a student is eligible for special student support services. That begins with making sure students are participating in all supports currently available to provide accurate data to support the need for more intense interventions. Complete the Staff Referral for Student Support Survey immediately.

What do I do if a parent says their child was in RTI or SST at the previous school?
Records of the supports and interventions will need to be requested by GCA staff to determine prior supports and adjust to the virtual setting. Contact the Grade Band MTSS Interventions Coordinator.

What do I do if a parent sends me a psychological evaluation/medical information regarding a student?
Thank them for sharing this information with you and let them know the information will be reviewed for educational planning. Complete the Staff Referral for Student Support Survey immediately.

What do I do if a parent says their student has a condition or medical issue and because of this, the child cannot do school/participate every day?
Please find out as many details as you can and let parents know they will be contacted regarding the situation as medical records and other pieces of information will need to be collected. Contact the Grade Band MTSS Interventions Coordinator and 504 Coordinator.

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What do I do if a parent says his student has an IEP or had an IEP at their previous school or a few years ago?
Please ask parents to send copies of the current or previous IEP information. Please contact the Special Education department with the student information so records can be requested. Contact the Special Education Department.

What do I do if a parent requests testing to see if their child is dyslexic or has a learning disability?
GCA has a multi-tiered systems of support and a process in place for determining proper instructional and behavioral supports to ensure the least restrictive environment and to also use this process to determine if a student is eligible for special student support services. However, if a parent makes a direct request for an evaluation or Special Education services, please complete the Staff Referral for Student Support Survey immediately.

What do I do if a parent says a child is in private speech or other therapies and wants it through the school?
Speech and Language Impairment is an eligibility category of Special Education and a student must go through the MTSS process in order to qualify for this service. Private therapies cannot be transferred to the school without a student meeting eligibility and moving through the MTSS process. If a parent requests speech services or an evaluation, please contact the Speech Services Supervisor.

What do I do if a student is not attending classes and is below level?
In order for a student to move up the tiers of interventions, there has to be data demonstrating interventions have not been successful. If a student does not participate in interventions, it cannot be determined if the interventions have been effective. Discuss with your Academic Administrator for a plan of action and next steps to take.

Updated August 2023
Program Summary

Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits the discrimination against persons with disabilities. It is a federal civil rights law which requires that students with disabilities be provided with a free and appropriate education. Students who have a physical or mental impairment that limits one or more major life activities may qualify for a 504 plan.

To determine 504 eligibility, a student must demonstrate: as a result of an evaluation, to have a physical or mental disability/impairment (or having a history of a physical or mental disability/impairment) that substantially limits one or more major life activities. A major life activity includes the following: caring for one’s self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, and learning.

At Georgia Cyber Academy, we are committed to providing an exemplary individualized and engaging educational experience to all of our students. This policy and procedure manual has been created to assist staff as they work with our families who may need a 504 plan for their children.

Legal Overview

According to the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), “Section 504 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive Federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Education (ED). Section 504 provides: ‘No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. . . .’” (U.S. Department of Education, 2018)

Roles and Responsibilities

Section 504 Supervisor

The Section 504 District Supervisor is a highly qualified, state certified educator responsible for ensuring students with disabilities, identified by Section 504, are receiving specific and individualized course content based on their 504 Plan, in an online environment.

Responsibilities

- Utilizes Child Find and similar services to pull new 504 plan referrals; schedules and facilitates meetings; follows up with all three grade bands
- Plans and facilitates all 504 district trainings

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• Conducts bi-weekly meetings with School Level Coordinators
• Addresses teacher and administrator concerns in a timely manner
• Assists School Level Coordinators with any 504 inquiries
• Receives and distributes transfer plans from previous schools
• Ensures implementation of the school district approved 504 process
• Collects and maintains all 504 data
• Ensures 504 plan accommodations are updated in the testing platform and coded prior to testing
• Serves as Point of Contact (POC) for 504 questions during state testing
• Maintains the GCA 504 Manual
• Collects data for monthly reports
• Attends all meetings; School and District

Section 504 School Level Coordinator
The Section 504 School Level Coordinator is a highly qualified, state certified educator responsible for ensuring students with disabilities, identified by Section 504, are receiving specific and individualized course content based on their 504 plan, in an online environment.

Responsibilities
• Facilitates school-level 504 plan renewal meetings and plan transfer meetings;
• Facilitates the collection and maintenance of student medical documentation; uploads documentation into Infinite Campus;
• Ensures testing accommodations are up-to-date and uploads plans for State Testing
• Responds to flags in Infinite Campus and online platforms;
• Communicates with parents/Learning Coaches, and teachers regarding all 504 inquiries
• Conducts classroom visits to monitor implementation of 504 plan accommodations for students;
• Receives and uploads medical forms for eligibility;
• Facilitates school-based teacher training and answers questions when necessary;
• Attends weekly open offices with the compliance specialist to review data for students;
• Attends monthly and weekly district, school and department meetings;
• Provides communication and updates regarding 504 to teachers via school newsletter and/or email blasts;
• Prepares data and attend monthly data meetings and update information;
• Meets with school-level leads, administration, collaborating teachers, students and parents/Learning Coaches to discuss student progress and instructional supports through examination of 504 plan

Updated August 2023
Glossary of Commonly Used Terms

Terms From Georgia Department of Education Website

**Accommodation:** An accommodation is a change in how or where your child is taught—or the materials used for teaching. Accommodations can help kids who are struggling work around their weaknesses. For instance, kids who have trouble writing may be allowed to answer test questions orally. Even with accommodations, kids are expected to learn the same content as their peers.

**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** This is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. It covers schools, the workplace and public places. ADA works in tandem with Section 504. Section 504 applies only to K–12 public schools. If your child has a disability, ADA will cover him in the workplace and as an adult.

**Disability:** Section 504 defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a person’s ability to participate in a major life activity, such as learning. Section 504 has a broad definition of “disability.” This is why kids who aren’t eligible for an Individualized Educational Program (IEP), including some children with ADHD, might be eligible for a 504 plan.

**General education curriculum:** This is the knowledge and skills that all students are expected to master. The curriculum varies from state to state. The goal of Section 504 is to make sure that students with disabilities have access to, or can take part in the general curriculum.

**Least restrictive environment (LRE):** Students with disabilities must be taught in the same setting as students without disabilities as much as possible. The school must offer services or supports that can help her succeed in a general education classroom.

**Major life activity:** These can include learning, reading, thinking, writing and concentrating. A child’s disability may substantially limit one or more major life activities. If this is the case, they need to be addressed in the 504 plan.

**Modification:** A modification is a change in what a student is expected to learn. For example, instead of reading a book at his grade level, your child might read a book written for two grade levels lower. In general, a child who needs modifications would have an IEP, not a 504 plan.

**The Rehabilitation Act of 1973:** This is a civil rights law that prohibits disability
discrimination. It requires reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities. Section 504 is the part of this law that applies to public K–12 schools.

Supplementary aids and services: These are supports to help a child learn in the general education classroom. Examples of this are equipment or assistive technology, such as audio books or highlighted classroom notes.

504 Processes and Procedures

Child Find

According to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the District has a responsibility to identify, refer, evaluate and if eligible, provide a free, appropriate public education to disabled students who do not fit the criteria to qualify for Special Education services. For additional information about the rights of parents of eligible children, or for answers to any questions you may have regarding eligibility and placement into Section 504 programs, please contact the District’s Section 504 Supervisor.

The purpose of the 504 plan is to provide legal accommodations for disabled students who do not fit the criteria to qualify for Special Education services. A student who may need accommodations within the intent of Section 504 is one who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, including, but not limited to; learning, reading, thinking, concentrating; and communicating. A major life activity also includes the operation of a major bodily function.
- Has a record of such impairment; or
- Is regarded as having such an impairment.

504 services are available to disabled students who are not served under special education and IDEA. To qualify under 504:

- A student must have a documented disability (i.e. a doctor’s note regarding ADHD or another physical or mental condition, a psychological report, a vision-eye report, etc.)
- There must be proof this disability substantially limits a major life activity.

Georgia Cyber Academy District Child Find Procedures include:

- Online Registration (OLR) questions that address previous diagnoses or Section 504 Plans.
- Announcements on the GCA website and other media.
- Periodic emails to GCA families.
- Inquiries received from GCA parents/legal guardians and staff members.

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504 Referrals
1. If information comes to a staff member that a child may have a physical or mental impairment, the staff member should find out how this condition is impacting the student’s ability to access education.
2. The staff member should complete the Staff Referral for Student Support Survey immediately.
3. The Inquiry Specialist will contact the student’s parent or legal guardian and schedule a 504 Informational meeting within 10 days of receiving the referral. The Inquiry Specialist will email the parent/LG a notice of meeting and document the contact in Infinite Campus.
4. During the 504 Informational Meeting, the Inquiry Specialist will listen to the parent/LG’s concerns and share information regarding Section 504 and GCA’s 504 eligibility process. The Inquiry Specialist will document the meeting’s discussion on the student’s 504 Informational Meeting form.
5. Following the meeting, the Inquiry Specialist will email the parent/LG a copy of the meeting notes and a copy of the GCA Medical form.
6. Until appropriate medical documentation is received or until the parent/LG declines the 504 process, the Inquiry Specialist will follow up with the parent/LG every 10 days by email reminding them to send medical documentation to continue the 504 process.
7. Once appropriate medical documentation is received, the 504 School Level Coordinator will schedule a 504 eligibility meeting with the parent/LG to determine program eligibility.

Informational Meetings
When a parent requests additional support for a student, an Instructional Support Services team member should schedule an Informational meeting with the parent. If the concern is medical only, the Inquiry Specialist can schedule and hold and document the 504 Informational meeting. If the parent/LG’s concern is both medical and academic, the Inquiry Specialist may hold a joint Informational meeting to determine the next steps of support for the student.

Making a 504 Referral in Infinite Campus
All 504 referrals for initial meetings will be input into the 504 Module in Infinite Campus by the School Level 504 Coordinator or the 504 Supervisor.

Requests for 504 Evaluation
The District recommends that the parent should submit appropriate medical documentation of the student’s diagnosis(es) which details how the condition impacts the student’s access to learning. The School Level Coordinator and/or the District 504 Supervisor will review all paperwork and submit a 504 Meeting Referral to request a meeting; evaluations can consist of reviews of current student data and/or formal academic & behavioral testing: If no formal testing is required to support eligibility, the

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School Level Coordinator and/or the District 504 Supervisor should schedule a 504 eligibility meeting.

Is evaluation necessary to determine 504 eligibility?
Under Section 504, no formal testing is required. The 504 Committee will look at grades over the past several years, teachers’ reports, information from parents or other agencies, state assessment scores or other school administered tests, observations, discipline reports, attendance records, health records and adaptive behavior information. Schools must consider a variety of sources. A single source of information (such as a doctor’s report) cannot be the only information considered. Schools must be able to assure that all information submitted is documented and considered.

Is a medical report always necessary to determine 504 eligibility?
The 504 Committee should attempt to get as much information as possible regarding the student’s condition, a physician’s statement is not required to determine eligibility. If the committee determines that a formal evaluation of any type is necessary to determine eligibility, consent for evaluation is required and the evaluation must be provided at no cost to the parents.

Evaluation Process
According to the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, at the elementary and secondary school level, determining whether a child is a qualified disabled student under Section 504 begins with the evaluation process. Section 504 requires the use of evaluation procedures that ensure that children are not misclassified, unnecessarily labeled as having a disability, or incorrectly placed, based on inappropriate selection, administration, or interpretation of evaluation materials.

What is an appropriate evaluation under Section 504?
Recipient school districts must establish standards and procedures for initial evaluations and periodic re-evaluations of students who need or are believed to need special education and/or related services because of disability. The Section 504 regulatory provision at 34 C.F.R. 104.35(b) requires school districts to individually evaluate a student before classifying the student as having a disability or providing the student with special education. Tests used for this purpose must be selected and administered so as best to ensure that the test results accurately reflect the student’s aptitude or achievement or other factor being measured rather than reflect the student’s disability, except where those are the factors being measured. Section 504 also requires that tests and other evaluation materials include those tailored to evaluate the specific areas of educational need and not merely those designed to provide a single intelligence quotient. The tests and other evaluation materials must be validated for the specific purpose for which they are used and appropriately administered by trained personnel.

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How much is enough information to document that a student has a disability?
At the elementary and secondary education level, the amount of information required is
determined by the multi-disciplinary committee gathered to evaluate the student. The
committee should include persons knowledgeable about the student, the meaning
of the evaluation data, and the placement options. The committee members must
determine if they have enough information to make a knowledgeable decision as
to whether or not the student has a disability. The Section 504 regulatory provision
at 34 C.F.R. 104.35(c) requires that school districts draw from a variety of sources in the
evaluation process so that the possibility of error is minimized. The information obtained
from all such sources must be documented and all significant factors related to the
student’s learning process must be considered. These sources and factors may include
aptitude and achievement tests, teacher recommendations, physical condition, social
and cultural background, and adaptive behavior. In evaluating a student suspected of
having a disability, it is unacceptable to rely on presumptions and stereotypes regarding
persons with disabilities or classes of such persons. Compliance with the IDEA regarding
the group of persons present when an evaluation or placement decision is made is
satisfactory under Section 504. (Protecting Students With Disabilities. (2018, September

Annual Reviews
An annual review meeting to discuss and document possible updates to the student’s
accommodation plan. This meeting must occur at least annually. At the beginning of
the school year, the 504 SLC will schedule meetings with the parent/legal guardians of new
enrollees to transfer students’ 504 accommodation plans to GCA. Within the first
semester of the school year, the 504 SLC will schedule review meetings for all returning
GCA students to review students’ progress and accommodations. If there has been a
change in the student’s medical condition, the parent should submit updated
documentation prior to the meeting in order to consider updating the students’
accommodations.

Grievance and Complaints
It is the policy of Georgia Cyber Academy not to discriminate on the basis of disability.
Georgia Cyber Academy has adopted an internal grievance procedure providing for
prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action prohibited by Section
and Human Services regulations implementing the Act. Section 504 prohibits
discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity receiving Federal
financial assistance. The Law and Regulations may be examined in the office of the
Instructional Support Services Director and/or the Section 504 Supervisor, who has
been designated to coordinate the efforts of Georgia Cyber Academy to comply with
Section 504.

Any person who believes she or he has been subjected to discrimination on the basis of
disability may file a grievance under this procedure. It is against the law for Georgia

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Cyber Academy to retaliate against anyone who files a grievance or cooperates in the investigation of a grievance.

Procedure:

- Grievances must be submitted to the Instructional Support Services Director and/or the Section 504 Supervisor within 30 days of the date the person filing the grievance becomes aware of the alleged discriminatory action.
- A complaint must be in writing, containing the name and address of the person filing it. The complaint must state the problem or action alleged to be discriminatory and the remedy or relief sought.
- The Instructional Support Services Director and/or the Section 504 Supervisor (or her/his designee) shall conduct an investigation of the complaint. This investigation may be informal, but it must be thorough, affording all interested persons an opportunity to submit evidence relevant to the complaint. The Instructional Support Services Director and/or the Section 504 Supervisor will maintain the files and records of Georgia Cyber Academy relating to such grievances.
- The Instructional Support Services Director and/or the Section 504 Supervisor will issue a written decision on the grievance no later than 30 days after its filing.
- The person filing the grievance may appeal the decision of the Instructional Support Services Director and/or the Section 504 Supervisor by writing to the Superintendent within 15 days of receiving the Instructional Support Services Director and/or the Section 504 Supervisor’s decision. The Superintendent shall issue a written decision in response to the appeal no later than 30 days after its filing.
- The availability and use of this grievance procedure does not prevent a person from filing a complaint of discrimination on the basis of disability with the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights.

Georgia Cyber Academy will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that disabled persons are provided other accommodations, if needed, to participate in this grievance process. Such arrangements may include, but are not limited to, providing interpreters for the deaf, providing taped cassettes of material for the blind, or assuring a barrier-free location for the proceedings. The Instructional Support Services Director and/or the Section 504 Supervisor will be responsible for such arrangements.

Updated August 2023
Accommodations Manual

Research
Accommodations: General program accommodations/adjustments or services are always made on a case-by-case basis and individualized. Accommodations are to be reasonable and are intended to provide persons with disabilities compensation for their functional limitation(s) due to a mental or physical impairment. Where Section 504 is concerned, accommodations are made to bring a student with a disability to the same starting point as a non-disabled student.

Commonly Used Accommodations

Allergies

- Possible Accommodation and Strategies:
  ○ Small group or Individual work environment as needed
  ○ Extended Time
  ○ Frequent monitored breaks

- At Home Strategies:
  ○ The student will self-manage to ensure a clean work environment.
  ○ Reinforce self-monitoring and self-reporting of behaviors.
  ○ Utilize recordings if repetition of material is needed.

- Medical Health Plan:
  ○ Allergy statement: There is no guarantee that students will not come into contact with allergens at state testing.
  ○ Parent/legal guardian may remain on site to provide assistance or required medication. Per State guidelines, the parent/legal guardian may not remain in the testing room during the test administration.
  ○ In case of severe allergic reaction, call 911

Arthritis

- Possible Accommodation and Strategies:
  ○ Small Group
  ○ Preferential Seating
  ○ Extended Time
  ○ Frequent monitored breaks
  ○ Use a modified physical education assignments/activities.

- At Home Strategies:
  ○ Reinforce self-monitoring and self-reporting of behaviors.
  ○ Utilize recordings if repetition of material is needed.

Asthma

- Possible Accommodation and Strategies:

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Preferential seating
Small group
Frequent monitored breaks
Extended time
Optimal time of day for instruction

Medical Health Plan:
- There is no guarantee that students will not come into contact with allergens at state testing.
- Parent/legal guardian may remain on site to provide assistance or required medication. Per State guidelines, the parent/legal guardian may not remain in the testing room during the test administration.

ADHD
- Possible Accommodation and Strategies:
  - Small group or Individualized work environment
  - Preferential seating
  - Frequent monitored breaks
  - Extended time
  - Instructions will be repeated and/or paraphrased for clarity.
  - Optimal time of day for instruction
  - Adaptive furniture: Chewelry, fidget spinner, balance ball.
- At Home Strategies:
  - Block Schedule
  - Print slides from each class to use for taking notes
  - Seat student away from distractions (video games, TV, extra noise)
  - Use of a timer to help student stay on task
  - Break the list of assignments down into smaller chunks (work on multiple lessons for one subject each day or work in chunks of time).
  - Provide a quiet work space for your student.
  - Write or print out daily assignments.
  - Check for student’s completion of assignments.
  - Use incentives to help reinforce positive behaviors.
  - Reinforce self-monitoring and self-reporting of behaviors.
  - Utilize recordings if repetition of material is needed.
  - Reinforce self-advocating behaviors.

Bipolar Disorder/Schizophrenia
- Possible Accommodations and Strategies:
  - Small group or individual instruction will be provided when needed.
  - Extended time
  - Frequent monitored breaks
Based on documented diagnosis, student will be allowed to supplement instruction with recordings when needed. Student will email the teacher and access recordings within 24 hours of a missed session.

Examiner familiar to student (for state testing)

- **At Home Strategies:**
  - Provide a quiet work space, free from distractions.
  - Block scheduling or chunking assignments.
  - Utilize recordings if repetition of instruction is needed.
  - Reinforce self-advocating behaviors.
  - Write or print out daily assignments.
  - Check for student’s completion of assignments.

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**Cerebral Palsy**

- **Possible Accommodations and Strategies:**
  - Teachers will be aware of health care needs.
  - Preferential seating – Student must be seated in an area that accommodates his/her wheelchair or other adaptive needs.
  - Use a modified physical education assignments/activities.
  - Small group or individual instruction will be provided when needed
  - Frequent monitored breaks

- **At Home Strategies:**
  - Provide a quiet work space for your student.
  - Write or print out daily assignments.
  - Break the list of assignments down into smaller chunks (work on multiple lessons for one subject each day or work in chunks of time).
  - Reinforce self-advocating behaviors.

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**Cystic Fibrosis**

- **Possible Accommodations and Strategies:**
  - Based on documented diagnosis, student will be allowed to supplement instruction with recordings when needed.
  - Extended time
  - Frequent monitored breaks
  - Small group instruction will be provided when needed.

- **At Home Strategies:**
  - Provide a quiet work space for your student.
  - Break the list of assignments down into smaller chunks (work on multiple lessons for one subject each day or work in chunks of time).
  - Communicate with teachers how condition is managed with your student.

- **Medical Health Plan:**

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Updated August 2023
○ If needed at testing, student will be allowed frequent monitored breaks for breathing treatment; administered by the parent.
○ If needed at testing student will be allowed a private place for “coughing”.
○ Parent/legal guardian may remain on site to provide assistance or required medication. Per State guidelines, the parent/legal guardian may not remain in the testing room during the test administration.

Diabetes
● Possible Accommodations and Strategies:
  ○ Small group or individual instruction will be provided when needed.
  ○ Extended time
  ○ Frequent monitored breaks
  ○ Based on documented diagnosis, student will be allowed to supplement instruction with recordings when needed.
● At Home Strategies:
  ○ Communicate with teachers how well diabetes is managed with your student.
  ○ Reinforce self-advocating behaviors.
● Medical Health Plan:
  ○ Student must have access to glucose monitoring supplies as needed.
  ○ Student will have access to snacks and water throughout the day
  ○ Student will have access to bathroom breaks whenever necessary
  ○ Student must have access to Dex-com glucose monitor and cell phone must stay with examiner at testing and be within range of student at all times.
  ○ Parent/legal guardian may remain on site to provide assistance or required medication. Per State guidelines, the parent/legal guardian may not remain in the testing room during the test administration.
  ○ If needed, call 911.

Anxiety/Depression
● Possible Accommodations and Strategies:
  ○ Small group or individual instruction will be provided when needed.
  ○ Extended time
  ○ Frequent monitored breaks
  ○ Based on documented diagnosis, student will be allowed to supplement instruction with recordings when needed. Student will email the teacher and access recordings within 24 hours of a missed session.
  ○ Examiner familiar to student (for state testing)
● At Home Strategies:
  ○ Provide a quiet work space, free from distractions.
  ○ Block scheduling or chunking assignments.

Updated August 2023
○ Utilize recordings if repetition of instruction is needed.
○ Reinforce self-advocating behaviors.
○ Write or print out daily assignments.
○ Check for student’s completion of assignments.

Student with Special Health Needs
● Possible Accommodations and Strategies:
  ○ Teachers will be aware of health care needs.
  ○ Frequent monitored breaks
  ○ Extended time
  ○ Preferential seating
  ○ Small group or individual instruction will be provided when needed
  ○ Recordings (vs. attending live synchronous sessions)
  ○ Optimal time of day for instruction
  ○ Instructions will be repeated and paraphrased for clarity.
  ○ Adaptive furniture: Chewelry, fidget spinner, balance ball.
  ○ Use a modified physical education assignments/activities.
  ○ Familiar examiner (for State testing)
● At Home Strategies:
  ○ Block Schedule
  ○ Print slides from each class to use for taking notes
  ○ Use of a timer to help student stay on task
  ○ Break the list of assignments down into smaller chunks (work on multiple lessons for one subject each day or work in chunks of time).
  ○ Provide a quiet work space for your student.
  ○ Write or print out daily assignments.
  ○ Check for student’s completion of assignments.
  ○ Use incentives to help reinforce positive behaviors.
  ○ Reinforce self-monitoring and self-reporting of behaviors.
  ○ Utilize recordings if repetition of material is needed.
  ○ Reinforce self-advocating behaviors.
● Medical Health Plan:
  ○ Parent/legal guardian may remain on site to provide assistance or required medication. Per State guidelines, the parent/legal guardian may not remain in the testing room during the test administration.
  ○ If needed, call 911.

Encopresis/Enuresis
● Accommodations and Strategies:
  ○ Frequent monitored breaks

Updated August 2023
Extended time on daily assignments and assessments- time and a half. MAP Assessments and Interim assessments must be taken during the regularly scheduled assessment window.

- **At Home Strategies:**
  - Change of clothes available.
  - Create a plan of response to events.

- **Medical Health Plan Recommendations:**
  - Parent/legal guardian may remain on site to provide assistance or required medication. Per State guidelines, the parent/legal guardian may not remain in the testing room during the test administration.
  - Provide an additional change of clothes

**Epilepsy**

- **Accommodations and Strategies:**
  - Frequent monitored breaks
  - Extended time on daily assignments and assessments- time and a half. MAP Assessments and Interim assessments must be taken during the regularly scheduled assessment window.

- **At Home Strategies:**
  - Utilize recordings if repetition of material is needed
  - Observe for triggers and let teachers/504 Coordinator know
  - Print off notes/slides

- **Medical Health Plan Recommendations:**
  - Monitor and assess student for breathing difficulties
  - Preferential seating front of room and away from doors and away from flashing/blinking lights because seizures are photo-convulsive; examiner needs to watch for signs of staring off or not being responsive; student may appear to stare off into space but is actually having a seizure; if student is about to have a grand mal seizure and body will becomes rigid
  - If the examiner sees a student is falling from a chair, help get the student to the floor; protect their head; turn on their side; and notify the parent. Parent will remain on site. If seizure lasts longer than 5 mins, the parent will administer emergency med. Parent will let you know if 911 should be called.

**Hearing Impairment**

- **Accommodations and Strategies:**
  - Repetition of directions
  - Extended time on daily assignments and assessments- time and a half. MAP Assessments and Interim assessments must be taken during the regularly scheduled assessment window.

Updated August 2023
○ Provide an interpreter for school events (such as graduation) when necessary or requested
○ Assistive Technology

● At Home Strategies:
  ○ Utilize recordings if repetition of material is needed
  ○ Print off copies of notes/slides
  ○ Present information visually when needed
  ○ Assistive Technology
  ○ Provide an audio amplification system
  ○ Desktop Speakers

● Medical Health Plan Recommendations:
  ○ Audio amplification system

Leukemia

● Accommodations and Strategies:
  ○ Frequent monitored breaks
  ○ Extended time on daily assignments and assessments- time and a half. MAP Assessments and Interim assessments must be taken during the regularly scheduled assessment window.
  ○ Teachers will be aware of health care needs.
  ○ Optimal time of day for instruction
  ○ Use a modified physical education assignments/activities.
  ○ Small group instruction will be provided when needed
  ○ Recordings (vs. attending live synchronous sessions)

● At Home Strategies
  ○ Utilize recordings if repetition of material is needed
  ○ Block Schedule
  ○ Print slides from each class to use for taking notes
  ○ Break the list of assignments down into smaller chunks (work on multiple lessons for one subject each day or work in chunks of time).

● Medical Health Plan Recommendations:
  ○ Parent/legal guardian may remain on site to provide assistance or required medication. Per State guidelines, the parent/legal guardian may not remain in the testing room during the test administration.
  ○ Small group or individual
  ○ Optimal time of day

Orthopedically Impaired

● Accommodations and Strategies:
  ○ Frequent monitored breaks

Updated August 2023
- Extended time on daily assignments and assessments - time and a half. MAP Assessments and Interim assessments must be taken during the regularly scheduled assessment window.
- Teachers will be aware of health care needs.
- Use a modified physical education assignments/activities.
- Physical Therapy

- **At Home Strategies:**
  - Print slides from each class to use for taking notes

**Tourette’s Syndrome**

- **Possible Accommodations and Strategies:**
  - Teachers will be aware of health care needs.
  - Frequent monitored breaks
  - Extended time
  - Preferential seating
  - Small group or individual instruction will be provided when needed
  - Recordings (vs. attending live synchronous sessions)
  - Optimal time of day for instruction
  - Instructions will be repeated and paraphrased for clarity.
  - Adaptive furniture: Chewelry, fidget spinner, balance ball.
  - Use a modified physical education assignments/activities.

- **At Home Strategies:**
  - Block Schedule
  - Print slides from each class to use for taking notes
  - Seat student away from distractions (video games, TV, extra noise)
  - Use of a timer to help student stay on task
  - Break the list of assignments down into smaller chunks (work on multiple lessons for one subject each day or work in chunks of time).
  - Provide a quiet work space for your student.
  - Write or print out daily assignments.
  - Check for student’s completion of assignments.
  - Use incentives to help reinforce positive behaviors.
  - Reinforce self-monitoring and self-reporting of behaviors.
  - Utilize recordings if repetition of material is needed.
  - Reinforce self-advocating behaviors.

- **Medical Health Plan:**
  - Parent/legal guardian may remain on site to provide assistance or required medication. Per State guidelines, the parent/legal guardian may not remain in the testing room during the test administration.
  - Small group or Individual Testing
  - Preferential seating

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Traumatic Brain Injury

- Possible Accommodations and Strategies:
  - Teachers will be aware of health care needs.
  - Frequent monitored breaks
  - Extended time
  - Preferential seating
  - Small group or individual instruction will be provided when needed
  - Recordings (vs. attending live synchronous sessions)
  - Optimal time of day for instruction
  - Instructions will be repeated and paraphrased for clarity.
  - There is no guarantee that students will not come into contact with allergens at state testing.
  - Adaptive furniture: Chewelry, fidget spinner, balance ball.
  - Use a modified physical education assignments/activities.

- At Home Strategies:
  - Block Schedule
  - Print slides from each class to use for taking notes
  - Seat student away from distractions (video games, TV, extra noise)
  - Use of a timer to help student stay on task
  - Break the list of assignments down into smaller chunks (work on multiple lessons for one subject each day or work in chunks of time).
  - Provide a quiet work space for your student.
  - Write or print out daily assignments.
  - Check for student’s completion of assignments.
  - Use incentives to help reinforce positive behaviors.
  - Reinforce self-monitoring and self-reporting of behaviors.
  - Utilize recordings if repetition of material is needed.
  - Reinforce self-advocating behaviors.

- Medical Health Plan:
  - Parent/legal guardian may remain on site to provide assistance or required medication. Per State guidelines, the parent/legal guardian may not remain in the testing room during the test administration.

Tuberculosis

- Possible Accommodations and Strategies:
  - Teachers will be aware of health care needs.
  - Frequent monitored breaks
  - Extended time
  - Preferential seating
  - Small group or individual instruction will be provided when needed

Updated August 2023
○ Recordings (vs. attending live synchronous sessions)
○ Optimal time of day for instruction
○ Instructions will be repeated and paraphrased for clarity.
○ Use a modified physical education assignments/activities.

● At Home Strategies:
  ○ Block Schedule
  ○ Print slides from each class to use for taking notes
  ○ Seat student away from distractions (video games, TV, extra noise)
  ○ Use of a timer to help student stay on task
  ○ Break the list of assignments down into smaller chunks (work on multiple lessons for one subject each day or work in chunks of time).
  ○ Provide a quiet work space for your student.
  ○ Write or print out daily assignments.
  ○ Check for student’s completion of assignments.
  ○ Use incentives to help reinforce positive behaviors.
  ○ Reinforce self-monitoring and self-reporting of behaviors.
  ○ Utilize recordings if repetition of material is needed.
  ○ Reinforce self-advocating behaviors.

● Medical Health Plan:
  ○ Parent/legal guardian may remain on site to provide assistance or required medication. Per State guidelines, the parent/legal guardian may not remain in the testing room during the test administration.

Visual Impairment
● Possible Accommodations and Strategies:
  ○ Teachers will be aware of health care needs.
  ○ Frequent breaks
  ○ Extended time
  ○ Preferential seating
  ○ Small group or individual instruction will be provided when needed
  ○ Recordings (vs. attending live synchronous sessions)
  ○ Optimal time of day for instruction
  ○ Instructions will be repeated and paraphrased for clarity.
  ○ There is no guarantee that students will not come into contact with allergens at state testing.
  ○ Adaptive furniture: Chewelry, fidget spinner, balance ball.
  ○ Use a modified physical education assignments/activities.

● At Home Strategies:
  ○ Block Schedule
  ○ Print slides from each class to use for taking notes
  ○ Seat student away from distractions (video games, TV, extra noise)

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○ Use of a timer to help student stay on task
○ Break the list of assignments down into smaller chunks (work on multiple lessons for one subject each day or work in chunks of time).
○ Provide a quiet work space for your student.
○ Write or print out daily assignments.
○ Check for student’s completion of assignments.
○ Use incentives to help reinforce positive behaviors.
○ Reinforce self-monitoring and self-reporting of behaviors.
○ Utilize recordings if repetition of material is needed.
○ Reinforce self-advocating behaviors.

**Weight Issues: Diagnosis of Obesity, Anorexia, or Bulimia**

- Possible Accommodations and Strategies:
  ○ Teachers will be aware of health care needs.
  ○ Frequent monitored breaks
  ○ Extended time
  ○ Preferential seating
  ○ Small group or individual instruction will be provided when needed
  ○ Recordings (vs. attending live synchronous sessions)
  ○ Optimal time of day for instruction
  ○ Instructions will be repeated and paraphrased for clarity.
  ○ There is no guarantee that students will not come into contact with allergens at state testing.
  ○ Adaptive furniture: Chewelry, fidget spinner, balance ball.
  ○ Use a modified physical education assignments/activities.

- At Home Strategies:
  ○ Block Schedule
  ○ Print slides from each class to use for taking notes
  ○ Seat student away from distractions (video games, TV, extra noise)
  ○ Use of a timer to help student stay on task
  ○ Break the list of assignments down into smaller chunks (work on multiple lessons for one subject each day or work in chunks of time).
  ○ Provide a quiet work space for your student.
  ○ Write or print out daily assignments.
  ○ Check for student’s completion of assignments.
  ○ Use incentives to help reinforce positive behaviors.
  ○ Reinforce self-monitoring and self-reporting of behaviors.
  ○ Utilize recordings if repetition of material is needed.
  ○ Reinforce self-advocating behaviors.

- Medical Health Plan:
  ○ Preferential seating

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Supporting 504 Students

**Progress Monitoring**
504 School Level Coordinator will periodically check in on students to ensure accommodations are being implemented by the teachers and accessed by the students. 504 SLCs will confirm this information with the teachers via data meetings, phone calls, surveys, and emails. SLCs may also review students’ testing data including test results and time spent on the assessments. The SLC will communicate progress to the student and/or parent via phone, email, or individual/small group, and SLCs will document the contact in the Infinite Campus Contact Log.

**504 Amendments/Addendums**
504 Amendments or addendums can be made at any time. Parents/Guardians/Students (if over 18) can request an amendment meeting by emailing or phoning the school principal, 504 SLC or District Supervisor, or other GCA staff member. 504 Amendments are made to adjust accommodations or when a student has updated medical information that would change their supports, medications, or testing accommodations needed.

**Re-Evaluation Meetings**
To continue eligibility for a 504 at GCA, the District recommends for medical documentation (GCA Medical Form or psychological evaluation with diagnoses codes), to be updated every 3 years. The school level 504 coordinator will reach out to families who need to return updated medical documentation by phone and by email. It will be the responsibility of the 504 team to meet with the family during the first conference period (prior to November 1) and update this plan for the year. All teachers can identify their students with 504 plans by a red flag under 504 in Infinite Campus.

**College Board Accommodations**
Any student with a 504 can request accommodations for assessments such as SAT, PSAT, ACT, and AP exams. These exams are through the College Board and the ACT. The 504 Coordinator will submit requests for accommodations through the College Board and the ACT. Prior to requesting accommodations, parent must complete and return a consent form. This form should be uploaded in IC under PLP Documents. After a decision is made, the College Board and/or the ACT will send an email to let the coordinator know that a decision has been made. A decision letter will be available for download. Coordinator will download the letter, upload to the PLP document tab and send a copy to the parent.

**Graduation Accommodations**
During renewals in the fall, the Secondary Grade Band 504 Coordinator should ask seniors about potential accommodations needed for graduation. Make a note in IC about graduation requirements.

Updated August 2023
In May, once the graduation list is sent out, the Secondary Grade Band 504 Coordinator should call to confirm with 504 seniors the accommodations they discussed during renewal. Send all notes to the graduation administration team.

**Vocational Rehabilitation Referrals**

Vocational Rehab is an ideal program for students that would like to transition directly from school to work and may need some assistance with pre-employment skills. Students can be referred for Pre-Employment Transition Services as early as ninth grade. More information can be found at the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency website at https://gvs.georgia.gov/ as well as in the appendix of this manual. The Secondary Grade Band 504 SLC will be able to assist students and parents with a referral to this program.

**Diabetes Protocol**

For students with diabetes, a Diabetes Management Plan is required at the beginning of the school year, to be completed by the medical provider. If the student has additional medical diagnoses, a GCA Medical Form will also be required. These forms need to be received prior to the Section 504 Plan being renewed for the school year. This information must accompany the student to any state testing.

**Frequently Asked Questions about 504**

**Who is protected by Section 504?**

Any otherwise qualified person who currently has an impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities is eligible for protection and services under Section 504. Any student who is regarded as having impairment, or who has a record of impairment, is eligible for protection from discrimination.

**What is a major life activity?**

Section 504 defines major life activities as those activities involving caring for one’s self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working.

**What are “substantial limitations”?**

This term is not defined in the act or the regulations and is left to each agency to define. However, the Americans with Disabilities Act suggested that the term “substantially limits’ be interpreted to mean that the student “is unable to perform a major life activity that the average student of approximately the same age can perform, or that the student is significantly restricted as to the condition, manner or duration under which a particular major life activity is performed as compared to the average student of approximately the same age.” This interpretation can provide some guidance in defining the phrase.

Updated August 2023
What is “reasonable accommodation”? 
Reasonable accommodation in the school setting is a modification or adjustment of educational programs to afford students with disabilities equal opportunity to access the programs. Reasonable accommodation must be made for persons with disabilities unless the schools can show that the requested accommodations would impose undue hardship.

What protections are afforded to those with a “record of an impairment” or who are “regarded as having an impairment”? 
Under these prongs of the act, individuals are only eligible for protection from discrimination. For example, a student who has a record of leukemia but who is currently in remission cannot be denied the opportunity to try out for the football team. Likewise, a student with an orthopedic impairment cannot automatically be regarded as disabled when in reality the student experiences only minimal limitations.

Are IDEA (special education) students protected by Section 504? 
Students who are served through special education under IDEA are also covered under Section 504. However, individuals covered by Section 504 are often not covered by IDEA. The determining factor will be the severity of the disability and the need for special education related services.

Do students who have an Individualized Education Program under IDEA need a 504 Plan as well? 
Yes and no. The student cannot be discriminated against based on history of impairment. If the 504 Committee determines that the student continues to have a disability that substantially limits a major life activity even though he does not meet IDEA eligibility requirements, the student would then be eligible for services and protection under Prong 1 of Section 504.

Can temporary disability qualify a child for accommodations under Section 504? 
In some instances, students with temporary disabilities are eligible for 504 protections. The committee should consider the nature and severity of the impairment and what its permanent or long-term impact will be.

What protections are afforded to alcohol and/or drug addicted students? 
Section 504 does not provide protection to persons currently engaging in alcohol/drug use or to casual users. It does protect individuals who have successfully completed rehabilitation programs, persons who are participating in a rehabilitation program, and persons regarded erroneously as drug users.

Who is responsible for implementing Section 504? 
Section 504 is considered to be a provision of general education. It is therefore the responsibility of classroom teachers and the administrators to assure that Section 504 accommodations are carried out.

Updated August 2023
Who makes up the 504 Committee?
According to the federal regulations: “...placement decisions are to be made by a group of persons who are knowledgeable about the child, the meaning of the evaluation data, placement options, least restrictive environment requirements, and comparable facilities” [34 C.F.R. §104.35(c)(3)]. Individuals who make up the SST are also appropriate for the 504 Committee. Many school systems choose to use the SST as the vehicle for implementation of 504, although it is not required.

Is evaluation necessary to determine 504 eligibility?
Under Section 504, no formal testing is required. The 504 Committee will look at grades over the past several years, teachers’ reports, information from parents or other agencies, state assessment scores or other school administered tests, observations, discipline reports, attendance records, health records and adaptive behavior information. Schools must consider a variety of sources. A single source of information (such as a doctor’s report) cannot be the only information considered. Schools must be able to assure that all information submitted is documented and considered.

Is a medical report always necessary to determine 504 eligibility?
The 504 Committee should attempt to get as much information as possible regarding the student’s condition, a physician’s statement is not required to determine eligibility. If the committee determines that a formal evaluation of any type is necessary to determine eligibility, consent for evaluation is required and the evaluation must be provided at no cost to the parents.

Can a student be placed under Section 504 without parental consent?
No. Parents must always be given notice before their child is evaluated and/or placed under Section 504 (34 C.F.R. §104.36). Parents are provided with a copy of their child’s Section 504 accommodation plan if the committee determines that the child is eligible under Section 504.

What types of accommodations will a student receive if determined eligible under Section 504?
Each child’s needs are determined individually. Determination of what is appropriate for each child is based on the nature of the disabling condition and what that child needs to have an equal opportunity to compete when compared to the non-disabled. There is no guarantee of A’s or B’s or even that the student will not fail. Students are still expected to produce. The goal of education for all students, with or without disabilities, is to give students the knowledge and compensating skills they will need to be able to function in life after graduation.

How often will a student with a 504 be re-evaluated?
Students must be re-evaluated at least once every three years or whenever there is going to be a “significant change in placement.” Your school level 504 committee should

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re-evaluate your child’s plan annually (every year) to make sure that his or her accommodation plan is appropriate based on their current schedule and individual needs. The accommodation plan may be revised at any time during the school year if needed.

**Does every child who takes medication at school need a 504 Plan?**
No. Students may have accommodations such as administration of medication without having a formal plan. Local school system policy should be implemented.

**If a student has a 504 Plan, will a teacher or paraprofessional be assigned to come and work with the student?**
In most circumstances, no additional personnel will be assigned to carry out accommodations. Section 504 accommodations are generally carried out by the classroom teacher or other designated personnel within the school. However, a student who is unable to attend school may qualify for Hospital Homebound services.

**Are there any special rules for PE?**
The 504 Committee should determine to what extent a student will be able to participate in PE. Alternate assignments or exemptions should be addressed in the 504 Plan.

**Is it possible for a 504 student to fail a class?**
Yes. 504 protections do not automatically dictate that a student will receive passing grades. The 504 Committee must determine if the accommodations were appropriate and if they were implemented for the student. Team members must keep in mind that many factors influence a student’s academic performance.

**How does eligibility for Section 504 affect discipline?**
Students may not be punished for behavior that is caused by a disability. If it is determined that the behavior was not related to the disability, the student could receive the same consequences as a student without a disability. In that case, a manifestation committee will convene for a disciplinary hearing for students with Section 504 plans. A Section 504 Notice of Conference and Section 504 Notice of Parents’ Rights will be sent to notify the parent of the conference. The committee will review placement data to determine if current evaluation information is sufficient to make a determination. If placement occurred over a year ago, additional evaluation may be warranted. At the conference, a Section 504 Parents’ Rights will be provided, and the Manifestation Determination Conference Report will be completed. If the Section 504 Accommodations Plan is appropriate and there is no causal or substantial relationship, an expulsion process may continue.

**Can the 504 Committee order accommodations to district-wide standardized testing?**
Accommodations as outlined in the testing manual can be recommended as part of a 504 Accommodations Plan. However, committees should exercise caution in making these decisions. 504 Plans should not be written for the sole purpose of providing

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accommodations on standardized testing. In fact, a student may be placed at a
disadvantage if an accommodation is introduced for the first time at the administration
of a standardized assessment.

**Can the 504 Committee order accommodations to the ACT/SAT?**
The 504 Committee can make recommendations based on accommodations written
into the 504 Plan. However, the Educational Testing Service makes all decisions
regarding accommodations on an individual basis.

**Can a student be dismissed from a 504?**
Yes. Students who no longer have an impairment are no longer eligible for 504 services.
They will continue to be eligible for protection from discrimination based on their history
of impairment.

**Can a parent/guardian or adult student age 18 or older revoke consent for 504
placement?**
Yes. A parent/guardian or adult student age 18 or older can revoke consent in writing.
Please send your written revocation to the school level 504 Coordinator and/or
homeroom teacher.

**Does 504 eligibility automatically guarantee that a student is chosen for extracurricular
teams/activities?**
No. Students with disabilities must be given equal access to compete for and
participate in these activities with reasonable accommodations. If the student fails to
meet criteria for team membership, then he is not considered to be “otherwise qualified”.
Discrimination occurs when the decision not to allow the student to participate is based
solely on the fact that the student has a disability.

**What supports does the school offer to disabled parents?**
Providing reasonable accommodations also applies to disabled parents. The school
must provide reasonable accommodations to disabled parents, so they are able to
participate in the mandatory activities of their child’s education. Therefore, reasonable
accommodations (e.g., sign language interpreters for deaf parents) must be provided so
that the parent can actively participate in school-initiated conferences and hearings
regarding the student’s educational program related to academics and discipline.

Updated August 2023
Hospital Homebound Services
Colleen Hartmann, Hospital Homebound Coordinator

Hospital/Homebound (HHB) services are designed to provide continuity of educational services between the classroom and home or hospital for students in Georgia public schools whose medical needs, either physical or psychiatric, do not allow them to attend school for a limited period of time. HHB instruction may be used to supplement the classroom program for students with health impairments whose conditions may interfere with regular school attendance (e.g., students receiving dialysis or radiation/chemotherapy or students with other serious health conditions). Students must be enrolled in a public school in Georgia in order to receive HHB services. HHB services are not intended to supplant regular school services and are by design temporary. The student must anticipate being absent from school for a minimum of ten consecutive or intermittent school days due to a medical or psychiatric condition. The student’s inability to attend school for medical or psychiatric reasons must be certified by the licensed physician or licensed psychiatrist who is currently treating the student for the diagnosis presented. (Georgia Department of Education, 2016)

**Standard Operating Procedures for STAFF Regarding Virtual HHB Services**

1. Parent/Guardian or student contacts a GCA staff member to discuss the need for Virtual Hospital/Homebound services due to circumstances that lead to extended absence or a chronic qualified health condition.
2. The contacted staff member completes the [Staff Referral for Student Support Survey](#) immediately.
3. The student must be anticipated to be absent from school a minimum of 10 consecutive days or for intermittent periods of time anticipated to exceed 10 school days during the school year. Chronic illnesses that require long term intermittent absences may require students missing many days, but possibly not three consecutive days will be considered on a case by case basis.
4. The Inquiry Specialist will review surveys and forward information to the Hospital/Homebound Coordinator whose team will follow up with the parent/guardian and provide the parent with a copy of the Hospital Homebound application when appropriate. The Hospital Homebound team will request that the completed application be received back at least 7 days prior to the start of HHB services, if possible. All paperwork from the parent/physician should be received within 10 business days. The phone call and/or email is to be documented in the IC PLP contact log.

- **Virtual Hospital/Homebound Application Packet**
  - Georgia Cyber Academy Initiation Letter
  - Parent/Guardian Notice and Summary of Virtual Hospital/Homebound Services
  - Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement and Request for Virtual Hospital/Homebound Services
  - HHB HIPAA Release Form

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5. Parent/Guardian receives the Virtual Hospital/Homebound referral packet and reviews the information.

6. The parent/guardian, emancipated minor, or student 18 years of age or older should take the HHB application to the licensed physician or licensed psychiatrist treating the student for the medical condition. The completed application must be returned to the Hospital/Homebound Coordinator. An incomplete application may cause a delay in services. Only signed paperwork will be accepted as an application for hospital/homebound services.

7. The Licensed Physician/Psychiatrist Statement and Medical Referral Form should be legible and completed in its entirety. The licensed physician/psychiatrist should specifically state the nature of the illness, the projected length of absence (anticipated to be absent for 10 or more school days) and that the student is physically unable to participate in virtual school. It should indicate how many hours or minutes a student is medically viable to participate in school. The licensed physician/psychiatrist signature is required.

8. The Hospital Homebound Coordinator or Liaison will review the referral for completion. If the application is complete, within 5 days of receiving the completed application, the Hospital Homebound Coordinator or Liaison should schedule an ESP meeting with the parent. If the application is incomplete, the Hospital Homebound Coordinator should email the parent within 5 school days notifying the parent of the deficiencies.

9. The Hospital Homebound Coordinator or Liaison will review the application to ensure that the student meets the minimal eligibility requirements and will schedule a meeting with the appropriate team members.

10. Students may ONLY be eligible for testing accommodations for district and state assessments if Hospital Homebound packets are received within the last 30 days of school.

**Hospital/Homebound (HHB) Review Team**

*General Education Students*

The team will develop an Educational Service Plan (ESP), and determine if a 504 plan is needed at the end of service.

- Hospital Homebound Coordinator
- Hospital Homebound Liaison
- 504 School Level Coordinator
- Parent/Guardian

*504 Program Students*

The team will develop an Educational Service Plan (ESP) in conjunction with a 504 consideration meeting.

- Hospital/Homebound Coordinator
- Hospital Homebound Liaison
- 504 School Level Coordinator

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• Parent/Guardian

Special Education Program Students
Within 5 days, the team will schedule an amendment meeting and develop an Educational Service Plan (ESP) that is a part of the student’s IEP for each designated SE HHB student.

• Hospital/Homebound Coordinator
• Hospital Homebound Liaison
• Special Education LEA
• Parent/Guardian
• Special Education Case Manager
• General Education Teacher

Education Service Plan
This plan must address the disabling condition, anticipated length of absence, accommodations and modifications recommended by the licensed physician or licensed psychiatrist instructional delivery method, place of instruction, adult parent designee if the student is under 18 years of age, team members participating, and strategies for the student’s reentry to school upon his or her return.

The plan does not need to be lengthy, but it must give all parties enough information to adequately serve the student’s needs.

If the doctor does not address reentry on the medical referral form, and a signed HIPAA release is on file, Georgia Cyber Academy can contact the doctor directly. If such information is not provided, the school team can develop the reentry plan without doctor input.

The ESP shall identify the number of hours necessary to meet the instructional needs of the student. To comply with the Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.31 Hospital/Homebound (HHB) Services and meet attendance requirements, a minimum of three hours of instruction per week must be provided.

The ESP shall identify the appropriate course load for the student during the approved period of HHB instruction. It is noted that Virtual HHB instruction is not structured to supplant the regular school day and may, therefore limit the number and type of classes offered.

Additional Notes
A team meeting as described above must be convened to determine the needs of students that are found eligible for virtual hospital/homebound services.

Students are not eligible for Virtual Hospital/Homebound instructional services if their disease will endanger the health and safety of the instructor or other students with whom the instructor may come in contact. (This would apply to in person state testing)

Students may receive HHB services for pregnancy if the pregnancy causes the student to meet the requirements for HHB services.

Re-documentation of a chronic or recurring condition is not required but may be requested by the Hospital/Homebound Coordinator.

Updated August 2023
While receiving Virtual Hospital/Homebound instruction, a student will be counted present for the week, when a minimum of three hours of services are delivered within the week.

Classroom teachers will be responsible for providing recorded class sessions and assigning the student appropriate reduced work in one of GCA’s online learning programs.

GCA virtual school teachers provide class recordings in which parents will be able to utilize Virtual Hospital Homebound Instructional Services.

In addition to the Virtual Hospital/Homebound recorded class instructional sessions, a Learning Coach must be present during each recorded or live instructional class period.

The parent will notify the Hospital/Homebound Coordinator when the student is ready to return to school. A re-entry Hospital/Homebound Review Team meeting will be scheduled with appropriate stakeholders to discuss student needs.

For students who are anticipated to be out of school for 10 or more school days due to accidents, surgery, etc. it is not necessary to wait until they have missed 10 days to submit an application.

A Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement and Request for Virtual Hospital/Homebound Services form is required to place a student in this program along with a signed copy of the HIPAA Release form. The treating physician completes the last portion of the referral.

**Termination of Services**

A student is released from the Hospital Homebound Services program:

a. When determined by the Hospital Homebound Review Team. The Hospital/Homebound Review Team should reconvene to consider whether HHB services are still needed upon any of the following events:

b. When the student is employed in any capacity, goes on vacation, regularly participates in extracurricular activities, or is no longer confined to home.

c. When the student misses the completion of work for three HHB instructional sessions without providing extenuating circumstances documentation, including medical documentation from the treating provider.

d. On the last day of school of the regular school year.

e. If the student withdraws or is properly withdrawn from GCA.

Updated August 2023
Title III & English Learner Program

Emily Post, District ESOL Supervisor
Julie Ferrer, Title III Federal Programs Manager

Purpose of English Learner Programs

Georgia Cyber Academy will increase English proficiency of English Learners (ELs) in the English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program and meet academic achievement standards for grade promotion by providing high quality language development programs that are based on scientifically-based research and demonstrate the effectiveness of English proficiency and achievement in academic content areas.

Federal Definition

Means an individual—

- who is age 3 through 21;
- who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;
- who
  - was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English;
  - is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and
  - comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or
  - is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and
- whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual—
  - the ability to meet the State's proficient level of achievement on State assessments described in section 1111(b)(3);
  - the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or the opportunity to participate fully in society.

Common Acronyms

English Learner (EL)
English Language Learner (ELL)
English as a Second Language (ESL)
Limited English Proficient (LEP)

Updated August 2023
All of these acronyms are used to describe a student who speaks a language(s) other than English and has been identified as needing additional language support.

**Georgia Cyber Academy’s Standardized EL Entrance and Exit Procedures per ESEA/ESSA Title III, Part A**

**Registration/Enrollment Process**
Students will be identified through the enrollment process using the Home Language Survey required by the federal government. This survey is provided in the language the guardian’s can understand as indicated on enrollment paperwork.

The ESOL Program Supervisor routinely reviews the enrollment data weekly with the Home Language Survey results. Any student whose answers are anything other than English will need to be investigated by making phone calls to the family, SLDS data, and records requested from the previous school.

Teachers will continuously review their student rosters in SLDS to verify any additional active, monitored, or former ELs.

Compliance & State Reporting administrator routinely captures new students in GUIDE providing the ESOL Program Supervisor with students that have been coded as EL-Y, EL-1, EL-2, EL-3, EL-4, EL-Former, or EL-Waived.

If a child comes from a local school district or from a sister WIDA state, contact will be made with that school to determine if the child was served, screened, or monitored in their EL program. This will help us to determine if a child is in need of taking the WIDA Screener for placement.

If a child has no record of EL services in the past and has been confirmed to have other languages present from the HLS, the student must be evaluated using the WIDA Screener for placement. The online WIDA Screener placement test for second semester first grade through 12th grade will be given in person by a certified teacher at the Georgia Cyber Academy office or a location local to the student. The WIDA Screener for Kindergarten placement test for Pre-K entering Kindergarten through first semester first graders, will be given in person by a certified teacher at a location local to the student.

**EL Entrance Procedures**
*Screening for Eligibility*

Updated August 2023
WIDA Screener Placement Tests are the state required screening tests for potential EL students. The WIDA Screener for Kindergarten will be used for Pre-K entering Kindergarten, first/second semester Kindergarten, and 1st semester first graders. Students 1st grade, second semester through 12th grade will take the WIDA Screener. Students who come from another county or from WIDA sister states who have already been screened will not have to take this.

ESOL certified teachers will be trained through the WIDA platform to give this placement assessment and will assist in screening. All administrators/examiners will annually renew their WIDA test certification after September 1st for the current school year. WIDA’s Test Certification Year runs September 1st - August 30th. The ESOL Supervisor will maintain the annual training certificates for each examiner.

The WIDA Screeners, including the Kindergarten Assessment, are secure assessments and must comply with all requirements for test security.

**EL Eligibility Criteria**

A Pre-K entering Kindergarten through 1st semester Kindergarten student whose Composite Oral Proficiency Level (Listening & Speaking) < 5.0 on the Kindergarten WIDA Screener qualifies and is identified as an English Learner. If the student’s Composite Oral Proficiency Level (Listening & Speaking) is ≥ 5.0, the student Does Not Qualify (DNQ) as an English Learner and is not coded as an English Learner. The screener score is uploaded to the student’s Person Documents folder within Infinite Campus.

A 2nd Semester Kindergarten student and first Semester First grader whose Overall Composite Proficiency Level (Listening, Speaking, Reading, & Writing) is < 5.0 on the Kindergarten WIDA Screener, qualifies and is identified as an English Learner. If the student’s Overall Composite Proficiency Level (Listening, Speaking, Reading, & Writing) is ≥ 5.0, the student Does Not Qualify (DNQ) as an English Learner and is not coded as an English Learner. The screener score is uploaded to the student’s Person Documents folder within Infinite Campus.

A 2nd semester First Grader to 12th Grader taking the WIDA screener whose grade-level-adjusted Overall Composite Proficiency Level (Listening, Speaking, Reading, & Writing) is < 5.0 is eligible for ESOL services. If the student’s grade-level-adjusted Overall Composite Proficiency Level (Listening, Speaking, Reading, & Writing) is ≥ 5.0, the student Does Not Qualify (DNQ) as an English Learner and is not coded as an English Learner. The screener score is uploaded to the student’s Person Documents folder within Infinite Campus.

**EL Entrance Flowcharts**

[Kindergarten WIDA Screener for Kindergarten](#)

[Grades 1-12 WIDA Screener](#)

**Documenting ELP Screening Irregularities**

Updated August 2023
An ELP Screening irregularity may happen when one of the following takes place to a student:

- Administered the incorrect grade-level screener
- Administered the incorrect language domain subtests
- Administered the screener by a non-WIDA certified or untrained staff
- Administered the WIDA screener without appropriate accommodations to a student with or suspected disabilities
- Administered the WIDA screener even though they are English-only
- Administered the WIDA screener after transferring with an EL Exit status (El-1-F)

On the occasion where an ELP Screening irregularity takes place, the ESOL Services Supervisor will complete the ELP Screener Irregularity Form and maintained locally. Next steps for properly identifying the student’s EL status will need to be discussed between the ESOL Services Supervisor and the WIDA Screener examiner.

**Students with Disabilities**

Potential English Learners with Disabilities (or Suspected Disabilities) Students with disabilities established in an IEP or 504 Plan whose home or primary language is not English, must be administered the appropriate WIDA ELP Screener with the appropriate accommodations as established in the IEP. Please see the GaDOE 2023-2024 Student Assessment Handbook. These accommodations must be documented in the IEP within Infinite Campus. Collaboration will take place between ESOL and the Special Education department to ensure the accommodations on the ELP Screener are appropriate to the disability. See also the WIDA Table of Allowable Accommodations in the GaDOE 2023-2024 Accessibility and Accommodations Manual and in WIDA’s 2023-2024 WIDA Accessibility and Accommodations Supplement. A potential EL entering school with a suspected disability may require an evaluation for special education before administering the WIDA ELP Screener with accommodations, especially if the suspected disability would impact the results of the screener. Making an eligibility determination for EL status when there is a suspected disability that has not been addressed could impact the eligibility determination. Collaboration between the ESOL and Special Education departments will take place prior to administration of the WIDA ELP Screener.

**Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities**

The WIDA Screener and the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten may not be valid screeners for Potential English Learners with Disabilities. A team meeting will be held to determine if a student with a significant cognitive disability or non-verbal communication would be adequately assessed by the language screener. The team will include the parent, an ELD teacher, the classroom teacher, a special educator, and a school administrator. The team will discuss the best educational options for the student.

Updated August 2023
If the IEP team determines that the administration of the WIDA ELP Screener with accommodations is not appropriate to identify this student as an EL, the IEP meeting minutes suffice as documentation of this decision. A flag could be placed with the Home Language Survey in the permanent record to alert any reviewer to see the IEP minutes dated XXXX for decision regarding screening.

If the IEP team determines that the student is not an English learner, then he/she would be coded EL=No.

The meeting minutes and the committee decision must be maintained in the student’s Person Documents (cumulative record) folder in Infinite Campus. Additionally, the IEP team decision must be maintained in the student’s cumulative record along with evidence that supported the committee’s decision. The decision may be revisited at any time in the student’s school career.

**Students with Disabilities that Preclude Assessment of One or More Language Domains**

WIDA ELP screeners may not be valid screeners for making EL eligibility determinations for students whose IEP precludes the assessment of one or more language domains. To determine the student’s qualifications as an EL, the IEP team must meet to discuss how the student will be determined to be an EL when one or more language domains are missing.

Students that are deaf, blind, and non-verbal would be considered as having a disability that precludes one or more language domains. In this case, the Assessment Director needs to seek counsel from the GaDOE Assessment Division who would then consult with the Special Education and EL Learner Programs. The decisions made by the IEP team must be maintained in the student’s cumulative record in Infinite Campus.

**When Parents Report a Multilingual-Multiliterate Home Language Environment**

GCA utilizes the updated HLS that includes “Additional Information from Multilingual Families.” Parents that indicate their child and other adults in the home understand and use English and another language will complete the “Additional Information from Multilingual Families” questions. If a parent responds that their child understands and uses English more than the other home language, or that the child understands and uses both English and the other home language equally, GCA will not screen the child for English language proficiency. If the student qualifies for EL status, GCA identifies the primary home language as the non-English language, since both primary home languages cannot be simultaneously recorded in Infinite Campus.

If a parent of a developing multilingual child feels that the ELP screening process is discriminatory against multilingual-multiliterate families, the parent may request a Multilingual Home Language Survey (MLL HLS) Amendment. This amendment provides guidance and describes the process to change the student’s primary home language.

Updated August 2023
code to English. With an English primary home language, the student would not be considered a potential English learner nor would be screened for ELP.

If a new family requests a MLL HLS Amendment form the following process will occur:

- The ELD teacher will email the form provided by GADOE and offer a follow up phone call to answer any questions at the guardian’s request
- Once the completed form is received, the ELD teacher will send it to the ESOL Program Supervisor.
- The ESOL Program Supervisor will review the form and follow up with the guardian if needed
- Upon verification and approval by ESOL Program Supervisor, this Multilingual HLS Amendment will be added to the student’s file in Infinite Campus and Ellevation and will constitute the official Home Language Survey of record.
- The ESOL Program Supervisor will also change the STUDENT HOME LANGUAGE in Infinite Campus to English.

Students Transferring From Out of State
If a student was screened by a WIDA state and not found eligible, GCA may NOT screen the student again. If the student was screened in a Non-WIDA state and not found eligible, GCA may consider rescreening the student using the WIDA eligibility assessment. However, GCA will NOT consider re-screening if the student was screened within the last 24 months from enrollment, was successful in the general education program at the previous school, or performed at the met or exceeded level of the state’s content assessments.

J-1 Visa, Foreign Exchange Students
It is expected that all J-1 exchange visitors are proficient enough in English to participate successfully in their exchange program and to function on a day-to-day basis in U.S. schools. GCA will not screen these students for language services if sponsors provide GCA with evidence of English proficiency in one of the following ways:

- Results of a recognized English language test
- Signed documentation from an academic institution or English language school
- A documented interview conducted by the sponsor

The ESOL Program Supervisor will review the evidence submitted on behalf of the student.

When an EL-Y student is Incorrectly Identified
On the rarest of occasions, a student is identified through the Home Language Survey (HLS) screened, and found eligible for ESOL services, EL-Y and following the parent notifies GCA that they incorrectly completed the Home Language Survey questions. The ESOL Program Supervisor will provide the parent the opportunity to complete a Home Language Survey Addendum. The original HLS and the HLS addendum must be printed in a language the parents have indicated they understand.

Updated August 2023
**Home Language Survey Addendum Procedures**

- When parents report an error in the completion of the Home Language Survey
  - A parent may request to change their answers to the Home Language survey if they did not understand the questions on the original Home Language Survey.
  - The Home Language Survey Addendum will be provided to the parent in a language that they understand. The addendum must be completed and signed by the parent in the presence of a notary.
  - The notarized form must be added to the students person documents folder in Infinite Campus.
  - The ESOL Program Supervisor will update the student’s Primary Language code in Infinite Campus.
  - Depending on the change (example: English to Spanish or Spanish to English), a student may be screened for ESOL eligibility or a student will not be screened for ESOL eligibility.

The ESOL Program Supervisor approves the new HLS and will take the next steps based on the new information.

If the next step requires a status change, GCA’s State Reporting Manager will use the code EL-I to show the student was Incorrectly Identified for the remainder of the school year. All subsequent years following July 1st, the student will be coded as EL-N.

The ESOL Program Supervisor will place all documentation of the status change in the Person Documents file in Infinite Campus as well as report the following information to the GaDOE through the secure Portal messaging system by June 30th:

- Student’s First and Last Name
- Grade level
- Parent’s reason for change
- Name of ESOL Program Supervisor that approved status change
- Former status code
- New Status code
- Date status change effective
- Save the report as: DISTRICT.YEAR.TitleIII.EL-ICodeReport. Insert link to the form.

**Coding Screener Data & Results**

To code student EL-Y, on the EL Information Tab in Infinite Campus (IC), you must change the student’s Program Status to EL. The date of ELP Screener is called the Identified Date in IC. A home language other than English must be added to the students’ demographic information (Census-People) in order to add the EL Program status.

**Screener Results**

Updated August 2023
The ESOL Program Supervisor will inform the parents of the ELP Screener score by emailing the results to the parent email on file in Infinite Campus. A follow-up phone call will be offered to discuss the results as well. A copy of the score report will be placed in the records folder in Infinite Campus and Ellevation.

Georgia Cyber Academy utilizes the EL Screener Tab in SLDS to maintain the ELP Screener information for all districts in Georgia to access as needed.

**Documenting ESOL Services**

When a student begins service, the ESOL Program Supervisor will add an initial date for ESOL services in the student’s individual record in Infinite Campus. If the student begins receiving service, but after parent notification (see below) is withdrawn from services, the start date should be indicated as parent withdrawn and the date the school received written parent notification. A start date for ELs receiving ESOL must be documented annually. Finally, a start date is entered indicating when the student began to receive ESOL services. The start date should be the first day upon which the student received instruction in an ESOL program. It is not allowable to simply enter the first day of school if the student did not receive ESOL services the first day of school. This service will be documented in Infinite Campus (IC) under Program Participation, English Learners and will be marked as service type ESOL: ESOL and ESOL1:1 ESOL Segment. ESOL Placement must take place within 30 days from the first day of school (10 days for students entering after the first day of school.)

Once a student is identified as an EL student, the ESOL Program Supervisor will email the counselor assigned to student placement. The ELD teachers will be copied on the email. The counselor will place the EL student in the ESOL Course in Infinite Campus.

Active EL students will be assigned to a certified ELD teacher who will meet with active EL students for 45-50 minutes daily (depending on grade level) to monitor progress and provide academic support using various service models. The ELD teacher will focus on assisting the student to achieve proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English.

Grades K-3 = 45 minute daily segments or a minimum of 225 minutes weekly
Grades 4-8 = 50 minute daily segments or a minimum of 250 minutes weekly
Grades 9-12 = 50 minute daily segments or a minimum of 250 minutes weekly

**Parent Notification of ESOL Services**

The Parent Notification Letter is used to notify parents of students that have been identified as EL and their student’s placement in a language instruction program. The parent notification letter is emailed annually to all EL Eligible students’ parents. The letter must be provided to the parent no later than 30 days from the beginning of the school year, or within 2 weeks of enrollment in an ESOL program. For any student that enrolls after the first 30 days of the school year, the school will have 10 days or 2 weeks to notify of ESOL program placement following the student’s date of enrollment.

Updated August 2023
The letter will come from Ellevation and will be translated to the Native Language for those that request communication in their native language.

The school will ensure that all communication to a parent of a child identified for participation in a language instruction educational program for limited English proficient children shall be in an understandable and uniform format and, to the extent practicable, provided in a language that the parents can understand.

The school must notify parents, in a language they can understand, within ten school days. GCA will use ZAB Translation Solutions for translating documents. Additionally, GCA will refer to the Georgia DOE website or Ellevation for completed translations of required forms.

Parent Notification of Title I Supplemental Language Programs
Georgia Cyber Academy consolidates Title I funds and therefore does not send the Parent Notification of Title I Supplemental Language Programs. If we do not consolidate Title I funds, the form would need to be sent and would be handled as follows: Parent Notification of Title I supplemental Language Programs is not for all ESOL Students. This specific notification is for students receiving additional language programs funded by Title I or III Federal Programs. When applicable, the ESOL Program Supervisor will use the template provided by the GADOE website. It is the duty of the ESOL Program Supervisor to update the notification with the supplemental program information when applicable. The ELD teachers will disperse through email the notification within 30 days of the first day of the school year or within 10 days of starting ESOL services after the first day of school. A copy of the notification will be added to the student’s permanent record.

Parent Notification of Student Eligibility for English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Language Program and Supplemental Language Instruction Services
If GCA is not Consolidating Funds: The ESOL Program Supervisor may choose to use the combined Parent Notification of Student Eligibility for English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Language Program and Supplemental Language Instruction Services instead of sending the letters separately if the school is no longer consolidating Title I funds.

Notification of Language Assistance Services
Schools must notify Limited English Proficient (LEP) parents and all school staff of the availability of free (to them) language assistance services with respect to information about school programs and activities (e.g., on-line/digital and “in person” or telephone-based orientation sessions, parent-teacher conferences, meetings with school staff, special education or other meetings about disability, learning coach activities, etc.). The notification(s) should include information about how to access the services and will identify a school contact person (e.g. Family Partnership School Coordinator of Special Programs) who can assist LEP parents in accessing interpreter services or translated documents.

Updated August 2023
GCA has a Family Partnership School Coordinator of Special Programs that is dedicated to working with district and school level staff to ensure communications are being sent in a language that can be understood. GCA will routinely use S’mores newsletters that allow for on-demand translations. The GCA website is translatable through a translation management tool, Weglot. The availability of Language Assistance Services will be published in/on:

- the Georgia Cyber Academy’s website;
- the student and parent handbooks;
- all District-wide or school-based newsletters or other general communications;
- general contact information in advertisements or other contacts relating to enrollment/admissions through taglines
- GCA’s letterhead that includes taglines

Annually school staff should be trained on the following items:

- Notice of Language Assistance Services for Parents
- Accessing an interpreter
- Requesting document translation
- Utilizing free online translation
- Utilizing taglines

In general, the use of family members and friends for the provision of language assistance is not acceptable. The use of such individuals may raise issues of confidentiality, privacy, or conflict of interest and that, in many circumstances, such persons are not competent to provide quality, accurate interpretations.

In addition, staff are strongly cautioned not to rely on family members and friends to provide LEP parents meaningful access to important programs and activities and that, even when LEP parents have voluntarily chosen to provide their own interpreter or translator, the school may still need, depending upon the circumstances of the encounter, to provide its own interpreter or translator to ensure accurate interpretation or translation of critical information. This is especially true for, but not limited to, situations where the competency of the LEP parents’ chosen interpreter is not established and/or when identified LEP parents do not request translation but a translator is deemed necessary to convey information.

Additionally, the use of minor children raises concerns about competency, quality, and accuracy of interpretations and that it is never advisable to use such children to convey information about their own education and/or complex information.

**English Learner Exit Criteria**

**WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 English Language Proficiency Assessment**

Under ESSA, All grade K-12 students identified as an EL, including waived, will be administered the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 English Language Proficiency (ELP) assessment annually; the ACCESS test will be given annually in February.

Updated August 2023
Federal Programs Titles I and III, Part A will be monitoring the school system’s ELL ACCESS Participation Rates annually. Georgia Cyber Academy will comply with the 95% requirement of testing participation but will aim for 100%.

Attending the ACCESS test is the student’s attendance for that school day. Not showing up for the ACCESS is an unexcused absence. Students that do not show up to their assigned ACCESS date will be rescheduled within the ACCESS testing window at least two additional times. Each day missed will count as an unexcused absence. Families may apply for an exemption by completing the Hardship documentation. Administration will decide if the hardship is excusable from state testing. The Hardship document will be placed in the student’s Personal Records.

Exit Criteria
Georgia Cyber Academy will provide services to EL students until they are proficient enough in English to participate meaningfully in the regular education program. The school will determine whether a student requires ESOL service based on a variety of measures. If the combined evidence suggests that an EL no longer needs direct service and has achieved on the Annual Assessment, the student may be exited from direct ESOL service. Exit and Reclassification is based on the following criteria:

- ACCESS Score Requirement for a Kindergartener to exit ESOL: The Overall Composite Proficiency Level (CPL) is >5.0. GCA will use the EL Exit Flowchart for Kindergarten to make exit decisions.
- If a student in grades 1-12 achieves an Overall score of greater than or equal to 5.0 the student must be exited from the ESOL program. GCA will use the Grades 1-12 EL Exit Flowchart.

Alternate ACCESS Threshold for considering EL Exit: Alternate ACCESS Overall CPT P2 (Emerging) for two consecutive years with IEP Team recommendation OR any other Alternate ACCESS Overall CPL of the SAME score for Three consecutive years with IEP recommendation.

The student no longer needs English language development services or a TPC including but not limited to specific interventions based on the four domains (reading, writing, speaking and listening) based on multiple indicators including

- WIDA Screener for Kindergarten or WIDA Screener Placement Tests, grades K and 1-12
- ACCESS test
- Work Sampling
- Grades
- Homework and teacher/parent input

Updated August 2023
EL-1 and EL-2 students need to be closely monitored to ensure that they are making progress in all classes as well as showing growth and meeting standards on Benchmark assessments. ELD teachers will be required to send a Monitoring Form to be completed by content teachers and the ELD teacher for these students at the end of each grading period (quarterly.) These forms will be generated and housed within Ellevation.

The student now has full access to the mainstream curriculum with or without the use of universal tools (Assistive technology) available to all students.

Once the two-year monitoring period has ended, the student’s coding for Data Collections Student Record purposes will change from EL-2 to EL-3 (3rd Year Post-Exit), then EL-4 (4th year Post-Exit). Following the EL-4 designation, the student will be coded EL-F (Former EL) and remain as such as long as they are enrolled in public schools.

Annually parents will be notified of the exit and reclassification criteria for EL students.

**EL Reclassification**

Reclassification is a term that is used when an EL student’s English language proficiency level reaches the state and LEA’s definition of English Proficient. Georgia Cyber Academy has chosen the score of 4.6-4.9 on the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 to be considered for EL Reclassification for students in 1st to 5th grade. Georgia Cyber Academy has chosen the score of 4.5-4.9 on the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 to be considered for EL Reclassification for students in 6th to 12th grade.

Any student who achieves a 4.6-4.9 (1st-5th) or 4.5-4.9 (6th-12th) on the annual English Language proficiency assessment will be reviewed for reclassification based on the flexibility of the state of Georgia. A reclassification meeting will be held and the state’s reclassification form must be filled out. The team will include the ELD teacher, the ESOL Program Supervisor, a content teacher, and the parent/guardian. If the team decides the student will be successful in accessing the curriculum at grade level without ESOL direct support based on the academic and perception data collected, the student may exit.

After completing the Reclassification Meeting, students are Exitd from EL status and the student’s status is reclassified from English Learner=Yes (EL-Y) to English Learner Monitor Year 1 (EL-1). The Reclassification Meeting document is required to be added to the student’s Person Documents folder within Infinite Campus.

**Post-Exit Reversal-Reclassification Decisions**

During the Post-Exit years 1 & 2, the EL-1 & EL-2 students are monitored quarterly by the content teachers of these students. The ELD teachers for the assigned grade band will send out the monitoring form to the teachers and will document and track student progress. Through monitoring, if an EL-1 or EL-2 student is not progressing academically as expected and monitoring suggests a persistent language need, GCA will re-test the...
student’s English language proficiency with a valid, reliable, and grade-appropriate ELP test to see if the student must be offered additional language assistance services.

It will be decided through collaboration of the Multi Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), ELD teacher, and ESOL Program Supervisor if the EL-exited student is struggling due to lack of English Proficiency. The team will decide if the EL-exited student should be administered a valid English Language Proficiency (ELP) test to determine if the student must be offered additional language support services. The WIDA ELP assessment is not an option for exited ELs at GCA.

Through monitoring, if an EL-1 or EL-2 student is not progressing academically as expected and monitoring suggests a persistent language need, and was exited below 5.0, may be placed back into the ESOL Program without a Reclassification meeting. GCA will maintain best practice, by holding a meeting with the parent/guardian, ELD teacher, ESOL Program Supervisor, and a content teacher to determine if the student is struggling due to a language barrier. Notes and decisions from the meeting will be maintained in the student’s record in Infinite Campus and Ellevation.

The ESOL Program Supervisor needs to reflect on reasons why the EL-exited student did not succeed without ESOL services.

- Is the GCA exit score flexibility too low for students to be successful in their grade level content classes?
- Are the instructional staff at GCA providing instructional support to the student?
- Are the instructional staff being mindful of the Testing Participation Committee document and following through with the accommodations set in place?

In Georgia, it is the responsibility of the MTSS team to determine whether the EL-exited student is struggling because of a lack of content knowledge or whether the EL-exited student is struggling because of a lack of English language proficiency. ELD teachers are essential to the MTSS review process as they understand the process and timeframe of second language acquisition, especially those ELD teachers who have taught the exited EL in recent years. The team may choose to administer a valid ELP assessment from among vendor choices, however, the WIDA ELP assessment is not an option for an exited EL student.

First, the team should examine whether its locally chosen exit criteria is ensuring that EL students are proficient enough in English to be successful in the classroom. If GCA finds that changes to locally designed exit criteria are necessary, appropriate training would be provided to teachers and staff.

Secondly, the team should ensure that the struggling student is provided all instructional support available to all students within the school.

The third step is to ensure that the team is aware of the student’s lack of academic progress and success. The MTSS team should examine student data and determine

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appropriate interventions or appropriate increases in the intensity and duration of such interventions, following MTSS protocols. Tier 2 or 3 progress monitoring processes should be implemented as for any other student.

Questions for the MTSS team to Consider

- Was the exited student educated formally in his/her home country? Was schooling consistent or did the student’s education have prolonged periods of interrupted schooling or no schooling?
- What were the exited EL student’s ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 score and subscores in each domain?
- Was the student exited from English language assistance services based on the English Learner Reclassification Review Committee decision?
- What were the student’s EOG/EOC scores?
- In the courses in which the student is struggling, what is the main area of struggle?

The team reviewing all the evidence and data will determine whether the problem is truly a lack of English language proficiency or a lack of content knowledge, cognitive issues, or stability.

Receiving Exited EL Students from Transfer LEAs

GCA honors the decision of Reclassification for a student that transfers from another LEA when the transfer occurs after the October FTE count.

If the transferring LEA uses a lower EL Exit Criterion than GCA, and if the transfer occurs within the first two weeks of school, GCA will observe the student performance for two weeks and convene another EL Reclassification Team to review the documentation and evidence, when applicable.

Post-Exit Re-Screening Decision-Making Process for EL-3 and EL-4 Students Returning to US Schools after Multiple Years in Non-English School

Students that leave the country and are in non-English school environments have their EL status frozen where they last left in a US Public School. When returning to US schools, the student continues with the EL status they last had. If the Exited EL-3 or EL-4 student is not progressing academically and monitoring suggests a persistent language need, the ESOL Supervisor, a grade band ESOL teacher, a MTSS team member, and one of the student’s content teachers will meet to determine if the student should be considered for re-screening.

The following must be considered before moving forward with a screening:
- Did the student demonstrate full English proficiency at an early elementary grade level?

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• Following EL Exit, was the student successful in U. S. school during the first two monitoring years (EL-1 & EL-2) and then left the country to be schooled in a non-English environment for three or more years?
• Is the student currently enrolled in a grade level that has high academic English expectations? Is there a sense of urgency that is pointing to re-screening and possibly being served in the ESOL Program?

Based on the findings from above questions, the student may be administered the ELP Screener again. The results of the screener will determine the next steps.

Post re-screening steps:
• Documentation of the decision making process and the ELP screener results will be maintained in the student’s Person Documents folder in Infinite Campus. A cover letter will be saved as the first page of the screener document describing the purpose of the re-screening.
• If the screening results in the student being eligible for ESOL services, the student will be coded as EL-Yes in IC. The ESOL Supervisor will need to work with the GaDOE ESOL office and GCA’s Data Collections Assistant Director to clear errors in data collections.
• The parent/guardian must receive the Notification of ESOL services within ten days of placement in ESOL services.
• The ESOL teacher will collaborate to create a TPC and EL Plan for the student within 10 days of entering ESOL services.
• If the reclassification occurs before or during the ACCESS window, the student will also be required to take the ACCESS test.

**Exiting Procedures for English Learner Students with Disabilities**

The Alternate ACCESS for ELLs assessment for English Language Proficiency is used for Georgia Students in grades 1-12 who are classified as English learners and have significant cognitive disabilities that prevent meaningful participation in the regular ACCESS for ELLs assessment. These students must be eligible to participate in GAA 2.0. Students taking the Alternate ACCESS that score CPL P2 (Emerging) for two consecutive years with the IEP recommendation OR any other Alternate ACCESS Overall CPL- The same score- for three consecutive years with the recommendation of the IEP team may be considered for EL Reclassification. The EL Reclassification/IEP Team Rubric will be utilized to make the decision. A copy of the rubric will be placed in the student’s permanent record in Infinite Campus.

**Post-Exit Procedures for Students with Disabilities**

For two consecutive school years, the exited student’s progress toward IEP goals must be monitored by designated ESOL and Special Education staff to ensure the exited student’s English Proficiency is not a barrier to full access and participation in classroom instruction and assessments in English. Quarterly Monitoring documents are to be placed in the student’s permanent record in Infinite Campus and housed in Ellevation.

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Exiting Procedures for English Learner Students with Less than Four Domains

As determined by the student’s IEP team or 504 plan, if a student’s disability is directly related to a domain for which there are no accommodations, the student may be exempt from taking that language domain assessment.

Students who are deaf, blind, and non-verbal would be considered as having a disability that precludes the assessment in one or more language domains. For these unique situations the Assessment director needs to seek counsel from the GaDOE Assessment Division who would consult the Special Education and EL Learner Programs.

Students whose disabilities precludes assessment of one or more language domains should be considered for exit from English Learner Status when the student has met the following state-established criteria using a GaDOE provided Designate Composite Proficiency Level (D-CPL)

- D-CPL Process:
  - Administer the appropriate WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 or Alternate ACCESS language domain tests to the EL student as established by the IEP team.
  - For each language domain test not administered, the testing coordinator must mark DO NOT SCORE with a reason code of SPD in the students’ test booklet or in WIDA AMS.
  - Using WIDA-provided language domain scale score tables, the GaDOE Assessment & Accountability Division assigns the lowest exit score for the missing language domain(s) to allow an overall composite proficiency level calculation.
  - The GaDOE Assessment & Accountability Division will calculate a Designate Composite Proficiency Level (D-CPL) for each one of these EL students whose WIDA ACCESS score results are missing one or more language domains.
  - Typically in August, the GaDOE Assessment & Accountability Division provides GCA with an ACCESS D-CPL for each one of these EL students.

Based on the D-CPL and the statewide EL exit criteria for ACCESS for ELs 2.0 or Alternate ACCESS for considering EL Exit would then be applied to decide to Exit the EL student from ESOL services.

**EL Exit Reason**

EL Exit reason must be coded in Infinite Campus. This describes the method used to determine the student’s placement in the monitoring phase. The EL Exit is required when EL status is ‘1’ or ‘2.’

The ESOL Services Supervisor will choose the appropriate reason code:

1: ACCESS or EL proficiency

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3: Exited out of State or from a non-public school
4. EL Reclassification Team Decision

**Reporting Date of EL Exit**
ELs who have either met the standardized statewide Exit criteria or have been reclassified must have an EL Exit date coded in Infinite Campus. The EL Exit data must be an end-of-year date no later than June 30th. GCA typically uses the last day of school as an Exit date. However, this date cannot be added into IC until AFTER July 1st.

- The first-year post-exit starts July 1st after the student has met a qualifying exit score and/or Reclassification decision at the end of a school year or June 30.
- During the 2-year monitoring period Exited ELs are coded EL-1 and EL-2 for Year 1 and Year 2.
- Once the two-year monitoring period has ended, the student’s coding for Data Collections Student Record purposes will change from EL-2 to EL-3 (3rd Year Post-Exit), and then EL4 (4th year Post-Exit).
- Following the EL-4 designation, the student will be coded EL-F (Former EL).

**Timeline for EL Exit Procedures**

- May
  - GCA’s ESOL Program Supervisor pulls ACCESS and Alternate ACCESS scores from DRC.
  - The ESOL Program Supervisor and ELD teachers review scores for students that would meet the state’s ACCESS exit criteria.
  - ESOL Program Supervisor and ELD teachers review scores for students that may be “considered for exit” for scoring between CPL 4.6-4.9 (1st-5th), CPL 4.5-4.9 (6th-12th).
  - ELD Teachers will schedule and hold Reclassification meetings by including students’ content teachers, the ESOL Program Supervisor, Parent/Guardian, and additional staff as related to student’s qualifications (504, IEP, Gifted, etc.) Final decisions may be made before the end of the school year or within the first 30 days of the following school year.

- July/August
  - Exited EL students’ code is changed in Infinite Campus.

**Services and Programs of Instruction for ELs**
Programs of instruction for ELs shall include formal instruction in English language development; and instruction in academic subjects which is designed to provide ELs with access to the regular curriculum. In selecting a program(s), the school shall choose programs that are research based and that have been demonstrated to be effective in the education of ELs.

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Programs shall be implemented consistent with the goal of prompt acquisition of full English proficiency. Programs shall include instruction in academic subjects which is equivalent in scope to the instruction that is provided to students who are not limited in English proficiency.

Instruction shall be delivered by individuals who meet Department of Education licensure and certification requirements and who are trained in the delivery of instruction to ELs.

The student’s parent, guardian or Relative Caregiver has a right to refuse placement of their child(ren) in the ESOL program and has the right to withdraw an identified student from the program. Parents, guardians or Relative Caregivers of eligible students who refuse placement of their student in either program or withdraw students from either program shall do so in writing. Parents, guardians, or Relative Caregivers cannot refuse annual ACCESS testing.

ACCESS & Accommodations Conference
Each EL student will participate in ACCESS testing according to state and federal guidelines. The purpose of this test will be to assess growth in English acquisition as well as to determine eligibility for the upcoming year.

ACCESS test results will be sent to families through a password protected email. A copy of the scores will be made available to the ELD teacher and the student’s teachers via the EL Plan in Ellevation. ACCESS test score reports will be placed in the student’s Person Documents folder in Infinite Campus.

At the beginning of each school year or the initial placement of an EL, the ELD teacher, student’s ELA teacher, and the ESOL district supervisor will discuss accommodations and classroom modifications for ESOL students. The EL plan/TPC document will be provided to all teachers who will sign that they have received ACCESS scores, as well as required accommodations for each student in their class.

The ELD teachers will:
After enrollment closes, parents will be sent their student's EL plan/TPC along with a flipped recording that
● Defines what it means to be an English Learner.
● Explains the goals of the ESOL program and the support provided.
● Shows parents where to find the accommodations and classroom modifications on the EL Plan/TPC.
● Reviews the notification of ESOL services which outlines the instructional models GCA uses.

State Assessment Accommodations

Updated August 2023
For state assessment purposes, students receiving ESOL services, EL-1, & EL-2 students that need accommodations to access their education at the same level as their same-age and grade-level peers, will be noted on the TPC (Testing Participation Committee)/form and the EL Plan. Accommodations needed for state assessments must follow these guidelines:

- All accommodations on the TPC/EL-Plan must be implemented throughout the school year.
- Only state-approved accommodations can be used with EL students on state assessments.
- Refer to GADOE’s Assessment page for an updated list of approved accommodations.

Data and Information Required by the Department of Education
Georgia Cyber Academy shall enter such data and information concerning ELs as instructed by the Department of Education and as otherwise required annually. For the purposes of Student Record reporting, the coding status for ELs who have met the criteria for exiting language assistance services and who then will begin the two-calendar year monitoring period changes from EL-Y to EL-1 or EL-1 to EL-2. In order to document first or second year monitoring status, ELs are coded in Student Record as EL-1 for the first year and EL-2 for the second year. For state testing purposes, students will be marked EL-3, three years after exiting and EL-4, after four years of exiting.

EL-3 and EL-4 students will not be monitored as EL-Year 1 and 2 students are but will be identified to monitor scoring on state tests. At the end of the monitoring cycle, 5 years after exiting, the student will then be coded as a former EL (EL-F). As ACCESS scores generally are received and evaluated before the end of the school year, GCA will determine that an EL has successfully met criteria for exit from the ESOL program. Coding in Infinite Campus must not be changed for students before July 1. The student’s EL coding should remain until all state data collection has been completed and finalized.

Waived Students
Screening for ESOL is not an option. It is a requirement of Title III and the Office of Civil Rights. However, once a child is screened and if that child is found eligible, the parents may waive the child’s right to participate in the program. Parents may waive students from the EL program, but the child will still be required to take the ACCESS annually. If a family insists that they do not want their child screened for ESOL and refuse to meet to take the screening test, we must then refer them to GCA’s Compliance Liaison.

If a parent wishes to waive services, the ELD teacher will attempt to call the parent (with interpreter if needed) to review the student’s current English Proficiency scores as well as their standing in academic classes to ensure an informed decision is made. A follow up email will be sent to the parent with the waiver attached. If the parent cannot be reached, the attempt will be documented in Infinite Campus and a follow up email will be sent requesting a meeting. The EL student will continue being provided ESOL services until the meeting is held with a final decision for waiving.

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A plan will be put in place to address supporting the language proficiency needs of the student in class.

A waiver form will be signed if the parents decide to waive ESOL services. Once this form is signed, the ELD teacher will add it to the Person Documents folder in IC and forward it to the ESOL Program Supervisor.

The ESOL Program Supervisor ends the EL-Services date in Infinite Campus. The Service type changes to Non ESOL01-Parent refusal-indirect serv. A parent declined date needs to be added to the Active EL Record.

The ESOL Program Supervisor will then email a copy of the Explanation of Consequences for Refusing English Learner Services to the parents.

Waived students will be monitored quarterly and be provided with a TPC for appropriate modifications and accommodations. The waiver will be signed annually and must be initiated annually by the parent before the student can be waived from ESOL services.

Communication with Parents
GCA will use translating options through the published school website and school newsletters to communicate with families in their native language. Teachers and staff can request an interpreter for meetings and phone calls to the Limited English Proficient (LEP) Learning Coach/Parent. GaDOE documents translated to Native Languages will be utilized as necessary. The School handbook is written out as text on the website and therefore is translatable using the embedded translation features.

The ESOL team may host outings for EL and LEP families throughout the year. Teachers from foreign language departments/clubs are encouraged to attend to help with translations.

GCA Staff will make every effort to translate communication to families in their native language

- Documents containing sensitive or legal information (TPC, IEP, Report cards, etc.) will be formally translated using Zab Translation services.
- GCA Letterhead will include taglines for families to request language assistance services
- School newsletters will be sent using on-demand translation tools
- The GCA website uses a translation management tool, Weglot
- Certified Languages International is the interpreter service GCA uses for meetings and conversations with parents
- GCA continues to hire bilingual staff across departments to provide in-house translation services.

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**Student EL Files**
Every student identified as EL, must have a Person Documents file in Infinite Campus. The following items must be located within this file:
- Home language survey (retained for all students)
- Placement and Annual Assessment results
- Copy of the most recent TPC
- Progress monitoring assessment or documentation (same interval as report cards)
- If the parent refuses services, a copy of the document indicating such Title I Supplemental Funds form
- Exit from ESOL or Reclassification documents

**Retention of EL Students**
Retention of an EL student should not be based solely upon their level of English language proficiency. Prior to considering retention of an EL student, the following points will be addressed in a meeting composed of the student’s teacher(s), ESOL staff member(s), and administrator(s). Documentation and results of the meeting must be kept in the student’s cumulative folder.

The committee should consider the length of time a student has been enrolled in the school in order to determine whether retention is an appropriate choice.

The student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) should be contacted when a student is not performing at grade level. All communication should be documented and in the parent(s)/guardian(s) native language. Documentation may include phone calls, progress reports, report cards, sample work, retention warning-letter, etc.

Every EL student is required to have a TPC (Testing Participation Committee) or localized form for documenting modifications and scaffolds. Teachers are required to have copies of TPC’s for any student that has one and all modifications and scaffolds must be followed. It is important to ensure that the TPC has been fully implemented and documentation has been provided for any changes or updates made to the TPC. The TPC is a fluid document that should be re-visited and updated as new data becomes available but not less than once per school year.

An EL student should be receiving English language development instruction throughout the school day via pull-out, push-in, or an ESOL course specifically designed to support their language development.

There must be a collection of multiple types of data points showing that an EL student is consistently failing to meet grade level expectations on screening and progress monitoring instruments. Retention decisions for EL students should not be based on one specific piece of data.

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Parents/guardians may appeal the decision to retain and a meeting will be held to discuss the appeal with the guardian, ESOL Program Supervisor, and school level administration.

**English Language Learners with Disabilities**

It is important that the IEP Team for a student identified as an EL with disabilities include persons with expertise in second language acquisition and other professionals, such as speech-language pathologists, who understand how to differentiate between limited English proficiency and a disability. The participation of these individuals on the IEP Team is essential in order to develop appropriate academic and functional goals for the child and provide specially designed instruction and the necessary related services to meet these goals. It is required that the ELD teacher be present at the annual IEP meetings, determination meetings, and amendments (when applicable) hosted by the special education case manager. GCA provides guidance for these meetings.

A student identified as EL, with a disability, will receive both English Language support and special education services. Sometimes a student’s needs in Special Education are so great that they would be better-provided language development opportunities in a self-contained classroom. When this is determined by the IEP team, it will be included in the IEP and the ELD teacher will work with the Special Education teacher to provide language learning opportunities. These students will be coded as NonESOL02: Lang Supp in SPED for ESOL services in Infinite Campus.

**ELs with Disabilities taking the ACCESS**

IDEA requires each school to ensure that a free appropriate public education (FAPE) is made available to all eligible children with disabilities residing in the State in mandatory age ranges, beginning at age 3 and possibly lasting to a child’s 22nd birthday, depending on State law or practice (34 CFR §§300.101-300.102). These entities also must ensure that the IDEA’s rights and protections are extended to eligible children and their parents (34 CFR §§300.100 and 300.201). IDEA requires that all students with disabilities be included in all general State assessment programs, including assessments described under section 1111 of the ESEA, with appropriate accommodations and alternate assessments, if necessary, as indicated in their respective IEPs (section 612(a)(16)(A) of the IDEA, 34 CFR §300.160(a), and section 1111(b) of the ESEA).

Both Titles I and III of the ESEA require schools to annually assess the English proficiency of all ELs in the State enrolled in public schools in grades kindergarten through twelve in the domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing (sections 1111(b)(7) and 1123(b)(3)(D) of the ESEA). Accordingly, as part of a general State assessment program, all ELs with disabilities must participate in the annual State ELP assessment with or without appropriate accommodations or by taking an alternate assessment, if necessary, consistent with their IEPs.

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ELs with disabilities can participate in the annual State EL assessment in the following ways, as determined by their respective IEP Teams:

- in the regular State ELP assessment without accommodations (in the same way as ELs without disabilities take the assessment);
- in the regular State ELP assessment through the use of one or more appropriate accommodations as indicated in the student’s IEP; or
- in an alternate assessment aligned to State ELP standards, if the IEP Team determines that the student cannot participate in the regular State ELP assessment, with or without appropriate accommodations. These students must also qualify to take GAA 2.0.

The Role of the Teacher and Teacher Training
The ELD teachers and ESOL Program Supervisor will complete annual WIDA Screener trainings (Paper & Pencil, Online, & Kindergarten) before the administration of the language screenings.

Georgia Certified staff also certified in ESOL will be asked to assist with any paper and pencil administration of the ACCESS test.

Georgia Certified staff may be asked to assist with online administration of the ACCES test.

Teachers and staff assigned to administer the ACCESS test will complete the annual WIDA ACCESS training through the WIDA platform and sign the Non-Disclosure. The WIDA ACCESS training must be completed annually after September 1st for the current school year. The WIDA Screener Certification is valid for one calendar year from the date the training was completed.

There will be a monthly ESOL program meeting to review program guidelines, plan for upcoming events, inform and update on current tasks, and discuss any concerns. This meeting is for ELD teachers and the ESOL Program Supervisor.

GCA will have five full-time certified ELD teachers serving the K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. The ELD teachers will support students through the push-in model, innovative model or separate class as determined by the Instructional Support Services (ISS) Team each year.

All ELD teachers will be able to assist staff with questions and/or concerns in addition to staying in constant communication with the ESOL Program Supervisor.

All ELD teachers will be required to administer the WIDA Screener for Kindergarten or WIDA Screener to potential EL students.

Active EL students will meet with a certified ELD teacher for the minimum weekly segments as required by the DOE for the monitoring of progress and reviewing of

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academic topics. This will include activities in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Classes are held in CLASS synchronous platform, attendance is taken, and classes are recorded. Grades K-3 = 45 minute daily segments or a min. of 225 minutes weekly Grades 4-12 =50 minute daily segments or a min. of 250 minutes weekly

Supplemental Programs Under Consolidated Funds:
In collaboration with the Federal Programs Manager, the ESOL Program Supervisor will continuously review the effectiveness of supplemental programs based on intents and purposes through consolidated funds under Fund 150. ELD teachers will report their implementation through monthly conferences with the ESOL team. Effectiveness of programs will be determined based on the goals in place for district and school improvement, and other goals in place for specific program implementation, as outlined in the Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan.

Annual Program Review
The effectiveness of the ESOL program will be reviewed annually through the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA), a component of the Comprehensive LEA Improvement plan (CLIP) in coordination with the school’s other federal programs. Data is pulled from the ACCESS tests to see the effectiveness of our program. The data shows where our strengths and weaknesses are as a program and allows for us to make improvements for the following school year.

Family Resources
There will be information on the GCA website for EL families to utilize. In addition to this, here are some websites that you may share with your EL families:
- http://www.colorincolorado.org/
- http://www.everythingesl.net/
- http://www.eslprintables.com/
- http://www.usingenglish.com/handouts/
- http://www.starfall.com/
- http://bogglesworldesl.com/worksheets.htm
- http://www.esl-lab.com/

Updated August 2023
Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support
Lakin Whitesides, PBIS Coordinator

Program Summary
The section serves to provide information about the function and purpose of PBIS.

Georgia Department of Education
According to the GADOE, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an evidence-based, data-driven framework proven to reduce disciplinary incidents, increase a school’s sense of safety and support improved academic outcomes. Implementation of PBIS is saving countless instructional hours otherwise lost to discipline. The premise of PBIS is that continual teaching, combined with acknowledgement or feedback of positive student behavior will reduce unnecessary discipline and promote a climate of greater productivity, safety and learning. PBIS schools apply a multi-tiered approach to prevention, using disciplinary data and principles of behavior analysis to develop school-wide, targeted and individualized interventions and supports to improve school climate for all students. (OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports).

Overview
Source: Center on PBIS
Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is an evidence-based three-tiered framework to improve and integrate all of the data, systems, and practices affecting student outcomes every day. PBIS creates schools where all students succeed.

Tier 1: Tier 1 practices and systems establish a foundation of regular, proactive support while preventing unwanted behaviors. Schools provide these universal supports to all students, school-wide.

Tier 2: Tier 2 practices and systems support students who are at risk for developing more serious problem behaviors before those behaviors start. These supports help students develop the skills they need to benefit from core programs at the school.

Tier 3: At Tier 3, students receive more intensive, individualized support to improve their behavioral and academic outcomes. At this level, schools rely on formal assessments to determine a student’s need.

Summary
Georgia Cyber Academy has established developmentally-appropriate behavior expectations for each grade band through the SOAR matrix. Through SOAR, safe, on task, awesome attitude, responsible, students are being taught positive behavior strategies and expectations. When teachers model the expectations and implement the

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PBIS strategies, students soar as learners with less behaviors interrupting valuable class time.

Georgia Cyber Academy uses Classcraft as an acknowledgement system. The purpose of an acknowledgement system is to prompt staff to respond positively when a student engages in the behavioral expectations. Reinforcing students’ appropriate behavior increases the likelihood that it will happen again, and it allows staff to connect with more students.

Roles and Responsibilities

**PBIS Coordinator**
The PBIS Coordinator is a highly qualified, state certified educator responsible for maintaining PBIS processes and procedures in an online environment. The PBIS Coordinator provides support and guidance to district staff and helps manage the learning process by focusing on all students’ needs. Coordinators monitor student progress through various platforms and work closely with School Level Discipline Assistant Principals, PBIS Team Members, teachers, students, and parents/Learning Coaches to advance each student’s success in the virtual classroom. Duties include but are not limited to: participate in regional, statewide, and national trainings for PBIS, secure resources for PBIS planning and implementation, oversee the school’s PBIS assessment and SWIS accounts, implement an acknowledgement system, and manage grade band PBIS teams.

**Discipline Grade Band Administrator**
The Discipline Grade Band Administrator is a highly qualified, state certified educator responsible for creating an environment conducive for successful PBIS implementation. Duties include but are not limited to: serve as the PBIS grade band point of contact, attend PBIS grade band meetings, complete and collect data required for PBIS school evaluation and reports (TFI, SAS, EOY reports, etc.), oversee creation and publication of grade band PBIS lessons, and lead in carrying out the grade band’s action plan.

**Behavior Representative**
The Behavior Representative is a highly qualified, state certified educator responsible for having a basic understanding of functions of behavior. Duties include but are not limited to: working closely with the Discipline Grade Band Administrator, ensure a focus on the root cause of behavior, ensure that the team is focused on proactive strategies, and ensure the team is using evidence-based strategies and interventions.

**Grade Band Administrator**
The Grade Band Administrator is a highly qualified, state certified educator responsible for creating an environment conducive for successful PBIS implementation. Duties include but are not limited to: supporting the grade band through the ISS department.

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active team member who supports and facilitates PBIS team activities and recommendations, and helps with supports for Tier 2 and Tier 3

**Data Leader**
The Data Leader is a highly qualified, state certified educator responsible for leading the PBIS Leadership Team through the data and problem-solving processes. Duties include but are not limited to: analyze data and lead data discussions to formulate problem solving for PBIS team meetings, ensure accuracy and consistency of SWIS data entry, and pull data from Jigsaw and Classcraft for the team to analyze.

**Family Engagement**
The Family Engagement member is a highly qualified, state certified educator responsible for being active supporter, implementer and leader of PBIS in the grade band. Duties include but are not limited to: attend grade band PBIS monthly meetings, participate in the PBIS action planning process and complete assigned tasks, communicate with families about PBIS implementation and use of the framework throughout the grade band, work with FELs for information distribution, and set positive tone and lead by example.

**Teacher Engagement**
The Teacher Engagement member is a highly qualified, state certified educator responsible for being active supporter, implementer and leader of PBIS in the grade band. Duties include but are not limited to: attend grade band PBIS monthly meetings, participate in the PBIS action planning process and complete assigned tasks, communicate with staff about PBIS implementation and use of the framework throughout the grade band, mentor teachers who need PBIS implementation help, and set positive tone and lead by example.

**Committee Members**
The Committee Member is a highly qualified, state certified educator responsible for being active supporter, implementer and leader of PBIS in the grade band. Duties include but are not limited to: attend grade band PBIS monthly meetings, participate in the PBIS action planning process and complete assigned tasks, communicate with students, families, and staff about PBIS implementation and use of the framework throughout the grade band, and set positive tone and lead by example.

**Frequently Asked Questions about PBIS**

What do students and educators gain in PBIS schools?
All students develop and learn social, emotional, and behavioral competence,
supporting their academic engagement. All educators develop positive, predictable, and safe environments that promote strong interpersonal relationships with students through teaching, modeling, and encouragement.

**How does PBIS contribute to the development of positive school climate, school safety, and student-educator relationships?**

PBIS implementation involves explicitly prompting, modeling, practicing, and encouraging positive expected social skills across settings and individuals. When students are taught to effectively use relevant expected social skills for themselves and with others, school climates are described as more positive, learning environments are designated as safer, and student-educator relationships are referred to be more trusting and respectful.

**What does PBIS have to do with school discipline and classroom management?**

Effective classroom management and preventive school discipline are essential for supporting teaching and learning. PBIS goes further by emphasizing that classroom management and preventive school discipline must be integrated and working together with effective academic instruction in a positive and safe school climate to maximize success for all students.

**How does PBIS work in a virtual environment?**

Teachers can still establish expectations for students in a virtual classroom. PBIS is successful in a virtual environment through establishing virtual classroom expectations, providing students with positive behavioral feedback, creating an accountability system, reinforcing expectations, and providing behavior interventions as necessary.

Updated August 2023
Bibliography and Resources

Bibliography

Georgia Department of Department of Education:
https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-EducationServices/Pages/TieredSystemofSupports.aspx
https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Parent-Rights.aspx

Child Find Procedures

FAPE

NWEA/MAP Growth

Georgia Department of Education, Hospital Homebound (HHB) Services Guidelines

Understood, 504 Plan Terms to Know

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Protecting Students with Disabilities
https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html

Resources

Selecting Evidenced-Based Tools for Implementing Intensive Intervention

National Center on Intensive Intervention Tools Chart
https://charts.intensiveintervention.org/chart/instructional-intervention-tools

What Works Clearinghouse
https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/ Best Evidence Encyclopedia
http://www.bestevidence.org/

Evidence-Based Tools for implementing Intensive Intervention

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports https://www.pbis.org/
http://www.pbiscaltac.org/

Updated August 2023
NEA Positive Behavioral Interventions
https://www.nea.org/assets/docs/PB41A-Positive_Behavioral_Interventions-Final.pdf

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Parent and Educator Resource Guide to Section 504 in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools
https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/504-resource-guide-201612.pdf

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Appendices

**MTSS Forms**
- **Georgia Cyber Academy Medical Form**—This form allows parents to disclose diagnoses or medications that are relevant to the student.
- **Parental Rights**—This form explains the rights of the parents regarding special education.
- **Parent Request for Special Education Notice (PRS)N Response Letter**—This letter is sent to parents who make a direct parent request for an evaluation. The letter explains the SST process and required documentation.
- **RTI Learning Coach Intervention Support Form**—This form allows the parent to share their specific concerns and indicate how he or she supports the student at home.
- **K-8 SST Meeting Form**—This form is used to document student data and meeting notes during a SST Tier 3 meeting.
- **9-12 SST Meeting Form**—This form is used to document student data and meeting notes during a SST Tier 3 meeting.
- **Visual Example of Form 3300**—This form provides a visual example of a completed 3300

**504 Forms**
- **College Board Consent Form** – The SGB 504 Plan Coordinator will send this form to parent or student if 18+ to complete when accommodations are requested for The College Board.
- **Diabetes Health Management Plan** - This documentation is required for all Section 504 Plans for students with diabetes. The form should be completed by a medical physician.
- **ACT Consent Form** – The SGB 504 Plan Coordinator will send this form to parent or student if 18+ to complete when accommodations are requested for The ACT.
- **Georgia Cyber Academy Medical Form**— When a parent/legal guardian requests a 504 Plan/accommodations, the Inquiry Specialist emails this form to the parent/legal guardian to take to the student’s doctor to complete.
- **Vocational Rehabilitation Forms** - Secondary Grade Band 504 Plan Coordinator or District 504 Plan Supervisor will send these forms to parent or student if 18+ when vocational rehabilitation services are requested.

**ESOL Forms**
- **Required Home Language Survey**
- **Parent Waiver of Direct ESOL Services**
- **Multilingual Home Language Survey (HLS) Amendment**
- **Home Language Survey Addendum**

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