

# **From Data to Decisions:**

## **Using Psychological Data to Understand Disability, Drive IEP Decisions, and Write Compliant IEPs**

Presented by:

Dr. Jessica Williams, Coordinator of Special Education

Elyse Hughes, Coordinator of Special Education

Clarke County School District

*Department of Exceptional Programs*



# About Us

## Clarke County School District

Athens, GA



**JESSICA WILLIAMS**

Coordinator of Special Education

Academics - Exceptional Programs

[williamsje@clarke.k12.ga.us](mailto:williamsje@clarke.k12.ga.us)



**ELYSE HUGHES**

Special Education Coordinator

Academics - Exceptional Programs

[hughese@clarke.k12.ga.us](mailto:hughese@clarke.k12.ga.us)



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# Session Objectives

Participants will gain knowledge of how to lead their teams to:

- Interpret essential elements of psychological and speech-language evaluations.
- Connect data to the impact of disability on learning and daily functioning.
- Write comprehensive Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFPs) and develop measurable, data-driven IEP goals that align with student needs.
- Collaborate effectively with school psychologists, speech-language pathologists, and IEP team members to support high-quality decision making.

# FY23

## Starting Point

Fall, 2022:

- In schools with teachers supporting IEP writing
- IEPs noncompliant
- Disconnect between Needs, Goals, Services, Accommodations, and Instruction



Our first steps:

- Needs assessment- What is the best way to support teachers and transform IEPs towards compliance?
- Consideration of IEP Writing Support Tools

# FY24

## The Change Implemented



- CCSD purchased teacher subscriptions with IEP writing tools in 2023
- Review of IEPs using tool did not produce desired outcomes in 2024
- Reassessment outcome- special education teachers needed training
  - Not just how to write an IEP, but how to ***interpret data*** to propose the most appropriate calculated IEP for each individual student
  - Collaboration between Special Education and School Psychologists needed



# The Baseline Information



## Spot Checks Conducted and Showed:

- ☐ 0% of IEPs reviewed met 100% compliance with Due Process Checklist
- ☐ Less than 10% of reviewed PLAAFPS contained all required contents
- ☐ Deeper review showed poor quality PLAAFPS and limited connection to IEP goals, services, and accommodations
- ☐ The first round of IEPs pulled rated PLAAFPS overall as mostly “Not Addressed” and “Emergent” using the [GA ATSI PLAAFP Rubric](#)

# CCSD Common Compliance Concerns

**Based Spot Checks and IEP reviews, CCSD demonstrated difficulty with:**

**H16-** Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFPs) did not include information regarding results of the initial and/or most recent evaluation of the student.

**H19-** The PLAAFP did not describe the student's academic, developmental, and/or functional needs.

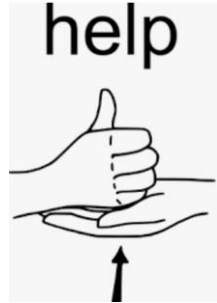
**H20** The PLAAFP did not include how the student's disability affects involvement and progress in the general education curriculum.

**K36-** Goals and objectives did not all align with the needs section of the PLAAFP.



# We Learned

- Teachers do not have an understanding of how to interpret psychoeducational data
- Disconnect between School Psychologists, Special Education Teachers, and related providers
- Teachers did not fully understand eligibility criteria or implications
- Teachers do not make connections between student weaknesses and alignment of goals/objectives, best practices instructionally including:
  - services, accommodations, and instructional decisions





# Common Reasons Special Education Teachers Struggle to Interpret Psychological Evaluative Data and Make Instructional Connections.

- **Insufficient expertise:** Teachers may lack the specific knowledge and expertise to understand the assessments and complex data presented in psychological evaluations.
- **Misinterpretation of scores:** Scores can be easily misinterpreted if the teacher doesn't understand what they represent.
- **Lack of time:** Teachers have numerous responsibilities, and a lack of time dedicated to in-depth review and collaboration with psychologists can hinder understanding.
- **Other Factors**



# The Work Begins

## **Fall, 2024: CCSD makes a shift in practice...**

- CCSD implements standing PL day for special education team leaders
- Department's Consistent focus:
  - Instruction, Compliance, Procedures

# Professional Learning



- Target audience= Team Leaders
- Training Model= Train the trainer model across leader groups
- Plan of action= IEP reviews monthly at each monthly school-based meeting
- IEPs selected at random and reviewed at the monthly PL meeting
  - Peer reviewed
  - Examples v. non-examples provided
  - Exemplars given
- Evidence noticed=PLAAFPS moving from “Non Operational” to “Emerging” (ATSI\_Review of Rubric for SWD’s)
- The Shift=SMART Goals and service alignments began connecting

# Continued Professional Learning...

- Monthly Meeting with department redelivery by Special Education Team Leaders at school site with Special Education department
- Department shares overview with all school administrators on designated PL days monthly
- FY25 CCSD Deliverables related to improving compliance
  - Leader and Teacher Companion Guides
  - Series of Professional Learning designed to address compliance

# FY25 Professional Learning Series

Special education department launched a mini PL series to support teachers titled:

## **Writing Compliant IEPs**

- The work began with understanding the heart of the IEP- the PLAAFP
- Understand how to write meaningful PLAAFPs with *ALL* necessary criteria
- Understand how to interpret psychoeducational evaluation data
- Understand the relationship between the PLAAFP, IEP Goals, and Services



# The Mini-series...

## 1. Common GA compliance errors shared

### a. We focused on the PLAAFP

## 1. The PLAAFPs we pulled randomly:

### Top 10 Common Errors

(Data collected from the Georgia Department of Education and IRIS Center)

1. Failing to include state and local assessment data in PLAAFP
2. Failing to include all the student's educational needs in the PLAAFP
3. Failing to write challenging, ambitious, and measurable annual IEP goals
4. Goals not written for each area of need
5. Failing to monitor student progress
6. Failing to provide special education services that address all the student's educational needs
7. Lack explanation of extent that the student would not be included with nondisabled peers or the explanation is poorly written
8. Failing to adhere to the continuum of alternative placements
9. Offering an inappropriate placement
10. Placing students for reason unrelated to their individual needs



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## Scenario 1

Student will show improvement in the area of math by mastering the following short term objectives.

Consider the six PLAAFP Components.

1. What is included?
2. Could something be added?
3. Is the needed Goal clear?



[Copy of  
September  
Compliant  
IEPSlides  
FY25](#)

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# FY26

## Writing Compliant IEPs

- Continual PL on writing compliant IEPs
- Review of new Due Process Checklist
- Random pull of IEPs- all levels
  - New and Veteran Teachers
- Peer reviewed
  - Feedback

# Our Work

Turn psychological data into meaningful insights that guide IEP development and Specially Designed Instruction





# Connection Between Departments: Special Education and School Psychologists

- Build relationships with school psychologist
- Began collaborative meetings biannually
- Began identifying building level roles for:
  - Meeting roles for Psychologists and Special Education teachers
    - (both preparation and meeting facilitation)
  - Launched digital GoIEP Consent to Evaluate Form
- Shared GA IEP PLAAFP Criteria with Psychologists
- Need for training teachers to understand eligibility and write substantial eligibility rationales
- Development and Implementation of classification cards

# FY26 District-Wide Support

- Special Education allowed designated PL days
  - New Teacher Academy (2 Full days during preplanning and half day quarterly )
  - Standing Collaboration within department meetings:
    - (SpEd, TLs, Psychs, Beh)
- First Professional Learning session as a collaboration between school psychologists

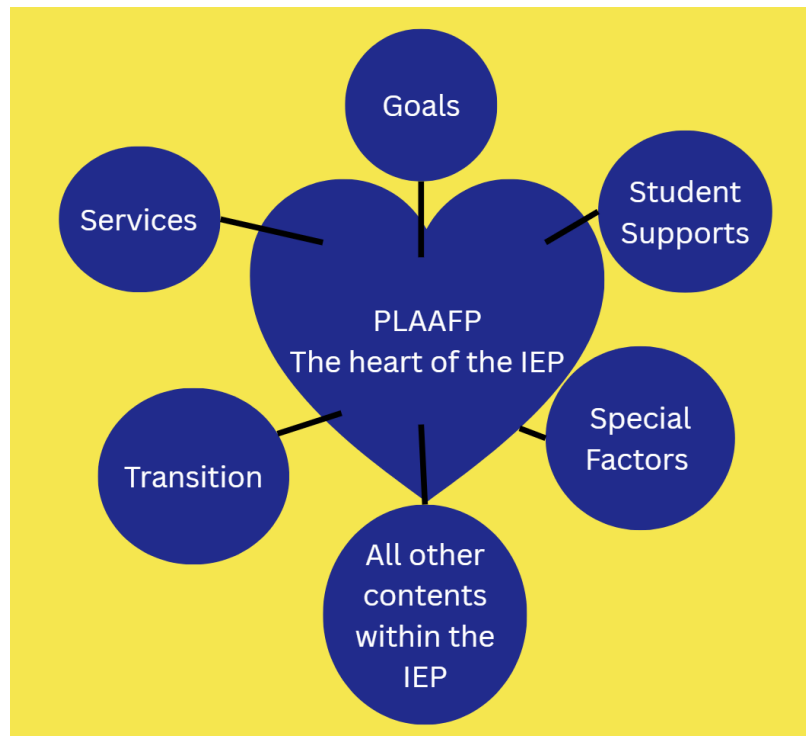
[\\*Copy\\*\\_From Data to Decisions - Evaluation Data\\_Fall FY26](#)
- Division-Wide PL Schedule
  - Focus on SDI with Instructional Leaders

# IEP Roadmap

**Here to help!**



**IEP Drafting Roadmap**



## Goals and Objectives Alignment

- District Wide PL for teachers and leaders to strategically plan for SDI (include PLAAFP)
- Connect the dots between evaluative data, impact of disability, writing compliant IEPs, and planning for SDI
- Ongoing IEP audits show IEP growth.
  - Fall25 spot checks showed 75% of IEPs reviewed had Operational PLAAFPs, some Fully Operational



# IEP Writing and Instructional Growth

## -Making Informed Decisions through the IEP

- Understanding the implications of data and impacts of disability has shifted mindsets from “can’t” to “capable with differences”
- In one year’s work, we were able to move 13 students from GAA to Milestones

Segments review:

SY24 to SY25 a decrease in 57 direct segments

SY25 to SY26 a decrease in 537 direct segments

19% of students with direct segments had increased access to Tier I instruction from SY24-SY26



# None of this would have been possible without our incredible team!

**Jacinta Henry**  
**Executive Director of Exceptional Programs**  
[henryj@clarke.k12.ga.us](mailto:henryj@clarke.k12.ga.us)

**Cortina Harris**  
**Special Education Coordinator**  
[harrisc3@clarke.k12.ga.us](mailto:harrisc3@clarke.k12.ga.us)

**Jennifer Tolbert**  
**Director of Behavior Supports and Interventions**  
[tolbertj@clarke.k12.ga.us](mailto:tolbertj@clarke.k12.ga.us)

**Dwayne Cumbus**  
**District Coordinator of Speech-Language Pathology**  
[cumbusd@clarke.k12.ga.us](mailto:cumbusd@clarke.k12.ga.us)

**Anisha Mendez**  
**Special Education Coordinator**  
[mendeza@clarke.k12.ga.us](mailto:mendeza@clarke.k12.ga.us)

**Sabrina McCray**  
**Special Education Coordinator**  
[mccrays@clarke.k12.ga.us](mailto:mccrays@clarke.k12.ga.us)



**JESSICA WILLIAMS**  
Coordinator of Special Education  
Academics - Exceptional Programs  
[williamsje@clarke.k12.ga.us](mailto:williamsje@clarke.k12.ga.us)



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