

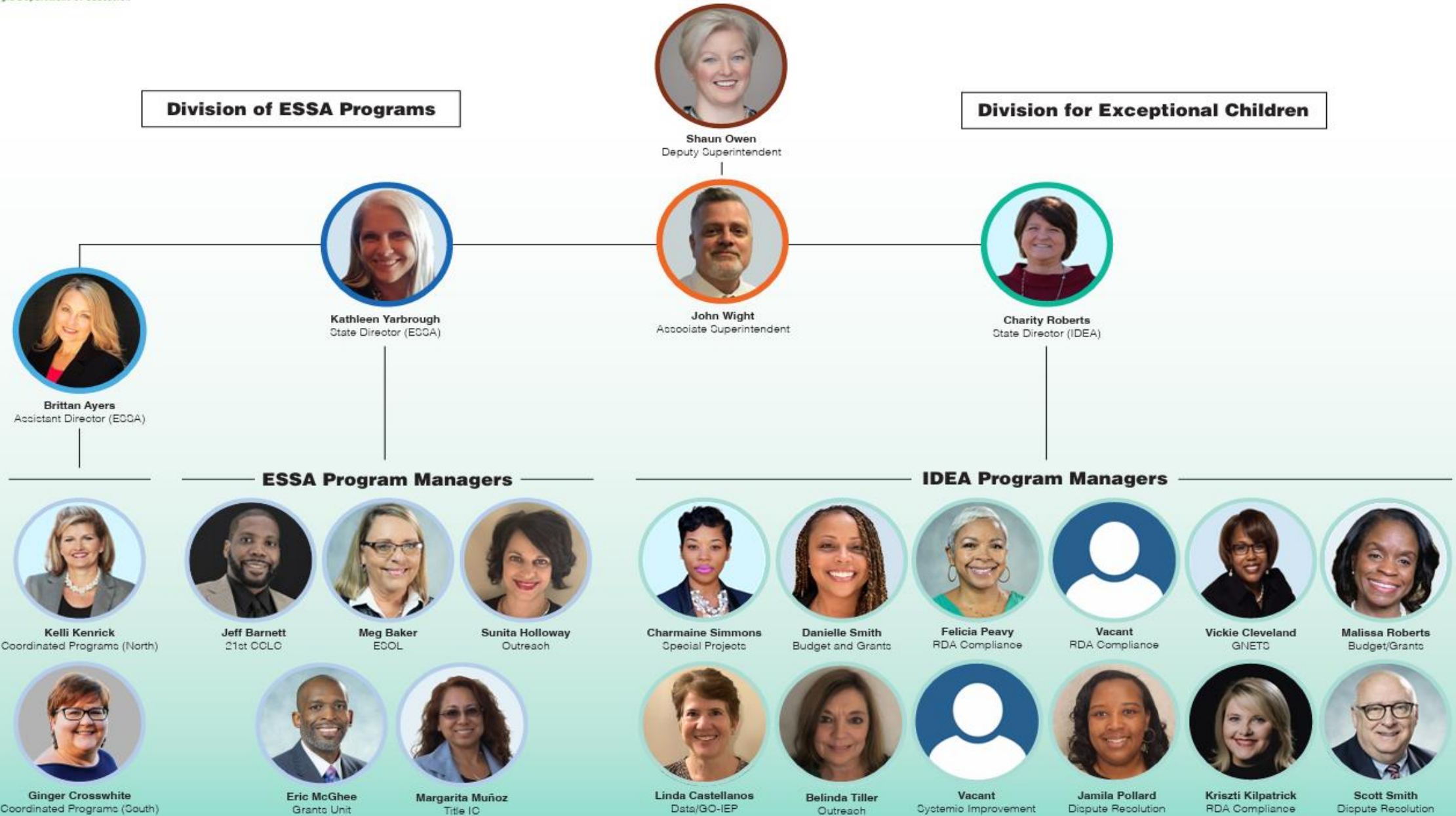
Strategic Engagement with GVRA: Strengthening Your Transition Programming for Greater Impact

Fall GCASE

November 13, 2025

Office of Federal Programs

Organizational Chart



Division of ESSA Programs

Division for Exceptional Children



Shaun Owen
Deputy Superintendent



Kathleen Yarbrough
State Director (ESSA)



John Wight
Associate Superintendent



Charity Roberts
State Director (IDEA)



Brittan Ayers
Assistant Director (ESSA)

ESSA Program Managers

IDEA Program Managers



Kelli Kenrick
Coordinated Programs (North)



Jeff Barnett
21st CCLC



Meg Baker
ESOL



Sunita Holloway
Outreach



Charmaine Simmons
Special Projects



Danielle Smith
Budget and Grants



Felicia Peavy
RDA Compliance



Vacant
RDA Compliance



Vickie Cleveland
GNETS



Malissa Roberts
Budget/Grants



Ginger Crosswhite
Coordinated Programs (South)



Eric McGhee
Grants Unit



Margarita Muñoz
Title IC



Linda Castellanos
Data/GO-IEP



Belinda Tiller
Outreach



Vacant
Systemic Improvement



Jamila Pollard
Dispute Resolution



Kriszti Kilpatrick
RDA Compliance

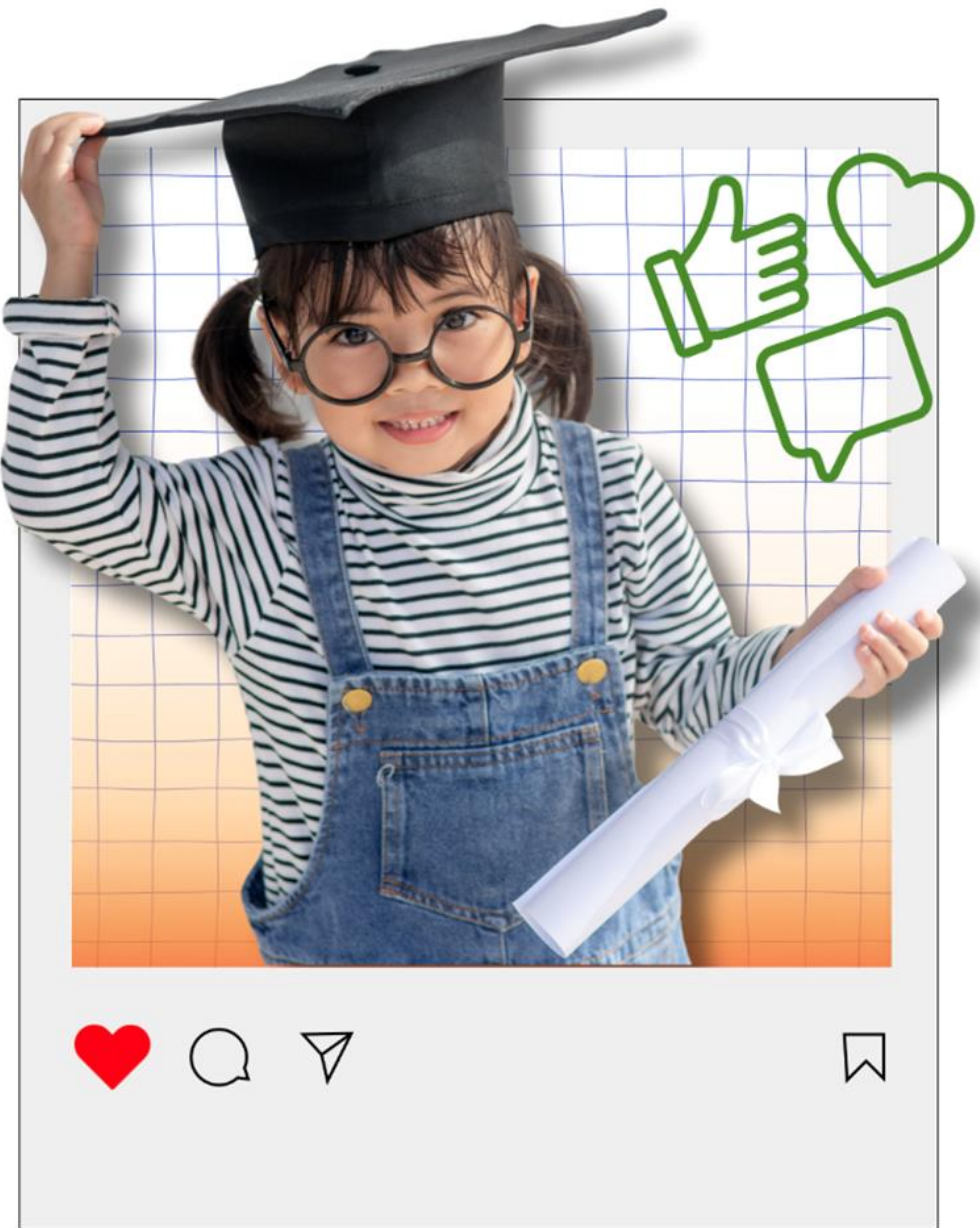


Scott Smith
Dispute Resolution

Office of Federal Programs



The Georgia Department of Education's Office of Federal Programs partners with schools to ensure every child — including students with disabilities, English learners, students experiencing poverty and homelessness, migratory students, and students in foster care — receives the support they need to succeed. Through guidance, resources, and oversight of ESSA and IDEA grants, we help districts deliver services that make a difference for students.



Follow the Office of Federal Programs on Social Media

Stay connected with Georgia's Federal Programs for the latest updates, resources, and success stories that support student achievement across the state. Follow us to learn about initiatives, upcoming events, and tools that help schools and districts make an impact.

Facebook



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Instagram



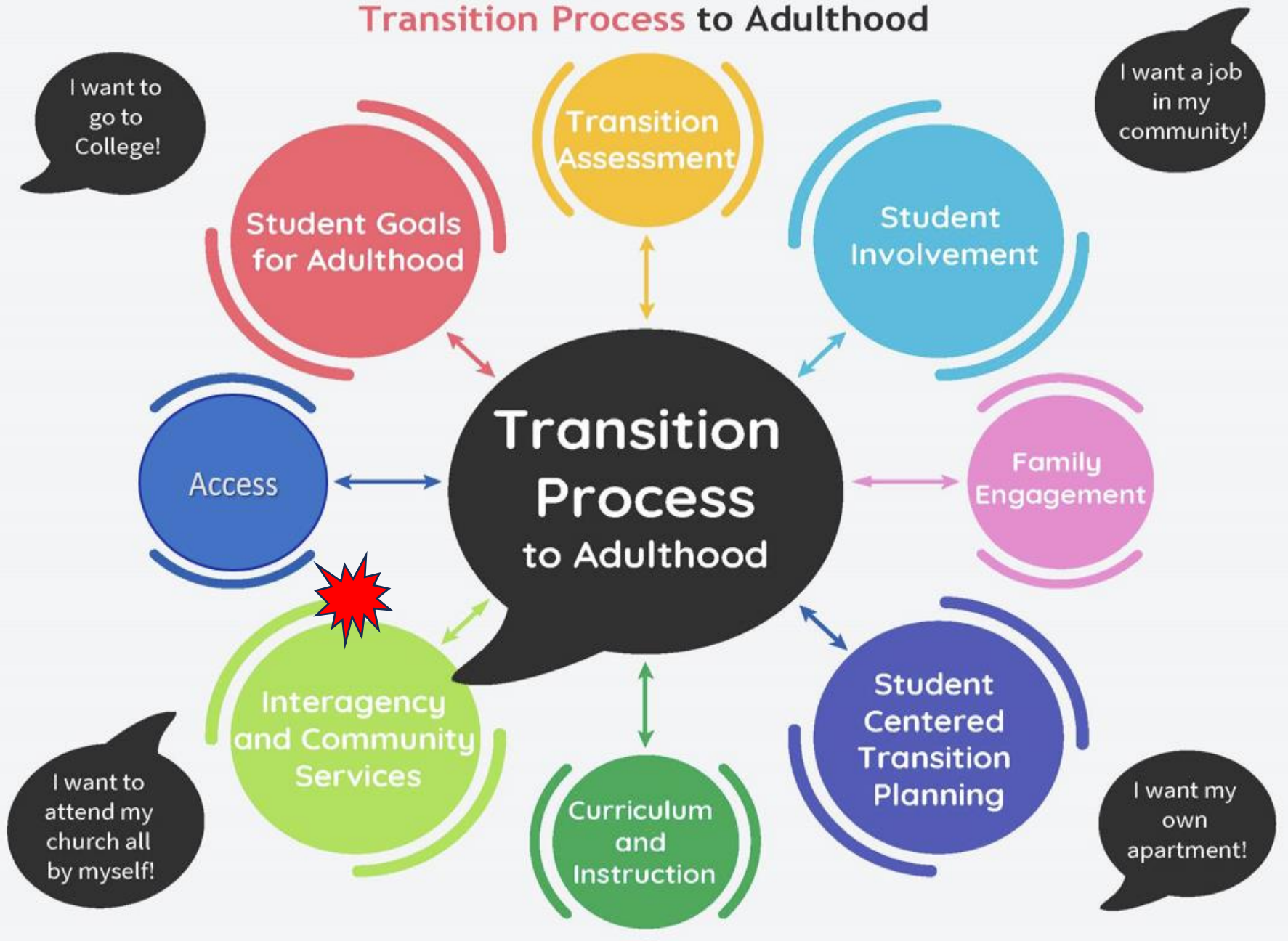
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Learning Targets

- Learn about how GVRA partners with schools to serve high school students with an IEP or Section 504 Plan
- Understand how GVRA contracts with approved providers to deliver Pre-ETS
- Identify ways you can help GVRA meet the pre-employment needs of your students
- Analyze how Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) funding can be allocated to support a Transition Specialist position within the district

Transition Process to Adulthood



Adapted from
“Your Complete
Guide to
Transition
Planning and
Services”
(Morningstar
and Clavenna-
Deane, 2018)

Agency Representatives Involved

(b) To the extent appropriate, with the consent of the parents or the adult student who has reached the age of 18, in implementing the transition requirements, the LEA must invite a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services. [34 C.F.R. § 300.321(b)(3)]

Employers/
Businesses

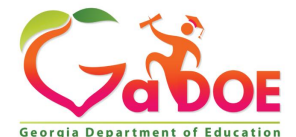
Institutions of
Higher
Education

College
Disability
Support
Representatives

Georgia Vocational
Rehabilitation
Agency (GVRA)

Training
Program
Representatives

Department of
Behavioral
Health and
Developmental
Disabilities
(DBHDD)



Transition Personnel Matter!



Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency

GVRA Supporting Transitioning High School Students

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency

Rebecca Williamson, Transition Manager

Rebecca.williamson@gvs.ga.gov



Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Overview

- **Mission**

- Serving Georgians with disabilities to empower them to live independently.

- **Vision**

- To build a client-focused agency that partners with the community to expand opportunities for Georgians with disabilities

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency

5 Programs

- The **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)** program offers an array of services to Georgians who have a disability and want to work or who need services to keep the job they have.
- **Roosevelt Warm Springs (RWS)/Cave Spring Center (CSC)** serves Vocational Rehabilitation clients, 18 years old and older who are referred by their VR counselors to participate in education and training programs in a residential, wholistic, college-like environment with individual attention and customized enrichment.
- **Disability Adjudication Services (DAS)** works with the Social Security Administration (SSA) to make disability determinations for Georgia citizens who apply for entitlement programs administered by the SSA, including Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency

5 Programs

- The **Business Enterprise Program (BEP)** gives priority to blind vendors who want to operate food service facilities in federal and state government buildings. It helps visually impaired Georgians become independent business owners in the food service industry.
- **Georgia Industries for the Blind (GIB)** manufactures file folders, safety vests, pillows, customized screen printing, sewing projects, kitting for corporations, and individually wrapped 3-ply facemasks at plants in Bainbridge, GA and Griffin, GA. GIB also operates a service site at Robins Air Force Base in Warner Robins, GA.

GVRA - Who Qualifies?

As a Potentially Eligible Student:

- Between the ages of 14-21 (up until their 22nd birthday)
- Eligible and receiving services under an IEP or Section 504
- Is participating in a recognized academic setting. (public, private, home-based schools, Post-secondary training.
- Has not been determined “Ineligible” for VR Services

As an Eligible VR Client:

- Permanent physical or mental disability
- Disability poses a substantial impediment to employment
- Individual can benefit from Vocational Rehabilitation Services in terms of a competitive integrated employment outcome.

Potentially Eligible Student (PTS) Process

- GVRA receives completed Parental Permission Form (PPF)
- GVRA obtains a copy of the IEP/504/Disability Documentation and case is updated to reflect SWD able to receive Pre-ETS.
- GVRA begins coordinating Pre-ETS with school and approved Providers

What are Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

- Pre-ETS represent the earliest set of services available for students with disabilities under the GVRA program
- These services are short-term in nature and are designed to help students identify career interests.
- Specific set of five required activities
- Pre-ETS are individualized based on the student's interest and transition goals.
- Pre-ETS supplement the school services already in place to support college and career readiness and community participation.

These are the Five Pre-ETS:

Job exploration counseling- Discussion and activities on job opportunities intended to foster motivation and informed decision-making

Workplace readiness training- Development activities on social and other soft skills that are necessary for employment and independent living

Work-based learning experiences- Placing student in workplaces to help them connect school experiences to future career opportunities

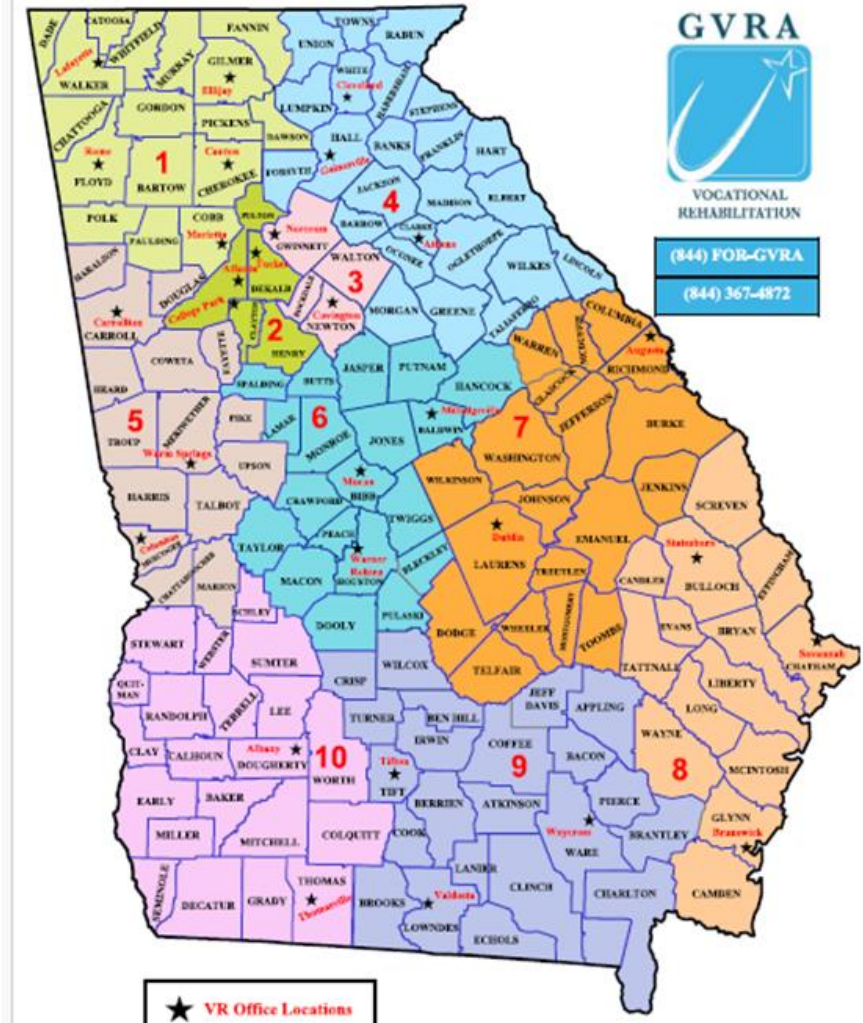
Post-secondary education counseling- Discussion and activities regarding college and other post-secondary opportunities

Instruction in self-advocacy- Activities to improve abilities to communicate, negotiate, and assert one's interests and desires

How to Access GVRA Services

Reach out to your GVRA Transition Liaison

District	Office Location	Name	Email
D1	Marietta	Kimberly Lewis	kimberly.lewis@gvs.ga.gov
D1	Rome	Rena Roper	rena.ropер@gvs.ga.gov
D2	College Park	Sharese Cross	sharese.cross@gvs.ga.gov
D2	Tucker	Huda Hassan	huda.hassan@gvs.ga.gov
D3	Norcross	Mark Tappin	mark.tappin@gvs.ga.gov
D3	Norcross	Sarina Forest	sarina.forest@gvs.ga.gov
D4	Gainesville	Andre' Cheek-Castleberry	andre.cheek@gvs.ga.gov
D5	Columbus	Denise Fox	denise.fox@gvs.ga.gov
D5	Warm Springs	Lesley Goodwin	lesley.goodwin@gvs.ga.gov
D6	Warner Robins	Natalie Oldaker	natalie.oldaker@gvs.ga.gov
D7	Augusta	Cori Morgan	corina.morgan@gvs.ga.gov
D8	Savannah	Heather Wolff-Holstein	heather.wolff@gvs.ga.gov
D9	Waycross	Kristie Jarrard	kristie.jarrard@gvs.ga.gov
D10	Thomasville	Robin Gaston	robin.gaston@gvs.ga.gov
D10	Albany	Lisa Edwards	Ulisser.Edwards@gvs.ga.gov



Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency

Provider Management

Courtney Sapp, Provider Relations Supervisor

Courtney.Sapp@gvs.ga.gov

Provider Management

providermanagement@gvs.ga.gov



Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Agenda

- **Service Categories**
- **From School to Career Pathways**
- **Current Pre-ETS Providers**
- **Pre-ETS Totals at end of September**
- **Looking Ahead**
- **Partnering Impact**
- **New Provider Process**
- **Interested in Partnering with GVRA**
- **Call to Action**



Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Service Categories

- ✓ **Evaluations and Assessments**
- ✓ **Support Services**
- ✓ **Assistive Skills Development**
- ✓ **Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)**
- ✓ **Georgia Eligible Training Providers**
- ✓ **Employment Skills Development**

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency From School to Career Pathways

Flow of Support:

- ✓ Pre-ETS: Exploration of career options and self-advocacy skills
- ✓ VR Services: Individualized services for specific employment readiness.
- ✓ Employment: Job Search, training, and sustained independence.

Goal:

- ✓ Seamless transition from classroom to competitive integrated employment for every student wanting to work.

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency

44 Current Pre-ETS Providers

Ace Driving School, LLC
B Smith and Associates, LLC DBA Star Innovative Coaching
BlazeSports America, Inc.
Bobby Dodd Institute, Inc.
Creative Enterprise
Cross Plains Community Partner, Inc.
Dignified Employment Services LLC
DYNAMIC LEARNING CENTERS, LLC (ODATOC)
Easter Seals East Georgia
Easter Seals Middle Georgia
Easter Seals of Southern Georgia, Inc
Employability
Family Restoration Network
Favor Academy of Excellence
Georgia Career and Technical Instruction (CTI)
Georgia Center of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Georgia Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities (HSHT)

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency

Current Pre-ETS Providers

Goodwill Industries of Middle Georgia, Inc
Goodwill Industries of the Southern Rivers
Goodwill of North Georgia, Inc.
Green Mine Growers
Griffin Area Resource Center
Hear For You Services
Hi-Hope Service Center
Hunter Rodgers Corporation
iEduvate:ME
Innovative Career Solutions LLC
Joshua Tree
Lighthouse Case Management LLC
Nobis Works, Inc.
Peachtree Farms
Progressive Abilities Support Services (PASS)

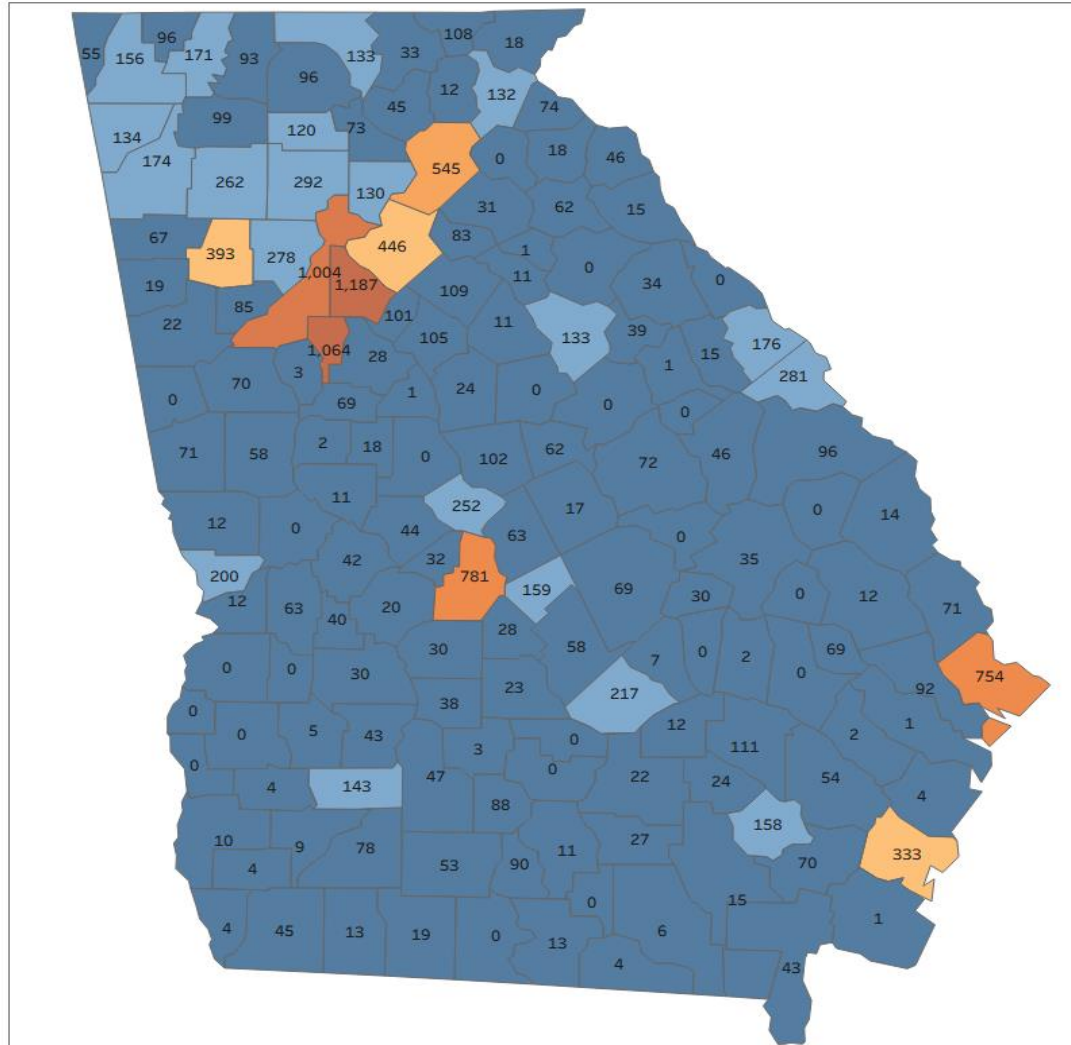
Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency

Current Pre-ETS Providers

Saavi Services for the Blind
Shields Foundation
Southern Pro Staffing, LLC
Strides Horse Park TEMS
Teem Economic Research and Business Community Development, Inc.
The Ringer Center of Excellence, Inc.
Tift County Board of Health/Diversified Enterprises of Tifton
Tree of Life, Inc
Turning Point
Waves Autism Center, LLC
White Columns Rehabilitation Services
WOW In-Sync, Inc.

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Statewide Pre-ETS Totals

SFY26 Pre-ETS as of September 30, 2025



Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Looking Ahead

Future Goals:

- ✓ Continue expanding partnerships with LEAs
- ✓ Increase Pre-ETS access across rural and underserved student groups

**Together, we can achieve measurable, lasting outcomes for
Georgia's youth!**

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency

Partnering for Impact

✓ Our Focus

- Enhancing collaboration with schools, agencies, and advocacy groups.

✓ Partnership Goals

- ✓ Build new partnerships with local school districts and education agencies.
- ✓ Strengthen collaboration with advocacy and community organizations.
- ✓ Develop quarterly outreach events to engage stakeholders and share updates.

✓ Outcome

- Greater access and improved coordination for students with disabilities.

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency New Provider Process

Prospective Provider Application Process

- Open enrollment is held April 1-30 Annually
- This is also the time for current providers to submit new programs or requests for added services
- If a district has a specific need outside this window, the District Manager can make a request to Provider Relations
- Amendments are completed on an as needed basis
- Contracts are renewed annually on October 1

Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Interested in Partnering with GVRA

If you or someone you know, is interested in partnering with GVRA, reach out to ProviderManagement@gvs.ga.gov with any questions or to schedule an introductory meeting.



Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Call to Action

**Let's strengthen the
pathway to successful
outcomes for Georgia's
students – together.**



Funding a Transition Specialist in Georgia: State, Federal & Other Options

Practical steps, budget examples,
and compliance tips

Presented by
Dane Heard, South GLRS Director



Why a Transition Specialist Matters

- Improves post-school outcomes: employability, community participation, and postsecondary enrollment.
- Supports compliance with IDEA transition requirements and Pre-ETS expectations.



Overview of funding streams to utilize:

- **QBE** - base state funding driven by FTE and program components.
- **IDEA Part B** - federal special education funds can support staffing and excess costs for students with disabilities.
- **Title I** - may fund staff/services that improve outcomes for Title I students.
- **Perkins V (CTAE)** - supports career/CTAE activities, may fund staff time for CTAE related transition work.



Funding streams, continued:

- **Medicaid-based claiming** - may reimburse eligible health/related services provided to Medicaid enrolled students (nursing, counseling, related services) - a revenue source for related services, freeing local funds.
- **Local/General Funds**– Ad valorem, Local Option Sales Tax, SPLOST, etc.



How QBE can support (and its limits):

- QBE funds staffing based on FTE, certified positions, and salary schedule factors. Use for certified staff positions where state recognition/position coding matches role.
- Limit: QBE is not an automatic line item for “Transition Specialist” unless district codes the position within an allowable program/step and has FTE to support it. Local board action often required.



Using IDEA Part B (most common federal source):

- IDEA Part B can fund excess costs of special education and related services, including staff who provide specially designed instruction or coordination. Districts may allocate a portion of Part B to staff who provide direct and indirect services to IDEA students.
- Required: Document how staff time supports IDEA-eligible students, maintain personnel activity reports (time studies) when partially funded.

Title I, Perkins V, and other federal programs

- **Title I:** If transition work improves achievement, graduation, and college & career readiness for Title I populations, a share of Title I may fund the role. Must align to schoolwide/targeted program plans and allowability rules.
- **Perkins V:** Can fund career exploration, CTAE teacher time, work-based learning coordination — good source if the Transition Specialist supports CTAE pathways.

Medicaid & school-based claiming (opportunity for related services)

- Medicaid reimburses specific school-based services for eligible children (OT/PT/speech, counseling, nursing) and can be a stable revenue stream when allowable. Federal guidance and GA programs support school-based claiming.
- Practical: Medicaid seldom pays whole salary but can reimburse direct billable services delivered by licensed staff - use to offset related services portion of position or contract providers.

Practical budget example (sample numbers):

Sample district estimate for 1.0 FTE Transition Specialist:

- Base salary (example): \$55,000
- Benefits (estimate 30%): \$16,500 ($55,000 \times 0.30 = 16,500$)
- Total compensation = \$55,000 + \$16,500 = **\$71,500**

How to braid:

- IDEA Part B: 40% = \$28,600 ($0.40 \times 71,500 = 28,600$)
- Perkins / CTE: 20% = \$14,300 ($0.20 \times 71,500 = 14,300$)
- Title I / Local / Board: 40% = \$28,600 ($0.40 \times 71,500 = 28,600$)

Personnel / Fiscal Compliance Checklist

- Job description tied to allowable activities for each funding source (IEP services, CTAE coordination, Title I academic support).
- Time & effort documentation (monthly time study or equivalent).
- Program budgets and LEA allocations included in Federal Program plans (Title I, IDEA, Perkins).
- Parental consents & medical necessity documentation for Medicaid billing.

Draft Job Description for Transition Specialist

- Coordinate transition assessments and IEP transition services (measurable postsecondary goals).
- Provide Pre-ETS and coordinate with Vocational Rehabilitation for referrals and co-funding.
- Develop and maintain community employer/agency partnerships, schedule work-based learning sites.
- Track post-school outcomes, support data collection for SPP/APR indicators.

Talking Points for Superintendent/Board

- Invest in a Transition Specialist to improve graduation & post-school employment outcomes (costs can be partly offset by federal funds and Medicaid).
- Braiding funds reduces local burden and builds partnerships



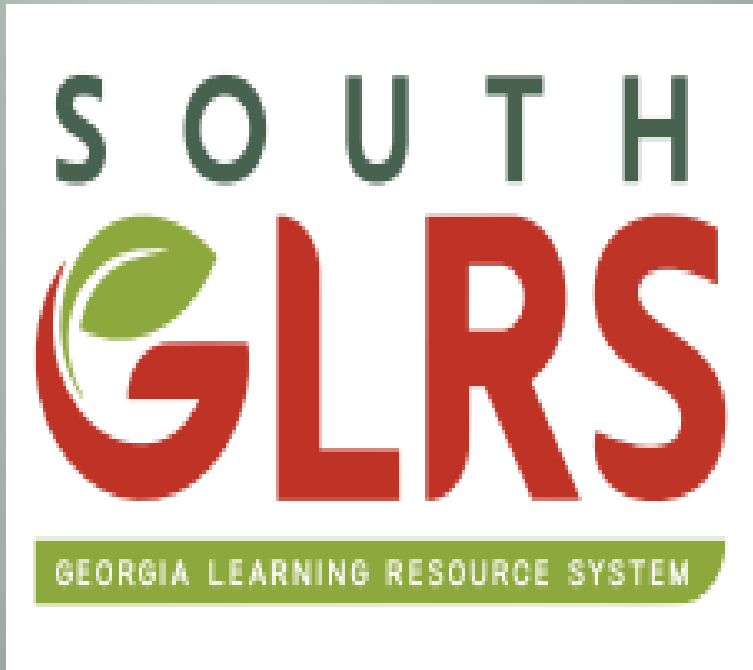
Summary of Funding Sources

1. Georgia's QBE funding formula is based on FTE, certified staffing and other factors and is the primary state funding mechanism for K-12.
2. IDEA Part B funds are a primary federal source to support the excess costs of special education and can be used for staff who provide IEP-linked services when properly documented.
3. Perkins V is the federal CTE funding stream that can support career/CTE-aligned transition activities and staff time focused on CTAE/work-based learning.

Summary of Funding Sources, con't

4. Medicaid provides federal/state reimbursement for certain school-based health and related services for Medicaid-enrolled students and can free local funds when billing is allowable and documented.
5. Title I funds can be used to support staff and activities that improve academic outcomes for eligible students in Title I schools — with proper program alignment.

*Local Funds are sometimes limited, but can be used and could fund a percentage of a position, if not all.



Dane Heard
South GLRS Director
Coastal Plains RESA
daneheard@cpresa.org

Contact

- Elise James
- Program Specialist, Transition Postschool Outcomes
- Office of Federal Programs
- Division for Exceptional Children
- ejames@doe.k12.ga.us
- 850-980-0776

GaDOE Community

- Login or Create an Account
- Make sure you complete your profile with your work email
- Select Groups
- Search for:
 - “GO-IEP” and
 - “Special Education Data Support”
- Click “Join Group” for both groups
- Select Discussions
- Then **click Subscribe** to get emails any time a new discussion is posted.



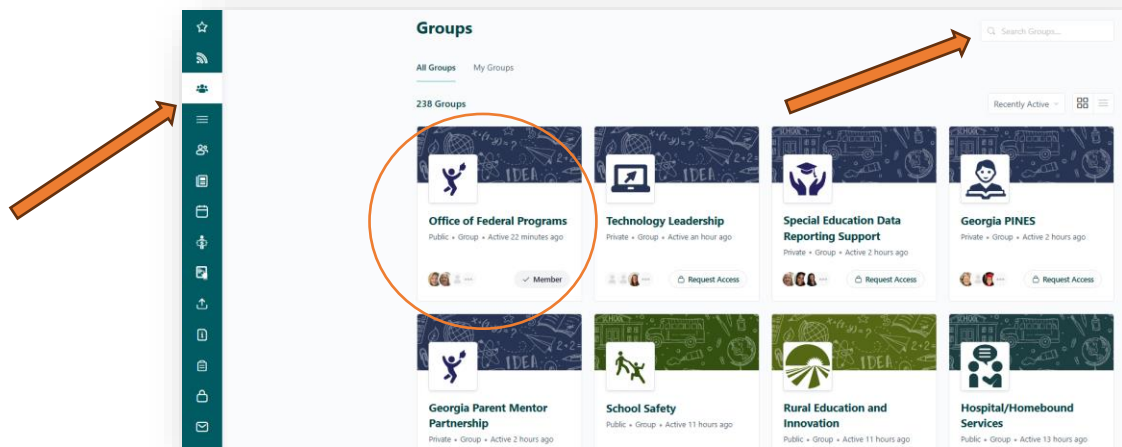
<https://community.gadoe.org/>



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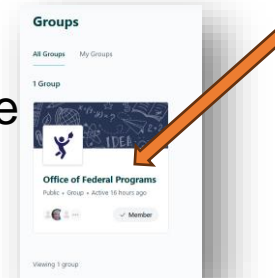


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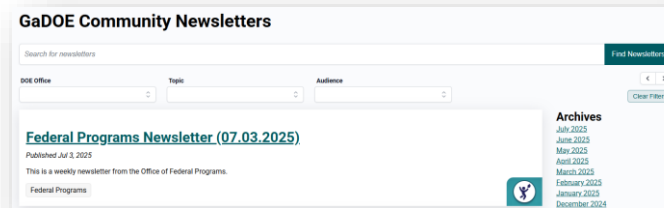
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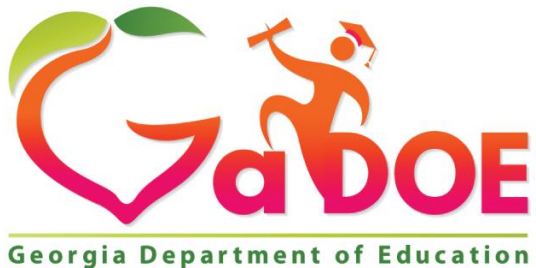
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**PREPARING ALL
STUDENTS FOR LIFE**

