

Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS)

The Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) supports local school systems' continuum of services by providing comprehensive special education and therapeutic support for students whose behavior severely impedes their learning. GNETS serves children ages 3 through 21 through one of 24 programs serving every school system in the state.

For more information on GNETS, contact the Division for Special Education Supports, Positive Behavior Supports, Georgia Department of Education at voconnel@doe.k12.ga.us or at 404-657-9953.

PROGRAM DEFINITION.

(a) Services for students with severe emotional and behavioral disorders or autism may be provided by psychoeducational programs. All programs may accept students ages birth through 21 years. Students ages three through 21 may be served by the program staff in classes, direct services or other settings as appropriate.

(b) The major admission requirements shall be the presence of an emotional and behavioral disorder or autism severe enough to require this special treatment program. Students with secondary disabilities, such as, but not limited to, an intellectual disability, learning disability, neurological disability, hearing loss or developmental delay, shall be accepted if the primary disability is a severe emotional and behavioral disorder or autism.

ELIGIBILITY AND PLACEMENT.

(a) A student shall be considered for psychoeducational program services based upon a comprehensive case study and eligibility report that documents the severity of the duration, frequency and intensity of one or more of the characteristics of the disability category of emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) or documents the characteristics of the disability category of autism.

OPERATIONAL REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES RULES.

(a) Department responsibilities. In compliance with a provision of the budget, Psychoeducational Programs for Students With Severe Emotional and Behavioral Disorders or Autism, the department shall receive funds appropriated by the Georgia General Assembly. The department shall:

1. Develop regulations and procedures pertaining to the operation of psychoeducational programs, subject to review and approval of the state board.
2. Review proposals for funding and make recommendations to the state board.
3. Award funding to an approved fiscal agent for the operation of a program to serve students with severe emotional and behavioral disorders or autism ages birth through 21.

(b) Fiscal agent responsibilities.

1. If a majority of the systems served by the psychoeducational program desire to change the fiscal agent, the vote shall be taken no later than April 1 to be effective for the ensuing fiscal year. The fiscal agent responsibility may be transferred to a regional education service agency (RESA) or a school system provided the new fiscal agent agrees to serve for a minimum of three years. The fiscal agent shall do the following.

- (i) Serve as fiscal agent for the receipt and disbursement of all grant funds.
- (ii) Transfer funds to restricted program accounts upon receipt of all grant funds, including maintenance and operation, instructional materials and media and sick leave.
- (iii) Maintain appropriate bookkeeping procedures to ensure the expenditure of funds as indicated in the approved proposal. (For information concerning procedures, the *Financial Management for Georgia Local Units of Administration* shall be used.)
- (iv) Provide appropriate information as required by the department, including the following.
 - (I) March, October and annual reports of services to students.
 - (II) March, October and annual reports of services to parents.
 - (III) Annual documentation of proposal objectives.
 - (IV) Quarterly financial reports.
 - (V) Annual demographic data.

(c) Advisory board.

1. The advisory board comprised of the superintendents of the school systems served, shall meet at least quarterly.

2. Responsibilities of the board shall include, but are not limited to, the following.

- (i) Review and endorse the proposal for funding, including service delivery model, staffing pattern, objectives and budget.
- (ii) Review service delivery model and recommendations for program improvement.
- (iii) Review services data quarterly.

(d) Budget/fiscal management.

(a) Guidelines for the budget are established to cover all areas of expenditures.

- 1. Budgets shall be determined annually according to appropriations and population to be served by each program.
- 2. Management of program budgets shall be consistent with state fiscal policy.
- 3. Deviations in the project budget shall be approved by the fiscal agent and submitted in writing to the department for approval as outlined in the proposal guidelines.
- 4. Indirect cost is only allowable on the state grant and shall be calculated using one percent. Indirect cost may be negotiated for providing such services as accounting, data processing and purchasing.

(e) Budget/personnel.

1. The procedure outlined below shall be used for personnel in programs.

- (i) Minimum salary schedules for professionals shall be consistent with either the Professional Standards Commission requirements or Georgia Merit System rating in the area of job responsibility.

- (ii) Personnel salaries shall not exceed those being paid local school system personnel with similar training, experience and position.
- (iii) Any positions established that are not described in the approved proposal shall be justified in writing with a complete job description attached and submitted for prior approval to the department.
- (iv) Personnel employed as teachers shall meet the state certification requirements. Others shall meet licensing or certification requirements in their respective Professional area, e.g., psychiatrist, psychologist, social worker or be eligible for an appropriate State of Georgia Merit System rating.
- (v) Sufficient personnel to operate a psychoeducational program shall be employed and described in the proposal approved by the fiscal agent and school systems served. These shall include sufficient leadership and supervisory personnel, Instructional staff to include teachers and paraprofessionals, and clinical support staff.

(f) Budget/operation.

1. The procedure outlined below shall be followed in regard to costs of operation and equipment.

- (i) Travel expense reimbursement shall be based on state travel regulations for local school systems.
- (ii) State funds shall not be utilized to buy snacks or rewards for students.
- (iii) Installation of equipment or renovation of a facility on property not legally the property of the fiscal agent shall be prohibited.
- (iv) Expenditures for purchases or lease of vehicles or reimbursement for pupil transportation is not an allowable budget item, except in those cases where vehicles were purchased prior to FY 75.
- (v) Insurance coverage may be contracted for program contents.
- (vi) Insurance coverage may be contracted for liability on pupil transportation vehicles unless already covered by pupil transportation grants.
- (vii) Insurance coverage may be contracted for professional liability and/or accident and health when provided to all staff by the fiscal agent.

(g) Program operation.

1. The procedure outlined below shall be followed in regard to program operation.

- (i) Each program shall operate eight hours daily, 240 days each fiscal year.
- (ii) Classes in the 0-14 age program shall operate a minimum of 200 days each fiscal year. The recommended maximum class size is eight.
- (iii) Classes in the adolescent program shall operate 330 minutes per day, five days per week, 180 days each fiscal year. The recommended maximum class size is ten.

This rule shall become effective July 1, 2000.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-270; 20-2-274.

Adopted: August 10, 2000 Effective: July 1, 2000