



*The Georgia Council  
of Administrators of  
Special Education*

*2018 Special Education Legal  
Forum*



*March 5, 6, and 7, 2018  
The Classic Center  
Athens, Georgia*



# Pre-Conference Meetings

***Monday, March 5, 2018***

8:00 -11:30 AM	SELDA Meeting Donna Ann Flaherty	<b>Athena H-I</b>
8:00 – 12:00 PM	GNETS Meeting Desiree Woods	<b>Parthenon 2</b>
8:00 - 9:30 AM	G-CASE Board Meeting Advisory and Executive Board Members	<b>Athena G</b>
9:30 – 11:30 AM	Special Ed Directors' Forum Zelphine Smith Dixon	<b>Olympia 1</b>

# 2018 G-CASE Spring Conference Schedule

## ***Monday, March 5, 2018***

1:00 PM	<b>Conference Opening</b> Charlette Green, G-CASE President	<b>Athena A-E</b>
1:15 PM	<b>Washington Update</b> Nancy Reder, Asst. Director, NASDSE	<b>Athena A-E</b>
2:45 PM	Break	
3:00 PM	<b>General Assembly Update</b> Jimmy Stokes, Executive Director, GAEL	<b>Athena A-E</b>
3:45 PM	<b>Special Education Update</b> Zelphine Smith-Dixon, Director, GaDOE	<b>Athena A-E</b>
4:45 PM	Adjourn	

## ***Tuesday, March 6, 2018***

7:30 – 8:30 AM	Breakfast	<b>Athena F-J</b>
8:30 AM	<b>General Session</b> Award Presentations	<b>Athena A-E</b>
9:00 AM	<b>Harben, Hartley &amp; Hawkins</b>	<b>Athena A-E</b>

### ***Managing Complicated Relationships: Sanity Is Overrated***

A discussion of how to manage the complicated and sometimes difficult relationships you encounter and the legal issues that accompany them as you navigate the special education world.

10:30 AM	Break	
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10:45 AM **Concurrent Sessions**

**Harben, Hartley & Hawkins      Athena A-E**

***I Want it Now! Finding the Delicate Balance Between Too Much and Too Little***

Consideration of appropriate accommodations in the age of “I want more and I want it now” and how to balance requests with district obligations under IDEA and Section 504.

**Allison Vrolijk**

**Olympia**

***Fostering a Collaborative IEP Relationship: A Parents' Side Perspective***

As we are all acutely aware, parents and school district personnel do not always see eye to eye when it comes to educating students with disabilities. With disagreement often comes a deterioration of the relationship, with parents often blaming the school and the school often blaming the parents for any breakdowns. In this session, Allison will help you understand the parents' perspective on why these relationships break down and give tips and suggestions to help foster a collaborative working relationship with your special education parents.

**Devon Orland and Ilias Savakis  
The Georgia Advocacy Office**

**Parthenon**

***Supported Decision Making for Individuals with Disabilities***

Supported Decision Making (SDM) is an alternative to guardianship that allows a person with a disability to work with a team and make choices about his or her own life. Supported decision-making maximizes independence and promotes self-advocacy. It replaces the substituted decision-making power of a guardian with supported decision-making by the person, assisted by a family and/or community support network. O.C.G.A. 29-4-20 (a) (6) provides that the person under guardianship has the right to the least restrictive form of guardianship assistance. SDM provides a less restrictive and more fluid mechanism of support.

12:00 PM

Lunch

**Athena F-J**

1:00 PM **Concurrent Sessions**

**Jim Walsh**

**Athena A-E**

***What I've Learned Along the Way***

The law pertaining to educating students with disabilities has been evolving for fifty years. In this session, an attorney offers perspectives on what we have learned along the way and where we are headed

**Allison Vrolijk**

**Olympia**

***Fostering a Collaborative IEP Relationship:  
A Parents' Side Perspective (repeat)***

As we are all acutely aware, parents and school district personnel do not always see eye to eye when it comes to educating students with disabilities. With disagreement often comes a deterioration of the relationship, with parents often blaming the school and the school often blaming the parents for any breakdowns. In this session, Allison will help you understand the parents' perspective on why these relationships break down and give tips and suggestions to help foster a collaborative working relationship with your special education parents.

**Devon Orland and Ilias Savakis**

**Parthenon**

***Supported Decision Making for Individuals with  
Disabilities (repeat)***

Supported Decision Making (SDM) is an alternative to guardianship that allows a person with a disability to work with a team and make choices about his or her own life. Supported decision-making maximizes independence and promotes self-advocacy. It replaces the substituted decision-making power of a guardian with supported decision-making by the person, assisted by a family and/or community support network. O.C.G.A. 29-4-20 (a) (6) provides that the person under guardianship has the right to the least restrictive form of guardianship assistance. SDM provides a less restrictive and more fluid mechanism of support.

2:15 PM Break

2:30 PM

**Jim Walsh**

**Athena A-E**

***Dealing with Challenging Behaviors Appropriately: An Introduction to the Educator's Toolbox***

Federal law requires schools to serve all students, including those who present dangerous and/or disruptive behaviors. At the same time, the law requires schools to maintain a safe and orderly campus. The Educator's Toolbox provides an overview of ten "tools" that are available to enable the school administrator to accomplish both goals.

4:00 PM **G-CASE General Meeting**

**Athena A-E**

4:30 PM

Adjourn

## ***Wednesday, March 7, 2018***

7:30 – 9:00 AM

Breakfast

**Athena F-J**

9:00 AM

**Concurrent Sessions**

**Julie Weatherly**

**Athena A-E**

***Top Mistakes Under 504***

When it comes to educating students with disabilities, issues arising under Section 504 and its sister statute—the ADA—are on the rise, and there is a lot of misinformation out there about the requirements under these statutes. As a result, educators make mistakes, some of which subject their districts to disability discrimination complaints, OCR investigations and, in some cases, money damages. This session will focus on some of the biggest mistakes districts make under Section 504 and the ADA—ranging from child find and placement errors to disability discrimination blunders.

**Jamila Pollard**

**Olympia**

***Resolving and Possibly Preventing Special Ed Disputes***

This session will provide techniques and strategies that participants can utilize to possibly prevent special education disputes. The presenter will review the current dispute resolution data in Georgia and discuss some common IDEA violations found in formal state complaints and due process hearings. Participants will learn about resources that can be used to assist school districts in analyzing certain special education issues.

10:15 AM      Break

10:30 AM      **Julie Weatherly**

***Tips for Demonstrating FAPE in Light of Endrew F***

On March 22, 2017, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its decision in the *Endrew F.* case and, for the first time since 1982, addressed the standard for the provision of FAPE to students with disabilities. In this session, we will explore some practical tips for ensuring that IEPs are developed and implemented in accordance with the *Endrew F.* FAPE standard and examine some recent court decisions and their application of the clarified standard

12:00 PM      **Conference Conclusion**  
Charlette Green, G-CASE President

***Thank you for attending the  
2018 G-CASE Legal Forum!***

***Please complete the conference evaluation which  
will be sent to you via email at the conclusion of the  
conference. Your feedback is important to us.***





**Nancy Reder**, has served as the deputy executive director and director of government relations of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) for 17 years. She has been an advocate and 'public policy wonk' for more than 30 years working on policy issues affecting children and families, with a primary focus on education, economic matters and civil rights. Her work at NASDSE has focused on IDEA implementation issues and the broad brush of education issues affecting students from birth to 21.



**Phil Hartley** graduated with honors from the University of Georgia in 1976 and then obtained his J.D. degree with honors from the University of Georgia Law School. In 1980, he became a founding partner in the law firm of Harben & Hartley. The Harben, Hartley & Hawkins Law Firm represents many school districts in Georgia. The firm also serves as general counsel to the Georgia School Boards Association, and Phil works closely with the Georgia School Superintendents Association and GAEL to respond to and shape legislative and policy issues that affect public education in the State.



**Beth Morris** graduated, with honors, from the University of Georgia with a B.A. degree in 1999. She then received her J.D. degree from the University of Georgia in 2005, where she graduated with honors and served on the Moot Court team and executive board. She joined Harben & Hartley upon graduation from law school and has represented school districts throughout her legal career. Much of her practice has focused on issues involving children with disabilities.



**Reagan G. Sauls** obtained a B.S. degree in political science from Georgia Southern University in 1999 and then her J.D. degree from American University, Washington College of Law in 2002. She has practiced with the United States Department of Justice and with private firms in Virginia and Atlanta. She is a member of the Georgia and Maryland bars. Since joining Harben, Hartley and Hawkins, she has

represented Georgia school districts in a variety of matters involving students with disabilities.



**Jim Walsh**, along with partners Joe Hairston and Tom Doyal, founded the firm now known as Walsh Gallegos Treviño Russo & Kyle P.C., in 1983. From the beginning, the focus of the firm was supporting public schools. Jim began his career in Texas school law by serving as the attorney for the Region XIII Legal Service Program, beginning in 1979. He currently serves on the Advisory Board for LRP

Publications and the Board of Directors for the national Council of School Attorneys (COSA). Jim has taught school law at both the graduate and undergraduate level at Texas State, Baylor and St. Edward's universities. A highly sought-after speaker in Texas and throughout the nation, he has conducted in-service training sessions at hundreds of Texas school districts and at every Education Service Center in the state.



**Julie J. Weatherly** is the Founder of RISE, Inc. located in Mobile, Alabama and has been working with school agencies in the area of special education for over 30 years. RISE is a full-service legal and consulting business designed to assist educational agencies in the avoidance and resolution of special education legal disputes arising under the IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the ADA

and other applicable laws. Julie is a graduate of Presbyterian College and the University of Georgia School of Law. She is a member of the State Bars of Alabama and Georgia and provides consultative and/or legal services to school agencies primarily in Alabama, Florida and Georgia, as well as on a national basis.



**Allison B. Vrolijk** earned her undergraduate degree from the State University of New York at Albany, where she graduated *magna cum laude*. She earned her law degree from Duke University School of Law. Allison frequently speaks to parent groups regarding their rights under special education and has presented at numerous conferences. She is a member of the Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates and is a graduate of the Georgia Advocacy Office's Parent

Leadership Support Project VIII. She was also named a 2012 Hero for Autism by the Autism Society of America, Georgia Chapter and is the recipient of the 2012 Emily's Award from Corrigan Care.



**Jamila C. Pollard** is the program manager senior/legal officer for the Family Engagement and Dispute Resolution Unit in the Division for Special Education Services and Supports at the Georgia Department of Education. Jamila oversees the GaDOE and IDEA dispute prevention and resolution processes including the special education help desk, IEP Team meeting

facilitation, mediation, formal written complaints, and due process hearing requests. Prior to joining the GaDOE, she was a staff attorney with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit and a middle grades mathematics and language arts teacher in Georgia.

**Devon Orland** is the Litigation Director and **Ilias Savakis** is an Advocate for The Georgia Advocacy Office (GAO). GAO is organized primarily around the principles of loyalty to people with disabilities and independence in our advocacy. Central to their work is the understanding that people with disabilities have the right to self-determination, protections from harm, and the opportunity to fully exercise their citizenship rights and responsibilities. The Georgia Advocacy Office monitors state hospitals serving individuals with disabilities and responds to calls involving community-based services. The GAO provides individual advocacy ranging from technical assistance to litigation in United States federal court to ensure that the civil liberties of individuals with disabilities are protected.



**Zephine Smith-Dixon** is the State Director for the Division for Special Education at the Georgia Department of Education. For the past ten years, she has worked diligently to improve outcomes for Georgia's children. Prior to being an educational leader in Georgia, Dr. Smith-Dixon worked for the South Carolina Department of Education in a leadership capacity supporting low performing schools. During her career, she has received various rewards for her outstanding performance as a teacher and administrator. Zephine has delivered numerous keynotes, motivational speeches, and national presentations. Her commitment and passion for supporting adults and students are contagious.



**Jimmy Stokes** is the Executive Director for the Georgia Association for Educational Leaders (GAEL). He has served in a variety of roles in Georgia education in a career that encompasses over forty years. Dr. Stokes has served as a middle and high school teacher, principal and college instructor as well as a coach, referee and announcer for athletic events. He is the state's only nationally certified School Hearing Officer. In addition, Dr. Stokes also serves the GASSP as Legislative Liaison and Lobbyist.

# **G-CASE Executive Board**

## **2017-2018**

Charlette Green	President
Greg McElwee	President-Elect
Jimmy Pitzer	Past President
Zabrina Cannady	Vice President
Katie Lowry	Secretary
Leslie Reese	Treasurer
MaryKay Berry	CEC Representative
Jenny Carpenter	Communications Chair
Tris Gilland	Legislative Chair
Sarah Burbach	Membership Chair
Andrea Pender	Professional Development Chair
Laura Melton	Professional Dev Co-Chair
Cassandra Holifield	Research and Innovations Chair
Kelly King	Strategic Planning Chair
Donna Poole	Parliamentarian
Sarah West	Executive Director
Zelphine Smith-Dixon	DOE Liaison
Donna Ann Flaherty	DOE Prof Learning Liaison

# **G-CASE Advisory Board**

## **2017-2018**

Michele Sayles	Paulding County	District 1
Shelley Goodman	Pickens County	District 2
Mary Day Widner	Stephens County	District 3
Amy Penn	Fulton County	District 4
Jan NeSmith	Jackson County	District 5
Terri Baggarly	Coweta County	District 6
Rosie Gwinn	Fayette County	District 7
Jenny Rooks	Monroe County	District 8
Laura Melton	Putnam County	District 9
Talithia Newsome	Richmond County	District 10
Loranda Holmes	Marion County	Districts 11 /12
Tonya Brown	Dodge County	District 13
Mary Wildes	Wayne County	District 14
Jennifer Brendle	Bryan County	District 15
Catherine Gossett	Decatur County	District 16
Marcus Richardson	Brooks County	District 17
Belinda Tiller	Pierce County	District 18



# *Save the Dates*

## **GAEL Summer Conference 2018**

Jekyll Island Convention Center  
Sunday, July 8 – Wednesday, July 11, 2018

## **2018 Special Education Legislative Summit**

The Westin Alexandria  
Alexandria, Virginia  
Sunday, July 8 – Wednesday, July 11, 2018

## **Annual CASE Fall Conference 2018**

Beau Rivage, Biloxi, MS  
Wednesday, November 7 – Saturday, November 10,  
2018

## **G-CASE 2018 Fall Conference**

Marriott Savannah Riverfront, Savannah, GA  
Wednesday, November 14 - Friday, November 16,  
2018

## **Spring 2019 G-CASE Conference**

The Classic Center, Athens, GA  
Monday, March 18 – Wednesday, March 20, 2019