



# G-CASE COMMENTS

*An Affiliate of the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders*



## **President's Corner**

*Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)* is more than just a buzz phrase. It's a societal expectation needed for organizations to be more Inclusive through understanding and acceptance. GCASE is committed to supporting the building of a diverse special education leadership workforce that is fully representative of the students and families we serve. Diversifying the candidates for leadership in special education is a critical component in meeting this commitment. Diversity encompasses racial, ethnic, linguistic, gender, sexuality, ability, socio-economic status, and religious identify.

Over time, as GCASE places more of a focus on diversifying the special education leadership workforce and improving diversity of thought, we anticipate improved recruitment and retention practices of special education leaders that lead to improved educational and behavioral outcomes for our special education students.

- Dr. Cassandra Allen Holifield

## **Notes from the Executive Director**



We start planning our Fall Conference two years in advance. We visit venues, compare prices, and negotiate everything from room blocks to parking to food to technology. Our G-CASE President develops a theme that is current and specific, and then speakers are vetted from all across the nation.

Our 2022-2023 G-CASE President, Dr. Cassandra Holifield, has really worked hard to design a conference that is centered upon actual skill-building, while being motivating...and fun. Her theme, *Trending Now*, will focus on Mental Health, Behavior, Legal Issues, Diversity, and Equity – huge areas for all of us. You will want to bring your entire Behavior Team to this conference! We will learn!

While offering a national perspective on trending issues is vital, so is being aware of current trends right here in Georgia. Our State Director, Wina Low, will provide a timely Keynote Address at our Opening Session, and her staff will update us during several Breakout Sessions. Phil Hartley will close out the conference by sharing the latest judicial decisions affecting educators across Georgia.

Confirmed Concurrent Session presenters include Beth Morris, Reagan Sauls, Samantha Lewis, John O'Connor, Dr. Laura Riffel, Hal Beaver, Alexa Ross, Phil Hartley, and our own special education administrators from all over the state, sharing their own initiatives and innovations.

We will learn!

-Sarah Burbach





G-CASE Fall Conference  
Fall Conference [Registration](#)

# Trending Now

Diversity

Equity

Legal Issues

Behavior

Mental Health



G-CASE Fall Conference  
November 16-18, 2022  
The Hyatt, Savannah

# AGENDA FOR G-CASE FALL CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 16-18, 2022

## 2022 G-CASE FALL CONFERENCE THE HYATT REGENCY, SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

**Tuesday, November 15, 2022**

Time	Activity
5:00 PM – 6:30 PM	Ambassadors Meeting

**Wednesday, November 16, 2022**

Time	Activity
8:00 AM – 5:00 PM	Registration
8:00 AM – 12:00 Noon	Exhibitors Set Up
9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon*	<b>SELDA Meeting</b>
9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon*	<b>GLRS Directors Meeting</b>
9:00 AM – 9:45 AM	G-CASE Advisory Board Meeting
10:00 AM – 11:30 AM	G-CASE Executive Board/Advisory Board Work Session <b>G-CASE Executive Board Regular Meeting</b>
12:00 Noon	Exhibits Open/Silent Auction Opens
1:00 PM – 1:30 PM	Conference Kick-Off: <b>Dr. Cassandra Holifield</b>
1:30 PM – 2:45 PM	Keynote: <i>Happy Kids Don't Punch You in the Face: Your Guide to Eliminating Aggressive Behavior in the School Setting</i> <b>Dr. Ben Springer</b>
2:45 PM – 3:15 PM	Exhibit Area Break
3:15 PM- 3:25 PM	CEC Presentation
3:25 PM – 4:25 PM	Update from the GaDOE <b>Wina Low, State Director</b>
4:30 PM	Announcements and Adjournment
5:00 PM – 6:00 PM	<i>SELDA Mentor Mingle (Sponsored by SES)</i>

**Thursday, November 17, 2022**

Time	Activity
7:00 AM – 8:00 AM	Breakfast
7:30 AM-4:30 PM	Exhibits/Silent Auction
7:30 AM – 10:00 AM	Registration Continues
8:00 AM-8:30 AM	Conference General Session
8:30 AM-10:00 AM	<b>Keynote:</b> <i>Anxiety and Stress in the Post-Pandemic Classroom</i> <b>Dr. Laura Riffel</b>
10:00 AM-10:30 AM	Refreshment Break/Tour Exhibit Area
10:30 AM-11:30 AM	Breakout Sessions A
11:45 AM-12:45 PM	Breakout Sessions B
12:45 PM-1:30 PM	Lunch
1:45 PM – 2:45 PM	Breakout Session C
2:45 PM-3:15 PM	Refreshment Break/Tour Exhibit Area
3:15 PM-4:15 PM	Breakout Sessions D
5:30-6:30 PM	<i>Special Education Administrator Development Academy (ADA) Social (Presidential Suite)</i>



## AGENDA FOR G-CASE FALL CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 16-18, 2022

**Friday, November 18, 2022**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
7:30 AM – 8:30 AM	Breakfast
8:30 AM – 8:45 AM	Welcome, G-CASE Awards, Introduction of Speaker
8:45 AM- 10:15 AM	<b>Keynote:</b> <b>D. Mary Hemphill</b>
10:15 AM-10:45 AM	Break
10:45 AM-11:45 AM	<b>Legal Update:</b> <b>Phil Hartley, Harben, Hartley, &amp; Hawkins</b>
11:45 AM -12:00 PM	Door Prizes, Conference Concludes



*2021 G-CASE Fall Conference  
The Hyatt Regency, Savannah*

# G-CASE FALL CONFERENCE BOASTS STATE AND NATIONALLY ACCLAIMED SPEAKERS

*Trending Now: Mental Health, Behavior, Legal Issues, Diversity, and Equity* is the theme for the **2022 G-CASE Fall Conference** in Savannah, with speakers carefully selected to teach, motivate, challenge, and inspire.



**Dr. Ben Springer** is an award winning and Nationally Certified School Psychologist. He is also the author of the popular book, "Happy Kids Don't Punch You in the Face" and "GPS: Good Parenting Strategies: The No-Guilt Survival Guide for Parenting During the Pandemic and Beyond." Ben received his Master's and Doctoral Degrees from the University of Utah in Educational Psychology. He studied Autism Spectrum Disorders, Social Skills Instruction, Applied Behavioral Analysis, Parent Training, and Evidence Based Practice. Currently, Ben works as the director of special education in Wasatch County School District and manages Totem PD, a professional learning company focusing on practical, ready-to-use tools for educators working in classroom management, crisis de-escalation, bullying prevention, positive behavior supports, and student wellness. Dr. Springer will be giving G-CASE conference attendees a humorous and insightful take on how to address aggressive and dangerous behavior in the school setting through the high leverage combination of Applied Behavioral Analysis, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, and Applications of Positive Psychology. Our participants will walk away with ready-to use tools and strategies to take back to their teams!

**Dr. Mary Hemphill** is a leadership expert and coach, K-12 educator and administrator, author, and motivational speaker. With over sixteen years of professional experience as a teacher, administrator, state director, and university professor, Dr. Hemphill understands the importance of fusing education, empowerment, and leadership together as she works with learning and working communities and speaks to audiences across the country.

She holds a Ph.D. in Leadership Studies from North Carolina A&T State University and currently teaches as an adjunct professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Hemphill currently serves as North Carolina's Chief Academic Officer and works to set the strategic vision and direction for the instructional framework and pedagogical approach to North Carolina's academic standards & programs and acts as a key lever to accomplish the Department's key



**Dr. Laura Riffel** has taught every grade in Pre-K-Adult in general and special education. She ran a day clinic and statewide project on behavioral interventions and supports in Georgia. She was also an adjunct professor at Georgia State University, teaching Applied Behavior Analysis for Classroom Teachers.

Dr. Riffel has spent the last 17 years traveling the world helping other educators to implement positive interventions and practical strategies to help students with behavioral strategies. She has developed an easy-to-use competing pathway chart for designing behavioral interventions and has written a plethora of books and presentations. Her website [www.behaviordractor.org](http://www.behaviordractor.org) is filled with free resources for teachers and family members. She has a free tool that graphs functional behavior assessment data, and it is downloaded and used over 3000 times a month. She spends her evenings answering emails from around the world, trying to help others brainstorm solutions to behavioral issues.



**Wina Low** is the State Director with the Georgia Department of Education, Division for Special Education Supports and Services. Prior to serving in this role, she was a Program Manager Senior with primary responsibilities including the Teacher/Provider Retention Program, leadership for the CEEDAR project, co-lead for the Special Education Leadership Development Academy (SELDA), as well as effective transition, assistive technology, and professional learning while maintaining a focus on improved post-secondary outcomes for students with disabilities. She has 39 years of experience as an educator having served as a middle-grades classroom teacher, educational diagnostician, and local district Student Services Director for 17 years prior to joining the Georgia Department of Education in 2013.

Professional recognition includes the G-CASE 2013 Lillie Moncus Award Outstanding Special Education Administrator of the Year, and the GAEL 2014 President's Professional of the Year Award. Wina holds a Bachelor of Science in Middle Grades Education from Brenau University. Her graduate work was completed at the University of West Georgia earning a Master of Education in Special Education - Learning Disabilities, and an Education Specialist in Special Education Administration.

**Phil Hartley** has served as lead counsel in numerous cases involving Georgia's school districts and works closely with the *Georgia School Board Association*, the *Georgia School Superintendents Association*, and of course *the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders* to respond to and shape legislative and policy issues that affect public education in Georgia. He is a founding partner in the law firm of *Harben, Hartley, & Hawkins* in Gainesville, Georgia and is a strong supporter of G-CASE and GAEL. Phil knows most of us by name or by our system...or by our superintendents, because he has worked with most of us!



***What a line-up!***

***Plan to bring your entire Behavior Team to this conference!***

**2022 G-CASE FALL CONFERENCE  
NOVEMBER 16-18  
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA**

## **AMBASSADORS for 2022 G-CASE Fall Conference: *Great Opportunity for Teacher Leaders!***

This year, G-CASE will continue the tradition of hosting Ambassadors to ensure that the **2022 G-CASE Fall Conference** runs smoothly! Five outstanding teacher leaders will be chosen to assist with conference activities such as registration, breakout sessions, Silent Auction, and the exhibit hall — being available, providing resources, and answering questions as needed.

Ambassadors will need to be at the Savannah Hyatt Regency by 5:00 P.M. on Tuesday, November 15th, and are expected to stay through the end of the conference on Friday, November 18th. Ambassadors receive conference registration, up to three nights of lodging (two to a room), and travel/food expenses. G-CASE does not provide reimbursement for substitute teachers for the Ambassadors.

**Your assistance is needed to identify the teacher leader candidates for the Ambassador positions.** Please communicate with your region to select a teacher leader candidate for the Ambassador position. These individuals will be recognized at the conference for their achievements.

**Deadline for applications is October 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

Applications for the Ambassador Position can be completed online at this link:

**[G-CASE Ambassador Application 2022](#)**

For more information about this life-changing opportunity, please contact:

**MaryKay Berry, Ed.D.**

[marykay.berry@white.k12.ga.us](mailto:marykay.berry@white.k12.ga.us)

706-969-9568





# SPONSORS

G-CASE is excited to partner with companies from all over the United States who want to meet you at the Fall Conference in Savannah. Our Sponsors report that they love coming to G-CASE events because our members are genuinely interested in them, their products, and programs. Please know that the funds generated from these sponsorships help offset the total cost of the conference. Take the time to visit each of our Sponsors/Exhibitors during the conference, learn about their product, find out who else in Georgia is working with them, and get on their mailing lists. These are good people who pay their own way (airfare, travel, hotels, etc.) to spend just a few minutes with you.

## **G-CASE Fall Conference Sponsors (at Press Time)**

Educational Associates, Inc./Dodge Learning  
Resources  
USTA Georgia  
Educational Learning Systems Inc.  
SES  
RoboKind  
Presence  
Bayes Achievement Center  
Go Solutions  
WPS  
STAR Autism Support  
American Book Company  
ChanceLight Education  
Teachers Retirement System of GA  
NWEA  
Goalbook  
Istation  
The Stepping Stones Group

## **Show Your Appreciation to Our Sponsors**

If a Sponsor invites you out to a special activity or dinner during the conference, please:

- ♦ RSVP within the time range so the Sponsor can make proper reservations (whether or not you can attend...Let the Sponsor know so they won't keep holding your place. They can invite somebody else!)
- ♦ Don't ask if you can bring other people (friends, spouses, peers from your system). The Sponsors have a set budget for these outings and want to target as many different systems as they can. They also often focus on specific groups (new directors, Executive/Advisory Board members, experienced directors, coordinators teachers, large/small systems, etc.)
- ♦ Show up!



## **Nominations for the G-CASE Lillie Moncus Special Educator of the Year**

Each year G-CASE presents the **Lillie Moncus Special Education Administrator of the Year Award** as the highest honor for an experienced special education administrator in Georgia. This award is presented to an individual with five or more years of experience as a special education administrator who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and service in the area of special education. This person characterizes resourcefulness, compassion, and professionalism as a leader. The **Lillie Moncus Special Education Administrator of the Year** has earned the respect of teachers, students, parents, and fellow administrators. This coveted award will be given during the G-CASE Fall Conference in Savannah. Nominations may be made by an individual or group as long as the nomination originates within the school system or educational entity (i.e. school district, GLRS, GaDOE, etc.) and the nomination is endorsed by a current active member of G-CASE. All nomination applications (link below) are due to Tris Gilland, G-CASE Immediate Past-President, by **October 17, 2022**.

In order to qualify for this honor, the candidate must:

- Be a current Special Education Administrator with five or more years of experience as a special education administrator
- Be a member of G-CASE
- Demonstrate exemplary leadership and service as a special education administrator
- Demonstrate care and concern for students with disabilities and their families
- Contribute to the field of special education
- Be actively involved in professional and community affairs
- Be recognized as an outstanding leader in his/her local district and/or the state

[\*\*Lillie Moncus Award Application\*\*](#)



## Georgia Council for Administrators for Special Education

### **G-CASE Lillie Moncus** **Special Education Administrator of the Year** **Nomination Application**

Each year G-CASE presents the **Lillie Moncus Special Education Administrator of the Year Award** as the highest honor for an experienced special education administrator in Georgia. This award is presented to an individual with five or more years of experience as a special education administrator who has demonstrated outstanding leadership and service in the area of special education. This person characterizes resourcefulness, compassion, and professionalism as a leader. The **Lillie Moncus Special Education Administrator of the Year** has earned the respect of teachers, students, parents, and fellow administrators.

#### **QUALIFICATIONS:**

The candidate must:

- be a current Special Education Administrator with five or more years of experience as a special education administrator
- be a member of G-CASE
- demonstrate exemplary leadership and service as a special education administrator
- demonstrate care and concern for students with disabilities and their families
- contribute to the field of special education
- be actively involved in professional and community affairs
- be recognized as an outstanding leader in his/her local district and/or the state

#### **NOMINATION REQUIREMENTS:**

Nominations may be made by an individual or group as long as the nomination originates within the school system or educational entity (i.e. school district, GLRS, GaDOE, etc.) and the nomination is endorsed by a current active member of G-CASE.

Nominations must include:

- Completed Nomination Application Form
- Narrative detailing exemplary service as a Special Education Administrator (two-page max)
- Minimum of two Letters of Support

**Deadline for Submission: October 17, 2022**

Completed Nomination Application Packets should be submitted by email to:

Dr. Tris Gilland, G-CASE Immediate Past-President

[Tgilland74@gmail.com](mailto:Tgilland74@gmail.com)



**G-CASE Lillie Moncus**  
**Special Education Administrator of the Year**  
**Nomination Application Form**

Name of Nominee:

School System:

Position:

Work Address:

Email Address:

Work Telephone:

Cell Telephone:

Number of Years in Education:

Number of Years in Current Position as an Administrator of Special Education:

Name of Person Making Nomination:

Email Address:

Work Telephone:

Cell Telephone:

Include this Nomination Form with a narrative detailing exemplary service as a Special Education Administrator (two-page max) and a minimum of two Letters of Support.



## **SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR DEVELOPMENT ACADEMY: LEARNING TO LEAD**

The second cohort of the *G-CASE Special Education Administrator Development Academy* (ADA) boasts thirty-six aspiring directors who have already formed a tight bond as they learn from others and from each other. They have met for three sessions so far this year, covering The Perfect IEP (Dr. Tris Gilland), Great Instruction, Great Achievement (John O'Connor), Human and Resource Management (Valerie Suessmith), and Data-Based Decision-Making and Accountability Systems (Dr. Steven Hornyak). Each of these master learners will be attending Fall Conference in Savannah, where they will participate in all conference activities and have their own concurrent sessions on the State and National Overview of Special Education (Dr. Jenny Millward). The new year will bring a day-long seminar on Shared Decision Making, Leading by Convening, and Advocacy for Special Education (Dr. Luann Purcell), followed by the ADA Culminating Project Showcase at the G-CASE Legal Issues Conference in March. The ADA curriculum is based on the *Administrator of Special Education Advanced Leadership Standards* set forth by the National Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE). They will be ready to lead!



**G-CASE FALL DRIVE-IN CONFERENCE**  
**“Modernizing Your Behavior/Mental Health Toolbox”**

**October 18, 2022**

**The Annex Auditorium**  
**Houston County Schools**

**9:00-3:00**

**Lunch and Snacks Provided**

*“Kids today are so different from the kids of 5, 10, 15 years ago.”*

*“The global pandemic sure had an impact on student behavior.”*

*“My go-to behavior management techniques just are not working”*

If you, your teachers, and administrators – general and special education -- have had these thoughts recently, then you need to plan to bring your team for a hands-on learning experience designed to assist educators (teachers/counselors/social workers/administrators) in *modernizing* their behavioral toolkits. Spend the day with veteran educators as they share a wealth of experience in dealing with behavioral and socio-emotional issues. This one-day drive-in conference is for ALL educators. It is the post-pandemic conference you’ve been waiting for! Participants will drive out with relevant and applicable tools to assist them in establishing rapport, de-escalating behavior, and maintaining a healthy classroom and school culture.



**Registration**

**Now Open:**

**[Behavior Drive-In](#)**



# **COORDINATOR SKILLS INSTITUTE**

**Year 2**

**Coming in January!**

**Registration Opens in late November**

***FBLA, BIP, MDR, IEP, GNETS, FTE and Budget (Part 2)....***

***And More!***



## DYSLEXIA RULE PASSES!

After a year and a half of good, hard thinking by many Georgia stakeholders, along with many Public Comments which led to many revised draft rules, a Task Force, and Rule Review Advisory Committee, the *Dyslexia Identification and Support Rule* (160-4-2-.39) was passed unanimously by the State Board of Education at the August meeting. Requirements include universal screening, intervention and supports, parental consent and support, and reporting. The rule will go into effect for all school systems at the beginning of the 2024-2025 school year. Other groups participating in the Collaborative include teachers across Georgia, the Georgia Association of Elementary School Principals (GAESP), the Student Support Team Association of Georgia Educators (SSTAGE), the Georgia Association of School Psychologists (GASP), and the Georgia Organization of School Speech-Language Pathologists (GO-SSLP). The Georgia Dyslexia Collaborative fully supported the final rule that was approved by the State Board.

Now that the rule has passed, the real work begins in order to ensure that students with dyslexia receive instruction and interventions that they need. In the last Public Comment sent to the SBOE by the Collaborative, the group recommended that specific criteria be established to determine which students have characteristics of dyslexia and that the criteria be consistent across all school systems. A final recommendation was made to ensure that Tier 1 Core Reading Instruction is based on the Science of Reading/Structured Literacy.

Implications of the rule for school systems will be presented at the G-CASE Fall Conference. The Georgia Dyslexia Collaborative is also planning workshops around this important topic.

G-CASE will keep members up to date!

A copy of the approved rule can be found at [160-4-2-.39 Dyslexia Identification and Support](#) .



## Legislative Update

This past July I had the opportunity to travel to Washington D. C. and represent G-CASE at the Special Education Legislative Summit (SELS). The first two days of the summit were focused on discussions around three specific topics: Mental Health, Teacher Shortages, and Appropriations. On the third day, we had an opportunity to hold face-to-face meetings with staff members from Senator Warnock's office, Senator Ossoff's office, and Representative Scott's office. During these meetings, we shared our needs and concerns about Special Education in Georgia.

Your Senators and Representatives at both the state and federal levels want to hear from you. Your voice needs to be heard. Here are some key points from the Legislative Summit.

According to the latest reports, one in six children have a mental health condition, but only half receive any mental health services.

Based on Bureau of Labor Statistics projections, between 2020 and 2030, 37,600 new special education teachers are required to keep up with demand.

From 2010 to 2020, the number of students who receive special education services increased by approximately 800,000 students.

In 1975 President Gerald Ford announced the Federal Government would cover 40% of the excess cost of educating children with disabilities. Currently, the Federal Government covers just over 13%. This year bills have been introduced in both the House and Senate proposing a 10-year glide path to fully fund IDEA.

-Sean Cooper

G-CASE Legislative Co-Chair



*G-CASE Legislative Co-Chair Sean Cooper with Catherine Citta and Karen Fisher in Washington at the CASE-Sponsored Special Education Legislative Summit*

# *And the awards go to.....*



## **Jennifer Donnelly Receives the 2022 Jim Puckett Outstanding Educator Award**

**J**ennifer Donnelly, Executive Director for the Bibb County Program for Exceptional Children, was awarded the **2022 Jim Puckett Award** at the GAEL Summer Conference on Jekyll Island. Jennifer has been a Special Education Leader in Georgia since 1997. She has served as Professional Learning Chair and President of the Georgia Council for Administrators of Special Education. In her district, Jennifer advocates for children with disabilities working towards the win/win while working with families and schools, focusing on what is right for the student. During her 6-year tenure in Bibb County, the Special Education Graduation Rate has increased 40 percentage points, and reading scores have improved. Ms. Donnelly is a strong supporter of G-CASE. She taught a double session on FTE at last year's Coordinator Skills Institute (CSI) and has presented at small group concurrent sessions at G-CASE conferences.

Congratulations, Jennifer!



## **Visionary Award Honors Anne Ladd**

**A**nne Ladd, Family Engagement Specialist at the GA-DOE, was awarded the Visionary Award by the *Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership* and *G-CASE* at the virtual Parent Mentor Partnership Kickoff Conference in early September. Anne is always positive and enthusiastic. She never meets a stranger, and always makes people feel welcome. She epitomizes the Shared Leadership style and always encourages the Parent Mentors from around the state to find better ways to support our students.

Congratulations, Anne!



# G-CASE at GAEL Summer Conference



*G-CASE President Dr. Tris Gilland leads the G-CASE Business Meeting.*

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*G-CASE Immediate Past-President Dr. Zabrina Cannady sworn in as 2022-2023 GAEL President.*



GEORGIA



Greetings from the new Georgia CEC President

G-CASE Members,

It is an honor to serve as the GA Council for Exceptional Children president for the next two years. Dr. James did an excellent job over the last two years, and she leaves behind enormous shoes to fill. One of the initiatives the executive board worked on over the previous month was creating a strategic plan. The plan is still in progress, but we were able to present two goals to the governing board, who voted to approve them! As we move forward into the 22-23, we are going to focus on two goals:

- **Goal:** *We will increase our membership by 5% by May 2023.*
  - **Objective:** *We will add 1 new student chapter*
  - **Objective:** *We will reach out to IHEs with SPED and/or Dual Programs that don't have a chapter and communicate resources and support to start a chapter.*
- **Goal:** *We will increase communication and collaboration with all current members by offering support and resources at least twice a month on the Ga CEC Community Board by May 2023.*
  - **Objective:** *The number of participants using the community board will increase to 5% of our membership.*

As we move forward, we will focus our resources on these goals to make the most significant impact on our members. If you want to help us reach our goals, please get in touch with me to join a committee or sign up on CEC's [Volunteer Square](#). Your Georgia CEC Executive Board meets regularly to support all its members and wants to be a support for you and your districts. Please let us know how we can be of service to you.

September 15 marks the first day of Hispanic Heritage Month! I invite you to reflect on the power of our differences and the impact we can make when we unite with shared values and purpose. This year's national theme is Esperanza: A Celebration of Hispanic Heritage and Hope. Given the number of Hispanic students with disabilities across the state, I thought it appropriate to share this celebration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karin Fisher".

Dr. Karin Fisher, GaCEC President  
kfisher@georgiasouthern.edu



# National CASE!



## *Meet Your Executive Committee*



**Zabrina Cannady**  
CASE Treasurer  
Assistant Superintendent  
of Student Services,  
Houston County School  
District  
Georgia

### **What is the BEST part of being a leader in special education?**

*"The brutal truth is that many students with disabilities were not even allowed to attend school 50 years ago. Yet now, in 2022, I have the opportunity to advocate for students who have been historically forgotten, shunned, and marginalized. Being the voice for these students and their families is highly rewarding and reminds me every day that as leaders in special education, we indeed have the power to make positive change in the world! "*

*"See you in Salt Lake!"*  
**casecec.org**







### ***THANK YOU, JENNY CARPENTER!***

Dr. Jenny Carpenter, G-CASE Communications Chair and creator of our award-winning newsletters, has moved on to the world of higher education as the Division Chair and Assistant Professor at Georgia Highlands College. G-CASE was honored as the recipient of the national CASE Communication Award (best in the nation!) for two years under Jenny's chairmanship. G-CASE thanks Jenny for "communicating" our goals, special events, and best practices to our members!

## **Paulding County Special Education – Innovative Teacher Preparation Program**

Grow Your Own Educator programs are a strategy for states and districts to help recruit and retain teachers. These programs help address teacher shortages, retention issues and teacher diversity. The Paulding County Exceptional Students Education Program (ESEP) Department embarked on creating a Grow Our Own program during the 21-22 school year through a collaboration with the University of West Georgia. The program is focused on recruiting special education paraprofessionals to become special education teachers. Based on initial feedback, the program is a HUGE success!

ESEP Grow Our Own program began with an information session in October 2021. Over 50 PCSD paraprofessionals attended the presentation by ESEP, HR and UWG staff. After reviewing program entrance requirements, college coursework requirements, and employment expectations, 28 paras chose to pursue application into the program. Because the program is funded for only 2 years, we ended with 4 paras meeting all requirements to enter the program. The 4 paras began their college coursework in January 2022 and will continue in a cohort model for six consecutive semesters. Upon completion of their MAT degrees, all participants agree to work in special education classrooms in PCSD for 3 additional years!

The most exciting part of the ESEP Grow Our Own program is that 3 of the 4 paraprofessionals, with the help of HR, have received provisional teaching certificates and are teaching in special education classrooms this year! This is a WIN for everyone - students, employees, schools and the district as a whole. Based on the initial success of the program, ESEP and HR are exploring ways to continue and expand Grow Our Own opportunities.

Submitted by: Amy Penn  
Sr. Executive Director of Special Education and Student Services  
Paulding County School System

## **G-CASE IMMEDIATE PAST-PRESIDENT TRIS GILLAND HONORED BY GAEL BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Outgoing G-CASE President Dr. Tris Gilland was recognized for her three years of service to the GAEL Board of Directors at their April meeting in Savannah. She will continue to serve GAEL by chairing the committee to revise the GAEL By-Laws. In her new role as Immediate Past-President of G-CASE, Tris will chair the Nominations/Elections Committee and the Awards Committee, and will join other G-CASE representatives at the CEC Annual Convention in Louisville in March. While President of G-CASE, Dr. Gilland led the organization out of the pandemic by offering virtual, then face-to-face conferences, keeping the group financially stable. She focused on the G-CASE goal of providing effective professional learning by leading Drive-In Conferences, as well as carefully and intentionally selecting inspiring and scholarly conference keynote speakers. She has been a featured presenter at the Special Education Administrator Development Academy (ADA) and Coordinator Skills Institute (CSI). Under her leadership, membership in G-CASE grew to 703 members, and 228 members of national CEC/CASE.

***G-CASE and GAEL thank Dr. Gilland for her continuing devotion to serving  
the administrators of special education***

***throughout Georgia!***



*Out-Going GAEL Board of Director, Dr. Tris Gilland, with Buddy Costley, GAEL Executive Director and GAEL President Claire Buck.*



# Strategic Plan 2022-2025





# G-CASE

*Georgia Council of Administrators of Special Education*  
2022-2025 Strategic Plan

## VISION

A unified voice promoting excellence in leaders of programs for students with disabilities

## MISSION

- Promote professional learning
- Promote engaged membership
- Promote effective leadership

## PURPOSE

G-CASE advocates for improved services for students with disabilities

## STRATEGY

By offering effective performance-based professional learning and promoting the engagement of members, G-CASE will impact state and national policy and legislation.



# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## Impact legislation and policy

- To impact state legislation and policy by identifying and advocating for key issues/legislative priorities
- To impact national legislation and policy related to IDEA and other special education-focused regulations by identifying and advocating for key issues.

## Promote engaged membership

- To increase, honor, and celebrate membership in G-CASE (state organization) by ensuring member loyalty, retention, and engagement
- To increase membership in CEC/CASE (national organization) by offering efficient registration and an awareness of the benefits of belonging to a professional organization

## Provide performance-based professional learning

- To build the knowledge capacity of members in order to provide improved services for students with disabilities
- To develop and enhance the leadership skills of new members at all levels of administration by strengthening the pipeline from teacher to director
- To expand the leadership skills of all members
- To communicate timely, accurate information that will encourage improved services for students with disabilities
- To value the experience and expertise of Past-Presidents and G-CASE-awarded individuals in the design, implementation, and presentation of professional learning activities





**SAVE THESE DATES**

**FALL BEHAVIOR DRIVE-IN**

**OCTOBER 18**

**HOUSTON COUNTY  
ANNEX AUDITORIUM**

**G-CASE FALL CONFERENCE**

**NOVEMBER 16-18**

**THE HYATT REGENCY  
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA**

**CSI DRIVE-IN**

**HOUSTON COUNTY  
ANNEX AUDITORIUM  
JANUARY, 2023**





# G-CASE

## 2022-2023 G-CASE Executive Board

President	Dr. Cassandra Holifield	Director North Metro GNETS Program
Immediate Past-President	Dr. Tris Gilland	Director Services for Exceptional Children Fulton County Schools
Emeritus Council Chair	Dr. Zabrina Cannady	Assistant Superintendent for Student Services Houston County Schools
President-Elect	Michele Sayles Harris	Chief of Special Services and Educational Supports Marietta City Schools
Vice-President	Dr. Brad Bowling	Upper School Director and PK-12 Sp Ed Administrator Lake Oconee Academy
Secretary	Dr. Pam McKinnon	Director of Special Education Services & Supports Glynn County Schools
Treasurer	Dr. Damita James	GLRS Director Middle Georgia RESA
CEC Representative	Dr. MaryKay Berry	Director of Student Services White County Schools
Parliamentarian	Rosie Gwin	Exceptional Children's Services Director Fayette County Schools
Professional Learning Chair	Todd Williford	Director of Exceptional Student Services Bryan County Schools
Legislative Chair	Sean Cooper	Director West GA GLRS
Legislative Co-Chair	Greg McElwee	Director GNETS Northwest GA GNETS
Membership Chair	Tonya Plant	Wraparound/Student Support Northwest Georgia RESA
Communication Chair	Tania Amerson	Exceptional Education Executive Director, Bartow County Schools
Social Media Co-Chair	Kitty Crawford	Director of Exceptional Education Troup County Schools
Strategic Planning Chair	Dr. Cindy Felkins	Director of Student Support Services Bleckley County Schools
Research and Innovation Co-Chairs	Jenny Rooks	Director of Instructional Student Support Monroe County Schools
	Dr. Carrie Powell	CIBC Coordinator North Metro GNETS
Policy and Procedures Chair	Jimmy Pitzer	Special Education Director Walton County Schools
<b>Ex Officio</b>		
GaDOE Liaison	Wina Low	State Director, Special Education Services and Supports
GaDOE SELDA Liaisons	Lynn Holland	Program Manager
	Belinda Tiller	Education Program Specialist
G-CASE Executive Director	Sarah Burbach	Executive Director G-CASE

# STAY UP TO DATE WITH G-CASE ONLINE NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE!



**@GeorgiaGCASE**



**#GCASE2022**



**GCASE2020**

Tania  
Amerson

Editor  
Communications Co-Chair,  
G-CASE Executive Board

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G-CASE serves the members of CASE who live and work in Georgia. Our major goal is to improve services to children with special needs. We strive to provide leadership and support to members by providing input into the policies and practices in Georgia which impact the quality of education and by providing support to the professionals who serve the students of Georgia.