

## Comments

Georgia Council of Administrators of Special Education

December 2020

An Affiliate of the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders

www.gcase.schoolinsites.com

## President's Corner

Greetings G-CASE Friends,



I hope you are all preparing for a well-deserved break. What a year this has been! But - your resilience, determination, and hard work have gotten you through. I know you join me in looking forward to a new year full of blessings galore. G-CASE is also looking forward to the coming year as we anticipate even more meaningful work, partnerships, networking, and fellowship with you all. We are excited to continue

Tris Gilland

with our monthly webinars and hope that you all

panelists who shared at our recent webinar regarding compensatory services. We really do have some rock-star folks in our group...more proof that we are #strongertogether.

This break is an opportunity for you to take time for yourwork. I hope that you will take this time to focus on your family and find some ways to recharge as you have been spending so conference.) much time taking care of others. Thank you for all you do for students, families, and your staff each and every day. Your leader- 1. The Classic Center has received certification from GBAC for ship throughout this past year is greatly appreciated by more people than you will ever know.

I wish you all a very safe, relaxing, and happy holiday season!! Can't wait to see you all at our Spring Conference!

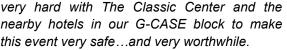
-Tris



## Notes from the **Executive Director**

#### **THERE WILL BE A SPRING CONFERENCE!**

G-CASE is thrilled to announce that our Spring Legal Forum at The Classic Center in Athens slated for March 8-10 is moving forward. Barring more restrictive Executive Orders from the Governor regarding conferences, we are excited that this one will happen! We have worked



Sarah Burbach

find them helpful as we move forward. Thank you, again, to the Before you make your plans, here is what you need to know so that you will feel (and be!) safe:

We have a contract with the Classic Center, and at this time, we plan to offer our conference face-to-face AND live-streamed. We understand the flexibility (knowing the rules can and probably will change several times between now and March) of the Governor's self. Remember that your self-care is just as important as the Orders regarding social distancing, masks, and group sizes and will be able to adhere to all of them (as written at the time of the

> adhering to safe, stringent sanitation procedures. They also have shared a link to their process that you may want to view: https:// www.visitathensga.com/ready-set-go-safely-athens/

> 2. We have booked the entire theatre (not the much smaller ballrooms where we usually meet) for all of the general sessions so that everyone can be socially distanced (Seven hundred people can be socially-distanced in the theatre! The theater actually holds 2100 people!)

> 3. We will be using the large ballrooms (that we used to use for General Sessions) for meetings and breakout spaces to accommodate social-distancing.

> 4. Food will be pre-packaged (refreshment breaks), grab and go (breakfasts), plated with covers/4 people only sitting at 8 person tables (lunch), and served by trained attendants (coffee/tea).

> 5. Attendees can choose to attend live or watch the conference as it is live-streamed, or even a combination of live and streamed!

6. We already have excellent keynote speakers confirmed!

7. We are working with exhibitors who can be socially-distanced who want to share their latest products and services with you!

Notes from the Executive Director continued on page 2



continued from page 1...

8. Several G-CASE board members will be attending the GAEL Winter Conference at The Classic Center in January to double-check the safety. The GAEL Legal Issues Conference last month at The Classic Center went over very well with the participants and speakers.

We are so hopeful that we can all get back together again in March, as long as it is safe to do so. We will keep you updated as plans progress and we will follow all the rules and safety guidelines. (We're special educators. We KNOW how to follow rules!) Our (many!) meetings with the (many!) people serving us at The Classic Center and hotels give me confidence that by working together, we can host a safe, meaningful, and fun conference for you in March!

We will provide even more information in late January when Registration opens!

SEE you in March!

Sarah &. Burbach

# Happy Holidays

#### G-CASE PRESIDENT-ELECT CASSANDRA HOLIFIELD HIGHLIGHTED BY WALDEN UNIVERSITY FOR HER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE UNIVERSITY AND THE ATLANTA COMMUNITY

https://www.waldenu.edu/online-masters-programs/master-of-arts-inteaching/resource/dr-cassandra-allen-holifield-a-passion-for-specialeducation-in-atlanta-and-bevond

Dr. Cassandra Allen Holifield: A Passion for Special Education in Atlanta and Beyond

## For Dr. Cassandra Allen Holifield, Walden University's social change mission made all the difference.



ATL. A-Town. Hotlanta. The list of nicknames for the state capital of Georgia is as diverse and storied as the city itself. Burned to the ground by General William T. Sherman during the Civil War, the phoenix is considered the symbol of Atlanta's rebirth—a city that quite literally rose from the ashes. Tenacity and passion are woven into the fabric of the community.

Dr. Cassandra Allen Holifield—contributing faculty for The Richard W. Riley College of Education

Dr. Holifield

and Leadership's Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) with a specialization in Special Education (K–21) at Walden University—is a proud native

Atlantan. As an active member of her own community, Dr. Allen Holifield sought a forward-thinking university committed to advancing social change. That's why she chose to join Walden, believing deeply in the university's vision and mission.

Dr. Allen Holifield says there is no place quite like Atlanta. "We have the best food, culture, arts, music, and diverse experiences in the Southeast. Atlanta is a place that once you visit, you'll never want to leave." This perhaps explains why Atlanta continues to be a growing city that's becoming more diverse each year. For Dr. Allen Holifield, it's this diversity that makes Atlanta such a great place for individuals from all walks of life to thrive.

Despite the economic, social, and political diversity of metro Atlan-

ta, Dr. Allen Holifield notes that the city is still undeniably a part of the south—a region of the U.S. that birthed the civil rights movement and paid witness to decades-long disenfranchisement and racial segregation. True to its symbolism, Atlanta continues to rise as city leaders, organizers, and mentors achieve success and mobilize those around them. Dr. Allen Holifield is part of this community involvement. Working with her sorority Rho Zeta Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., she dedicates her time to empowering the black community and beyond, including initiatives that promote voter registration, fundraise for scholarships, and build economic literacy and wealth among women.

Just as Dr. Allen Holifield is an invaluable member of the Atlanta community, she's also an invaluable member of Walden's faculty. When asked about her decision to choose teaching at Walden over other universities, she said, "Walden is truly committed to contributing to positive social change and the current events that are occurring in society and in the community in which I live. I am blessed to work at Walden."

## Become a More Effective Educator With a Master of Arts in Teaching at Walden

For prospective and future Walden students, Dr. Allen Holifield's advice is, "to come prepared to grow and excel academically. Walden University is an online university that offers rigor, relevance, and results. Every student's performance reflects the quality of Walden."

#### Dear G-CASE Members:



Seasons greetings to the G-CASE family! On behalf of the entire GAEL organization and our board of directors, I want to congratulate each and every member of G-CASE for your service to children in Georgia. Of course, you were already heroes to our students with disabilities before the COVID-19 pandemic, but since March of 2020, you have certainly distinguished yourself.

Robert Costley

I cannot imagine the effort, training, and courage you have shared with others to ensure our boys and girls receive the educational opportunities they need and deserve in a very challenging year. Even more, it occurs to me that it was not only the students who needed your expertise in 2020, but our teachers, school administrators, and staff needed you as well. And that's why taking the initiative to become a member of G-CASE and GAEL is so important for educational leaders. It would be easy to stay in our silos in our home school systems because there is certainly plenty of work to do. But each of you has gone above and beyond to stay plugged in and become a part of a network of peers that shares, learns, and collaborates with each other.

In other words, through your membership in your professional associations, you made an intentional choice to grow yourself and grow your peers. And what does that mean? Well, I think it means you are leaving a legacy for children, for public education, and for Georgia. You are setting an example for all those teachers and staff who are watching your daily work, many of whom will one day take our places as leaders in Georgia schools.

Obviously, each of you has every right to be proud of what you do for a living, and I also want to invite you to join me in celebrating the leadership of G-CASE Executive Director Sarah Burbach, 2021 President Tris Gilland, and our current GAEL Treasurer (and future GAEL President in 2022-2023) Zabrina Cannady! Through their efforts and service with the G-CASE board of directors and you, I can clearly see a great future for our students in our special educa-



#### The voice and vision of special education

year begins. The year 2020 didn't turn out the way that we had hoped but nevertheless, we are resilient educators and special educators who know how to be flexible. Despite the changes we faced in 2020, Georgia CEC has continued to be the voice and vision for students with

disabilities in ensuring that all educators reach their full potential through creative professional resources in order to reach every child with no lim- Check its. We have been unstoppable.

We have some exciting opportunities available to our special educators through mini-grants, upcoming professional development, and a virtual teacher's lounge. The virtual teacher lounge will be a place for teachers and other educators to meet and chat about things that concern special educators across the state. It is our hope that the support provided to amount. You give and we give back to you! teachers will help with the retention rate and less turn-over in our field.

We are excited to be partnering with districts throughout the state in creating CEC chapters in the various regions. As Henry Ford said, "Coming

tion programs all over Georgia.

As I close, I want to invite the G-CASE membership to come out in force at our Winter GAEL Conference in Athens, GA, on January 24-26 (Register at www.gael.org). As you know, G-CASE is a proud GAEL affiliate organization, and the GAEL Winter and Summer Conferences are times when we all come to together and celebrate as one family of educational leaders for public education in Georgia. To ensure a safe conference, we have an excellent facility and safety plan, and our general session for the conference will actually take place in the very nice (and very large) concert theater at the Classic Center so that we can social distance with class!

The theme of our conference this year is "Leaders Forging Silver Linings in 2021," and we hope you will join us so that you can share all you have learned in the past year and how we can use that experience for innovation and growth for the future of education in Georgia. Together, we are "GAELSTRONG" and "GeorgiaStrong"!

Wishing you all a safe, healthy, and blessed Holiday Season!

#### Robert Costley Executive Director, GAEL



Happy New Year! I together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; staying together is think we all are looksuccess." This rings so true for the collaboration of educators and we ing forward to a reknow we wouldn't be where we are without the collaborative interactions newal as the new with each other. Please let us know if you would be interested in creating a chapter in your district or region.

> Save the Date: Exceptional Children's Week will be March 1-5, 2021. Our theme this year is "Virtually Unstoppable." Help us celebrate the great efforts of our teachers and students as they have demonstrated that we are unstoppable and resilient.

out our GaCEC website community.cec.sped.org/ga/home) for more information on membership, professional opportunities, and ways to celebrate your staff and students. For all you Amazon shoppers, add Georgia Federation for Exceptional Children Inc. to your AmazonSmile and GaCEC will get a percentage of your purchase



Dr. Damita James. GACEC President

Take Care and Remember to Just Breathe!

cecgeorgia1@gmail.com

## GCASE Membership Reminders

Membership in state and national organizations is now more vital than ever!

#### What does membership get you?



Access to timely and critical conferences and webinars at reduced rates



High-powered, professional learning geared to Georgia's administrators of special education throughout the year



Your voice represented in person and through public comments and letters



#### Membership Dates

The membership year runs from July 1 to June 30; however, G-CASE always extends the membership year until November so that memberships can be paid with registration for Fall Conference

## \$

#### How Much Is Membership?

G-CASE Membership is \$50/year CEC?CASE membership is \$137/year (\$10 increase by national CEC in August)

#### Where can you go to renew?



Join on the GAEL website (gael.org) Click on the Membership tab, Join Now, G-CASE Memberships



Join when you register for he year-long G-CASE Webinar Series Memerbship options are included with the webinar's price

December 2020

### **Time to Vote!**

Several policies and amendments to the G-CASE Constitution were discussed by the Executive Board and then shared at the G-CASE General Business Meeting on November 18<sup>th</sup>. The complete amendments requiring a vote by the full G-CASE membership have been available on the G-CASE website (<u>http://gcase.schoolinsites.com/</u>), along with policies voted on by the Executive Board.

During the first week in January, all current G-CASE members will receive a link to cast their votes for or against approval of changes to the Constitution. All members will vote to amend the G-CASE Constitution to include:

A. Four new G-CASE Membership Levels:

1. Institutional Membership (for educational leaders who are not special education leaders. Same G-CASE membership fee.)

2. Corporate Membership (for sponsors, exhibitors, and vendors. Same G-CASE membership fee)

3. Honorary Membership (for all G-CASE Past-Presidents. No cost to Past-

4. **Teacher Leader Academy Membership** (for all teachers participating in the tor Development Academy. No cost to teachers participating in the Academy.)

B. Approve the G-CASE Membership fee at \$50 per year (July 1-June 30).

C. "Do-Over" Year

Closings and cancellations because of COVID-19 have led the G-CASE Executive Board to make the one-time decision to allow all elected officers to remain in their positions through FY22. No election for new officers will be held this fiscal year. This extension is to allow officers the opportunity to work with their committees on up-coming projects that were postponed, to plan face-to-face conferences, and to attend national CASE and CEC conventions to gather information about national trends in special education, share ideas with administrators from across the United States, and to hear a variety of presenters that may be well-suited for Georgia-CASE conferences.

D. Succession Plan to GAEL Presidency

Each affiliate member organization of the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders (GAEL) has the opportunity to nominate a member to rotate into and assume the role of an officer in GAEL according to a fixed, approved schedule. The purpose of this policy is to create procedures for the nomination and appointment of this individual to represent G-CASE in the rotation of GAEL officer leadership. Qualifications, procedures, and an application are included in the policy.

#### E. G-CASE Business Online

G-CASE members live and work all across the state of Georgia. There are occasions when meetings need to be held, or a vote needs to be taken by members of the Executive Board and/or the membership at large at a date before the group has a scheduled meeting. G-CASE has procedures in place for calling and canceling meetings. This policy would allow for online/ digital meetings and votes, as appropriate.

The recent COVID-19 virus has caused G-CASE to host meetings that require votes through digital venues *instead* of face-to-face meetings. The reason for this policy is to put procedures in place for occasions when it is not feasible to conduct a called or scheduled face to face meeting or when votes are needed to be taken between face-to-face meetings.



It is so beneficial to be a member of COUNCIL OF ADMINISTRATORS National CEC/CASE! CASE keeps us OF SPECIAL EDUCATION updated weekly on current issues,

trends, litigation, programs, and products, while providing professional learning focused on administrators of special education.

Here are some highlights from recent CASE newsletters, webinars, Zoom meetings, and conferences that will interest you:

• CASE is a non-partisan, apolitical organization that works cooperatively, to the maximum extent possible, with whichever party holds the White House and Congress's chambers.

• The CASE Executive Committee (on which our own G-CASE Past-President Zabrina Cannady serves) has approved the Diversifying the Special Education Leadership Workforce Taskforce to address our systems' inequities. CASE is committed to supporting a workforce that is fully representative of the students and families we serve. CASE recognizes that diversifying the candidates for leadership in special education is critical to meeting this commitment.

• CASE leadership is finalizing a document to share with President-Elect Biden's transition team, which will provide an introduction to who CASE represents, will outline our top legislative priorities, and establish CASE as the "best resource on special education."

• From Julie Weatherly: Let go of always being right and be kind to and take care of yourself. You are an excellent educator who is doing your best and, in times like these, your best is going to have to be good enough. Ask for help when you need it!

• Administrator support was one of the most important factors in maintaining teacher morale during COVID's disruptions, according to University of Winnipeg research on Canadian schools.

YOU need to join the 5000+ CEC/CASE members! DON"T NEGLECT YOUR OWN LEARNING! Stay on top of *everything* Special Education! Join or renew <u>here!</u>

#### Oconee County Students Complete 3-day Manufacturing Institute through High School High Tech

Submitted by: Suzanne Korngold, Oconee County School District

Oconee County's special education department had 16 juniors and seniors take part in a Manufacturing Institute through High School High Tech. Manufacturing Industries like Kubota, KIA Motors, and Caterpillar employ nearly half a million Georgians. As the manufacturing industry in our state grows, the need for skilled workers grows with it.

The Manufacturing Institute is an exciting opportunity for students to gain industry-recognized certifications that can result in them being more marketable to employers!

This is a 3-day training experience for HSHT students in your county school system. The purpose of the training is to learn more about the field of manufacturing, and students will earn 3 certifications that can go on a resume and assist with obtaining employment as they transition out of high school. Activities include tours, hands-on activities, speakers, and much more!

These certification training sessions exceeded our expectations. The presenters have been highly organized, efficient, and informative when providing information and hands-on training to our students. It is my belief, as director of special education in Oconee County, that these 3 days may indeed be the most beneficial 3 days of several students' high school careers. We are beyond excited that 15 of our students from NOHS and OCHS will be walking out with an OSHA-10 certification, a Lean Six Sigma White Belt certification, and a CPR/AED certification.



#### **G-CASE Monthly Webinar Series: You Deserve It!**

One of the most important roles of G-CASE is to provide professional learning to our members. We do that best through our newsletters and conferences because we are able to reach out and include all of our members across the state. After making the very difficult decision to cancel Fall Conference in Savannah, the Executive Board began searching for ways to continue to offer our members critical information. We wanted to invite some of the keynote speakers we had initially booked for Fall Conference, and we knew we needed to provide access to the GaDOE staff to answer "frequently asked" questions. So, a monthly "Lunch and Learn" webinar series was designed to offer G-CASE members a quick information-filled hour to get together and continue to LEARN! G-CASE partnered with SSTAGE to purchase a Zoom Webinar license so that 500 people can be in attendance at one time, and the series has taken off! The November webinar opened with the bi-annual G-CASE Business Meeting followed by a timely presentation by Dr. Zelphine Smith-Dixon, State Director of Federal Programs with the Division for Special Education Services and Supports, who answered questions from around the state. The December webinar went in a different direction, as several of our directors described how their systems were handling Compensatory Education. The next G-CASE webinar (January 20<sup>th</sup>) will feature G-CASE member and keynote presenter at last month's national CASE Conference John O'Connor, presenting some "Big Ideas" to increase learning and achievement for students with disabilities. Each session is recorded so that you won't miss a thing! G-CASE secured sponsors for each webinar, which allowed registration costs to be kept low. Registration remains open (since there will be four more webinars this school year) at the GAEL website (gael.org) or https://gael.ps.membersuite.com/events/ViewEvent.aspx?contextID=e386dc0a-0078cecd-d848-c61a2ce0d479.

You deserve this!



## CEC/GCASE SCHOLARSHIPS

Applicant Requirements and Deadlines

#### 2020/21 Theodore Smith Scholarship

Special education teachers/paraprofessionals Two scholarships of \$1,000 each for pursuit of higher education Paraprofessionals who are not CEC members will receive one-year free CEC membership Deadline: February 28, 2021 2020 recipients: Lori Harvin & Angeling Snider





#### 2021 CEC/GCASE Ambassador Application

Serve as ambassadors for the G-CASE Spring Conference Receive conference registration and travel expenses as appropriate

Assist with conference registration and support throughout the conference

Deadline: February 28, 2021

2019 Ambassadors: Erin Low, Michelle Starley, Larissa Beecher, Stacey Blagg, Courtney Murphy, Bethany McClure

#### 2021 Tony Molinari Scholarship

Three \$1,000 scholarships for special education administrators Must be members of G-CASE, CASE, and CEC Established for special education administrators to attend the International Council for Exceptional Children Annual Convention Deadline: TBD 2020 recipients: Katie Lowry (2019), Dr. Brad Bowling and Dr. Pam McKinnon



**Tris Gilland, President** Zabrina Cannady, Immediate Past President **Greg McElwee, Emeritus Council Chair Cassandra Holifield. President-Elect Michele Bealing-Sayles, Vice President** Pam McKinnon, Secretary Damita James, Treasurer MaryKay Berry, CEC Representative **Rosie Gwin, Parliamentarian Brad Bowling, Professional Learning Chair** Jenny Millward, Legislative Chair Sean Cooper, Legislative Co-Chair **Tonva Plant, Membership Chair Jenny Carpenter, Communications Chair Kitty Crawford, Social Media Co-Chair** Kelly King, Strategia Planning Chair **Jenny Rooks, Research & Innovation Co-Chair Carrie Powell, Research & Innovation Co-Chair Jimmy Pitzer, Policy and Procedures Chair Zelphine Smith-Dixon, GADOE Liasion Kachelle White, DOE SELDA Liasion** Wina Low, DOE SELDA Liasion Sarah Burbach, G-CASE Executive Director

Executive

Board

**Tania Amerson, District 1 Kristy Bone, District 2** Katie Lowry, District 3 **Blake McGaha, District 4 Cheryl Handley, District 4** Suzanne Korngold, District 5 **Cammie Tysver, District 6** Lenora Clarkson, District 7 **Catherine Brown, District 8** Pat Wolf, District 9 Teri Pettyjohn, District 10 Loranda Crimes, District 11-12 **TaKeshia Thomas, District 13** Nicole Balkcom, District 14 Mindy Yanzetich. District 15 Kerri Miller, District 16 **Marcus Richardson, District 17** William Hall , District 18

Will we see you in Athens? CASE Spring Legal Forum

Thank Yau To Our G-CASE Webinar Panelists

Brad Bowling Jenny Millward Suzanne Korngold Tania Amerson Jessica Coleman Rosie Gwin Jennifer Donelly Catherine Brown Katie Lowry

You put yourselves out there in front of over 200 other directors to share how your system is handling Compensatory Education!

And we learned!

G-CASE

December 2020

# 2021 Georgia Association of Educational Leaders (GAEL)

#### Provide Adequate Funding and Resources for Georgia's Students

- PROVIDE PANDEMIC FUNDING RELIEF by holding school systems harmless for temporary drops in enrollment on FTE reporting during the FY21 year for the purposes of determining the QBE funding allotments for FY22 and FY23.
- PROVIDE EQUITABLE BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS for ALL Georgia families by legislating and funding a five-year implementation strategy targeting rural and low wealth communities.
- PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF THE MAJORITY OF GEORGIA'S CHILDREN by limiting the diversion of public funds to private education institutions through vouchers, scholarships, tuition credits, or tax exemptions.
- BUILD SAFE AND POSITIVE LEARNING CLIMATES by funding expanded services and resources for school safety, health and nursing services, behavioral support, and mental health needs.
- INVEST IN SUPPORT FOR REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES (RESAs) to support rural school systems and to maximize collaboration and training for all Georgia school systems

#### Support Local School Board Authority

- STAND FOR LOCAL GOVERNANCE BY COMMUNITY BOARDS OF EDUCATION by ensuring that legislation is aligned with constitutional provisions regarding public school governance.
- ENSURE THAT SUPERINTENDENTS SERVING CHILDREN CONTINUE TO BE APPOINTED by locally-elected boards based on a leader's training and expertise.

### Provide Qualified Teachers and Leaders to Serve Georgia's Students

- ENCOURAGE TEACHERS TO REMAIN IN GEORGIA AND IN THE PROFESSION by supporting and strengthening Georgia's Teacher Retirement System (TRS) and state salary schedule.
- REDUCE THE CRITICAL SHORTAGE OF TEACHERS in Georgia classrooms by permitting retired educators to return to work full time without losing their retirement benefit.
- ENSURE FAIR ACCOUNTABILITY for teachers and school leaders through valid, reliable, and effective measures. Advocate that any FY21 testing be used for achievement and remediation of students instead of for school accountability and employee evaluations.

SUPPORT THE POSITION STATEMENTS AND PRIORITIES OF THE GEORGIA ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERS (GAEL) AFFILIATES AND GEORGIA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION (GSBA)

Lillie Moncus Special Education Administrator of the Year Award will be announced at Spring Conference in Athens!

#### Recognizes

**???** 

*As the* Lillie Moncus Special Education Administrator

Of the Year

March 2021



#### Join/Renew

If you usually renew your membership with your Fall Conference Registration and didn't register for the G-CASE Webinar Series, you need to renew your membership now!

#### Need Help/Questions?

If you have any questions about your G-CASE, CEC/CASE, or GAEL memberships, please contact Sarah Burbach, G-CASE Executive Director sburbach@gael.org

#### Remeber to Vote!

Watch your email in January for a link to cast your vote for or against approval to the G-CASE Constitution.



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.

Jenny Carpenter, Editor Northwest Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support P.O. Box 2130 Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia 30742 jcarpenter@nwgnets.org