

160-4-7-.15 GEORGIA NETWORK FOR EDUCATIONAL AND THERAPEUTIC SUPPORT (GNETS)

(1) PROGRAM DEFINITION AND PURPOSE.

(a) The Psychoeducational Network shall be known as the Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS). GNETS programs support the LEAs continuum of services by providing comprehensive special education and therapeutic support for the children served. The purpose of the GNETS is to prevent children from requiring residential or other more restrictive placements by offering cost-effective comprehensive services in local areas. Families have the opportunity to be engaged in all aspects of service planning. Child specialists (educators, psychologists, social workers, psychiatrists, behavior support specialists, or etc.) from a variety of professions collaborate on behalf of the children served.

(b) All programs may serve children ages 3 through 21 years by the program staff in classes, with direct therapeutic services, evaluation and assessment or other services as appropriate.

(2) ELIGIBILITY AND PLACEMENT.

(a) An IEP team may consider in-class services by a GNETS program for a child with an emotional and behavioral disorder based upon documentation of 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). This documentation must include prior extension of less restrictive services and data which indicate such services have not enabled the child to benefit educationally.

(b) For children receiving in-class services, local schools are actively involved and exit criteria are developed upon entry into the GNETS program.

(3) OPERATIONAL REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES.

(a) Department responsibilities. In compliance with a provision of the budget for the operation of GNETS, the department shall receive funds appropriated by the Georgia General Assembly. The department shall:

1. Develop regulations and procedures pertaining to the operation of GNETS 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 approved fiscal agents for the operation of GNETS programs

4. Ensure that all GNETS programs have an on-going system for documenting effectiveness and program improvement based on GaDOE requirements and guidance from stakeholders.

(b) Fiscal agent responsibilities.

1. If a majority of the LEAs served by the GNETS 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 LEA 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 for children.

(II) Program accountability data.

(III) Georgia's Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Plans.

(IV) Financial reports.

(V) Annual demographic data.

(c) Advisory board.

1. The advisory board comprised of the superintendents or their designees of the LEAs 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 and budget.

(ii) Review service delivery model and recommendations for program improvement.

(iii) Review program data quarterly.

(d) Budget/fiscal management.

1. Guidelines for the budget are established to cover all areas of expenditures.

(i) Budgets shall be determined annually according to appropriations and population to be served by each program.

(ii) Management of program budgets shall be consistent with state fiscal policy.

(iii) Deviations in the project budget shall be approved by the fiscal agent and submitted to the department for approval as outlined in the proposal guidelines.

(iv) 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) 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.

(iii) 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.

(iv) Sufficient personnel to operate a GNETS program shall be employed and described in the proposal approved by the fiscal agent and LEAs served. These shall include sufficient leadership and supervisory personnel, instructional staff to include teachers and paraprofessionals, and therapeutic 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 LEAs.

- (ii) State funds shall not be utilized to buy snacks or rewards for children.
- (iii) Installation of equipment or renovation of a facility on property not legally the property of the fiscal agent shall be prohibited.
- (iv) Insurance coverage may be contracted for program contents.
- (v) Insurance coverage may be contracted for liability on pupil transportation vehicles unless already covered by pupil transportation grants.
- (vi) 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) Classes shall operate a minimum of 180 days each fiscal year and may operate up to 200 days. The recommended maximum class size for preschool, elementary and middle school classes is eight. The recommended maximum class size for high school classes is ten.

(ii) GNETS programs shall utilize evidence-based positive behavioral interventions, supports and other strategies designed to increase children's resilience and social-emotional competence.

(iii) The academic curriculum for all children shall be Georgia's general education curriculum.

(4) This rule shall become effective July 1, 2007.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-152; 20-2-240; 20-2-270; 20-2-270.1; 20-2-272; 20-2-274.

Adopted: June 14, 2007

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