

House Study Committee on Postsecondary Education and
Employment Options for Individuals with Intellectual and
Developmental Disabilities



**Final Report of the House Study Committee on Postsecondary Education
and Employment Options for Individuals with Intellectual and
Developmental Disabilities**

The Honorable Katie M. Dempsey
Chair
State Representative, District 13

The Honorable Amy Carter
State Representative, District 175

The Honorable Bubber Epps
State Representative, District 144

The Honorable Valencia Stovall
State Representative, District 74

The Honorable Bill Werkheiser
State Representative, District 157

House Study Committee on Postsecondary Education and Employment Options for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Timeline of Events.....	4
COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS	8
1.) System Fragmentation	9
Conclusion	11
Signatures	12
Appendix A	13
Appendix B	18

House Study Committee on Postsecondary Education and Employment Options for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Introduction

House Resolution 642 created the House Study Committee on Postsecondary Education and Employment Options for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. This study looks at a variety of contributing factors that allow young Georgians with intellectual and developmental disabilities to finish high school only to become frustrated “couch kids” with nothing to do and nowhere to go. Specifically, the study examines postsecondary educational opportunities, employment opportunities, the utilization of public resources and the potential benefits of establishing an Employment First policy in Georgia.

Representative Katie M. Dempsey from House District 13 serves as the Chair of the Committee and authored the legislation that allowed its creation. Other members of the Study Committee are: Representative Bubber Epps, a co-sponsor of the resolution, Representative Amy Carter, Representative Valencia Stovall and Representative Bill Werkheiser.

The committee met four times over the course of the year. They heard hours of testimony from all sides of the issue including the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities, Employment First Georgia, the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, the Georgia Department of Education, the University System of Georgia, the Technical College System of Georgia and numerous advocates.

The committee’s recommendation is to create:

1. An Employment First Georgia Council, to serve in an advisory capacity to the Executive and Legislative branches for the evolution of future opportunities and discussions.

Timeline of Events

The committee held four public meetings.

First Meeting

Date: September 10th, 2015

Location: Coverdell Legislative Office Building, Room 606

Presenters:

Byron Sartin, Coordinator, Department of Behavioral Health and
Developmental Disabilities

Dawn Alford, Public Policy Director, Georgia Council on Developmental
Disabilities

D'arcy Robb, Coordinator, Employment First Georgia

Dr. Daniel Crimmins, Director of Center for Leadership in Disability, Georgia
State University

Jennifer Briggs, CEO, Briggs & Associates, Inc.

Ellyn Jeager, Director of Public Policy & Advocacy, Mental Health America of
Georgia

Focus: Provide an overview of the goals of Employment First Georgia and a high level understanding of education and employment issues facing people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Second Meeting

Date: October 26, 2015

Location: Kennesaw State University & Nobis Works

Presenters:

Dr. Monica Nandan, Interim Dean Prillaman Health Sciences, Kennesaw State University

Dr. Ibrahim Elsayy, Executive Director of Academy of Inclusive Learning and Social Growth (AILSG), Kennesaw State University

Dr. Karla Wade, Coordinator of Leadership and Project Development, AILSG, Kennesaw State University

Wendy Allen, parent of student at AILSG, Kennesaw State University

Patricia Roper-Hubbert, parent of student at AILSG, Kennesaw State University

Kellie Roberts, mother of student at AILSG, Kennesaw State University, employment perspective

Will Oglesbee, working graduate from AILSG, Kennesaw State University

Mike Oglesbee, father of working graduate from AILSG, Kennesaw State University, employment perspective

David Gwinn, working graduate from AILSG, Kennesaw State University graduate

Charlie Miller, current student at AILSG, Kennesaw State University

Dr. Greg Blalock, Associate Professor, Columbus State Goals

Theresa Davis, Program Director, East Georgia Choices

Ken Surdin, Director, Georgia Tech Excel

Johnelle Simpson, President of the Student Government Association, University of Georgia

Darby Miller, Treasurer of the Student Government Association, University of Georgia

Dave Ward, President & CEO of Nobis Works

Connie Kirk, President Emeritus & CEO of Nobis Works

Becky Ketts, Director of Rehabilitation Services, Nobis Works

Focus: Presentation on existing and potential higher education opportunities for students with disabilities. Overview of work program and tour of Nobis Works.

Third Meeting

Date: November 16, 2015

Location: Coverdell Legislative Office Building, Room 506

Presenters:

Dr. Donald Green, President, Georgia Highlands College

Dr. Greg Ford, Dean of Natural Sciences, Georgia Highlands College

Holly Chaney, Student Body President, Georgia Highlands College

Gretchen Corbin, Commissioner, Technical College System of Georgia

Kimberly Ellis, Special Populations Coordinator, Technical College System of Georgia

Debbie Gay, Director of Special Education Services and Support, Georgia Department of Education

Rob Anderson, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Public Policy, University System of Georgia

Greg Schmieg, Director, Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency

Dawn Alford, Public Policy Director, Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities

D'arcy Robb, Coordinator, Employment First Georgia

Jenny Taylor, Senior Director of Program Development and Training, Goodwill of North Georgia

Arnold Barros, Director of Anesthesia Services, Emory University Hospital

Melissa Edwards, job coach for Howard, self advocate

Shelly Simmons, self advocate and Assistant Director, Statewide independent Living Council

Alexis Pearce, self advocate

Alicia Hardy, self advocate

Claire Dees, on behalf of Pam Dempsey, advocate

Stacey Ramirez, State Director, The Arc Georgia

Focus: Presentations covered educational perspective, self advocate panel and recommendations from Employment First Georgia.

Fourth Meeting

Date: November 17, 2015

Location: Coverdell Legislative Office Building, Room 506

Presenters:

Cindy Burns, Community Development Coordinator, Coastal Center for
Developmental Services

Fontaine Huey, President, Center for Visually Impaired

Lynn Smith, CEO, Easter Seals of East Georgia

June Dipolito, Executive Director, Pineland Community Service Board

Desean Jones, public comment

Elizabeth Appley, All About Developmental Disabilities

Focus: Services provided and public comment.

Committee Recommendations

In the subsequent pages, recommendations are presented using the following format:

- Statement of the Problem;
- Committee Recommendation;
- Implementation Requirements;
- Funding Requirements; and,
- Timeline.

1.) System Fragmentation

Statement of the Issue or Problem:

Testimony from advocates and their families, providers and government agencies revealed that the upward educational and employment trajectory for individuals with intellectual and developmental issues is fragmented and disjointed. There is confusion about where services are available, what opportunities exist, where funding and resources are available and how to prevent affected populations from being relegated to unemployment and unfulfilled lives.

Committee Recommendations:

1. Encourage the Governor's Office to enact an executive order to create an Employment First Georgia Council under the authority of the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency. The Council should be tasked with creating a comprehensive strategic plan to include the following:
 - a. Identify the system of educational and employment supports already available to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and provide a common platform for that information to be shared.
 - b. Clarify the service gaps that currently plague the affected population and make recommendations for improvements. Each recommendation should include a timeline, resource assessment and implementation plan.
 - c. Explanation to providers on how transitioning to an Employment First state will affect their business model and clients.
 - d. Explanation to affected state agencies on how transitioning to an Employment First environment would impact both physical and financial resources.
2. Members of the Council should be dedicated stakeholders from Georgia including, but not limited to:
 - Georgia Department of Education;
 - University System of Georgia;
 - Technical College System of Georgia;
 - Georgia Student Finance Commission;
 - Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency;
 - Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities;
 - Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities;
 - Employment First Georgia;
 - Georgia Department of Economic Development's Workforce Division;
 - Disability advocate from the ID/DD community;
 - Disability advocate from the physical disability community;

Disability advocate from the mental health community;
Disability advocate from the sensory (deaf or blind) community;
Provider of services to people with ID/DD;
Provider of services to people with physical disabilities; and
Provider of services to people with mental health disabilities.

3. The director of the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency should have the ability to add members to the Council.
4. If the executive branch does not establish an Employment First Georgia Council by executive order, a joint study committee of the House and Senate should be considered to meet the same goal.

How Will the Recommendations Be Implemented?

Other notable states have endeavored to create an Executive Order to establish a group to provide guidance in transitioning to an Employment First state. In 2013, Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam issued an executive order instructing state agencies to better align their practices to conform to the Employment First movement by creating the Employment First Taskforce to guide them.

As Georgia moves forward, the executive branch should create an Employment First Georgia Council to provide guidance in the transition. If the executive branch does not create an Employment First Council, the legislature should follow the template provided by Virginia.

In 2012, the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates passed a joint resolution encouraging the Secretary of Health and Human Resources and the Superintendent of Public Instruction to adopt and implement Employment First practices in providing and coordinating services to Virginians with disabilities.

Is Funding Required?

No funding is required for these recommendations.

Timeline:

This plan will be developed in accordance with the GVRA's budget submittal for the Amended Fiscal Year 2017 and Fiscal Year 2018 budgets.

Conclusion:

The House Study Committee on Postsecondary Education and Employment Options for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities was charged with looking at a huge array of issues surrounding education and employment. Over the course of these meetings, it has become clear that the breadth and width of a change to Employment First policies, while inspirational and important, may have unintended consequences for service providers and state agencies alike. It is the goal of this study committee to avoid as many of those consequences as possible by encouraging the creation of an Employment First Council to education and employment policy makers.

Although time is of the essence, the state of Georgia has a foundation for administering care and providing resource for the disabled population. It is the hope of this study committee that this foundation can be built upon and updated to better serve those in need. Many of our sister states have already begun the transition to an Employment First culture, with varying degrees of success. Most have started the process by way of executive order, followed by legislation, and a transition period. Although there will never be a one-size-fits-all solution for providing educational and employment opportunities, it is imperative that analysis is done on the current resources our state provides in supporting its disabled citizens. This committee finds prudence in learning from what other states have experienced and through applying their successes.

House Study Committee on Postsecondary Education and
Employment Options for Individuals with Intellectual and
Developmental Disabilities

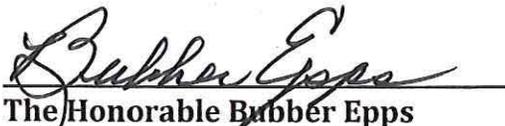
Signatures:



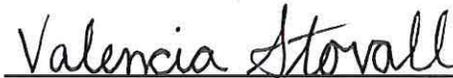
The Honorable Katie M. Dempsey
Chair
State Representative, District 13



The Honorable Amy Carter
State Representative, District 175



The Honorable Bubber Epps
State Representative, District 144



The Honorable Valencia Stovall
State Representative, District 74



The Honorable Bill Werkheiser
State Representative, District 157

Appendix A:

Opening Remarks from Employment First Georgia and the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities

September 10, 2015

D'ARCY: Good afternoon, Madame Chair and Committee Members. I'm D'Arcy Robb with Employment First Georgia. Employment First Georgia is a diverse coalition of members who believe that all people have abilities that can be put to valuable use in the workforce.

DAWN: And I'm Dawn Alford, the Public Policy Director with the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities. GCDD works to promote positive social and policy change in Georgia for people with disabilities and their families. We wanted to present to you together today because the two of us are leading the advocacy efforts around a major employment initiative and a major educational initiative for people with disabilities here in Georgia.

D'ARCY: We thought the best way to show you the changes we want to see for people with disabilities would literally be to show you those changes. That's why we worked with the artist and advocate Brittany Curry who created these drawings. This first panel shows the state of our current disability service system and the kind of world it creates for people with disabilities and their families.

DAWN: So the first drawing - this was inspired by a mother we met who said that navigating Georgia's disability service system, felt like hacking through the jungle all by herself with a machete. These isolated towers in the jungle - this is the state of our current disability service system. You've got four separate agencies - the Department of Education, the Department of Community Health, Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities, and the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency. They all serve people with disabilities and their families.

D'ARCY: But every agency's got their separate agenda. Every agency's got their separate goals - their separate data systems and separate funding streams and separate way of doing things. And something we think should be absolutely critical is supporting people with disabilities to get jobs - but that is not a high priority at most of our state agencies. The reality is they tend to get so focused on their own separate towers that these agencies don't work together nearly as much as they should.

DAWN: If you take a look over here at how that translates into real life - you see that despite our ivory tower issues we do have some good pieces to build on. One piece we've got that has been a game changer for this generation of young people is IDEA - the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Because of IDEA, the standard is that all children with disabilities get to go to school. Children who were once thought incapable of learning are defying all expectations.

D'ARCY: The problem is once you're out of high school, your IDEA support is over. People call this "falling off the IDEA cliff" - you can see it right here. This happens because we don't have a standard expectation or a standard support system for people with disabilities once they're out of high school. People have to navigate these multiple state agency systems. Many of those state agencies have waiting lists for their services. So what happens is a lot of people leave high school - fall off this cliff - and end up with nothing.

DAWN: These are the couch kids. A lot of people with a lot of promise finish high school - and they wind up on their parents' couch. Not only is that frustrating and lonely and a waste of their abilities - but it's extremely hard on the whole family. Our cartoon character here is a mother saying

something that I've heard many parents say - "I need my job but I can't just leave my child sitting on the couch all day long." This is a very real choice that many Georgia families face. You have families that go into extreme economic hardship because a parent feels they have no choice but to leave their job. You have families where the parents scramble as hard as they can to find some worthwhile thing for their child to do each day.

D'ARCY: We also have quite a few Georgians with disabilities who wind up in nursing home facilities. And I'm not talking about older folks - in the state of Georgia we have young adults and even teenagers with disabilities who live in nursing home facilities. That's horribly depressing for them and extremely expensive for the state.

DAWN: We even have some Georgians with disabilities who fall off the IDEA cliff and end up in jail. Sometimes that's directly related to not getting the treatment they need - sometimes it's because they've been set up as a fall guy - sometimes it's because they made a poor choice. This is a horrible outcome for these folks and their families and it's a huge drain on our public dollars. And we are vulnerable to this happening - people on couches, in nursing home facilities, and in jail - because once they are out of high school, we really don't do much to help people who could succeed with a little support.

D'ARCY: Now you do have some of the folks who fall off the IDEA cliff that land on a ledge. Some folks with intellectual or developmental disabilities go to day programs or sheltered workshops. Day programs are basically day care for adults with disabilities. And sheltered workshops are facilities where people with disabilities do repetitive work for subminimum wage. But programs like those are not the solution. Because if you talk to young people coming out of school, they want a career, they don't want to go to day care or fix widgets for the rest of their lives. And many people who are already in these types of programs are bored. They're certainly not earning a living - and they are curious to get out and be part of the broader world. Unfortunately right now, in our state system, we pay providers more to put someone in a day program or a sheltered workshop than we do to help them find and maintain a real job. Providers can earn \$7,000 dollars more a year for having a person in adult day care - than they do for supporting someone to have a real job. That's especially backwards because the state saves money when someone leaves a non-work program and gets a job.

DAWN: So we've got all these folks who fall off the cliff or land on the ledge - but there are a few lucky souls who make it to the other side of the IDEA cliff. They're able to build a good life after high school. They wind up seeking advanced education or building a career like any other young person.

D'ARCY: It would be easy to assume that these ones who make it to the other side must be the best or the brightest young people with disabilities. But that's not the case. The people who make it to the other side are the lucky ones. They have really dedicated, strong advocates in their lives who help them get across the pit. In our illustration here, one "super advocate" says, "We will support you however we can! Let's figure out what comes next. More education, an internship, a job?" And our young man they're supporting says, "This is awesome! I wish all kids with disabilities got to do this stuff." Then the other super advocate says, "I wish they did too. But there are not enough of us to fill the gap and too many fall off."

DAWN: Exactly what you need depends on the person - but it CAN be done - for virtually every person, with virtually every disability. During these committee meetings you're going to meet some of these folks who show that is possible for virtually everyone to have meaningful employment. And having that meaningful employment is so good for people - just like any of us, it makes a person happier and healthier. It gives them a purpose and a sense of pride and a paycheck. It's also a better use of taxpayer dollars than programs like adult day care and sheltered workshops and other non-

work programs out there for people with disabilities. In the study that D'Arcy alluded to earlier, it was found that the state of Georgia saves an average of \$260 per person per month when a person with intellectual or developmental disabilities gets vocational rehabilitation services to help them work. That's because when people work, they become taxpayers - and they don't need as many other non-work services from the state.

D'ARCY: You all have got Jennifer Briggs here today. Her agency supports folks all over the north half of Georgia and she can really tell you how the rubber meets the road, how you help a person find and build a meaningful career and what consequences it has for that person & their family & their employer too. So that is a huge bright spot for us - we have a handful of providers here in Georgia that do a really good job supporting people to go to work.

DAWN: Something else we're doing well in Georgia is inclusive post-secondary education. Inclusive post-secondary education opens up the world of higher education to students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Thanks to support from you all in the General Assembly we've been able to grow the number of inclusive post-secondary programs in Georgia from 1 to 4. And that is a huge success - because we've got the stories and the data to show that students who receive inclusive post-secondary education have much better employment outcomes than their peers who don't get that inclusive post-secondary education. IPSE is definitely another of our big bright spots.

D'ARCY: So in the Georgia we've got now - we get good outcomes for a lucky minority of people. Our challenge is to take the good things system wide.

DAWN: Here's the change we want. We to make Georgia an Employment First state. Employment First means we affirm that working and building a career is the best way for people with disabilities to spend their days, and we make it the first choice explored for all working age Georgians with disabilities. That includes all people with disabilities: those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, people with physical disabilities, people with mental health disabilities, and people with the most significant disabilities.

D'ARCY: In an Employment First Georgia it will be the norm for people with disabilities to go to work and build their careers. We envision state agencies sharing this goal - sharing data and braiding funds and working together to make employment a top priority for all working-age people with disabilities. Right now, it is not. Right now, people are told they can go to day programs or nursing home facilities before anyone has even considered whether that person would like to have a career. We want to change that. In ten years, we want Georgia to look like this.

DAWN: In an Employment First Georgia, there is no more IDEA cliff. Students with disabilities do what everyone else does - they transition from school into their career. While students with disabilities are in school, we encourage them all to dream about their careers. They get help planning their careers. And once they're out of school, we see to it that available funds and resources go to supporting them to build these careers.

D'ARCY: Part of building an Employment First Georgia is going to involve expanding inclusive post-secondary education - higher education for students with intellectual or developmental disabilities. Even with our recent addition of more programs, our programs are getting far more applications than they have available spaces. And inclusive post-secondary education is strongly linked to better employment outcomes. 57% of our IPSE grads here in Georgia are working, and another 21% are continuing their education.

That's especially impressive when you compare it with other employment numbers for people with disabilities. If you look at the Georgians with intellectual or developmental disabilities that receive state services like the NOW or COMP waiver - only 14% are working or training to enter the workforce. But it doesn't have to be that way. Washington State was the first state in the country to

adopt an Employment First policy. Today, if you look at their folks with intellectual or developmental disabilities receiving state services - 87% of them are working or training to enter the workforce. That's the power of a good Employment First system.

DAWN: As you can see, the path to employment is going to depend on the person. In this example, a person with a physical disability might need a personal assistant to help them get up and get ready for class in a traditional college program every morning. Later, they might need that personal assistant to help them get up and get ready for their job every day. But the outcome - is this person has a college education. They have a job. They have a career, they're a taxpayer, and they're not sitting at home or worse, sitting in a nursing facility all day long. In an Employment First Georgia, having a career will be the new normal.

Right now - I can tell you I am one of very few people with a significant physical disability in Georgia who has been able to take the working path. Even now, many barriers exist that make my maintaining employment extremely difficult. We want to create an Employment First culture in Georgia that would significantly remove those barriers to employment for individuals like myself and others who have disabilities yet want to be employed.

D'ARCY: Another person's path might involve inclusive post-secondary education - and then an internship - and then a job. And here we've got someone who needs behavioral support - then they're able to try out various jobs doing job sampling - and then they start their own business. The paths are endless, but the goal is the same - for each person to build a career that challenges and satisfies them.

DAWN: We also believe that in an Employment First Georgia, to the best of our ability, we've got to give everyone a chance at work. A lot of people who are already out of school and a lot of older folks have talked to us about how much they want to work. In an Employment First Georgia, we go to people who are already in the system and not working, and we look at their talents and skills. We take a fresh look to see how they can contribute, and we try to transition their services to re-center them around employment.

D'ARCY: We've got an example here of a person in a sheltered workshop. That person attends community college and discovers a passion for painting. They get some real canvases and start to sell their work. Along the way they also discover a gift for teaching and start sharing their knowledge of art with others. All of a sudden, we've got a person who doesn't need or want to spend all day, every day in day care for people with disabilities.

DAWN: This path is based on a true story of a man who spent two years in a sheltered workshop learning how to use a shredder. No one thought he could work. But one day he was taken to a modern art museum and he got so excited just being there, some employment folks thought to put a paintbrush in his hand. That gentleman now creates and sells his own artwork.

D'ARCY: I want to close by sharing one other story with you - one of my favorite employment stories - about a young man named Marvin. Marvin had significant disabilities and very limited verbal skills. And Marvin was also an amazing gardener. He got a micro grant and expanded his garden - and he started his business called Marvin's Mushrooms. He sells his produce to restaurants and farmer's markets.

That's what Employment First is all about. It's about changing the way we look at and the way we treat people with disabilities - so that rather than seeing them as people who need to be taken care of - we're looking for their talents and interests - and then we help them put those talents and interests to work.

DAWN: We want you to know that if it meets the needs of the committee, we have various sites around the state that have volunteered to host your future meetings. Shaw Industries in Dalton is

an excellent employer of people with disabilities, and so is the City of Tifton in southwest Georgia. They have both volunteered to hold meetings. Also our inclusive post-secondary programs at Kennesaw State University and East Georgia State University in Statesboro have both volunteered to host meetings as well.

We thank you so much for your interest in our community and in these issues - we are so excited to work with you on Employment First and inclusive post-secondary education and please know we'll do anything we can to support you and to support these efforts. We're happy to take any questions.

D'Arcy Robb,

Employment First Georgia Coordinator

darcy.t.robb@gmail.com

Dawn Alford,

Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD)

Public Policy Director

dawngcdd@gmail.com

For a link to photos of this first meeting, go the link below (Photos courtesy of Ryan Johnson, Center for Leadership in Disability at Georgia State University):

<https://www.flickr.com/gp/92258201@N05/442E18>

Appendix B:

Closing Remarks from Employment First Georgia and the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities



Recommendations For HR 642 Study Committee

1. **Sponsor Employment First legislation for the 2016 legislative session.** Such legislation will need to contain:
 - Clear definitions of Employment First, competitive employment and integrated setting. We suggest:

Employment First: It is declared to be the policy of this State that competitive employment in an integrated setting shall be considered its first and priority option when offering or providing services to persons with disabilities who are of working age. All state agencies that provide services and support to persons with disabilities shall follow this policy and ensure that it is effectively implemented in their programs and services.

“Competitive employment” means work in the competitive labor market performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting and for which a person with a disability is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by persons without disabilities; or self-employment.

“Integrated setting” means with respect to an employment outcome, a setting typically found in the community in which persons with disabilities interact with persons without disabilities, other than persons without disabilities who are providing services to those persons with disabilities, to the same extent that persons without disabilities in comparable positions interact with other persons.

- Declaration that Georgia is an Employment First state for all working-age people with disabilities, with a mandate that state agencies work together towards this end and restructure their services and policies to support the goal of Employment First
 - Creation of the Employment First Council, an independent group of members from across Georgia and across the disability community, whose task will be to advise and drive Georgia’s ongoing transformation to an Employment First culture
 - Establishment of a modest budget to provide the Employment First Council with staff, who will be tasked with carrying out the necessary policy research and daily tasks necessary to facilitate Georgia’s transition to an Employment First state, as determined by the Employment First Council
 - Provisions for the Employment First Council to support the governor and state legislature in carrying out the Employment First transition process, such as: having an official role in state agency budgeting processes; providing the governor’s office with budget recommendations; providing legislative recommendations.
2. **Create a mechanism to enable state-supported scholarships for inclusive post secondary students.** We suggest a “HOPE mirror” program – the establishment of a scholarship to mirror the structure and funding of HOPE for inclusive post-secondary students, since these students do not qualify for HOPE or for most other scholarships.
 3. **Double Georgia’s investment in inclusive post-secondary education.** This would be an increase from the current \$200,000 to \$400,000 annually. The additional \$200,000 would include match dollars for a large grant that will support ten programs across the state, as well as sustainability funds for Columbus State University, additional money for scholarships and feasibility studies.

Current: \$50,000/Academy at Kennesaw State

\$50,000/CHOICES at East Georgia State

\$50,000/IPA at Georgia Tech

\$10,000/GOALS at Columbus State University (through the inclusive post secondary consortium)

\$10,000/Destination Dawgs at UGA (through the consortium)

\$25,000/scholarships

\$5,000/consortium

Additional: \$40,000/GOALS at Columbus State University to bring them up to the \$50,000 level

\$125,000/startup grant match money

\$25,000/scholarships

\$10,000/new feasibility studies

4. **Review Georgia's high school diploma structure.** Evaluate alternatives that would make it possible for all Georgia high school students with disabilities who complete their IEP coursework to leave high school with a meaningful diploma.

For further information:

Dawn Alford, Public Policy Director, Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities
404-805-9741, dawnqcdd@gmail.com

D'Arcy Robb, Coordinator, Employment First Georgia
404-955-8558, darcy.t.robb@gmail.com