

October 2025

# Exceptional Education

*'Excited to be Exceptional'*



## IN THIS EDITION

Partnering for Success  
Meet the Parent Mentors  
Family Resources  
SEL Connection  
Sphere of Support

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## Partnering for Exceptional Success

Dear Families,

As we step into October, we celebrate this season of growth and new beginnings. October also marks the midpoint of the semester—a time to reflect on how far our students have come and to set goals for continued progress. Our focus remains on building strong partnerships with you to ensure every child receives the support they need to thrive.

As we move forward, please keep these reminders in mind to help us support your child's success:

- **Consistent attendance** helps students stay engaged and on track.
- **Regular communication** with teachers ensures strong home-school collaboration.
- **Reviewing IEP goals and progress** allows us to celebrate achievements and adjust supports as needed.
- **Staying involved in school activities and meetings** builds a strong support network for your child.

Together, we can make the remainder of the school year a time of growth, success, and celebration for every student.

# Meet Our Parent Mentors

Our Parent Mentors provide guidance, encouragement, and resources to families of students with special needs, helping them navigate the educational process and strengthen the home-school partnership

## Alicia Morris



I am committed to creating a positive, inclusive environment where every student and family feels supported. As a parent mentor, I use engaging approaches to empower students with the skills and confidence to thrive in school and beyond. With an Associate's Degree in Health Science Education and experience advocating for families of children with learning and medical disabilities since 2022, I am passionate about strengthening connections between parents, schools, and the community.

## Arkishya Anderson



I was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia. I am an Atlanta Public School graduate of the former Southside High School, now known as Maynard Jackson High School. I am also a graduate of Atlanta Technical College, where I received a degree in Early Childhood Care and Education. Being a proud Parent Mentor, I have progressed into my second year of supporting families of exceptional students.

## From One Parent to Another

The "Parent to Parent" section highlights tips and strategies from families to help strengthen communication, collaboration, and connection between home and school.

### Building Stronger Home to School Connections This Fall

#### Supporting Learning at Home

- Create a study spot** – Set aside a quiet, consistent place for homework and reading.
- Establish routines** – Set regular times for homework, reading, meals, and bedtime.
- Encourage reading** – Read together or let your child choose books that interest them.
- Limit distractions** – Reduce screen time during homework hours.
- Celebrate effort** – Praise persistence, not just grades.

**NEW!**

## Exceptional Family Toolkit

Supporting our families is at the heart of Exceptional Education. The Exceptional Family Toolkit is a new feature designed to connect you with valuable information, helpful tips, and community resources that empower you to support your child's learning and growth. Each month, we'll feature tools and resources designed to help families engage in their child's education with confidence and connection.



**Talk it Out**

YOUR VOICE. YOUR SPACE. ANY TIME. ANY PLACE.

A 100% Confidential Mental Health Crisis Text Line,  
Staffed by Licensed Clinicians, and Available 24/7.

  
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The Atlanta Public Schools (APS) "Talk It Out" program is a free, confidential text line for students in grades 6-12 to connect with licensed mental health counselors 24/7 for support with stress, anxiety, or other challenges.



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APS Student and  
Family Support Hub

# Free Groceries

for APS Families

**EVERY  
MONTH  
AT THE  
APS HUB!**



## APS Monthly Food Distribution

Drive up on the last Monday of each month between 10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (or until the food runs out) to receive free groceries. Volunteers will assist with distribution.

**601 Thomas Cole Jr. Way, SW  
Atlanta, GA 30314**

For questions, send an email to Mr. Keith Glass, Jr.,  
Community Affairs Program Director at  
[Keith.Glass2@atlanta.k12.ga.us](mailto:Keith.Glass2@atlanta.k12.ga.us)

**• DRIVE •**

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[www.atlantapublicschools.us/APSHub](http://www.atlantapublicschools.us/APSHub)

**PAPER**



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## Follow these steps to log in:

- 1 Scan the code or visit [app.paper.co](https://app.paper.co)
- 2 Type in your school name Sign in
- 3 with MyBackpack

Login directions:



Log in via mobile:



# SPHERE OF SUPPORT

The **Exceptional Education Department** is a team of dedicated individuals providing multi-tiered sphere of support to meet the unique needs of every student and family. Below is a list of team members that are dedicated to support parents and students by providing guidance, resources and assistance to ensure academic and personal success.

## Teacher/Case Manager

- Provides quality instruction
- Tracks the progress of students with special needs
- Ensures IEPs are executed properly with implementation of Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)
- Maintains communication with families and educators

## Exceptional Education Lead Teacher (EELTs)

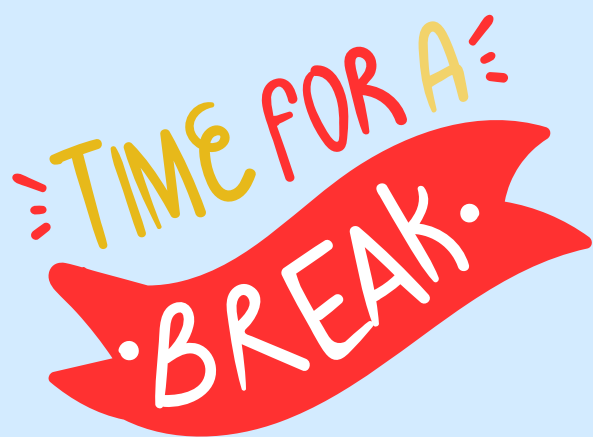
- Ensures the implementation of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)
- Implements Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)
- Adheres to compliance timelines
- Supports classroom teachers
- Serves as mentors and provides instructional strategies to improve student outcomes

## Cluster Coordinator

- Serves as liaison between schools and the district
- Provides professional learning opportunities
- Ensures that the school complies with special education laws and guidelines
- Coordinates resources and support for students and collaborates with all stakeholders

## Program Coordinator

- Focuses on overseeing district-wide programs
- Develops curricula
- Assesses program effectiveness across multiple schools
- Provides professional learning opportunities for staff



## Fall Break is just around the corner!

From October 13<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup>, students will enjoy a well-deserved week away from school. We encourage families to take this time to relax, recharge, and spend quality time together.

As you enjoy the break, remember to keep a few simple routines in place, encourage your child to read or explore new interests, and make time for rest and connection. We look forward to welcoming our students back refreshed and ready to learn!



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SOCIAL  
EMOTIONAL  
LEARNING

# S.E.L. @HOME

## OCTOBER 2025



### SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING THEME

*Diversity and Acceptance: We show appreciation for diverse perspectives and experiences.*

### SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING COMPETENCY

*Social Awareness: We appreciate how people are both different and similar. We work hard to show respect and consider the interests, feelings and perspectives of others. We pay attention to how our words and actions affect those around us. We care about the world we create together. We are mindful.*

### VIDEO



### CAREGIVER SEL TIP

*Hover over the QR code to access the resource.*

Model kindness and respect in your daily interactions with your scholar because young people learn social awareness by watching how you treat others.

### WELLNESS

Encourage your scholar's social awareness by talking about feelings and helping them practice empathy in everyday situations.

## WAYS TO INCREASE SOCIAL AWARENESS

#### ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

**Feelings Check-In:** At dinner or bedtime, take turns sharing "a good feeling" and "a tough feeling" from the day to build empathy and perspective-taking.

**Storytime Reflection:** After reading a book, ask your child how different characters might feel and why, encouraging them to see multiple viewpoints.

#### MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

**Current Events Conversation:** Read or watch a news story together and discuss how different people or groups might feel about the issue.

**Role Reversal:** Switch roles in a pretend scenario (parent as the child, child as the parent/teacher/friend) to practice perspective-taking.

#### HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

**TV Show/Book/Social Media Reflection:** After watching a show, reel, or reading a book, talk about the character's choices and how their actions impacted others.

**Debate Different Perspectives:** Choose a real-world issue and explore it from multiple sides, encouraging respectful discussion even if you disagree.

### CONNECTION QUESTIONS

*Ask these questions to build a stronger connection with your scholar.*

- How do you help others?
- How do you learn about people's cultures and traditions?
- How do you think people feel when you encourage them?
- If you could change one thing about the world, what would it be and why?
- Name an adult you can count on. What makes them reliable?
- What current event concerns you?

**Connect with us on Twitter (X) @SEL\_APS.**