



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

October 4, 2023

The Honorable Richard Woods
State School Superintendent
Georgia Department of Education
205 Jesse Hill, Jr. Drive, SE
Atlanta, GA 30334

Dear Superintendent Woods:

I am writing in response to Georgia's request to the U.S. Department of Education (Department) to amend its approved consolidated State plan under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). Georgia first submitted its request on February 1, 2023, and submitted revised versions on June 30 and September 5, 2023. Prior to implementing any revisions to its approved consolidated State plan, a State must submit its proposed amendments to the Department for review and approval.

I have determined that the amendment request meets ESEA requirements; accordingly, I am approving Georgia's amended State plan. A summary of Georgia's amendment is enclosed. This letter, as well as Georgia's revised ESEA consolidated State plan, will be posted on the Department's website. Any further requests to amend Georgia's ESEA consolidated State plan must be submitted to the Department for review and approval. Please be aware that approval of this amendment is not a determination that all the information and data included in the amended State plan comply with Federal civil rights requirements, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. It is Georgia's responsibility to comply with these civil rights requirements.

Thank you for the work the Georgia Department of Education has invested in its consolidated State plan under the ESEA. If you need any assistance regarding its implementation, please contact the Office of School Support and Accountability at: OESE.TitleI-a@ed.gov.

Sincerely,

Adam Schott
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Programs
Delegated the Authority to Perform the
Functions and Duties of the Assistant Secretary
Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

400 MARYLAND AVE., SW, WASHINGTON, DC 20202

<http://www.ed.gov/>

The Department of Education's mission is to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.

Page 2 – Honorable Richard Woods

Enclosure

cc: Matt Jones, Chief of Staff
Allison Timberlake, Deputy Superintendent

Amendment to the Georgia Consolidated State Plan

The following is a summary of Georgia’s amendment request. Please refer to the Department’s website <https://oese.ed.gov/offices/office-of-formula-grants/school-support-and-accountability/essa-consolidated-state-plans/> for Georgia’s complete consolidated State plan.

Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies

- *Eighth Grade Math Exception*
The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) amended its consolidated State plan to no longer exempt an eighth grade student who takes the high school mathematics course associated with the end-of-course assessment from the mathematics assessment typically administered in eighth grade under ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I)(aa) given changes to the assessments that are offered in the State and the fact that the State no longer has a more-advanced assessment for the student to take when in high school. As a result, such students will take the eighth grade assessment in addition to the high school end-of-course assessment and the State will bank the result of the high school assessment until the student is in high school.
- *Academic Achievement Long Term Goals*
GaDOE changed its long-term goal from 100 percent to 90 percent proficient and adjusted its school-level measurements of interim progress accordingly (i.e., from 3 percent of the gap between the baseline and 100 percent to 3 percent of the gap between the baseline and 90 percent).
- *Graduation Rate Long-term Goals*
GaDOE changed its long-term graduation rate goal to 90 percent from 100 percent and adjusted its school-level measurements of interim progress accordingly (i.e., from 3 percent of the gap between the baseline and 100 percent to 3 percent of the gap between the baseline and 90 percent).
- *Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency Long Term Goal*
GaDOE changed its long-term goal for English learners making progress toward achieving English language proficiency to 90 percent from 100 percent and modified its measurements of interim progress for each grade span accordingly (i.e., from 3 percent of the gap between the baseline and 100 percent to 3 percent of the gap between the baseline and 90 percent).
- *Academic Achievement Indicator*
GaDOE clarified that it will not calculate progress on its reading/language arts (R/LA) assessment for high schools in the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years due to pandemic-related data limitations pertaining to the prior year score.
- *Other Academic Indicator for Elementary and Secondary Schools that are not High Schools*
GaDOE clarified how it will measure progress in R/LA and mathematics for students participating in the Georgia Alternate Assessment (2.0). A student who maintains performance earns one point; a student who increases a performance level earns 1.5 points, and a student who declines by one level receives 0.5 points. In addition, GaDOE clarified

how it will award points for students who are already scoring at the highest performance level on the general assessment.

GaDOE also modified its calculation for its Closing Gaps measure to require all student subgroups to improve achievement by 3 percent. Previously, economically disadvantaged students, English learners, and students with disabilities were required to improve achievement by six percentage points in order to receive full points in the measure. GaDOE also clarified that this measure will exclude mathematics results in 2023-2024 and R/LA results in 2025-2026 due to implementation of new standards and assessments in those years. GaDOE made the same change to its Closing Gaps School Quality or Student Success indicator for high schools.

Finally, GaDOE proposes to remove its social studies assessment from its Closing Gaps and Content Mastery measures for elementary schools because the State no longer administers this assessment.

- *School Quality or Student Success (SQSS) Indicators*

GaDOE uses multiple School Quality or Student Success (SQSS) indicators and updated a number of those indicators:

- GaDOE updated its Literacy indicator, which it now calls the “At or Above Grade-Level Reading” indicator, so that schools will earn points for each student who scores at or above grade-level (as determined by the State using a Lexile band based on the student’s scale score) on the Georgia Milestones or a level 3 or 4 on the Georgia Alternate Assessment in R/LA.
- GaDOE added the subject areas of career exploratory and computer science to its Beyond the Core SQSS indicator for elementary and middle schools.
- GaDOE also added Cambridge courses to its Accelerated Enrollment indicator for high schools.
- GaDOE updated its College and Career Readiness SQSS indicator to include military readiness as measured by the ASVAB.
- Finally, beginning in fall 2024, GaDOE will now award 1.5 points for students who complete a career, technical, and agricultural education (CTAE) pathway in a high-demand area, as determined by the State with business and industry partners, in its Pathways Completion SQSS indicator.

Note that once GaDOE has finalized its list of high-demand areas, it must update its ESEA consolidated State plan to include these for transparency to LEAs, schools, and the public.

- *Annual Meaningful Differentiation and Weighting*

GaDOE will continue utilizing the staged approach for annual meaningful differentiation that was approved as part of its COVID-19 State Plan Addendum. GaDOE will report the results of each individual indicator on its State and local report cards using a 100-point scale. Specifically, its staged approach will be implemented as follows for Title I elementary and middle schools:

- Stage 1: A school in the lowest 20 percent of Title I schools in Content Mastery (includes Academic Achievement indicator and science achievement) moves on to stage 2.

- Stage 2: A school in either the lowest 25 percent of Title I schools in Progress (includes student growth/Other Academic indicator and Progress in Achieving ELP indicator) OR in the lowest 10 percent of Title I schools in Closing Gaps moves on to stage 3.
- Stage 3: Schools with the lowest score on Readiness (combined SQSS indicator metric) will be identified as comprehensive support and improvement (CSI) until the State reaches its target number (5 percent of Title I schools).

For Title I high schools:

- Stage 1: Schools in the lowest 25 percent of Title I schools in Content Mastery (includes Academic Achievement indicator and science achievement) move on to stage 2.
 - Stage 2: Schools in either the lowest 40 percent of Title I schools in Progress (includes student growth and Progress in Achieving ELP indicator) OR in the lowest 10 percent of Title I schools in Closing Gaps move on to stage 3.
 - Stage 3: Schools in the lowest 50 percent in graduation rate move on to stage 4.
 - Stage 4: Schools with the lowest score on Readiness (combined SQSS indicator metric) identified as CSI until the State reaches its target number (5 percent of Title I high schools)
- *Frequency of Identification*
GaDOE clarified that it will identify schools for CSI and additional targeted support (ATSI) every three years.
 - *Targeted Support and Improvement due to Consistently Underperforming Subgroups (TSI)*
GaDOE modified its methodology for identifying schools for targeted support and improvement due to consistently underperforming subgroups. GaDOE will use its staged approach to identify any school that has one or more consistently underperforming subgroups. Specifically, based on subgroup performance, for elementary and middle schools:
 - Stage 1: Any school with one or more subgroups performing below the threshold associated with the lowest 20 percent of schools in Content Mastery (includes Academic Achievement indicator and science achievement).
 - Stage 2: Any school with one or more subgroups performing below either the threshold associated with the lowest 25 percent of schools in Progress (includes student growth/Other Academic indicator and Progress in Achieving ELP indicator) OR the threshold for the lowest 10 percent in Closing Gaps moves on to stage 3.
 - Stage 3: Any school with one or more subgroups performing below the threshold associated with the lowest performing 5 percent of schools on Readiness (combined SQSS indicator metric) will be identified for TSI.

For high schools, based on subgroup performance:

- Stage 1: Any school with one or more subgroups performing below the threshold associated with the lowest 25 percent of schools in Content Mastery (includes Academic Achievement indicator and science achievement).
- Stage 2: Any school with one or more subgroups performing either below the threshold associated with the lowest 40 percent of schools in Progress (includes student growth and Progress in Achieving ELP indicator) OR below the lowest 10 percent in Closing Gaps moves on to stage 3.

- Stage 3: Any school with one or more subgroups performing below the threshold associated with the lowest 50 percent of schools on graduation rate moves on to stage 4.
- Stage 4: Any school with one or more subgroups performing below the threshold associated with the lowest performing 5 percent of schools on Readiness (combined SQSS indicator metric) is identified for TSI.
- *Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI)*
GaDOE revised its methodology for identifying schools for ATSI to align with its revised methodology for identifying schools for CSI.
- *Additional Statewide Categories*
GaDOE will no longer identify additional statewide categories of schools.
- *Exit Criteria – CSI*
Consistent with its approved COVID-19 State Plan Addendum, GaDOE updated its CSI exit criteria for the lowest performing 5 percent of Title I schools to allow a school to exit if it no longer meets the identification criteria and demonstrate improvement in Content Mastery (overall), R/LA achievement, mathematics achievement, or science achievement from the year of identification to the current year. Each school will have three years to meet the exit criteria before implementing State-determined more rigorous action.
- *Exit Criteria – ATSI*
Consistent with its approved COVID-19 State Plan Addendum, GaDOE updated its ATSI exit criteria to allow a school to exit if it does not meet the identification criteria and demonstrates improvement in Content Mastery (overall), R/LA achievement, mathematics achievement, or science achievement for all identified student groups from the year of identification to the current year. In addition, Title I schools identified for ATSI schools will have six years to exit ATSI status before being identified as CSI schools.
- *Other Continued Support*
GaDOE updated its more rigorous actions for CSI schools that do not exit this status after three years to align with State law.