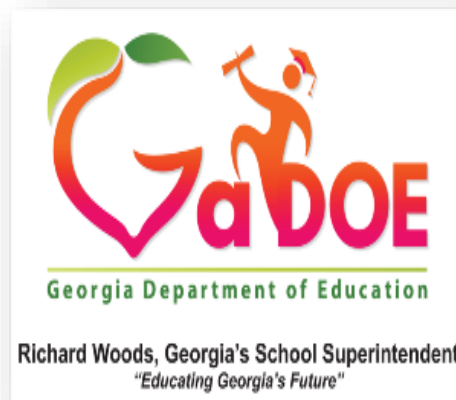


Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE)
Indicator 17: State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)



Submitted to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)

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Note – Redlined content denotes revision in sections previously submitted during Phase I.

Note – Blue text boxes include OSEP’s federal guidance used to guide this process.

Indicator 17: State Systemic Improvement Plan

Monitoring Priority: General Supervision

The State's SPP/APR includes a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) that meets the requirements set forth for this indicator.

Historical Data and Targets

Historical Data

<i>Baseline Year:</i>		FFY 2013
FFY	2013	2014
Target ≥		41.00%
Data	39.46%	59.35%

Key:  Gray – Data Prior to Baseline  Yellow – Baseline  Blue – Data Update

FFY 2014 – FFY 2018 Targets

FFY	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Target ≥	41.00%	60.5%	61.50%	63.00%	65.00%

Explanation of Changes

Georgia's State-identified Measurable Result (SIMR) is based on the Annual Event Graduation Rate for Students with Disabilities (SWD). During FFY 2014, Georgia experienced a significant increase in graduation for All Students and Students with Disabilities. Policy changes require that all students satisfy course requirements for graduation, earning a minimum of 23 credits in specific content areas but have eliminated the high stakes testing. March 30, 2015, Governor Nathan Deal signed [House Bill 91](#) into law, which states that students shall no longer be required to earn a passing score on any graduation tests to earn a high school diploma.

Georgia's baseline, representing fifty districts receiving intensive technical assistance, was 39.46%, which increased 19.89 percentage points to 59.35% in FFY 2014. Georgia met its FFY 2014 target while exceeding the FFY 2018 target, which required stakeholder engagement to reset the targets. The State did not establish new baseline because there were no changes in calculation for either the Cohort Graduation Rate or the Annual Event Graduation Rate. Georgia's revised targets demonstrate incremental increases because stakeholders do not anticipate statistically significant gains that are commensurate with the FFY 2014 data.

Georgia's graduation rate increased consistently for the 4-Year Adjusted Cohort Rate as compared to the Annual Event Graduation Rate. The FFY 2014 4-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate for Students with Disabilities increased by 17.8 percentage points (54.3%). The Cohort Graduation Rate for All Students increased by 6 percentage points, (78.5%).

Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

The Georgia Department of Education authentically engaged stakeholders to provide input for the targets and activities in the State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR): State Advisory Panel (SAP) for Special Education, Local Education Agencies (LEAs), Directors of Special Education, and Division staff and personnel from other Divisions at the Department. During Phase I of Georgia's State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), a diverse group of stakeholders assisted the State in analyzing trend data, examining State Infrastructure, selecting a State-identified Measurable Result for Children with Disabilities, and identifying Coherent Improvement Strategies. Ultimately, Georgia developed a Theory of Action that represented varied perspectives that incorporated a logical flow of overarching activities.

Georgia has chosen to brand its SSIP as "Student Success: Imagine the Possibilities!" A public webpage has been created for Georgia's SSIP to engage the public, share Technical Assistance Resources, and obtain ongoing feedback. The webpage is accessible by using the following link: [Georgia's Student Success Webpage](#). A SSIP Video was created to provide awareness for the work during Phase I. Georgia has convened a Stakeholder Engagement Committee that has been critical for the implementation of Phase I and will continue to support Georgia's efforts to implement and monitor all phases of the SSIP. Additional information concerning general stakeholder involvement can be found in the Introduction of the SPP/APR.

Numerous internal and external stakeholders supported Phase I of the SSIP process.

Intradepartmental Stakeholders: (1) Georgia State Board of Education; (2) Division for School Improvement; (3) Title I Part A; (4) Division for Curriculum and Instruction; (5) Division for Accountability and Assessment; (6) Division for Policy; (7) Division for Data Collections; (8) Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE); (9) School Counseling Program; (10) Division for Teacher/Leader Effectiveness; (11) Safe and Drug Free Schools; (12) Race to the Top; (13) Title III (English Speakers of Other Languages); (14) 619 Young Children Coordinator, and (15) Division for Special Education

External Stakeholders: (1) Institutions of Higher Education; (2) Georgia Learning Resources System (GLRS); (3) Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA); (4) Georgia's State Personnel Development Grant Leadership; (5) Georgia Parent Training Information Center (PTI); (6) Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency; (7) Special Education Parent Mentors; (8) Special Education Directors; (9) State Advisory Panel (SAP); (10) Special Education Teachers; (11) Part C: Babies Can't Wait Agency; (12) Governor Office of Student Achievement (GOSA); and (13) Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL)

In general, Georgia demonstrated a strong commitment to engage internal and external stakeholders during Phase I. Based on evidence, documentation, and feedback, the State rated its "Depth of Interaction" between the "Informing Level" (Sharing/Sending) and "Networking Level" (Exchanging) as measured by the IDEA Partnership Leading by Convening Rubric. Primarily, the engagement activities created a universal awareness of the State Systemic Improvement Plan requirement and other critical sources of evidence to clearly identify specific needs for student results. During the latter part of Phase I, the Depth of Interaction progressed to stronger networking practices and exchanges.

Table 1 summarizes a sampling of opportunities to authentically engage stakeholders during Phase 1. Initially the Stakeholder Committee reviewed robust data sources such as 618 Data, Annual Performance Report data, and demographic data for the "All Students" group and Students with Disabilities (SWD); they also reviewed disaggregated data to enable the State to identify targeted needs for specific students and LEAs.

Table 1: Georgia's Stakeholder Meetings

September 2013	The Georgia Department of Education, Division for Special Education, provided Technical Assistance (TA) to its Leadership Team. The Leadership Team outlined an action plan to clearly delineate “what,” “how,” “who,” and “by when.” During a preliminary planning step, the Leadership Team reviewed the federal expectations for the SSIP and other relevant documents: (1) Georgia’s State Determination Rubric; (2) State Performance Plan (SPP); (3) Annual Performance Report (APR); and (4) Special Education Demographic Data.
February 2014	The Division for Special Education Leadership Team engaged other staff members and personnel from the Georgia Learning Resource System (GLRS) in a collaborative meeting to provide awareness information about the SSIP and reviewed state-wide data trends.
March 2014	The Division for Special Education engaged a focus group of local special education directors to review state data and assist in making general analyses.
March 2014	The Division for Special Education shared data with the State Advisory Panel (SAP) in which the participants developed probing questions and discussed helpful analyses.
March 2014	The Division for Special Education engaged intradepartmental stakeholders by sharing general awareness of the SSIP and data trends.
May 2014	Stakeholder Committee assisted the State in reviewing broad data trends and identifying barriers.
May 2014	SAP received a SSIP update and provided stakeholder feedback.
July 2014	Stakeholder Committee assisted the State in reviewing a focused set of data and analyzing state capacity/infrastructure.
August 2014	GaDOE invited stakeholders to a Stakeholder Committee Meeting and obtained ongoing feedback that assisted the State in improving the quality of awareness and targeted data. Office for Special Education Programs (OSEP) Team visited the Department to provide targeted Technical Assistance (TA).
September 2014	SSIP Core Implementation Stakeholder Committee met to continue the planning process for the SSIP. Discreet variables were refined to conduct a focused data review for a targeted group of LEAs.
November 2014	SSIP Core Implementation Stakeholder Committee (e.g., Special Education, DECAL, School Improvement, Curriculum, and Data) met to continue the planning process for the SSIP.
November 2014	SAP received an update on the SSIP and provided stakeholder feedback.
January 2015	Stakeholder Committee reviewed focused sets of data. Discreet variables were made available for anonymous LEAs in which stakeholders were guided to prioritize LEAs who had the greatest opportunities to benefit from SSIP Intensive Technical Assistance (TA). Stakeholders were asked to consider: (1) SWD Size Group; (2) Geographical Region; (3) Current Initiatives and Capacity Efforts; (4) Accountability Designations and Resources; (5) Performance Data; and (6) Disproportionality. Stakeholders made recommendations for Coherent Improvement Strategies that would align with the data and barriers.
March 2015	Special Education Directors, along with other local leaders and teachers, attended the Spring Leadership Meeting to receive Technical Assistance (TA) around Georgia’s SSIP and provide stakeholder feedback on various topics.

The GaDOE has authentically engaged stakeholders in the development of Phase II of the State Systemic Improvement Plan. Using the Leading by Convening process, the Department has involved internal and external stakeholders in selecting districts to receive targeted and intensive supports, in identifying activities for each of the three improvement strategies outlined in the Phase I submission, and in designing the SSIP evaluation plan. The aforementioned internal and external participants consistently supported implementation of Phase II with a few additions and deletions. The State invited additional people to represent roles that were previously identified as stakeholder gaps during Phase I: (1) SSIP Evaluator, (2) Special Education Attorney/Advocate, (3) local superintendent, (4) local general/special education representatives, (5) local parent, (6) Family Connections Partnership, (7) Department of Family and Children Services, (8) special education/general

education teachers, and (9) local guidance counselor. Stakeholders who represented Georgia's Race to the Top were no longer available during Phase II based on the grant funding period.

Georgia, in partnership with Silvia DeRuvo (NCSI State Contact), convened a formal stakeholder meeting during November 2015 in which thirty-seven stakeholders attended the meeting and collaborated on the following topics: SSIP Updates, Curriculum and Other Policy Updates, Data Review, Phase II Requirements, Phase II Evaluation Plan and Next Steps. The facilitators provided stakeholders with guiding questions based on the selected topic areas and summarized the general feedback to further inform Phase II.

- Georgia's Student Success Updates: Primarily, the facilitator shared quick updates of the Phase I implementation. The State used stakeholders to target fifty districts to receive intensive technical assistance during Phase I; however, the technical assistance began during Phase II.
- Curriculum and Other Policy Updates: The facilitator provided a general overview of policy changes that directly impact the graduation rate. Georgia experienced a significant increase in the percent of Students with Disabilities who graduated with a general education diploma. The increase was commensurate with the improved graduation rate for all students. Stakeholders required additional insight of the policy changes and consideration of other barriers that should be addressed through policy.
- Data Review: Georgia's FFY 2014 data exceeded the FFY 2018 targets. The stakeholders agreed that Georgia should not reestablish baseline since the measurement construct had not changed. Stakeholders made suggestions to reset the targets for FFY 2015 and beyond.
- SSIP Phase II Requirements and Evaluation Plan: The facilitators shared clear expectations of the Phase II roll out and highlights of the SSIP evaluation plan. Stakeholders provided feedback that strengthened the evaluation plan such as specific questions and outcomes.
- Next Steps: Finally, stakeholders discussed the strengths and weaknesses of Georgia's Phase I, made recommendations for Phase II and shared additional feedback via an online evaluation link.

In addition to the formal stakeholder meeting, the State utilized other stakeholder engagement strategies.

- The State Director for Special Education participates on the State Superintendent's Executive Cabinet. Georgia developed a new state-wide strategic plan in which SSIP has been included. Also, Special Education participates in a cross-department collaborative meeting with other federal programs.
- The SSIP State Leadership Team represents diverse leadership across the Department along with several external stakeholders. The Leadership Team assumes the role of guiding the SSIP work, overseeing the development of state and regional infrastructure, and advising the State of necessary feedback.
- The SSIP State Implementation Teams provide critical feedback directly aligned with the state-identified barriers and local implementation of the SSIP.
- The State Special Education Director attends ongoing meetings with the RESA to encourage seamless alignment of resources and technical assistance.
- The GLRS Regional Teams (technical assistance providers) are critical stakeholders and often communicate the needs and barriers identified in the local districts.
- The Department hosts quarterly webinars for leadership teams (in the fifty districts) and GLRS Regional Teams to support infrastructure development, local implementation, and consistent communication.
- The SSIP Webpage allows any stakeholder to share ongoing feedback via a feedback document.
- The State Advisory Panel receives ongoing updates and provides invaluable feedback.
- A subset of the stakeholder committee convened to provide the SSIP Evaluator with specific guidance that strengthened the development of Georgia's evaluation plan.
- The State Special Education Director engages stakeholders using ongoing forums and conferences: Special Education Directors' Forum, Georgia Compensatory Educational Leaders (GCEL) Conference, Georgia Council of Administrators of Special Education (GCASE) Conference, Georgia Curriculum Directors' Conference, and Georgia School Counselors' Conference.

Overview

Georgia's State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) has been coined as **Student Success: Imagine the Possibilities**. Based on stakeholder engagement and review of data, the State identified three main barriers to student success that ultimately impacted school completion: (1) Access to the General Curriculum; (2) Access to Positive School Climate; and (3) Access to Specially Designed Instruction. More specifically, the State must improve capacity for local districts and schools to address various challenges around curriculum, instruction and climate. Why do local districts and schools struggle to expose students to effective instruction and engaging school climate? Stakeholders noted inconsistent, failing infrastructure as the root cause of the problem. The article, "[Addressing Dropout Related Factors at the Local Level: Recommendations for Administrators](#)" provided a framework by which local administrators should address school completion: (1) Efficient Infrastructure, (2) Effective Instruction, and (2) Engaging School Climate.

Local districts must be able to support implementation of evidence-based practices in their schools; however, district leadership teams must be able to select appropriate evidence-based practices and support these practices with efficient infrastructure. During Phase I, the Department utilized quantitative and qualitative data to clearly identify why these concerns were happening in local districts. District leadership teams required additional supports to engage critical stakeholders, analyze various data, and select evidence-based practices. State leadership from multiple federal programs noted similar concerns. Stakeholders strongly suggested that Georgia's SSIP address infrastructure development, as well as, the selection and implementation of evidence-based practices. Thus, the Student Success Process supports district/school infrastructure and the selection/implementation of evidence-based practices: (1) Engage stakeholders, (2) Examine local capacity and infrastructure, (3) Review strengths and weaknesses of the General Supervision System, (4) Analyze salient data trends, (5) Use the data to identify local barriers, and (6) Develop short-term and long-term actionable steps that will support local implementation of evidence-based practices. Georgia worked with the GLRS Regional Teams to develop and align resources to support local districts in implementing these steps. More importantly, a guidance document has been developed to clearly communicate expectations and ensure fidelity of implementation among districts.

Currently, Georgia's SSIP addresses two broad Coherent Improvement Strategies that will ultimately result in improved graduation outcomes for all students-including students with disabilities. **Georgia's Coherent Improvement Strategies were revised since the April 1, 2015** submission based on implementation progress and stakeholder feedback.

1. **Coherent Improvement Strategy One:** [Improve State and Regional Infrastructure](#) to better support districts to implement and scale up evidence-based practices that will improve graduation rates for all students-including SWD
2. **Coherent Improvement Strategy Two:** [Improve district infrastructure and implementation of evidence-based practices in fifty districts identified to receive intensive technical assistance](#) to improve effective instruction, engaging school climate, and transition

During Phase I, Georgia identified critical gaps in its infrastructure at the state, regional, district, and school levels that must be addressed to improve student success. More importantly, Georgia realized that the district-level infrastructure thrives within context of well-developed and aligned state and regional infrastructure. Phase I and part of Phase II have prioritized improving the state and regional infrastructure to better support district infrastructure during the latter part of Phase II. Additional information about the Coherent Improvement Strategies can be found in "Selection of Coherent Improvement Strategies."

Data Analysis

A description of how the State identified and analyzed key data, including data from SPP/APR indicators, 618 data collections, and other available data as applicable, to: (1) select the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities, and (2) identify root causes contributing to low performance. The description must include information about how the data were disaggregated by multiple variables (e.g., LEA, region, race/ethnicity, gender, disability category, placement, etc.). As part of its data analysis, the State should also consider compliance data and whether those data present potential barriers to improvement. In addition, if the State identifies any concerns about the quality of the data, the description must include how the State will address these concerns. Finally, if additional data are needed, the description should include the methods and timelines to collect and analyze the additional data.

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) has engaged internal and external stakeholders to provide awareness of the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) and review various sources of data necessary to implement Phase I. Georgia believes that its data system is of high quality and can be leveraged as strength for the SSIP work. The perception data supported more of a concern with data access and usage, which is an area in need of improvement. LEAs and schools have access to many different types of data sets that could inform local improvement efforts. However, local leaders communicated concerns with appropriate access and use of the data. In many instances, the data sets are available across multiple systems and require a general understanding of accountability constructs. The GaDOE has developed a Data Toolkit that will be used as technical assistance for the Coherent Improvement Strategy to build capacity in this area.

Another area of improvement relative to data is an analysis across multiple variables. During Phase I, Georgia was unable to disaggregate the data for variables by race, gender, disability and poverty. **During Phase II, stakeholders noted that Georgia's total student enrollment eligible for free/reduced lunch increased to 62%; however, total White students enrolled showed the largest discrepancy as compared to percent of White students who were economically disadvantaged. In contrast, percent of economically disadvantaged students represented a large majority for all other racial/ethnic groups.** While we may readily note that black SWD experience less positive outcomes with school completion, the State was unable to disaggregate the data by black males with disabilities as compared to black females with disabilities. Stakeholders' data analyses and feedback were paramount in clearly identifying barriers, analyzing current capacity and infrastructure, selecting the State-identified Measurable Result (SIMR), and developing appropriate Coherent Improvement Strategies. The varied perspectives provided an in-depth opportunity to create inclusive strategies to change outcomes for students. Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) has a nationally recognized partnership among various Federal Programs and Initiatives. As an example, the work of the SSIP will impact and improve outcomes for all students. Georgia's SSIP has been written into the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Wavier and aligns with the work of other federal programs; **SSIP will be embedded in the Every Student Succeed Act (ESSA), as well.** Stakeholders believe that this inclusion demonstrates a heightened commitment from the Department to share this work among programs and divisions.

Stakeholders began a broad data analysis by reviewing general demographic data for students. During FFY 2013, Georgia's total student enrollment was 1,723,439 to include 190,965 SWD depicting a disability incidence rate of 10.8%. The State of Georgia's demographic data have changed over the past 10 years because the White subgroup represented 49% of the FFY 2004 total enrollment and 43% of the FFY 2013 total enrollment; black students represented 38% of the FFY 2004 total enrollment and 37% of the FFY 2013 total enrollment. Other racial/ethnic groups have continued to increase such as the Hispanic population. The distribution of racial/ethnic groups represented in the total enrollment is commensurate with the distribution of

racial/ethnic groups represented in the special education enrollment. The percent of students eligible for free and reduced lunch has consistently increased from 47.88% in FFY 2004 to 62.16% in FFY 2013. Stakeholders discussed the unique barriers that directly correlate with high poverty and how pervasive those barriers are throughout the state. Based on FFY 2012 data, schools identified in the highest poverty quartile (23,000 teachers) demonstrated a 3.9 difference for the Mean Student Growth Percentile as compared to schools identified in the lowest poverty quartile (33,000 teachers). Essentially, students in schools with high poverty demonstrated less growth than students in schools with low poverty. Georgia's student enrollment showed a declining enrollment trend across grades. The FFY 2013 fall count identified 136,658 kindergarten students and 103,000 12th Grade students. Why might there be such a declining enrollment during later grades? The Stakeholder Committee hypothesized that this trend was the negative impact of Georgia's dropout rate.

Although Georgia has 200 Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), 74.1% of the State's SWD enrollment is in 21.9% of the LEAs. The 3-21 enrollment has increased from 177,070 (FFY 2009) to 190,965 (FFY 2013), and the composition of disability categories has changed overtime. Stakeholders noted decreases in Intellectual Disabilities (-1.86%), Emotional Behavioral Disorders (-2.97%) and Speech/Language Impairment (-2.44); yet, the change rate has increased for Autism (1.97%) and Significant Developmental Delay (2.44%). As a critical data point for stakeholders, Specific Learning Disabilities (33%), Other Health Impaired (15%) and Speech/Language Impairment (15%) represented the highest enrollment categories. There was a disaggregated review of disability categories by racial/ethnic groups and gender in which Other Health Impaired and Intellectual Disabilities demonstrated the greatest discrepancies. Approximately 10,000 black students were identified as OHI compared to approximately 15,000 White students. Stakeholders hypothesized that this finding could be an access issue based on the medical requirement outlined in the OHI Eligibility Rule. With increased poverty for specific racial/ethnic groups, did all students have access to health care and physicians to support eligibility in this area?

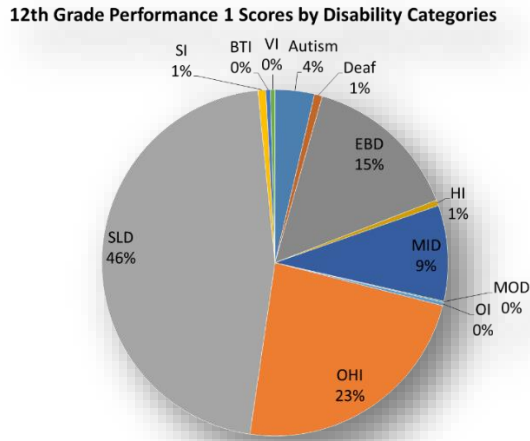
In the Intellectual Disability catchment, the discrepancy was observed for students identified as having a Mild Intellectual Disability (MID). For example, >5000 black students were identified as compared to approximately 2500 White students. In general, students with some type of Intellectual Disability made up 8.9% of the total SWD population and <1% of the total student enrollment. Poverty has increased for the Black Subgroup; unfortunately, these variables directly impact school readiness and acquisition of skills. Consequently, schools with high poverty may struggle to provide appropriate supplemental services and supports for all students thus complicating appropriate eligibility determination for students with a MID.

The preliminary demographic data review was critical for stakeholders because there was a hypothesis that SWD could demonstrate improved outcomes with the appropriate supports and high expectations. Based on perception data, often teachers, leaders, and communities are misinformed about the true nature of various disability categories. While the Intellectual Disability category is defined as students having "significant sub average intellectual functioning," there was an overgeneralization that all students with disabilities had a significant sub-average intellectual functioning. Stakeholders shared that the State should consider TA opportunities to help LEAs and communities better understand "adverse educational impact" and specially designed instruction (SDI). At the same time, Georgia believes that students with Intellectual Disabilities can and must experience improved outcomes too. Currently, the State has robust technical assistance and resources to support students with severe Intellectual Disabilities; however, additional assistance may be needed for students with MID.

With this understanding, stakeholders requested performance data disaggregated by disability categories to determine who the underperforming SWD were in the State of Georgia. Stakeholders reviewed FFY 2013 Performance 1 Scores (Not Meeting Standard) of 12th grade students by disability categories on accountability assessments. The top three disability categories with non-proficient scores were students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), Other Health Impaired (OHI), and Emotional/Behavioral Disorders (EBD). The distribution

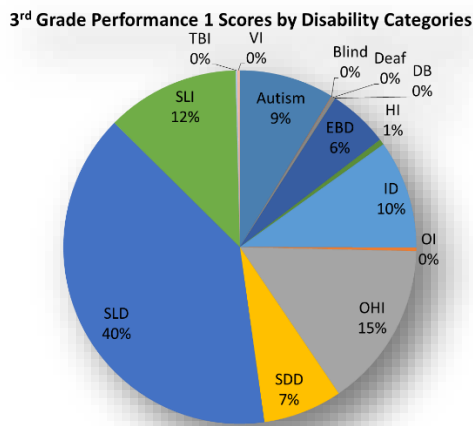
of disability categories had comparable similarities with Georgia’s special education enrollment since SLD and OHI were the highest enrollment categories.

Graph 1. FFY 2013 Performance 1 Scores by Disability Categories



Stakeholders requested additional data to determine how pervasive this pattern was for other grade levels. When considering similar data for 3rd Grade Students, stakeholders observed a similar pattern in which SLD and OHI had the highest percent (Not Meeting Standard); however, Speech/Language Impairment (SLI) represented the 3rd largest catchment. Why might these disability categories demonstrate such challenges with access to the curriculum? Perhaps in addition to the concerns with general curriculum, were these students receiving specially designed instruction? More often, students identified as SLD, OHI and SLI comprised a large percent of the students who received instruction in the general education class greater than 80% of the day.

Graph 2. FFY 2013 Performance 1 Scores by Disability Categories



During Phase II, the SSIP State Leadership Team invited external stakeholders to obtain additional information specific to specially designed instruction.

Table 2. Stakeholder Feedback about Special Designed Instruction

Stakeholder Feedback Questions	Summary of Findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Was there a consistent expectation for specially designed instruction? 	<p>Based on prior technical assistance, local districts had access to general guidance that supported a compliant explanation of special designed instruction. Georgia previously revised its General Supervision System and included this explanation in that guidance; yet, local districts required additional supports for implementation at the teacher and student levels.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What kinds of training/resources supported access to specially designed instruction at the local level? 	<p>Most of the resources supported a general framework for inclusion and specially designed instruction but lacked specific references for teacher-level implementation.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are students with disabilities who receive instruction in the general education environment less likely or more like to access effective specially designed instruction? 	<p>GLRS Regional Teams provide targeted supports for inclusion and co-teaching and shared qualitative feedback with the State. Specially designed instruction demonstrated consistent challenges in the general education environment and other restrictive environments. Interestingly enough, school teams that demonstrated highly effective co-teaching parity and other practices still required additional supports with specially designed instruction.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does this information correlate with the large percent of students with disabilities who receive instruction in the general education setting? 	<p>Stakeholders concluded that much of the co-teaching training and resources focused on adult variables such as scheduling and parity. A hypothesis was formed that an increased emphasis on student needs and specially designed instruction would be a logical next step.</p>

Stakeholders reviewed data from Georgia’s Formal Complaint Process to determine the most prevalent trends during FFY 2012 and FFY 2013. Considering the disability categories that demonstrated the greatest challenge with access to the curriculum, the Committee believed that these trends could help Georgia determine the negative impact of noncompliant practices. During FFY 2013, GaDOE made forty-eight findings across twenty-one LEAs. In summary, the most prevalent findings were about the development, review, and implementation of the IEP. The FFY 2012 Formal Complaint data demonstrated a similar trend but included the provision of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Georgia’s Formal Complaint Findings can be reviewed in Table 3 below. Stakeholders expressed concerns about the critical impact of these noncompliant practices on improved outcomes for students and suggested targeted technical assistance be included in the SSIP.

During Phase II, stakeholders revisited this information that validated local districts would benefit from additional resources and training specific to IEP development and implementation. The primary cause of this problem was the need for more supports on specially designed instruction. Local IEP teams required appropriate training to improve development and implementation of IEPs that appropriately addressed specially designed instruction.

Also, the State is piloting Georgia’s IEP Team Meeting Facilitation in four school districts. IEP Team Meeting Facilitation is an optional process, not required by the IDEA that state educational agencies (SEA) or school

districts may provide to parents and schools. A facilitated IEP Team meeting is the same as any other IEP Team meeting, except that a facilitator joins the meeting.

Table 3. Georgia’s Formal Complaint Findings

<i>FFY 2013 Formal Complaint Findings</i>	Number of Findings	<i>FFY 2012 Formal Complaint Findings</i>	Number of Findings
Implementation of the IEP	13	Implementation of the IEP	11
Development, review, and revision of the IEP	9	Development, review, and revision of the IEP	8
Evaluations and Reevaluations	7	Provision of a FAPE	4
IEP Team	4	Personnel, Facilities, & Caseloads	4
Procedural Safeguards Notice	3	Independent Educational Evaluation	3
Provision of a FAPE	2	Confidentiality	3
Child Find	2	Evaluations and Reevaluations	3
Prior notice by the public agency	1	Dispute Resolution	2
Confidentiality	1	IEP Team	2
Placements	1	Discipline Procedures	2
Discipline Procedures	1	Personnel Qualifications	1
Parent Participation	1	Determination of Eligibility	1
Enforceability of mediation agreement	1	Related Services	1
Personnel Qualifications	1	Implementation of the BIP	1
Amendment of records at parent’s request	1	Least Restrictive Environment	1
		Parent Participation	1
		Placements	1

The next critical step was to review demographic data to support who graduated with a general education diploma, and what percent of students dropped out of school. Considering Georgia's Four-Year Adjusted Graduation Cohort, the "All Students" group consistently improved overtime. While the SWD group made progress, the rate was not aggressive enough to significantly impact the performance gap in this area. During FFY 2013, 5,027 SWD graduated with a general education diploma, and 1,777 SWD graduated with a special education diploma-to include 1,108 males and 669 females. Males comprised almost twice the special education enrollment as compared to females. While the Black subgroup represented 55.9% of the Students with Disabilities who received a special education diploma, the Black subgroup represented 56.7% of the total enrollment that received a Certificate of Attendance. Black students with disabilities and without disabilities did not experience school completion with a general education diploma at a similar rate as the White subgroup.

Table 4. Four Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate Gap

	FFY 2013	FFY 2012	FFY 2011	FFY 2010
All Students	72.5%	71.50%	69.73%	67.50%
Students with Disabilities	36.5%	35%	35.18%	29.80%
Gap	36.0	36.5%	34.55%	37.70%

The dropout rate decreased for both groups; however, the gap between "All Students" and SWD remained the same for FFY 2011 and 2012. FFY 2013, Georgia's 9–12 dropout count for SWD was 3,579; however, the 7-12 dropout count for SWD was 3,944, which was a difference of 365 SWD. FFY 2013, Georgia's 9–12 dropout count for the "All Students" group was 19,561; however, the 7–12 dropout count was 21,986, which was a difference of 2,425 students. Over the course of four years, the "All Student" cumulative difference was 9,462 students. Why might so many students have dropped out during middle school years, and how has this barrier impacted positive outcomes for students?

Table 5. Dropout Gap

	FFY 2013	FFY 2012	FY 2011	FFY 2010
All Students	3.7%	3.6%	3.8%	3.7%
Students with Disabilities	5.9%	6.0%	6.2%	5.8%
Gap	2.2	2.4%	2.4%	2.1%

Georgia's FFY 2013 Retention Data showed 56,406 (total student enrollment) were retained with at least 33,119 students being retained in Grades 9 – 12. Males comprised 57.66% of retained students while Black students comprised 45.4%. Although there were notable negative trends for SWD, stakeholders noted that Georgia's Least Restrictive Environment data were 65% of SWD (Ages 6-21) receiving instruction in the regular education environment >80% of the day. Many SWD received instruction inside the regular classroom; yet, the general education environment did not have the presupposed positive impact on achievement. Was it the reality that receiving access to the general curriculum in the Least Restrictive Environment did not really benefit students? Or was the inclusive strategy being implemented with fidelity?

Stakeholders reviewed data for general education students who received interventions and supports-as demonstrated by Student Support Team (SST) data. During FFY 2013, a minimum of 48,636 students received Tier 3 (SST) supports at some point during the school year as represented in data submitted by a sampling of schools. In Georgia, the Tier 3 level represents individualized supports for at-risk students in which a formal team of educators, family and practitioners utilize the problem solving model to develop a targeted plan. The SST convenes on a regular basis, monitors progress and ensures that at-risk students benefit from evidence-based interventions and strategies. The distribution of racial/ethnic groups was commensurate with the state's total enrollment reflecting White Students (39%), Black Students (41%) and Hispanic Students (16%) as the highest enrolled. Males composed 60% of students who received SST; this trend aligned similarly with retention data and SWD enrollment.

GaDOE collected perception data via surveys and informal interviews. The perception data represented stakeholders' personal beliefs, feelings and actions and provided evidence to support concerns with implementation of tiered supports and interventions. LEAs did not always have a systematic infrastructure to meet the needs of administrators, teachers and students who required additional supports. The perception data were further supported by Georgia's review of LEAs to identify Disproportionality. During FFY 2012 and FFY

2013, the State identified 38 districts as having Disproportionality (Identification, Placement, and Discipline) that was the result of noncompliant policies, procedures, and practices. These noncompliant practices were directly related to insufficient or inappropriate pre-referral interventions and supports for students. In general, LEAs have barriers in providing access to the general curriculum for all students. Even when some students require additional supplemental supports and/or interventions, LEAs demonstrate inconsistent practices to enable access to prereferral interventions. As a consequence, some students might be referred to special education without the appropriate benefits of interventions and supports. These capacity issues impacted instruction and supports for all students.

How does this data relate to teacher effectiveness? Stakeholders requested state data for pilot implementation of the Teacher Keys for Effectiveness System to determine if the sampling state data would support current strengths and weaknesses. Georgia Statute requires that at least 50% of teachers' and leaders' evaluations include at least 50% student growth. The desired level of performance is Level III, and Level IV exceeds this expectation. Based on the FFY 2013 Teacher Assessment of Performance Standards (TAPs) data, as supported by administrators' observation, Differentiated Instruction and Academically Challenging Environment represented the lowest observed areas. How might the areas of low performance impact classroom instruction? Stakeholders noted that rigorous Tier 1 instruction is essential to the success of SWD demonstrating school readiness and school completion.

During FFY 2013, 97.9% of the teachers in Georgia's Race to the Top Schools received either a Level III or Level IV on the TAPs Evaluation Instrument. However, the same cohort of teachers demonstrated a slightly different distribution for Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM) scores that included Student Growth Measure because 72% of the teachers scored either a Level III or Level IV. Realizing the importance of teacher effectiveness on student outcomes, all students were not demonstrating anticipated growth based on Georgia's Growth Model. This data supported that teachers would require technical assistance to provide supplemental supports and rigorous Tier 1 instruction for all students.

Brief Descriptors for Lowest Performance Areas:

- Differentiated Instruction (e.g., provides remediation, enrichment and acceleration to further student understanding; uses flexible grouping strategies; diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment; demonstrates high learning expectations for all students)
- Academically Challenging Environment (e.g., maximizes instructional time, communicates high, but reasonable expectations for students learning, encourages students to explore new ideas, provides academic rigor and pushes students to achieve goals)

Based on Georgia's Preschool Outcomes data (young children with disabilities), stakeholders noted student growth and/or progress as an area of improvement: Social Emotional Skills, Acquisition of knowledge and Skills, and Taking Appropriate Action to Meet Needs. Out of the three outcome areas, Acquisition of Knowledge and Skills demonstrated the lowest performance for Summary Statement 2: The percent of children who were functioning within age expectations in each outcome by the time they exited the program. While 81% of the preschool children who entered the program below age expectations made substantial increase, only 36.7% of those students exited the preschool program within age expectations. Significant Developmental Delay (SDD) represents the fourth largest catchment (12%) for Georgia's special education enrollment. Many of these students, with the appropriate supports, can make substantial progress and achieve skills that are commensurate with age-appropriate peers.

Table 6. FFY 2013 Preschool Outcomes Data

Summary Statements	Social Emotional Skills	Acquiring and Using Knowledge and Skills	Taking Appropriate Action to Meet Needs
Summary Statement 1: Of those children who entered the program below age expectations in each outcome, the percent who substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program.	78.4%	81.0%	77.4%
Summary Statement 2: The percent of children who were functioning within age expectations in each outcome by the time they exited the program.	61.4%	36.7%	71.5%

Based on graduation and dropout trends, the stakeholders asked questions about the relationship among attendance, behavior, and course completion/competency for "All Students" and SWD. It was obvious that school completion was an area of concern for SWD; yet, stakeholders needed additional data to support barriers that would ultimately help Georgia to explain why this was happening. The attendance gap showed that the "All Students" group had a higher attendance rate than the SWD group in both catchments. In addition, SWD demonstrated more absences in the "More than 15 days absent" catchment possibly due to increased disciplinary removals-especially for black males with disabilities.

Table 7. Attendance Gap

	FFY 2013	FFY 2012	FFY 2011	FFY 2010
All Students				
6 to 15 Days Absent	31.1%	35.5%	31.20%	34.30%
More than 15 Days Absent	8.2%	9.6%	8.30%	8.80%
Students with Disabilities				
6 to 15 Days Absent	33.6%	37.20%	33.80%	35.50%
More than 15 Days Absent	12.1%	13.90%	12.30%	12.70%

Overall, the total disciplinary removals for SWDs decreased from 159,592 in FFY 2007 to 102,727 in FFY 2012; however, the disciplinary removals decreased at a disproportionate rate for Black SWD. After reviewing data for attendance and behavior, stakeholders considered possible correlations with achievement outcomes. The State examined performance outcome trends for Grades 3, 5, and 8 over a three-year period to identify areas of concern for reading and mathematics. In general, the "All Students" and SWD group performed significantly higher on the State's reading assessment than the mathematics assessment. The largest reading gap between the two groups was 9% for Grades 3 and 5; however, the largest mathematics gap was 23% for Grades 3 and 5.

During Phase II, the Department reviewed state data for the first implementation of the Georgia Milestone Assessment System (GMAS). The percent of all students and students with disabilities scoring proficient drastically declined for both reading and math. The GMAS was more rigorous than the previous assessments.

Table 8. Math and Reading/Language Arts Proficiency Percentages for All Students

	Percent of children with IEPs scoring Proficient for Math	Percent of children with IEPs scoring Proficient for Reading
Elementary/Middle	38.6%	38.2%
High School	33.2%	36.1%

Table 9. Math and Reading Proficiency Percentages for Students with Disabilities

	Percent of children with IEPs scoring Proficient for Math	Percent of children with IEPs scoring Proficient for Reading
Elementary/Middle	15.42%	16.77%
High School	11.07	12.28%

Stakeholders suggested a review of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) data in relationship to performance outcomes. Approximately, 65% of SWD were receiving instruction in the general education setting greater than 80% of the day for both reading and mathematics. Students with Mild Intellectual Disabilities demonstrated the greatest reading and mathematics performance gap as compared to the "All Students" group. This disability category received less instruction in the general education setting.

Stakeholders considered perception data such as a SSIP Parent Survey to assess parent perceptions for general curriculum, school climate, and student progress relative to the provision of special education services. A common thread throughout the survey data was the degree by which the schools engaged and communicated with families. The Department partnered with the Parent Training Information (PTI) Center of Georgia to administer the survey and report the data. To ensure proper access to the survey, there was collaboration with the Title One Family Engagement Specialist, Georgia's Parent Teacher Association and LEAs. 1,329 families responded to the survey; however, only 1,067 surveys identified themselves as families of children with disabilities. These families represented the following age groups: (1) 3-5 years old, 7.2%; (2) 6-10 years old, 35.1%; (3) 11-14 years old, 33.8%; (4) 15-18 years old, 23.9% and (5) 18-22 years old, 7.0%. In general, most surveyed areas obtained an approval rate (Strongly Agree or Agree) of at least 80% of the surveyed families. Interestingly enough, the two surveyed areas that did not meet this criterion were specific to progress and expectations for their students. The climate indicator demonstrated a disapproval rating of 15%. This posed concerns for stakeholders but spurred additional conversations around the effectiveness of school climate.

In addition to the SSIP Parent Survey, the State administered a SSIP Student Survey. The State administered surveys to five hundred seventy high school students with disabilities who were identified in need of additional strategies and/or interventions. Of the five hundred seventy SWD, four hundred fifty-two students identified themselves as having a disability. The survey was divided into three sections that had strong correlations with graduation: Instruction, Instructional Accommodations, and School Climate. Four hundred four students

stated either "Strongly Agree" or "Agree" that they were on track for graduation. This question was cross tabulated to other survey questions to analyze inconsistent responses or possible survey errors. Of the four hundred four students that believed they were on track for graduation, a small number, twenty-nine students, stated they were not receiving instruction in the general education setting and shared negative feedback about access to appropriate accommodations provided by teachers. Thirteen out of the four hundred four students were not clear of their progress toward graduation. Thirty of these students believed they were on track for graduation, yet, did not believe that the adults showed a belief that they could graduate. In general, the State found that students consistently responded to the survey questions. The biggest discrepancy was that fifty-four of the four hundred four students communicated that the school discipline policy was not fair. Stakeholders believed this data supported other concerns with school climate.

The perception data from families and students demonstrated consistently positive trends; however, the qualitative feedback did not always align with the quantitative data reviewed by stakeholders. Families and students communicated positive feedback despite the barriers and challenges to positive outcomes for students. The stakeholders determined that the State must consider strategies to clearly describe graduation readiness and create consistent transparency for students and families. Perhaps families' criteria for success and progress toward graduation differed from the state-level perspective. There would be a definite need to provide technical assistance for families and communities to address perceptions around school climate for SWD.

During Phase II, GaDOE collaborated with the Georgia Parent Training Information Center to develop school readiness and completion brochures that could inform families at the elementary, middle and high school levels. These brochures are currently being translated into other languages.

Georgia Health and Safety Survey provided stakeholders with perception data to support school climate for students with and without disabilities. 22.99% of students ranging from 6th through 12th grades (134,948 out of 587,043) answered "yes" they thought about dropping out of school. In addition to this question, surveyed participants were asked to identify the most likely reason for dropping out of school (e.g., bored, family reasons, being bullied, etc.), if this was a personal option. Interestingly, of the possible responses for dropping out, "bored" had the highest count! The stakeholders shared concerns about the large number of students that selected "Other" as a dropout reason, as well. The surveyed students provided perception data whether they liked school and felt successful at school. 75.71% responded either "strongly agree" or "somewhat agree" that they liked school, and 86.83% felt successful at school.

Next, stakeholders asked questions about the preparedness of students beyond high school. Based on FFY 2013, 57.18% (39,028/68,260) of the "All Students" group passed the End of Pathway Assessment (EOPA) in which 35.46% (1454/4100) of the SWD subgroup passed the EOPA. Based on FFY 2010 data, 52.45% (2281/4349) of the SWD that graduated from high school enrolled in a Postsecondary Institution.

Georgia's Indicator 13 trend data improved overtime from 5.5% in FFY 2009 to 94.98% in FFY 2013, 94.98%. Indicator 13 reports youth with IEPs aged 16 and above who had IEPs that included appropriate measurable goals. The State has implemented numerous evidence-based practices to obtain the substantial gains: (1) Participated in TA with National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC), (2) Revised the State's method of data collection, and (3) Provided differentiated TA for LEAs. Students with disabilities are accessing IEPs with measurable transition goals; however, these measurable transition goals have not demonstrated a connection to improved school completion and positive postsecondary outcomes. Stakeholders recommended that the work of the SSIP could bridge this gap and shift the focus from compliance to outcomes.

Georgia's broad data analyses created credible explanations to support the myriad of concerns and issues across grade levels and content areas, which ultimately impacted school completion. It reinforced a need to troubleshoot acquisition of skills and the environment in which those skills were accessed since poor School

Climate was a recurring theme. The next logical step was to pare down these statewide issues and clearly identify the root causes for the problems. As a result, Stakeholders completed a ***focused review of data***: (1) Longitudinal data for the FFY 2013 Graduating Cohort and (2) Broad Data Variables for a Targeted Group of LEAs in the State. By this point, the State required the support of stakeholders to answer the following question: What were the barriers that negatively impacted improved graduation rates for SWD? Stakeholders identified the salient data trends for the cohort and determined how pervasive those barriers were for other cohorts of students. Ultimately, these barriers would assist Georgia in developing a theory of action and outlining coherent improvement strategies.

Longitudinal data were reviewed for the FFY 2013 Graduation Cohort that extended back to its 3rd Grade Year. During FFY 2004, as Georgia’s 3rd grade students, there were performance gaps (Meeting and Exceeding the Standard) for both reading and mathematics between the “All Students” Group and SWD subgroup. Overall, all students performed better in reading as compared to math. By 5th grade, there was approximately a twenty plus percentage point gap for both reading and math. By 9th grade, the performance gap widened to approximately 36 percentage points for both academic areas. During 10th grade year, the SWD dropout rate almost doubled that for All Students.

Table 10. FFY 2013 Graduation Cohort Longitudinal Performance (Meets and Exceeds)

	3rd FFY 2004	4th FFY 2005	5th FFY 2006	6th FFY 2007	7th FFY 2008	8th FFY 2009	9th FFY 2010 American Literature and Math I
Reading All Students	92	81	86	92	89	96	82
Reading SWD	82	61	64	69	84	81	46
Math All Students	90	80	88	69	63	83	61
Math SWD	74	52	63	35	51	48	24

This focused analysis of data for a targeted cohort was critical to help Stakeholders confirm barriers highlighted in the broad analysis of data. This Cohort demonstrated proficiency gaps early during the beginning of the PreK-12 Pipeline. “Does Georgia have a comprehensive Pre-K-12 pipeline, or maybe this was part of the issue?” Essentially, the FFY 2013 SWD Cohort started as early as 3rd Grade underperforming the All Students Group. What appeared to be a SWD issue eventually manifested as a concern for all students. Stakeholders made a critical connection between the gap noted for young children upon exiting preschool and the gap demonstrated in Table 10. Generally, Students with Disabilities are underperforming their peers upon exiting the preschool program. Low Achievement for SWD demonstrated a microcosm of concerns with underperformance for All Students.

Based on the data, Stakeholders identified the following barriers as having a negative impact on positive outcomes for SWD:

- 1) Access to the general curriculum for All Students;
- 2) Access to a positive school climate for All Students; and
- 3) Access to Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) for SWD.

Georgia's SWD would have improved outcomes, if these barriers across the P-12 pipeline were addressed at the state, regional and local levels. Unfortunately, there are multiple areas of opportunity that Stakeholders could have suggested, but all roads seem to lead to graduation rate for SWDs. The belief was that the entire P-12 pipeline posed one or more concerns. While data could have guided stakeholders to address reading, math, preschool outcomes, postsecondary outcomes or graduation, a statewide focus solely on a subject area, gender, racial group or disability category could worsen the problem and create additional silos. Also with concerns about instruction and school climate, graduation would create a more feasible priority since school climate is essential to the entire P-12 Pipeline. Stakeholders believed that graduation outcomes were not only an area of need but would enable the State to select comprehensive, coherent strategies to target other areas of need. Georgia's State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG), GraduateFIRST, has improved capacity for local schools to implement evidence-based practices to support at-risk students.

During Phase II, Georgia State Leadership Team invited other relevant stakeholders to discuss specific barriers that impeded student access to the general curriculum. Based on the feedback, stakeholders noted that inconsistent expectations for curriculum at the state level directly impacted implementation of effective practices at the local level. As a result of this feedback, the Division for Curriculum and Instruction has provided leadership, using representation from other divisions, to clearly outline general guidance to support district and school leaders with the development and implementation of local curricula.

Considering the State's capacity to provide Intensive Technical Assistance (TA), what targeted group of LEAs would benefit through the systematic implementation of Student Success? Georgia already has a number of strategies around improving graduation outcomes for students; therefore, the SSIP could align with many of these efforts such as GraduateFIRST. While Stakeholders anticipated some strategies having universal implications for all LEAs, there was some limitation for intensive supports due to limited personnel. The State identified eighty-two LEAs based on the following variables.

- Variable 1: LEAs that had 1 or more Participating GraduateFIRST School in Georgia's State Personnel Development Grant
- Variable 2: LEAs that had 1 or more Schools with Accountability Designations for Graduation Rate (Priority, Focus, or Alert)
- Variable 3: LEAs that had a graduation rate for SWD approximately $\leq 30\%$

The State also considered the number of schools in the LEA with Accountability Designations for other areas and any determinations for Disproportionality within the past three years. During a Committee meeting, Stakeholders reviewed anonymous data sets for the eighty-two LEAs clustered within their GLRS regions. Stakeholders were asked to consider the LEAs within a GLRS region and prioritize three LEAs based on the following: (1) Size Group, (2) Capacity Efforts, and (3) Need. As a result of this activity, fifty LEAs were selected for intensive technical assistance; however, two GLRS regions had fewer than three LEAs to choose from. The fifty LEAs had a 3-21 SWD enrollment that represented approximately 46% of the State's total SWD enrollment. Changing outcomes for these LEAs would definitely improve the State data.

Analysis of the 50 Districts

- 24 LEAs had GraduateFIRST being implemented across 51 schools.
- 19 LEAs had 29 Priority, Focus or Alert schools for Graduation Rate and 94 additional Priority, Focus and Alert schools for other accountability areas.
- 7 of the 50 LEAs did not have enough students for a SWD subgroup for Graduation Rate.
- 42 of the 50 LEAs that had a SWD subgroup did not meet the ESEA Waiver SWD Graduation Target.
- 1 LEA met the SWD Subgroup Graduation target.
- 24 LEAs had a Disproportionality Determination (Identification, Placement and/or Discipline) within the past three years.
- 4 LEAs met the criteria for all variables.

Stakeholders' focused data analyses were helpful to target LEAs but also to identify strong correlational variables that impact low graduation rates. While a low graduation rate was only one variable, all LEAs with a size group underperformed the target-except one LEA. The other helpful observation obtained through this focused analysis was that LEAs demonstrated similarly low performance for varied reasons. This reality would further inform Georgia's selection of coherent improvement strategies. The Stakeholders helped Georgia to clearly define graduation as an area of priority. Perhaps the best way to build or strengthen a P-12 Pipeline is to create common mission and vision such as with school completion. In FFY 2004, did Georgia's 3rd grade teachers make a critical connection between student learning and school completion in FFY 2013? Stakeholders believed that this focus area would allow greater flexibility for individual LEAs to address reading, math, School Climate, as appropriate.

Stakeholders hypothesized that district effectiveness was most critical to the improvement of school and teacher effectiveness. Effective schools improve outcomes for students. Considering this theory, stakeholders reviewed focused data for the LEAs that had a Priority, Focus, or Alert school based on the Graduation Rate. Of the LEAs, 97% of the LEAs demonstrated systemic performance issues and had been identified in FFY 2004 with a performance gap of $\geq 25\%$ between SWD and Non SWD subgroups for reading and/or math. Many of these LEAs were identified in the bottom quartile of their size group for SWD performance on reading and/or math. The Committee believed that this observation supported the reality that LEA capacity is critical to address this problem. Stakeholders suggested that the State analyze its current capacity efforts to support LEAs with low achievement and/or proficiency gaps.

Analysis of State Infrastructure to Support Improvement and Build Capacity

A description of how the State analyzed the capacity of its current infrastructure to support improvement and build capacity in LEAs to implement, scale up, and sustain the use of Evidence-Based Practices to improve results for children with disabilities. State systems that make up its infrastructure include, at a minimum: governance, fiscal, quality standards, professional development, data, technical assistance, and accountability/monitoring. The description must include current strengths of the systems, the extent the systems are coordinated, and areas for improvement of functioning within and across the systems. The State must also identify current State-level improvement plans and initiatives, including special and general education improvement plans and initiatives, and describe the extent that these initiatives are aligned, and how they are, or could be, integrated with, the SSIP. Finally, the State should identify representatives (e.g., offices, agencies, positions, individuals, and other stakeholders) that were involved in developing Phase I of the SSIP and that will be involved in developing and implementing Phase II of the SSIP.

The GaDOE engaged stakeholders in a broad state infrastructure analyses relative to the graduation outcomes for SWDs. What was Georgia's current capacity to support improved graduation outcomes for SWD at the state, regional, LEA and school levels? Georgia has a comprehensive approach to clearly communicate standards and expectations at the LEA level and school levels with the use of District Keys, School Keys, Class Keys, and Teacher/Leader Keys. The Division for School Improvement's District Effectiveness Process is a capacity building initiative but only implemented in four LEAs identified as having School Improvement Grants (SIG). Priority Schools are awarded SIGs based on a competitive application process, which must include LEA commitment. The Division for Special Education collaborated with the Division for School Improvement to support these four LEAs. **During Phase II, the Division for School and Division Effectiveness provided District Effectiveness Specialists for all districts identified as having at least one priority school. Of the fifty districts targeted for SSIP, Division for Special Education and School Improvement mutually support thirty plus districts and developed joint Memorandum of Agreements.**

While Georgia has numerous collaborative opportunities at the state level, the strongest networks for capacity building are through the use of Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESA) and the Georgia Learning Resource System (GLRS). There are also local school improvement specialists that provide TA for individual schools to support school improvement planning process and increase student achievement. **The Division has worked diligently during Phase II to strengthen these partnerships.**

During July 2014, the State solicited feedback from Stakeholders concerning Georgia's infrastructure via paper and online surveys. Questions supported an analysis of Georgia's governance, fiscal, quality standards, professional development, data, technical assistance, and accountability/monitoring. Below you will find several of the questions and responses.

What initiatives do you know about that could be leveraged to improve graduation rates for students with disabilities? Here are a sampling of the identified initiatives: (1) Governor's Office Campaign Get Georgia Reading Campaign; (2) Math Endorsement for teachers; (3) State Personnel Development Grant; (4) Math Science Partnership Grant; (5) CEEDAR Grant; (6) Network of Transforming Teacher Education Programs (NTEP); (7) Teacher and Principal Induction Program; (8) Quality Rating Improvement System (birth to 5); (9) Flexible Learning Program (Title One); (10) Title One Funds provided to schools for students; (11) CTAE Career Pathways; (12) RT3 Initiatives; (13) Formative Instructional Practices (FIP) for teachers; (14) Summer Curriculum Academies; (15) Teacher Resource Link (SLDS); (16) Striving Reader B-12; (17) School Improvement Grant (SIG); (18) Dual Enrollment; and (19) Early Intervention and Remedial Education Programs.

Are you aware of any rules, policies, procedures and practices that are negatively impacting graduation rates for students? If so, what are they, and what actions should be taken to address them?

1. Response to Intervention (RTI) not being implemented with fidelity
2. Coordination of Technical Assistance
3. Opportunity Gaps for Students
4. Board policy about graduation
5. Practices around grading and reporting
6. Access to Parent Resources
7. Class size rule
8. Low expectations and faulty perceptions
9. Georgia's Special Needs Scholarship
10. Local School Code of Conducts/Lack of positive behavioral interventions and supports
11. State Rule for Promotion
12. Local promotion policies
13. Policies around attendance and tardies
14. Grading Policies
15. Undergraduate Coursework and Training
16. Fidelity of Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team

What system does the State have in place for developing implementation capacity at the state, regional, district, and school levels?

1. District Effectiveness Personnel and Resources (e.g., Georgia School Standards, Districts Keys, GAPSS, District Effectiveness Team, School Effectiveness Team, etc.)
2. Special Education Parent Mentor Program
3. Parent to Parent of Georgia
4. RESA
5. GLRS
6. Special Education District Liaisons and Collaborative Communities (Review of data for ABCs)
7. Special Education Active Engagement Process

How can the state leverage its system of professional development and technical assistance in order to improve graduation rates for all students including students with disabilities?

1. Align resources and technical assistance among federal programs
2. Form stronger partnerships with Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs)
3. Improve communication with local districts and regions about state priorities
4. Identify schools and LEAs with effective practices to share with others

While considering how the state could leverage its system of professional development and technical assistance in order to improve graduation rates for SWDs, stakeholders expressed concerns with alignment and wanted more in-depth information about specific initiatives. Stakeholders were asked to select state and regional initiatives that could be leveraged to improve graduation outcomes for SWD. The State identified thirty-six state or regional initiatives that had a direct or indirect impact on the graduation rate for SWD, as reported by the project and initiative leaders responsible for these activities. Many of these initiatives were included in the aforementioned list for state and regional initiatives. The initiatives targeted various grade bands: (a) Elementary School 45.45% (b) Middle School 48.48% and (c) High School 51.51%. The activities spanned all

three levels; yet, there was little vertical articulation among the three levels. In most instances, the initiatives were exclusively implemented in one of the three levels with little attention to school feeder patterns.

- Eleven out of thirty-six initiatives (30%) were identified as having some type of LEA engagement.
 - Four of the eleven initiatives engaged a large number (56-200) of LEAs throughout the state.
 - Seven of the eleven initiatives represented LEA capacity building work among twenty or fewer districts.

Approximately 14.7% of the state or regional initiatives were identified as compliance related activities. Those activities were directly supported by federal regulations and requirements. 52% of the activities were reported as having a financial responsibility between three to five, with five being the highest.

Each Project Leader was asked to rate how well the activity directly correlated to improving graduation rates on a scale from one to five (one being the lowest correlation and five being the highest correlation). 58% reported successful outcomes. Each educational leader was asked to describe specific measures and evidence used to determine student level impact in which only 16% demonstrated direct correlation to the SIMR and outcomes.

In general, Georgia currently provides a number of opportunities to improve graduation outcomes for students that were not regulatory activities. Those activities were implemented at all levels and provided preventative strategies for young children too. Unfortunately, there was little alignment with LEA capacity efforts and missed opportunities for seamless technical assistance to ensure appropriate coaching supports. **During Phase II, stakeholders have continued to address these concerns in Georgia's SSIP.**

Stakeholders discussed possible rules, policies, procedures and practices that were negatively impacting the graduation rates for SWD. Based on the feedback, several options were identified. Georgia has provided TA and supports for Response to Intervention (RTI) implementation for the local levels. In addition to the state level resources, local RESAs have supported RTI efforts for local LEAs and schools. Consequently, some LEAs have what is currently identified as "opportunity gaps" in which access to robust learning opportunities may not be a standard for all students.

There were several policies that support positive outcomes for children such as Georgia's Graduation Rule, Alternate Course Sequence, and Individualized Graduation Plan requirement for all students. Policies around Georgia's Special Needs Scholarship and Compulsory Attendance Law may be negatively impacting performance in this area. Perhaps the greatest strengths of Georgia's infrastructure are the RESA and GLRS, yet, there must be seamless alignment between the state and regions. Although numerous activities are currently being implemented, additional authentic engagement is needed among critical stakeholders. Majority of these activities were focused either at the school, teacher or student levels. Stakeholders noted that Georgia must improve systems change processes to obtain better outcomes, which can be accomplished through the SSIP.

In general, Georgia's infrastructure and capacity to support change at the LEA level was a definite area of improvement. Overall the accountability and monitoring components were in place and indirectly impacted positive graduation outcomes for students; however, more connectivity was needed to create an authentic Results-driven Accountability system. While Georgia's state infrastructure shifted to more of an inclusive, collaborative model, there was limited technical assistance to support LEAs to replicate this work. This too would be an area in need of improvement for Georgia.

State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities

A statement of the result(s) the State intends to achieve through the implementation of the SSIP. The State-identified result(s) must be aligned to an SPP/APR indicator or a component of an SPP/APR indicator.

During FFY 2013, 39.46% Students with Disabilities (ages 14 and older) graduated with a general education diploma as measured by the Annual Graduation Event Rate for fifty Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) that were identified to receive intensive technical assistance through the SSIP Coherent Improvement Strategies.

By FFY 2018, Georgia will meet a rigorous target of 65% (Annual Graduation Event Rate), which has been revised based on an increased graduation rate during FFY 2014. Stakeholders suggested that the State reset targets to show rigorous expectations but also realistic expectations for improving state data overtime.

Annual Graduation Event Rate

(# of SWD (Age 14 and above) enrolled during a specified school year who exited school by receiving a high school diploma)
Divided by
 (# of SWD (Age 14 and above) enrolled during a specified school year who exited school by receiving a high school diploma, a certificate/special education diploma, and dropping out))

A description of the result(s) the State intends to achieve through the implementation of the SSIP. The State-identified result(s) must be aligned to an SPP/APR indicator or a component of an SPP/APR indicator. The State-identified result(s) must be clearly based on the Data and State Infrastructure Analyses and must be a child-level outcome in contrast to a process outcome.

Description

FFY 2013, 44.80% of all students with disabilities exited with a general education diploma (Annual Graduation Event Rate), and 39.46% of students with disabilities in the fifty LEAs exited with a general education diploma. FFY 2014, the State significantly increased the Annual Event Graduation Rate to 64.1% for all students with disabilities and 59.35% for students with disabilities in the fifty LEAs. Georgia’s SIMR aligns to Indicator 1 (Graduation Rate for SWD) but reflects an alternative calculation and subset of the state’s data. The fifty LEAs represent approximately 46% of Georgia's special education enrollment and will support the State in meeting rigorous graduation rate targets for the SWD subgroup and the “All Students” group.

Table 11. Four-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate

	FFY 2013	FFY 2014
All Students	72.5%	78.5%
Students with Disabilities	36.5%	54.3%

The FFY 2014 4-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate for Students with Disabilities increased by 17.8 percentage points (54.3%). The 4-Year Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rate for All Students increased by 6 percentage points, (78.5%).

Selection of Coherent Improvement Strategies

An explanation of how the improvement strategies were selected, and why they are sound, logical and aligned, and will lead to a measurable improvement in the State-identified result(s). The improvement strategies should include the strategies, identified through the Data and State Infrastructure Analyses, that are needed to improve the State infrastructure and to support LEA implementation of Evidence-Based Practices to improve the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities. The State must describe how implementation of the improvement strategies will address identified root causes for low performance and ultimately build LEA capacity to achieve the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities.

While Stakeholders shared the research to support that systems change happen at the LEA level, the State's infrastructure analyses supported that capacity-building efforts at the LEA level was an area in need of improvement. Stuit (2010) published an article “Are bad schools immortal?” The researcher found that after five years of turnaround work, <10% of the schools actually changed their improvement status. This means >90% of the schools remained unchanged. The article cited that LEA improvement is the point of entry for school improvement. Yet, only 30% of the surveyed state and regional initiatives included engagement strategies at the LEA level. Among the 30% of initiatives and projects, there was great diversity between some strategies to promote awareness and others that addressed LEA capacity. Stakeholders believed that the Coherent Improvement Strategies had to provide a multi-tiered system of supports for students, administrators and teachers. The sampling of Georgia's Teacher Effectiveness data, from Race to the Top LEAs, supported that teachers struggled most with differentiation of instruction and academically challenging environments, which negatively impact positive outcomes for all students. Based on the perception data, discipline data, school climate ratings, and attendance data, school climate is an area in need of improvement for all students. Improved student outcomes must include improved environments and climates in which students learn.

Another salient trend that shaped the selection of Coherent Improvement Strategies was the reality that LEAs identified as having low performance and/or discrepant proficiency gaps in FFY 2004 were currently demonstrating the dismal trends in FFY 2013. On one hand, this data supported that change has to happen consistently and intentionally at the LEA level. Many of these LEAs had been monitored and supported by the Department's Federal Programs; yet, LEA capacity was still a priority. Perhaps this reality was more informative for how the State would have to “do business differently” to support LEAs.

During Phase I, Georgia's stakeholders selected three Coherent Improvement Strategies:

Coherent Improvement Strategy One: Provide Universal Technical Assistance for All LEAs;

Coherent Improvement Strategy Two: Provide Targeted Technical Assistance for Select LEAs; and

Coherent Improvement Strategy Three: Provide Intensive Technical Assistance for fifty LEAs.

The Coherent Improvement Strategies logically aligned to the State's SIMR-improved graduation outcomes for children with disabilities. More specifically, Georgia's SIMR addresses improved graduation outcomes in fifty districts that were selected via a stakeholder engagement process. These fifty districts would receive intensive technical assistance to support implementation of evidence-based practices. Consequently, the State's data analyses and infrastructure supported the notion that additional districts would greatly benefit from the technical assistance. Thus stakeholders suggested a tiered technical assistance model that would provide intensive technical assistance for the fifty districts included in the SIMR, yet, general supports for other districts.

Phase II, Georgia's stakeholders suggested a restructuring of the Coherent Improvement Strategies based on implementation progress data during Phase I. The Coherent Improvement Strategies were relevant but required flexibility to address the changing scope of the work as identified through actual implementation. Stakeholders identified gaps in Georgia's infrastructure during Phase I but did not anticipate the pervasive nature of the problem. The universal technical assistance for all LEAs (Previous Coherent Improvement Strategy One) represented an activity that would support the seamless alignment and general capacity efforts for all special education directors. Perhaps the gentle shift from Phase I to Phase II provided a deeper awareness for stakeholders that this activity supported overall infrastructure development-not a broad Coherent Improvement Strategy in and of itself. What specific adult practices would the technical assistance change and improve? Stakeholders identified a need to increase capacity for local districts to execute comprehensive district improvement planning that support local implementation of evidence-based practices. The previous Coherent Improvement Strategy supported an alignment and integration of initiatives and plans at the state, regional, district, and school levels.

Coherent Improvement Strategy Two provide a critical placeholder to support a select group of districts with increased supports but perhaps with less duration and intensity. During Phase I, stakeholders strongly forecasted that disproportionality could be a logical variable used to target these districts; however, additional consideration was needed. During FFY 2015, Georgia identified sixty-three districts as having either significant disproportionality (Identification, Discipline and Placement) or significant discrepancy (Disciplinary Removals). Forty-six of the sixty-three districts were identified as having over-identification for children with disabilities. Many districts required technical assistance to provide effective instruction and appropriate interventions for students. Stakeholders agreed that disproportionality should be the priority to target districts considering the previous Coherent Improvement Strategy Two. This choice would support Georgia in integrating and aligning disproportionality into the work of improved outcomes for students.

Stakeholders considered strategies to integrate the review for disproportionality and planning processes into the overall SSIP process. Georgia directed the GLRS Regional Teams to support local districts with the review of their improvement plans for disproportionality. As a result, stakeholders agreed to morph the Coherent Improvement Strategy into an activity that would support the alignment and integration of initiatives and plans at the state, regional, district and school levels. Georgia restructured the technical assistance provided for LEAs in this area and trained the local GLRS Regional Teams (Regional Implementation Teams) to support and sustain the disproportionality work.

Coherent Improvement Strategy Three provide intensive technical assistance for fifty LEAs. The State initially outlined that the capacity building efforts would primarily take place during FFY 2015 and support a transition from district to school level implementation of evidence-based practices. However, the systems change process of building state, regional and district capacity moved at much slower rate than intended. While some district level capacity efforts took place during this year, local teams will continue to support the transition during FFY 2016. GLRS Regional Teams are improving the state capacity to support local implementation of evidence-based practices, align improvement plans, and reduce redundant and duplicative technical assistance. Currently, the GLRS Regional Teams provide universal, targeted, and intensive technical assistance. The State has committed the GaDOE District Liaisons to participate on regional teams and improve capacity.

Stakeholders suggested to keep the emphasis on the fifty districts receiving intensive technical assistance as a standalone Coherent Improvement Strategy but tweak the wording to make critical connections with student outcomes. Georgia will provide intensive technical assistance for the fifty districts to change what adult practices? How will that change of practice support selection and implementation of evidence-based practices? How will those evidence-based practices benefit students and ultimately improve school completion? Based on this logic, the previous Coherent Improvement Strategy Three morphed into the following strategy: Support district infrastructure and implementation of evidence-based practices in fifty districts identified to receive

intensive technical assistance to improve effective instruction, engaging school climate and transition. Additional information about evidence-based practices can be found in Phase II (Support for EIS programs and providers implementation of Evidence-Based Practices).

Stakeholders advised the State to revise Georgia's Coherent Improvement Strategies, which are listed below.

Coherent Improvement Strategy Number One: Improve State and Regional Infrastructure to better support districts to implement and scale up evidence-based practices that will improve graduation rates for all students-including SWD

a. Align and integrate initiatives and plans at the state, regional, district, and school levels to reduce duplication and leverage resources

Universal Expectations for Student Success Process and Collaborative Communities: Georgia committed to aligning and integrating initiatives at all levels because stakeholders clearly identified inconsistent expectations, redundant improvement plans and isolated resources as areas of opportunities. FFY 2014, the Division for Special Education launched its integrated improvement planning process and provided technical assistance for all districts during the annual technical assistance meeting. In the past, more focus had been placed on the submission of compliant plans rather than comprehensive improvement plans that improved student outcomes. During Phase I, Georgia aligned with the GLRS Regional Teams as a catalyst to provide the universal technical assistance that would increase district capacity in the processes listed below. Each component is supported by research and comprises a comprehensive framework to help the district address its own adaptive challenges-low school completion rates and high dropout rates. All roads lead to component six (strategies, interventions and next steps); ultimately, the district must be able to identify and implement evidence-based practices with fidelity.

Georgia implements a Consolidated LEA Improvement Planning process in which all federal programs collaborate and submit annual plans. State leadership, across all federal programs, noted similar challenges in supporting local districts to develop improvement plans and implement evidence-based practices that resulted in improved student outcomes. The Division prioritized integrating special education improvement plans, such as disproportionality, during Phases I and II but will require one improvement plan for all federal programs by Phase III.

Student Success Expectations for All Districts

1. Documentation of Internal and External Stakeholder Engagement across Programs/Divisions (August 31, 2015 and ongoing);
2. Explanation of current capacity, infrastructure, and resources (August 31, 2015 and ongoing);
3. Strength and opportunities of local General Supervision (August 31, 2015 and ongoing);
4. Identification of strengths and weakness, as supported by data (February 29, 2016 and ongoing);
5. Identification of barriers (February 29, 2016 and ongoing); and
6. Strategies, interventions and next steps
(Short-Term Next Steps by February 29, 2016 and Long-term Next Steps by July 31, 2016).

GLRS Regional Teams, also referred to as Regional Implementation Teams, meet monthly with special education directors within each region for technical assistance. GaDOE plans in collaboration with the teams to identify appropriate topics and develop consistent content and resources. During FFY 2015, the GLRS aligned the topics and resources with the six components of the broad Student Success framework and shared the content via an electronic platform. Georgia established benchmarks to support district implementation of the components and submission of evidence that would document the process. The SSIP Evaluator worked with the

Department to develop a Student Success Process Planning Rubric that local districts could use to ensure consistent implementation. The rubric is also used to identify next steps for districts based on progress. Local districts submit the Student Success Process Plan, via the Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP), with the IDEA budget for approval from the Department. **Note:** This activity aligns with the initial Coherent Improvement Strategy One submitted in Phase I pertaining to universal technical assistance for all districts.

Integration of Disproportionality in the Student Success Process: The Student Success Process addresses disproportionality through the General Supervision questions; however, this integration consolidated the planning and review processes. The State expanded the role of GLRS Regional Teams to support districts identified as having disproportionality. The Regional Team assumes the following roles:

- Review policies, procedures and practices;
- Support development, implementation and review of Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS); and
- Monitor timely correction of noncompliance that caused the disproportionality.

By design, the Regional Implementation Team provides technical assistance to support universal practices expected for all districts; therefore, the additional roles made logical sense and connected the work. Also, the State noted a correlation between districts with systemic issues for disproportionality and school completion. **Note:** This activity aligns with the initial Coherent Improvement Strategy Two submitted in Phase I pertaining to targeted technical assistance for select districts. Stakeholders believed that disproportionality should be the variable by which Georgia selects LEAs for targeted supports. Georgia has hosted several Equity Summits to provide technical assistance for district leadership teams, as well.

Federal Programs Conference: During Phase II, Georgia will implement its first Federal Programs Conference in FFY 2015 bringing together Title I, Title III, Homeless, Title II, Special Education, Migrant Education, and Special Education leaders from local LEAs. These members will attend as a comprehensive district leadership team. The Federal Programs Conference represents a progressive attempt to align the work and support LEAs in a comprehensive manner. In addition to the Conference, Federal Programs are developing a comprehensive needs assessment that LEAs can use to inform a consolidated planning process that meets the needs of all students.

b. Establish, maintain, evaluate, and update cascading team management and implementation structures and communication protocols/feedback loops at state, regional, district and school levels

State Management and Implementation Structure: In order to enhance the implementation of Student Success and realize the desired outcome of improving graduation rates for SWD, the GaDOE has designed a state management and implementation structure that includes cascading support teams from the GaDOE, to regional technical assistance agencies, to districts, and ultimately to schools. This cascading team structure provides a strong foundation for the delivery of a seamless system of technical assistance designed to build the capacity of district leadership to support school leadership in improving teaching and learning.

The cascading team structures employed in Student Success also provide a mechanism through established communication protocols and feedback loops for sharing information about implementation barriers and successes from schools, to districts, to regional technical assistance agencies, to the GaDOE. This information is used to make adjustments in the work, which are filtered through the cascading teams to districts and schools.

State Leadership Team: The State Leadership Team is comprised of leaders across key offices and divisions at the GaDOE who manage various programs and initiatives including Federal Programs, School and District Effectiveness, Teacher and Leader Effectiveness, Curriculum and Instruction and Special Education Services and Supports. The State Leadership Team also includes a director of a Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) to provide the perspective of the RESAs in implementing Student Success statewide. Several members of the State Leadership Team also serve on the Superintendent’s Executive Cabinet. This strong link between the State Leadership Team and the GaDOE executive leadership provides a means of maintaining visibility and gaining political support for Student Success.

The State Leadership Team provides the guidance (vision, mission and scope of work) and resources (funding and personnel) that are essential to supporting implementation of the Student Success Process in districts. In addition, the team uses information regarding implementation barriers and successes from its established feedback loops to perform the following tasks: (1) Identify barriers to district implementation, (2) Make recommendations for policy changes when needed, and (3) Make adjustments to Student Success process and resources to support district implementation of evidence-based practices.

State Implementation Team: The State Implementation Team is comprised of division directors and program managers representing key GaDOE focus areas including School Climate, Instruction, Professional Learning Supports, General Supervision, and District Effectiveness. The State Implementation Team is responsible for planning and coordinating Student Success processes, professional learning, and technical assistance for the fifty districts. In addition, the State Implementation Team manages implementation resources, collects and analyzes implementation data, and uses facilitative administration to remove barriers to implementation identified by the GLRS Regional Teams.

The State Implementation Team maintains ongoing communication with the State Leadership Team to ensure that they have the information needed to adjust the Student Success Process, suggest revisions in policy, and allocate needed resources. The State Implementation Team then shares information and resources with the GLRS Regional Teams. A primary focus of the State Implementation Team is to build capacity and provide ongoing supports for the Regional Implementation Team that support local District Implementation Teams.

Regional Implementation Team also referred to as GLRS Regional Teams: The Regional Implementation Teams include Georgia Learning Resources System (GLRS) Directors, State Student Success Coaches, GaDOE District Liaisons, RESA School Improvement Specialists, RESA School Climate Specialists and other technical assistance providers supporting school improvement activities. Regional Implementation Teams meet on a regular basis to coordinate the provision of technical assistance to districts in the region. They discuss implementation barriers and plan integrated technical assistance activities to address the identified barriers. They also discuss implementation successes and resources that can be shared with districts in the region. The Regional Implementation Teams provide information from these meetings to the State Implementation Teams.

District Implementation Teams: District Implementation Teams lead the Student Success Process at the district level and are responsible for building the capacity of schools to implement evidence-based practices designed to improve student outcomes. The teams work to create strong infrastructures that support successful implementation and remove systemic barriers that impact implementation at the district and school levels. District Implementation Teams also work to integrate district initiatives and plans, reduce duplication, leverage resources, and maximize results for students. In addition, they analyze data to determine schools and students that need assistance, and they coordinate the provision of professional development and coaching based on the needs of schools.

The membership of District Implementation Teams varies based on a number of factors including district size and infrastructure. In some districts, the District Leadership Teams, which are comprised of the Superintendent and other key administrators/leaders from Human Resources, Finance, Data, Curriculum, and Special Education, directly guide the Student Success Process in the districts. In other districts, separate District Implementation Teams are established to focus on the work under the leadership of the District Leadership Team. These teams may include members from district leadership, as well as, other staff actively involved in designing and implementing Student Success activities in the districts. Regardless of the team structure utilized, it is essential that District Implementation Teams be comprised of staff from special education and general education. If District Implementation Teams are established to work under the direction of the District Leadership Teams, at least one member of the District Implementation Teams should also serve on the Leadership Team to support communication.

District Implementation Teams provide information to the Regional Implementation Teams on implementation barriers and successes, and they inform the Regional Implementation Team of technical assistance needs. The District Implementation Teams provide information and resources to the Building Implementation Teams. Each district committed to a person to lead this work in the district (District Student Success Coach). The RIT works diligently to build capacity for the District Leadership Team, to include the District Student Success Coach. The collaboration represents the true opportunity to build capacity at the district level that can be supported at the local level. It is important to note that the District Coach facilitates the local implementation of evidence-based practices at the school level, along with building leadership; the RIT supports implementation of this work.

School Implementation Teams: The School Implementation Teams are responsible for establishing processes in the school to support the implementation of evidence-based practices designed to improve outcomes for students. School Implementation Teams meet on a regular basis to analyze/review data to identify needs and problem-solve solutions. Teams support the implementation of universal, targeted, and intensive practices to support the needs of diverse learners. Team members coordinate professional learning and coaching within the school and ensure that evidence-based practices are implemented with fidelity.

School Implementation Teams include principals, assistant principals, teachers, and other individuals as determined appropriate by the school leadership. School Implementation Teams should include members that represent the diverse populations (e.g. general education, special education, Title I, parents, community members, students, etc.) within the school. School Implementation Teams share information about implementation barriers and successes with the District Leadership Team.

Communication Protocols and Feedback Loops: The GaDOE has developed clearly defined processes, protocols, and feedback loops to eliminate gaps in communication between various levels of the state's system (e.g. SEA, regional technical assistance agencies, districts, and schools). The cascading team structure, described in the previous section, provides the conduit for communication and well-defined feedback loops to support the sharing of information from one level of the system to another. For example, information about barriers to implementation in schools and districts is shared with regional technical assistance providers who assist them in addressing these barriers. Systemic issues that cannot be addressed at the regional levels are then referred to the next highest level, the State Implementation Team. This team problem-solves issues for systemic barriers and shares possible solutions with regional technical assistance providers supporting the district and school teams. The State Implementation Team then shares information about systemic barriers to implementation with the State Leadership Team who further works to resolve the barriers. In some instance, this involves changes in state systems or policies. These changes are then communicated back down the cascading team structures to local schools.

Georgia has created a “Practice-Policy Communication Cycle” (State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-Based Practices Center) where information from practice is shared “up” the system and information regarding changes in policy and resources is shared “down” the system. In addition to the vertical sharing of information described above, processes have been established to promote horizontal communication. For example, Regional Implementation Teams meet on a regular basis to discuss implementation status, problem-solve difficult issues, and share resources. Opportunities have also been provided for district teams to share their experiences in implementing Student Success improvement activities. During FFY 2015, almost four-hundred team members attended two statewide Partnering for Student Success meetings where they had opportunities to network with each other and participate in facilitated discussions about implementation barriers and successes.

The GaDOE has developed sample agendas for district, regional and state meetings in order to promote structured times for team members to address implementation barriers and successes and to identify resources and supports needed. These sample agendas provide a diagram that illustrates the level/team with which this information should be shared. For example, district teams share with regional teams, and regional teams share with state teams. In addition, online surveys have been created to allow for electronic submission of the information via the feedback loops.

During the current year, the GaDOE has used information gathered through the feedback loops to make adjustments in the Student Success process and timelines. Information about barriers experienced in districts have also been used to inform the development and distribution of resources to support districts in implementing the process.

c. Provide professional learning and technical assistance to state and regional technical assistance providers to increase their capacity to support districts and schools in implementing evidence-based practices

During Phase I, Georgia obtained feedback that the GLRS Regional Teams required technical assistance to improve infrastructure and capacity for district implementation. The State included activities to build capacity and ensure fidelity; however, additional supports were needed. As a result of this adjustment, the timeline for transitioning the work to the district level was delayed.

Ongoing Professional Development for TA Providers: The technical assistance providers include at a minimum, the GLRS, GaDOE District Liaison, and State Student Success Coach. The GaDOE District Liaison is a Department staff who is paired with the GLRS to support the technical assistance for districts within that region. The State Student Success Coach is a hired in each GLRS region to specifically support implementation of the Student Success work for local districts identified as receiving intensive technical assistance. Georgia's State Personnel Development Grant hired coaches who were selected to support the Student Success. The SSIP evaluator worked closely with the Department to collect ongoing progress monitoring data that will support job embedded learning for the TA providers. Each month, the TA providers receive ongoing technical assistance.

The State identified personnel as the Regional Implementation Team Coordinator to provide the general supports and ensure fidelity of implementation across the regions. Implementation scales were developed to guide local observations of teams leading the work and provide explicit feedback that would improve practices.

School and District Effectiveness Regional Meetings: During FFY 2015, the Division for School and District Effectiveness executed a new plan to develop and provide professional development to local districts. Georgia has been divided into six super regions that include multiple GLRS regions in each section. The six super regions host a quarterly meeting of state and regional technical assistance providers to analyze data and develop a comprehensive professional development plan for the region. The GLRS Regional Teams participate in these meetings to ensure alignment among GaDOE divisions and the Student Success Process.

Coherent Improvement Strategy Number Two: Improve district infrastructure and implementation of evidence-based practices in fifty districts identified to receive intensive technical assistance to improve effective instruction, engaging school climate, and transition

All districts received universal technical assistance to support the Student Success Process; however, only the fifty districts received direct supports to assist the district with selection and implementation of evidence-based practices. Georgia designed its SSIP to address a broad framework that would support local districts in the selection and implementation of evidence-based practices. During data analyses and infrastructure development, stakeholders noted that districts required additional supports to select and implement evidence-based practices. Selection of evidence-based practices posed an issue because districts lacked capacity to align the work in a comprehensive improvement plan that would support outcomes for all students. More importantly, the improvement plans were not always based on data and clearly identified barriers that impeded student success. Stakeholders noted that the implementation of a general framework delayed the intended progression of supporting students with the appropriate practices. However, the components of Student Success create an environment by which evidence-based practices can benefit students and improve outcomes.

During Phase I, Georgia identified three barriers that impeded school completion for all children-including children with disabilities.

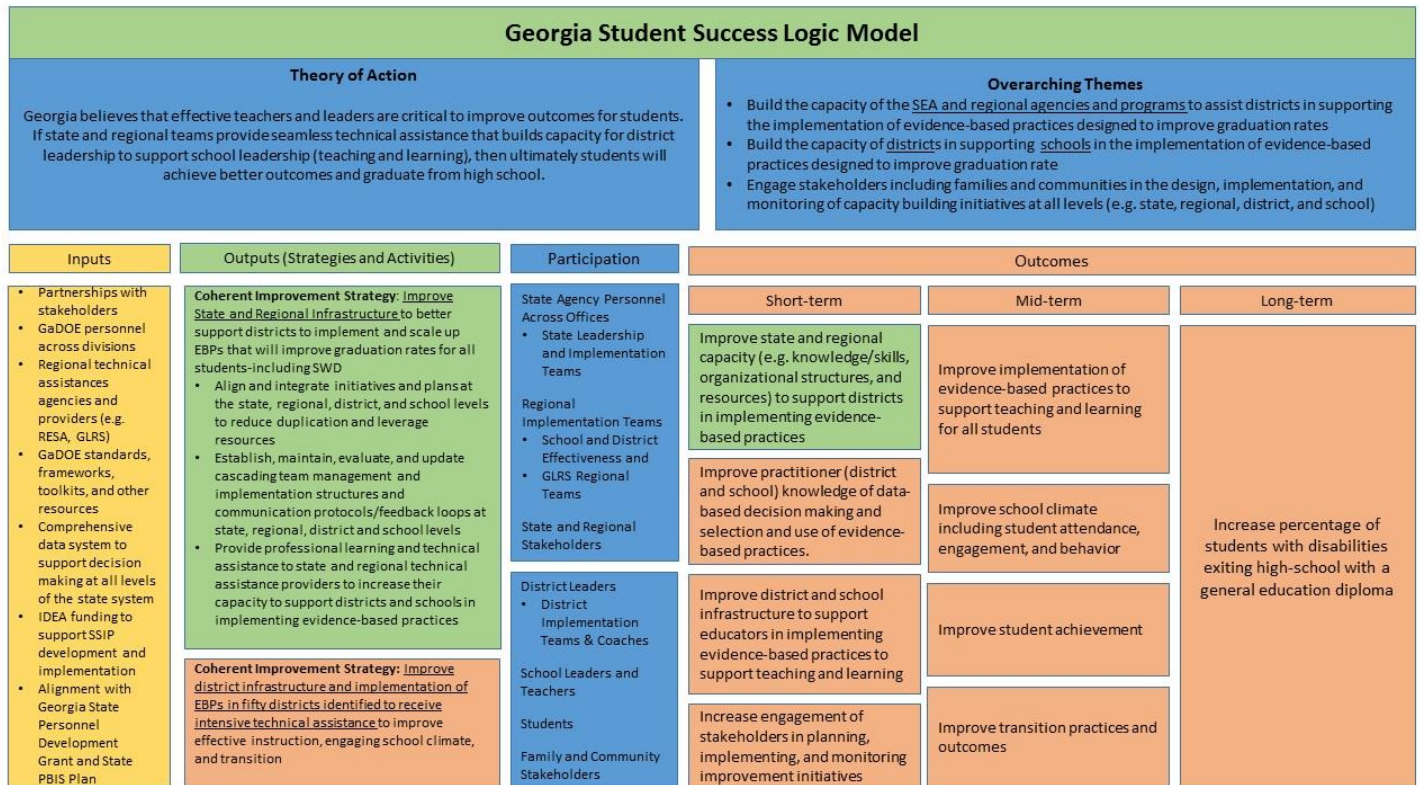
1. Access to the general curriculum;
2. Access to a positive school climate; and
3. Access to specially designed instruction.

The three barriers align with the framework suggested in the article "Addressing Dropout Related Factors at the Local Level." Districts will use the Student Success Process to guide the selection and implementation of specific evidence-based practices, which will benefit targeted students at the school level. During Phase II, the fifty districts prioritized infrastructure development at the district level and considered the following: (a) universal evidence-based practices that are expected for all schools in the district, (b) targeted evidence-based practices that are suggested for Select schools and (c) intensive supports (EBPs) for individual students in at least one high school. The State believed that districts should pilot the work of supporting evidence-based practices in a targeted school for targeted students. Based on local analyses, districts needed additional time to adequately explore specific evidence-based practices for individual students because the universal and targeted expectations were not always effective. The State believes that this process of supports will increase the scope of the work and build long-term scalability.

At the school level, the district supports the Student Success components to include stakeholder engagement, data analysis, barrier identification and action planning. Each school must commit to providing evidence-based practices directly related to effective instruction, engaging climate and/or transition. The National Dropout Prevention Center has a wealth of resources to support this selection. Currently, the State does not have one specific evidence-based practice that all districts will implement. During Phase III, the Department will be able to clearly identify targeted evidence-based practices across the fifty districts. If appropriate, the State will consider necessary resources to support implementation of specific evidence-based practices as supported by local district feedback and plans.

Theory of Action

A graphic illustration that shows the rationale of how implementing the coherent set of improvement strategies selected will increase the State’s capacity to lead meaningful change in LEAs, and achieve improvement in the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities.



Optional Description

Stakeholders were critical in developing the Theory of Action and newly developed Logic Model. Improved outcomes for SWD start with effective leaders at the LEA level. Leadership must be able to engage the appropriate stakeholders to solve their own adaptive challenges and develop a differentiated plan to support school-level change. Realizing that this change in adult practices must take place with multiple opportunities to practice the new behavior with ongoing coaching and feedback, Regional Implementation Teams (RITs) are critical partners.

GaDOE will collaborate with regional systems to provide a seamless support system for LEAs and schools. Unfortunately, change will not happen if state and regional resources become the work; therefore, there must be relevant opportunities to support LEAs as they address their own systemic issues and concerns through a common systemic process. At the school level, appropriate interventions and supports decrease student risk factors and improve school completion rate for students. Overall, leaders will become more proactive, and classroom instruction will reflect rigor for all students.

Georgia has not revised the Theory of Action but created critical alignments among the Theory of Action, Overarching Themes, Coherent Improvement Strategies, and the new Logic Model. The State strengthened this area based on feedback during Phase I and believe that the new Logic Model creates a methodical flow of activities to transition the work across all levels.

Phase II: Infrastructure Development

(a) Specify improvements that will be made to the State infrastructure to better support LEAs to implement and scale up EBPs to improve results for children with disabilities.

During the infrastructure analysis completed for the Phase I submission of the SSIP, the GaDOE and its internal and external stakeholders analyzed the State’s infrastructure and identified areas that would need to be improved in order to support LEAs in implementing and scaling up evidence-based practices to improve graduation rates for SWD. Based on this analysis, the GaDOE and its stakeholders have identified a robust set of infrastructure improvement activities that are designed to improve the Department’s ability to support districts in implementing the coherent improvement strategies and activities in a sustainable manner. These activities will be developed over the life of the SSIP and adjusted as needed based on implementation process and outcome data. More importantly, the State prioritized infrastructure development and supports as a high priority of this work and identified this area as an explicit Coherent Improvement Strategy during Phase II.

The improvement strategies are listed below and are included in the Georgia SSIP Logic Model and Implementation Plan located in Appendix A of this document.

Infrastructure Area	Relevant Improvement Strategies
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, disseminate, and update Student Success Process, expectations, and related resources • Align and integrate initiatives and plans at the state, regional, district, and school levels to reduce duplication and leverage resources • Establish, maintain, evaluate, and update cascading team management and implementation structures and communication protocols and feedback loops at state, regional, district, and school levels
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, disseminate, and update Student Success Process, expectations, and related resources
Fiscal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide capacity-building grants to districts to support implementation of EBPs
Accountability and Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Align and integrate initiatives and plans at the state and regional levels to reduce duplication and leverage resources
Professional Learning and Technical Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide professional learning and technical assistance to state and regional technical assistance providers to increase their capacity to support districts in implementing evidence-based practices • Provide a seamless system of universal, targeted, and intensive technical assistance (including professional development) to districts to build capacity of district and school leaders to support teaching and learning

In the following table, information is provided to support the need for each of the above improvement activities by infrastructure area (e.g. governance, quality standards, fiscal, data. monitoring and accountability, professional learning, and technical assistance). In addition, the improvement need directly aligns with the impact of the implementation of the improvement activities on State’s ability to support districts.

Infrastructure Area: Governance

Description of Improvement Need	Improvement Strategy as Reflected on Student Success Logic Model	Impact on State’s Ability to Support Districts in Implementing Coherent Improvement Strategies and Activities in a Sustainable Manner
<p>At the GaDOE, staff across various offices and divisions are working to develop and implement programs that are designed to improve outcomes for all students including SWD. This work often occurs in silos and communication between workgroups has been inconsistent and intermittent. These challenges are also experienced by regional technical assistance agencies, districts, and schools.</p> <p>Often, information that is critical to implementing improvement strategies is not communicated horizontally (i.e. at the GaDOE, within the regional agency, district, or school) or vertically (i.e. between the aforementioned levels of the system) to share information and resources.</p>	<p>Establish linked management and implementation team structures and protocols to support vertical and horizontal communication and supports across all levels of the state system (e.g. state, regional agencies, districts, and schools)</p>	<p>The GaDOE management and implementation structure, as described in the introduction section of this document, will support the state in developing and implementing a seamless system of technical assistance supports to assist districts and school in implementing Evidence-Based Practices to enhance teaching and learning.</p> <p>The technical assistance will assist districts and schools in identifying, implementing, and scaling-up Evidence-Based Practices based on the completion of a comprehensive data and infrastructure analysis using the Student Success Planning Process.</p> <p>The linked communication protocols and feedback loops will ensure that districts receive information and supports in a timely manner.</p>
<p>The GaDOE and districts across Georgia have been focused on improving graduation rates for all students including SWD. Some districts struggle with using a comprehensive problem solving process to identify universal, targeted and intensive supports that are differentiated based on data and capacity to implement improvement strategies and activities. Districts need assistance in developing a plan that focuses on improving graduation rates for SWD.</p>	<p>Develop, disseminate, and update Student Success Process, expectations, and related resources</p>	<p>The GaDOE will develop the Student Success Process to assist districts in developing a district-wide plan with coherent strategies to improve graduation outcomes for SWD. This data and infrastructure analysis components of the process will assist districts in identifying strategies and activities based on data and capacity to implement. Action steps outlined in the plan should support fidelity of implementation of the strategies and activities leading to improved outcomes for SWD.</p> <p>Use of a consistent process across the state will enable the state to coordinate technical assistance to districts.</p>

Infrastructure Area: Governance

Description of Improvement Need	Improvement Strategy as Reflected on Student Success Logic Model	Impact on State’s Ability to Support Districts in Implementing Coherent Improvement Strategies and Activities in a Sustainable Manner
<p>The GaDOE has established rigorous academic standards, the Georgia Standards of Excellence, for ALL students and has numerous resources have been developed to support the implementation of the standards. Access to the general education curriculum and effective instruction was identified as a primary causal factor to low graduation rates in Phase I of the SSIP.</p> <p>The GaDOE has also identified District and School Performance Standards and utilized these standards as a basis for its School and District Effectiveness improvement initiatives. Special education leadership is not consistently involved in implementing and evaluating these standards at the school or district levels. As a result, improvement initiatives within a district have not traditionally been aligned leading to duplication of resources and negatively impacted outcomes.</p> <p>Moreover, districts and school improvement plans that are based on these standards are not aligned. Multiple plans are submitted to the GaDOE leading to lack of coordination and integration of improvement initiatives.</p>	<p>Align and integrate initiatives and plans at the state, regional, district and school levels to reduce duplication and leverage resources</p>	<p>Alignment and integration of initiatives and plans based on quality standards will reduce duplication, leverage resources, and maximize results for students with disabilities. At the GaDOE, this alignment and integration will ensure that multiple offices and divisions have a common focus and aligned activities to support districts and schools.</p> <p>When districts and schools are creating integrated plans and technical assistance providers are working in a coordinated manner to align the provided supports, it is likely that districts and schools will be more effective implementing coherent improvement strategies and activities in a sustainable manner.</p>

Infrastructure Area: Fiscal

Description of Improvement Need	Improvement Strategy as Reflected on Student Success Logic Model	Impact on State’s Ability to Support Districts in Implementing Coherent Improvement Strategies and Activities in a Sustainable Manner
<p>The GADOE requires districts to submit budgets through the LEA Consolidated Application Website which supports districts in leveraging resources across programs to ensure that all children have an opportunity to meet state academic achievement standards. In addition, consolidating the planning and program requirements across all programs participating in the LEA Consolidated Application process eliminates the need for districts to submit multiple plans, thus making the application process more efficient for applicants.</p> <p>The State appropriate 1 billion dollars in funding across programs. However, districts can benefit from additional capacity building grants to support the implementation of intensive improvement initiatives. For example, districts have reported difficulty in securing funding for district coaches to support the implementation of Evidence-Based Practices with fidelity.</p> <p>In an effort to align and integrate plans and initiatives, LEAs required to provide Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS) must integrate improvement planning with the comprehensive Student Success Process to maximize use of funds.</p> <p>The GaDOE allocates and distributes funds to support local GLRS, which provide direct TA for the SSIP process.</p>	<p>Provide capacity-building grants to intensive districts to fund coaching supports and implement evidence-based practices</p>	<p>The GaDOE does not have the capacity to provide coaching supports directly to schools and districts. Fidelity of implementation and subsequent outcomes will be greatly supported by district coaches who can support school leaders and teachers in selecting, implementing, and evaluating the impact of Evidence-Based Practices.</p>

Infrastructure Area: Data

Description of Improvement Need	Improvement Strategy as Reflected on Student Success Logic Model	Impact on State’s Ability to Support Districts in Implementing Coherent Improvement Strategies and Activities in a Sustainable Manner
<p>As described in Phase I of the SSIP, Georgia has a robust data collection, analysis, and reporting system. Districts and schools are engaged in analyzing data to support identification and implementation of improvement strategies and activities.</p> <p>Although the state has designed and implemented a State Longitudinal Data System and reporting system, districts and schools need supports for analyzing and using data to inform instruction for students</p> <p>Tools and templates are needed to assist district and school personnel in identifying multiple data sources for analysis and identifying gaps in performance among subgroups that will support the identification of low performing schools and students in need of additional supports.</p>	<p>Develop, disseminate, and update Student Success Process, expectations, and related resources</p>	<p>If districts use multiple data sources and a common process and associated resources for analyzing data, the GaDOE can develop statewide professional learning and technical assistance to support districts.</p> <p>Districts will benefit from data analysis resources to assist them in identifying low performing schools and students and in determining the causal factors associated with this low performance.</p> <p>The GaDOE will develop a data toolkit and companion resources to support districts in this effort. Use of the toolkit and resources will lead to appropriate identification of target schools and students and the identification of appropriate improvement strategies to improve outcomes including graduation rate.</p>

Infrastructure Area: Monitoring and Accountability

Description of Improvement Need	Improvement Strategy as Reflected on Student Success Logic Model	Impact on State’s Ability to Support Districts in Implementing Coherent Improvement Strategies and Activities in a Sustainable Manner
<p>The Division for Special Education Services and Supports has been working to streamline monitoring and accountability activities in its commitment to implement a system of results-focused monitoring.</p> <p>Despite the efforts that have been made in this area, there are some monitoring activities that have remained “siloeed”. For example, monitoring for significant disproportionality has been conducted in isolation and districts were required to develop Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS) Plans and Corrective Action Plans (CAPS), if needed.</p> <p>Many of the causal factors identified in the Significant Disproportionality Self-Assessment are the same as those that are being identified by district personnel as they are completing the data and infrastructure analyses for Student Success. Under the current monitoring and accountability system, districts would have to develop separate plans for Student Success and CEIS. This is not efficient and leads to duplication of resources.</p>	<p>Align and integrate initiatives and plans at the state, regional, district, and school levels to reduce duplication and leverage resources</p>	<p>Alignment and integration of monitoring activities at the GaDOE will enable the Department to leverage the expertise and resources across units within special education. For example, when monitoring for Significant Disproportionality, staff within the Monitoring unit were responsible for the compliance and program improvement components. Staff from other units such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Curriculum were not engaged in this monitoring or follow-up support. Discipline and insufficient access to effective instruction are two causal factors in districts being identified with significant disproportionality; yet, some staff were not involved in this work.</p> <p>Within districts, alignment and integration of the SSIP will reduce duplicate processes such as conducting a comprehensive data analysis and submitting duplicate plans- Student Success and CEIS.</p>

Infrastructure Area: Professional Learning and Technical Assistance

Description of Improvement Need	Improvement Strategy as Reflected on Student Success Logic Model	Impact on State’s Ability to Support Districts in Implementing Coherent Improvement Strategies and Activities in a Sustainable Manner
<p>The GaDOE and its regional technical assistance agencies including Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) and Georgia Learning Resource System (GLRS) Centers) provide professional learning and technical assistance to district personnel on a variety of topics. These regional technical assistance partners serve as the technical assistance and professional learning boots on the ground for the GaDOE. Each center employs staff with knowledge and skills needed to support district general and special education personnel.</p> <p>During the development of Phase I and Phase II components of the SSIP, the state identified a continuing need to build the capacity of regional technical assistance providers for additional professional learning and technical assistance to support access to the general education curriculum for ALL students to include UDL; access to a positive school climate for ALL students; and access to Specially Designed Instruction for SWD. These regional providers would then be responsible for providing professional learning and coaching to district personnel.</p> <p>The GaDOE does not have the personnel needed to provide all of the professional learning and technical assistance to address these issues.</p>	<p>Provide professional learning and technical assistance to state and regional technical assistance providers to increase their capacity to support districts in implementing evidence-based practices</p> <p>Provide a seamless system of universal, targeted, and intensive technical assistance (including professional learning) to districts to build capacity of district and school leaders to support teaching and learning</p>	<p>The GaDOE will leverage its regional technical assistance agencies including Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs), Georgia Learning Resource System (GLRS), PBIS State Coordinators, and Regional School Climate Specialists to provide high quality professional learning and technical assistance including coaching to district personnel. Without this support, it would not be possible to achieve the changes in adult practice in district administrators that are needed to improve outcomes for SWD.</p>

Alignment of Improvement Plans and Initiatives

1(b) Identify the steps the State will take to further align and leverage current improvement plans and initiatives in the State, including general and special education, which impact children with disabilities.

During Phase I of the SSIP submission, the GaDOE with input from internal and external stakeholders completed a comprehensive analysis of improvement plans across general and special education in order to identify duplication and gaps. This analysis revealed varying degrees of alignment and integration. The following chart provides a listing of the current plans and initiatives that impact students with disabilities

Name of Current Improvement Plan or Initiative	General Education	Special Education	Alignment to Improvement Strategy
State Systemic Improvement Plan	X	X	The State has identified increased graduation rate for students with disabilities as the SIMR.
Georgia's State Transition Plan		X	The State Transition Plan supports district-level implementation of evidence-based practices specific transition for college and career readiness. Transition practices are included in the midterm outcomes collected in Georgia's SSIP.
Georgia Department of Education Strategic Plan	X	X	The SSIP is included in the Department's Strategic Plan and identified as a measurable outcome. Goal #1: Increase the percentage of high school graduates who are college and/or career ready – the SSIP is identified in the State Strategic Plan as a measurable outcome under this goal.
Get Georgia Reading Campaign	X		This Campaign supports district, school and community implementation of evidence-based practices specific to reading/literacy instruction for young children. These resources will support implementation of core instruction and interventions/supports.
Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)	X	X	The SSIP work supports local districts in improving data and student outcomes as measured through the accountability plan.
Georgia Department of Education Literacy Plan	X	X	Georgia Literacy Plan supports district, school and community implementation of evidence-based practices specific to reading/literacy instruction. These resources will support implementation of core instruction and interventions/supports.
Project AWARE	X	X	Georgia received the Now Is The Time – Project Aware Grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). This grant is providing the Department resources to develop and establish protocols in collaboration with three local schools districts designed to create a sustainable process for providing mental health services to student in schools through a partnership with community providers. This process has the potential to provide a framework to ensure every student in need receives the behavioral and

Name of Current Improvement Plan or Initiative	General Education	Special Education	Alignment to Improvement Strategy
			/or mental health support needed to reduce drop outs and move additional SWD to a diploma.
Georgia State Personnel Development Grant	X	X	The SPDG leveraged resources focused on improving graduation outcomes for all students-including SWD. Webpage: SPDG
CEEDAR Grant		X	<p>CEEDAR stands for “Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability and Reform.” CEEDAR helps Institutions of Higher Education reform their teacher and leader preparation programs, revise licensure standards to align with reforms, refine personnel evaluation systems, and realign policy structures and professional learning systems.</p> <p>Georgia’s CEEDAR team has addressed the issues of alignment of teacher preparation programs and new certification requirements in an effort to improve the teacher workforce available to support the SSIP. CEEDAR-GA Project Webpage Link</p>
Equity	X	X	The state equity plan submission has been realigned to include the review of data including the graduation rate gap between subgroups and the all student rate. Additionally, the review of additional data elements at the school level are designed to bring attention to the placement of staff in low performing schools. Georgia’s Equity Webpage Link
School and District Effectiveness	X	X	Partnership with School and District Effectiveness has been a critical partnership as the State moves to align initiatives in the LEAs. 30 of the 50 intensive districts also are working with the School and District effectiveness initiatives. Georgia’s School and District Effectiveness Webpage Link
Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)	X	X	The State’s PBIS plan supports implementation of EBPs specific to improving positive school climate and provision of behavioral/social emotions supports for students. Georgia’s PBIS Webpage Link

The following specific steps have been taken to foster further alignment of these plans and initiatives:

- 1) Georgia established a State Collaborative Meeting that includes diverse Department Leadership to meet biweekly and discuss progress of implementation in local school districts. Through this collaborative process, Federal Programs aligned resources to provide a comprehensive conference for local districts.
- 2) Division for Special Education and Division for School and District Effectiveness engage in ongoing planning and implementation to support targeted districts with improvement efforts.
- 3) The GaDOE Executive Cabinet membership was adjusted to include varied leaders across the Department and encourage alignment of plans and initiatives.
- 4) The Executive Leadership provided technical assistance for all personnel and staff on the new strategic plan and discussed various opportunities to align the work.
- 5) The Department is exploring steps to align the work and support a multi-tiered system of supports for local districts.

It is expected that the steps taken to create alignment of improvement plans and initiatives across general and special education (as described above), will have a positive impact on all students-including children with disabilities. Many of these initiatives support local implementation in common districts; therefore, the alignment will maximize resources and reduce redundant planning.

(c) Identify who will be in charge of implementing the changes to infrastructure, resources needed, expected outcomes, and timelines for completing improvement efforts.

(d) Specify how the State will involve multiple offices within the State educational agency (SEA), as well as other State agencies and stakeholders in the improvement of its infrastructure.

The SSIP State Leadership Team takes responsibility for implementing the changes to Georgia's infrastructure, resources, expected outcomes and timelines for completing improving efforts. Georgia's Leadership Team includes representation from Special Education, Curriculum and Instruction, School Improvement, School and District Effectiveness, Teacher and Leader Effectiveness, and RESA. The SSIP Evaluator worked diligently to assist Georgia in developing critical feedback loops that provide the Leadership Team with the appropriate information necessary for program improvements. The State identified a SSIP State Coordinator who supports the Leadership Team with these tasks.

During Phase II, the GaDOE extended the invitation to the Dr. Dean Fixsen, at the [State Implementation & Scaling-up Evidence-based Practices \(SISEP\)](#), to support Georgia by administering the State Capacity Assessment for Scaling up Evidence-Based Practices. The SSIP State Leadership Team, along with additional critical leaders across the Department, completed the review. Georgia's findings indicated the following: (a) 54% for State Investment, (b) 50% for State Alignment, and (c) 38% for Commitment to Regional Implementation Capacity. Georgia's total score was 48%, which indicated significant progress in a relatively short period of time. The State Capacity Assessment empowered the Department with critical data to support required next steps for this work.

- Create a commitment of shared leadership for the SSIP at the state level and commit the necessary personnel and/or resources
- Provide necessary structure, supports and training for Regional Implementation Teams
- Structure supports and accountability systems to encourage and strengthen the alignment of this work at each level

During Phase II, Georgia identified additional resources necessary to implement the infrastructure changes. In addition to the current State Coordinator for SSIP, Georgia is considering pairing the special education personnel with a representative from general education. Perhaps the most efficient way to support children with disabilities in a diverse manner would be to show collaborative leadership for the initiative across the Department. If approved, the intended timeline for implementation will be the 2016-17 school year. The paired leadership will foster deeper collaboration between special education and school improvement.

The Department will continue to engage internal and external stakeholders throughout the development and implementation of these changes. Stakeholders will convene, either in person or through technology, at least quarterly and offer the state ongoing feedback. The SSIP State Leadership Team will convene biweekly and use the newly revised logic model to message the roles and responsibilities of this group.

Phase II: Support for LEA Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices

(a) Specify how the State will support LEAs in implementing the Evidence-Based Practices that will result in changes in LEA, school, and provider practices to achieve the SIMR(s) for children with disabilities.

(b) Identify steps and specific activities needed to implement the coherent improvement strategies. Include communication strategies, stakeholder involvement; how identified barriers will be addressed; and who will be in charge of implementing. Include how the activities will be implemented with fidelity; the resources that will be used to implement them; and timelines for completion.

The primary role of the State SSIP State Coordinator is to guide the development and implementation process at the state level. The primary role of the SSIP Regional Coordinator is to guide development and implementation at the regional level and ensure fidelity of implementation among the GLRS Regional Teams-also referred to as the Regional Implementation Teams. The Regional Coordinator has provided leadership and support for Georgia State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) and receives ongoing training and credentials in this area.

How will the State support LEAs during the implementation of evidence-based practices? As stated earlier, LEAs struggled to identify appropriate evidence-based practices and implement those practices with fidelity. The Coherent Improvement Strategies support the district in both selection and implementation of evidence-based practices, as appropriate. Georgia's SSIP does not specifically identify one evidence-based practice that all fifty LEAs will implement with targeted students. Instead, the plan provides a supportive framework by which LEAs can appropriately select evidence-based practices that are aligned with the intended outcome and implement those practices with fidelity.

During Phase II, the Division for District Effectiveness required all districts with identified priority and/or focus schools to complete a self-assessment that aligned with the [Georgia District Performance Standards](#). Approximately thirty of the district teams that completed the self-assessment received intensive technical assistance among the identified fifty districts. The evidence supported that many of these districts rated local implementation as "limited development" in several indicators that directly impact student supports. The self-assessment findings align with Georgia's decision to prioritize infrastructure development and selection of evidence-based practices prior to implementation.

- Use a collaborative, data-driven planning process at the district and school levels for improving student learning
- Use protocols and processes for problem solving, decision-making, and removing barriers
- Guide and supports schools in the selection and implementation of effective strategies, programs, and interventions to improve student learning
- Use processes to monitor and provide timely guidance, support, and feedback to individual schools as they implement improvement plans
- Assess the impact of professional learning on staff practices and student learning and make adjustments
- Engage and support all schools in systematic processes for curriculum design to align instruction and assessments with the required standards

February 29, 2016, the fifty LEAs submitted evidence to support implementation of the Student Success Process after a comprehensive review of data and identification of barriers. LEAs used many of the resources, such as the data toolkit, to support the robust analysis across federal and state programs. Each district was asked to identify short-term next steps critical to support the district in clearly identifying universal, targeted and

intensive supports for schools and students. The RITs supported districts in completing this analysis and outlining the next steps. The next update is July 31, 2016 in which the fifty districts will submit a plan to support specific evidence-based practices at the school level. RITs will use various resources to help districts select evidence-based practices that would address the local barriers and support the State's SIMR. The [National Dropout Prevention Center](#) identified specific practices aligned with increasing school completion and discussed the size effect of each practice. A [Meta-Analysis](#), of twelve strategies, concluded an overall effect size of .15, and the twelve strategies are shown below.

- 1) Behavioral Intervention, Career Development/Job Training, Family Engagement, and Literacy Development demonstrated a larger effect size than the overall effect on dropout thus improving school completion.
- 2) Academic Support, Health and Wellness, Life Skills development, and Mentoring demonstrated a commensurate effect size.
- 3) Afterschool, School/Classroom Environment, Service-Learning, and Work-Based Learning demonstrate a smaller effect size than the overall effect size.

RITs will receive ongoing training and supports to use the National Dropout Prevention Center research to guide local districts in selecting a specific evidence-based practice. In general, these practices can be organized by infrastructure, instruction, or climate. As the district identifies barriers to student success, the RITs will share specific research and resources that empower the District Implementation Teams to explore appropriate evidence-based practices. The research, supporting effect size, can provide critical information as District Implementation Teams select effective practices that will result in the greatest improvement of student outcomes.

During Phase I, numerous districts discussed concerns with engaging school climates and explored possible options to support evidence-based practices in this area. Several of the fifty districts currently implement district-wide PBIS but could benefit from additional supports in this area. As an example, a local district might conclude that integrating behavioral interventions and mentoring supports for targeted students will improve school completion. The State will guide LEA selection and implementation, as well as, offer appropriate supports to do this work. Stakeholders have suggested that the Department should allocate resources to support LEAs in implementation, when available. Districts may opt to utilize Check and Connect, specific literacy practices and interventions, or effective transition planning as a few examples. The RITs would guide the district in clearly identifying the evidence-based practices and creating critical connections with the data analysis and local infrastructure. Another critical aspect of the work creates a fidelity of implementation that ensures evidence-based practices are implemented as designed. During Phase III, Georgia will be able to update this section and clearly define the specific evidence-based practices implemented across the fifty districts and how the Department continues to support this implementation. RITs will facilitate the review of literature to include well-vetted resources such as The National Dropout Prevention Research in which many of these practices are currently available on the [GA SPDG website](#).

The State Director of Special Education and the SSIP State Coordinator created a seamless system of feedback and communication to support this work. As needed, the State Director provides consistent communication across the RITs and local districts to share clear expectations. The [SSIP Webpage](#) provides timely updates and access to resources for stakeholders, RITs and local districts. The Quarterly Leadership Launch Webinars, for the Fifty Districts, created a viable strategy to inform local leadership and shore up the foundation of this work.

During FFY 2015, Georgia will engage in ongoing planning meetings to consider additional resources needed for implementation and adjust timelines based on potential developments during Phase III. By this juncture, local districts will have identified barriers that negatively impact school completion in the district and indicated the connections among those barriers to the state-identified barriers. March – June 2016, Regional Implementation Teams will continue to provide technical assistance for these fifty districts to ensure the barriers are supported by data and aligned with specific evidence-based practices currently being explored by the local districts. The RITs will use the Implementation Science Hexagon to assist local District Implementation Teams to explore readiness and ultimately select, implement, sustain, and scale up the evidence-based practices.

Based on a preliminary review of district plans, most leadership teams indicated barriers across access to the general curriculum, access to specially designed instruction, and access to engaging school climate. In addition to specific practices, district leadership identified several concerns with infrastructure and supports for leaders and teachers that must be addressed through this process. In some instances, the identification of barriers was clear, logical and aligned with the analysis of data. In other cases, district leadership identified strategies to eradicate the barriers but neglected to clearly identify those barriers. In other examples, identified barriers were critical symptoms but not necessarily the root causes of the problem.

The RITs will use the Student Success Process Planning Rubric to provide feedback for the fifty districts and consultation to the leadership teams to strengthen the improvement process, as needed. During a technical assistance for RITs, the SSIP Evaluator and Regional Coordinator will provide professional development in this area to ensure fidelity and consistent messaging. The initial review provided the State Leadership Team with ample information to outline a general plan for implementation of evidence-based practices related to climate, instruction, and infrastructure among the fifty districts.

The State will involve multiple offices within the SEA (and other State agencies) to support LEAs in scaling up and sustaining the implementation of the evidence-based practices once they have been implemented with fidelity. The SSIP State Coordinator will work with the Regional Coordinator to visually map implementation of the practices among the fifty districts. This information will be communicated with other divisions and will increase opportunities to align the work and scale up the practices. LEAs are required to select one high school during the initial phase to ensure fidelity of implementation will not be compromised. Overtime, the RITs will support the fifty districts in developing plans to sustain and scale up the evidence-based practices across the districts. The Department will seek opportunities to support local implementation and invite additional districts to benefit from these practices, as well.

Phase II: Evaluation

Alignment with Theory of Action and Other Components

3(a) Specify how the evaluation is aligned to the theory of action and other components of the SSIP and the extent to which it includes short-term and long-term objectives to measure implementation of the SSIP. Specify its impact on achieving measurable improvement in SIMR(s) for children and youth with disabilities.

Evaluation Type and Resources:

The GaDOE has used an external evaluator to support the development of the evaluation plan. This evaluator has worked closely with the Student Success Leadership and Implementation Teams and with stakeholders in identifying evaluation questions and associated measurements. The evaluation services, which are estimated to be about .25 FTE for FFY 2015, are procured through a contract with the GaDOE and supported with IDEA funds. The current level of funding is sufficient to support evaluation activities required for the SSIP. The GaDOE will review the contract for evaluation services on an annual basis and will make adjustments as needed based on the scope of the evaluation.

The Department is also working to build internal state capacity to support the SSIP evaluation. The external evaluator will be working with the Student Success Leadership Team to identify evaluation activities that can be completed internally and to ensure alignment with external evaluation activities.

Identification of Inputs, Outputs, and Outcomes:

The GaDOE with input from stakeholders has developed a Student Success Logic Model that is aligned with the Theory of Action and clearly articulates and connects the inputs, outputs, and short and long term outcomes for the SSIP. A copy of the logic model is included in Appendix B of this document. A summary of the logic model is included below:

The inputs represent the investments and resources that support the implementation of the SSIP and include:

- Partnerships with internal and external stakeholders
- GaDOE personnel across offices and divisions
- Regional technical assistances agencies and providers (e.g. RESA, GLRS)
- GaDOE standards, frameworks, toolkits, and other resources
- Comprehensive data system to support decision making at all levels of the state system
- IDEA funding to support SSIP development and implementation
- Alignment with Georgia State Personnel Development Grant
- Alignment with Project Aware (embedded in the Statewide PBIS Plan)
- Alignment with Statewide PBIS
- Alignment with the CEEDAR Grant

The outputs below represent the broad infrastructure strategies that are addressed in the Student Success Evaluation Plan included in Appendix A. In addition, detailed activities for each of the strategies is included in the Student Success Improvement Plan located in Appendix A.

Coherent Improvement Strategy One: Improve State and Regional Infrastructures to better support districts to implement and scale up EBPs that will improve graduation rates for all students-including SWD.

- Align and integrate initiatives and plans at the state, regional, district, and school levels to reduce duplication and leverage resources
- Establish, maintain, evaluate, and update cascading team management and implementation structures and communication protocols/feedback loops at state, regional, district and school levels
- Provide professional learning and technical assistance to state and regional technical assistance providers to increase their capacity to support districts and schools in implementing Evidence-Based Practices

Coherent Improvement Strategy Two: Improve district infrastructure and implementation of EBPs in fifty districts identified to receive intensive technical assistance to improve effective instruction, engaging school climate, and transition. **Applies only to the 50 districts selected to receive intensive technical assistance.**

Short-term, mid-term, and long-term outcomes were also identified and represent changes in outcomes that are expected to occur based on implementation of the improvement strategies listed above.

Short-term Outcomes represent changes in capacity at each level of the state system:

- Improve state and regional capacity (e.g. knowledge/skills, organizational structures, and resources) to support districts in implementing Evidence-Based Practices
- Improve practitioner (district and school) knowledge of data-based decision making and selection and use of Evidence-Based Practices.
- Improve district and school infrastructure to support educators in implementing Evidence-Based Practices to support teaching and learning
- Increase engagement of stakeholders in planning, implementing, and monitoring improvement initiatives

Mid-term Outcomes represent changes in practices related to teaching and learning and include some student level outcomes in key areas related to barriers identified in Phase I Data Analysis (e.g. access to general curriculum, access to specially designed instruction, and access to positive school climate) and of factors contributing to low graduation rates.

- Improve implementation of evidence-based practices to support teaching and learning to ensure access to the curriculum for all students
- Improve school climate including student attendance, engagement, and behavior
- Improve student achievement
- Improve transition practices and outcomes

The long-term outcome represents Georgia’s State-identified Measurable Result which is “Increase percentage of students with disabilities exiting high-school with a general education diploma”.

Alignment with Other Components:

The Student Success Evaluation Plan is clearly aligned to the theory of action identified in Phase I of the SSIP and to other components of the SSIP. Georgia’s theory of action is that building the capacity of district leadership to support school leadership will result in improvements in teaching and learning and will ultimately lead to students achieving better outcomes and graduating from high school with a general education diploma.

Based on the above theory of action, it became apparent that in order to improve teaching and learning, it would be necessary to improve the state and regional infrastructure to increase their ability to support districts in the selection, implementation and scaling-up of Evidence-Based Practices (Coherent Improvement Strategy One). In addition, in order to improve graduation rates and meet the SIMR, some targeted districts would need more

intensive supports to assist them in implementing Evidence-Based Practices to improve effective instruction, engaging social climate, and transition.

Within this theory of action and the two improvement strategies listed above, several strands emerged related to improving infrastructure and building capacity. These were,

- Alignment and integration of plans, initiatives, and resources at all levels of the state system
- Communication in and between all levels of the system
- Professional learning and technical assistance to build capacity of technical assistance providers and district/school personnel in the selection and implementation of evidence based practices

Development of the theory of action led to **broad** evaluation questions which tested the theory of action for the SSIP. These questions included:

- What types of resources and investments can we leverage to support the implementation of Student Success? (Inputs)
- What types of strategies and activities will we need to implement to address the strands from the theory of action and achieve to the desired outcomes? (Outputs)
- What are the short- and medium-term outcomes that will lead us to our State-identified Measurable Result (i.e. long-term outcome) of improving graduation rates of students with disabilities?

On-going discussions related to these broad questions based on the theory of action led to the development of the Student Success Logic Model which includes a visual description of the inputs and outputs that were needed to achieve the desired short and mid-term outcomes leading to the long-term outcome of improving graduation rates. The logic model was reviewed with stakeholders and changes were made based on their input. The logic model is included in Appendix A (page three).

Following the development of the logic model, the State Leadership and Implementation Teams worked to develop a comprehensive improvement plan that will guide implementation through FFY 2018. This plan, which is referred to as the Student Success Implementation plan, is included in Appendix A of the SSIP Phase II and is based on the two improvement strategies designed to improve infrastructure and support practice that are needed to achieve the outcomes on the logic model leading to the SIMR. For each improvement strategy, the following components are included:

- Level of state system being addressed (e.g. state, regional, district)
- Specific activities/steps needed to implement the strategies
- Responsible Individuals or Groups
- Timelines for completing the activities
- Resources needed to implement the activities

Next, the GaDOE Leadership and Implementation Teams and its stakeholders developed an evaluation plan based on the strategies, activities, and timelines established in the Student Success Improvement Plan. The evaluation plan includes:

- Evaluation questions specific to each of the improvement strategies. (e.g., Has collaboration of GaDOE staff increased as a result of Student Success Implementation? Was the evidence-based practice implemented with fidelity by regional, district, and school teams)
- Performance indicators which provide information on whether or not the activities for each of the improvement strategies were implemented and accomplished as intended and outcomes were achieved

(e.g. Percentage of Student Success processes, expectations, and resources that were completed within proposed timelines, Percentage of teachers implementing evidence-based practices with fidelity, etc.)

- Data Collection Methods and Sources that reveal what measurements will be used and methods for collecting the data
- Responsible Individuals or Groups which identifies the persons or groups of persons responsible for collecting and analyzing the data
- Timelines for completing data collection and analysis activities

The Student Success Implementation and Leadership Teams with input from stakeholders have worked diligently to ensure that strong connections exist and are evident between the theory of action, the logic model, and the improvement and evaluation plans.

Stakeholder Involvement

3(b) Specify how the evaluation includes stakeholders and how information from the evaluation will be disseminated to stakeholders.

Recruitment of Stakeholders:

The GaDOE worked extensively during Phase I of the SSIP to recruit a diverse group of stakeholders to support the development and implementation of the SSIP. Internal stakeholders included staff from the Division for Special Education Services and Supports and partners from key offices including the Division for School Improvement, Title I, Division for Curriculum and Instruction, Division for Teacher and Leader Effectiveness, Divisions for Accountability and Assessment, Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE), and Division of Data Collections. External stakeholders included individuals representing Colleges and Universities, regional technical assistance agencies including Georgia Learning Resources System and Regional Educational Service Agencies, the Georgia Parent Training and Information Center, the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency, Babies Can't Wait: Part C, the Governor's Office of Student Achievement, and the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. Special education directors, parent mentors, and members of the State Advisory Panel for Special Education also served as stakeholders for the SSIP. Many of these stakeholder groups were represented on the Student Success Stakeholder Committee that was convened during the development of Phase I SSIP components and maintained to support Phase II development and implementation.

In November 2015, the Student Success Stakeholder Committee met to provide input into the development of the SSIP implementation and evaluation plans. In regards to the SSIP evaluation, the Committee helped formulate evaluation questions and performance indicators.

The Student Success Stakeholder Committee discussed strategies for disseminating information about SSIP implementation and outcomes to stakeholders in Georgia. Based on this discussion, the following strategies have been targeted to share this implementation and outcome information:

- Student Success webpage at <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/SSIP-.aspx> to provide information about Student Success activities outcomes to the public and all stakeholders. URL for the website will be shared with all stakeholder groups.
- Agenda item on Division for Special Education Services and Supports staff meetings. Also include in reports from Special Education during Executive Cabinet and State Board of Education Meetings

- Agenda items on Student Success Leadership and Implementation teams to share information with internal stakeholders. Members of these teams will share with their respective offices and divisions.
- Agenda item as placeholder for discussion on the State Advisory Panel for Special Education meetings. Many stakeholder groups included above are represented on the State Advisory Panel.
- Agenda items on various meetings for special education directors, RESA directors, and GLRS directors including face-to-face and virtual meetings.
- Updates and resources shared with Parent to Parent, Georgia’s Parent Training and Information Center for dissemination to parents across Georgia.
- Update reports provided to parent mentors funded by the GaDOE for dissemination to parents in local school districts.

Following the November 2015 meeting, a subgroup of the Student Success Stakeholder Committee was formed to specifically support the further development of the SSIP evaluation plan. This subgroup was referred to as the Stakeholder Evaluation Workgroup, and it was comprised of external and internal stakeholders from the larger Student Success Stakeholder Committee. The workgroup members provided input regarding revisions to the Student Success Logic Model and evaluation questions. They also assisted in identifying measures and data sources for the improvement activities associated with each of the coherent improvement strategies and for the outcomes.

Development of Evaluation Questions:

The Student Success Stakeholder Committee discussed the improvement strategies and evaluation plan during its November 2015 meeting. In regards to the evaluation plan, the committee helped formulate evaluation questions and identified performance indicators based on the theory of action and logic model.

In the early spring, the Stakeholder Evaluation Workgroup reviewed the evaluation questions and performance indicators that had been developed previously. They helped to identify additional questions and performance indicators and were actively engaged in identifying data collection methods and timelines.

Continued Engagement of Stakeholders:

The GaDOE will continue to engage stakeholders from all groups referenced above in providing input into the evaluation process and results. The entire committee and the evaluation workgroup will continue to be involved in implementing the evaluation plan and reviewing process and outcome data. As stated previously information about Student Success will be shared in all stakeholder meetings and feedback will be solicited on both the process and outcomes.

The Student Success Leadership and Implementation Teams, with support from the external evaluator, will lead the work in making adjustments to the evaluation plan and in disseminating information about implementation process and outcomes.

Methods Used to Collect and Analyze Data

3(c) Specify the methods that the State will use to collect and analyze data to evaluate implementation and outcomes of the SSIP and the progress toward achieving intended improvements in the SIMR(s).

Evaluation data are collected on the implementation of the activities (process) and on the short, mid, and long term outcomes identified by the GaDOE and its stakeholders. Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods will be utilized. The Student Success Evaluation Plan, which is included in Appendix A, provides in-

depth information on the methods used to collect and analyze implementation and outcome data. Timelines and targets are also provided.

Measurement Changes in Infrastructure and Alignment:

Improving the State's infrastructure and alignment is a primary focus of Georgia's SSIP. In fact, Coherent Improvement Strategy One, is directed toward improving the State's infrastructure to support districts in implementing Evidence-Based Practices that will improve graduation rates. Based on the strands in the theory of action, which form the basis of the activities for Strategy One, the State will be specifically working on:

- Alignment and integration of plans, initiatives, and resources at all levels of the state system
- Communication in and between all levels of the system
- Professional learning and technical assistance to build capacity of technical assistance providers and district/school personnel in the selection and implementation of evidence based practices

The above strands will be addressed at each of the levels of Georgia's cascading management and implementation structures (e.g. state, regional, district and school levels). The primary measure of changes in state infrastructure will be the State Capacity Assessment (SCA) developed by the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) and the State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-Based Practices Center (SISEP). This assessment provides the State Leadership Team with a measure of state capacity (e.g. systems, activities, and resources) to implement Evidence-Based Practices in three key areas: investment in implementation and scaling, system alignment, and regional implementation team functioning. The SCA was administered in January 2016 to establish baseline and will be repeated annually in the fall and spring of each year to measure progress.

In Georgia, Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs) and Georgia Learning Resources System (GLRS) serve as regional technical assistance agencies and they have a key role in supporting districts in improving infrastructure and implementing Evidence-Based Practices. For the SSIP, GLRS Regional Teams have been formed to support the implementation of Student Success in intensive districts, and Collaborative Communities, which are operated by the GLRS Centers, support all districts in addressing implementation barriers and successes. The State will use the Regional Capacity Assessment (RCA) developed by NIRN and SISEP to measure changes in regional infrastructure and capacity. The RCA will be used to assist Georgia technical assistance agencies in their efforts to facilitate district-level implementation of Evidence-Based Practices. The RCAs will be administered annually, in the fall and winter with the initial administration in fall 2016.

Coherent Improvement Strategy Two focuses on improving district infrastructure and implementation of Evidence-Based Practices in districts to improve effective instruction, engaging school climate and transition. The District Capacity Assessment (DCA) developed by NIRN and SISEP will be used to measure changes in district infrastructure and capacity to support schools in implementing evidence-based interventions that benefit students. The DCA will be administered in targeted districts annually (fall and spring) beginning in the 2016 – 2017 school year. Student Success Plans submitted to the GaDOE each year will also be used as a means of assessing infrastructure and capacity. The plans are rated by GLRS Regional Teams using a rubric, and recommendations for district technical assistance are made based on the team review of the plan.

In addition to the assessments mentioned above, the GaDOE has developed measures to assess improvements in infrastructure and capacity as well as alignment of initiatives at multiple levels of the State's system. These are included and based on the activities developed for each of the strands of the theory of action:

- Alignment- Key Initiative and Plan Inventories which are completed at state and district levels to measure changes in alignment and integration of major improvement initiatives and plans.
- Cascading Team Structure and Communication- Evaluation of communication protocols and feedback loops established across multiple levels of the State system

- Professional Learning and Technical Assistance- The Observation Checklist for High Quality Professional Development will be used to ensure that professional development provided by state and regional technical assistance providers is of high quality and is evidence-based. Coaching observations will be conducted for each State Student Success Coach, and Coaching Effectiveness Surveys will be completed by district personnel to assess the effectiveness of coaching supports.

Each of the measures included in Georgia's evaluation plan are designed to measure changes over time. This includes improvements in infrastructure. Please refer to the Evaluation Plan in Appendix A for a complete listing of evaluation methods, data sources, and timelines.

Criteria for Successful Implementation:

The GaDOE with input from stakeholders has developed a variety of measures to assess successful implementation and to measure changes over time. These include implementation scales which assess fidelity of implementation of the Student Success Process at multiple levels of the State system. The Regional Team Implementation Scales is a fidelity measure that assesses the degree to which regional teams implement meetings and technical assistance activities as intended. The District Implementation Scales measures the degree to which districts implement the Student Success Process at the district level as intended, and the School Implementation Scales measures fidelity of implementation at the school level.

As districts begin to support schools in implementing evidence-based practices for students, specific fidelity measures will be developed for these practices to ensure fidelity of implementation. Fidelity measures, methods, and timelines will be identified.

Data Collection System:

The State Leadership and Implementation Teams with input from the external evaluator and stakeholders have developed a comprehensive data collection, analysis, and reporting system that includes both implementation process (i.e. fidelity) data and data for short-, mid-, and long-term outcomes. Performance indicators, data collection methods, persons responsible and timelines are included for each of the improvement strategies in the Student Success Evaluation Plan which is included in Appendix B of this document.

For each improvement strategy, practice profiles have been developed for each of the improvement activities linked to the strategies, and they are subsequently reviewed with relevant groups and individuals. These profiles include the essential components of the activity and provide clear descriptions of what the process looks like. The practice profiles form the basis of the associated implementation fidelity rubrics. For example, a practice profile was developed for the GLRS Regional Team Meetings which have a critical role in the cascading system of professional development and technical assistance. The profile was reviewed with GLRS Regional Teams in November 2015. An on-line survey was used to collect data on the fidelity of implementation of each of the essential components on the GLRS Team Meeting Fidelity Rubric. In addition, GLRS Directors send a copy of the meeting agenda and discussion notes to the external evaluator. The teams' responses in the on-line survey are then compared to the agendas and discussion notes to verify information provided in the survey. These data are reviewed on a regular basis and are used to inform adjustments that need to be made in the GLRS Regional Team Meeting structure and/or function.

Please refer to the Student Success Evaluation Plan included in Appendix A to review fidelity measures for each of the activities.

In Georgia's SSIP, outcome data are collected to assess outcomes identified in the logic model and to assess progress toward the SIMR. For example, several of the short-term outcomes related to improvements in state, regional and district, and school capacities as measured by the State, Regional, and District Capacity

Assessments developed by NIRN and SISEP are used to measure changes in capacity at each of the levels. Classroom Learning Walks are used to assess improvements in the implementation of Evidence-Based Practices and School Climate Ratings are used to measure improvements in school climate including attendance, engagement, and behavior. Both of these mid-term outcomes contribute to Georgia's SIMR of improving graduation rates for students with disabilities, which is measured by the annual graduation rate calculation. Please refer to the Student Success Evaluation Plan included in Appendix A to review outcome measures, methods, and timelines.

Data are reviewed on a monthly bases by the State Leadership Team and adjustments are made as needed based on the data analysis and review.

Selection of Target Students for Evaluation:

For Coherent Improvement Strategy Two, the GaDOE has targeted fifty districts to receive intensive support from the GaDOE and its regional technical assistance providers. The initial focus of implementation will be on improving infrastructure and capacity at the district level. Subsequently, each of these districts will be required to select a target school to initially implement the Student Success Process. Within each of these schools, approximately 50 students who are at risk of academic failure and not graduating from high will be identified based on data. The school will then implement an evidence-based practice with these students, and the school will collect and report data to the district and state on their progress. It is expected that each of the districts receiving intensive technical assistance will have targeted a high school by the end of the 2015-2016 school year. In future years, the district will scale-up the Student Success including implementation of Evidence-Based Practices to other schools and students.

Use of Evaluation Data

3(d) Specify how the State will use the evaluation data to examine the effectiveness of the implementation, assess the progress toward achieving intended improvements, and make modifications to the SSIP as necessary.

Data Review and Adjustments in Implementation:

The State Leadership and Implementation Teams review process and outcome data on a regular basis, at least once monthly. Data are collected as outlined in the Student Success Evaluation Plan included in Appendix A. Data are still being collected for some of the performance indicators, and these data will be reviewed as soon as they are available.

In addition to the performance indicator data outlined in the evaluation, pulse checks are conducted via an on-line survey application to gather implementation information on an as needed basis. Since September 2015, pulse checks have been conducted each month to support initial implementation of Student Success. These data are also reviewed by the State Leadership and Implementation Teams.

Performance indicator and pulse check data are used by the State Leadership and Implementation Teams to make adjustments in implementation and in the improvement strategies. For example, initial implementation data revealed that many districts were experiencing challenges in conducting the comprehensive data analyses required to identify low performing schools and students and to identify Evidence-Based Practices to addresses the areas of low performance. Very quickly, the GaDOE developed a Data Toolkit to support the districts in the deep data analysis.

Information and data from the feedback loops are also used to inform practice at all levels of the state system. For example, GLRS Regional Teams utilize facilitative administrative strategies to remove barriers to implementation reported by district teams. When the barriers cannot be resolved by the regional teams or when they represent systemic issues, they are reported to the State Implementation Team to be addressed.

Utilizing data from multiple sources (e.g. performance indicator data, pulse check data and data from the feedback loops) allows the State Leadership and Implementation Teams to regularly examine the effectiveness of implementation and assess the progress toward achieving intended improvements. Data will also be used to make modifications to the SSIP as necessary.

Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Technical Assistance and Professional Development:

The delivery of high quality professional development and technical assistance is critical to achieving outcomes included in the Student Success Logic Model. In fact, two improvement strategies address the provision of professional development and technical assistance. They are as follows:

- Provide professional learning and technical assistance to state and regional technical assistance providers to increase their capacity to support districts in implementing Evidence-Based Practices
- Improving district infrastructure and implementation of Evidence-Based Practices in districts to improve effective instruction, engaging school climate and transition. (Key components of improving district infrastructure include professional learning and technical assistance.)

In order to assess the effectiveness of professional assistance and technical assistance, performance indicators were developed to measure both the fidelity of delivery as well as the outcomes of professional development and technical assistance. For example, the GaDOE uses the Observation Checklist for High Quality Professional Development to ensure that high quality, evidence-based professional development is delivered to technical assistance providers and practitioners. Coaching Observation Checklists are completed for each State Success Coach to ensure that effective coaching strategies are used. Professional Development Post-event Evaluation Forms are used to collect data on the quality, relevance, and usefulness of professional development.

Refer to the Student Success Evaluation Plan available in Appendix A for a listing of the performance indicators and evaluation methods.

The State Leadership Team reviews data on the delivery and effectiveness of technical assistance and professional development on a regular basis. When data indicate that technical assistance and professional development are not being delivered as intended or achieving the desired outcomes, the team makes adjustments in the delivery to ensure that the desired outcomes are achieved.

Modifications to the SSIP:

The Student Success Leadership and Implementation Teams regularly review data from multiple sources to determine adjustments in implementation and to make modifications to the SSIP as needed. The complexity of the Student Success data collection system enables the teams to quickly access data and make changes as appropriate. This form of rapid cycle problem solving allows issues to be addressed quickly, adjustments made as needed, and information flowed “down” the system using the established feedback loop.

When significant modifications are recommended by the State Leadership and Implementation Teams, stakeholders are informed of the changes. When time permits, stakeholders are engaged in decision making regarding the proposed changes.

Phase II: Technical Assistance and Support

Describe the support the State needs to develop and implement an effective SSIP. Areas to consider include: Infrastructure development; Support for LEA implementation of EBPs; Evaluation; and Stakeholder involvement in Phase I.

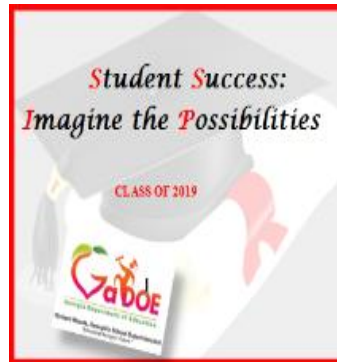
The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) has encountered a number of opportunities and areas of growth through the SSIP process. Georgia's SSIP supports infrastructure development, selection of evidence-based practices and implementation of those practices with fidelity. Unfortunately, Georgia does not have allocated personnel committed to Response to Intervention and/or Multi-tiered System of Supports. While relevant resources have been developed and shared with districts, there are limited to no opportunities to move beyond awareness activities. The State believes this realization proves why Georgia's SSIP process had a staggered implementation during the initial phases. Essentially, Georgia is building capacity and infrastructure, at the state level, to support LEA implementation of RTI-like practices at the local level. The current structure offers limited support for this type of work to execute systematically and seamlessly across the Department.

The State Leadership will utilize retreat opportunities to clearly delineate appropriate supports and potential providers of these supports. In some instances, the Department is exploring intradepartmental and interdepartmental options to bring these critical resources and services to Regional Implementation Teams, District Implementation Teams, and School Implementation Teams. During Phase III, Georgia will update its SSIP narrative to reflect specific progress for technical assistance and support.

Appendix A

Georgia SSIP Implementation and Evaluation Plan

April 1, 2016



The implementation and evaluation plans that are included in this document are based on the Student Success Logic Model included on page four. Implementation of the two identified coherent improvement strategies and associated activities are addressed in Section C. Evaluation measures for the strategies and activities (process) as well as outcomes are addressed in Section D.

A. Coherent Improvement Strategies:

1. Improve state and regional infrastructure to better support districts to implement and scale up EBPs that will improve graduation rates for all students-including SWD.
 - a. Align and integrate initiatives and plans at the state, regional, and district, and school levels to reduce duplication and leverage resources
 - b. Establish, maintain, evaluate, and update cascading team management and implementation structures and communication protocols/feedback loops at state, regional, district and school levels
 - c. Provide professional learning and technical assistance to state and regional technical assistance providers to increase their capacity to support districts and schools in implementing evidence-based practices
2. Improve district infrastructure and implementation of EBPs in targeted districts to improve effective instruction, engaging school climate, and transition

B. Outcomes

The GaDOE, with input from internal and external stakeholders has identified short, mid, and long-term outcomes. They are as follows:

Short-term Outcomes:

- Improve state and regional capacity to support districts in implementing evidence-based practices
- Improve district capacity to support schools in implementing evidence-based practices to support teaching and learning
- Improve school capacity to support staff in implementing evidence-based practices to support teaching and learning
- Increase engagement of stakeholders in planning, implementing, and monitoring improvement initiatives at state, regional, district and school levels

Mid-term Outcomes

- Improve implementation of evidence-based practices to support teaching and learning for all students
- Improve school climate including student attendance, engagement, and behavior
- Improve student achievement
- Improve transition practices and outcomes

Long-term Outcome

- Increase percentage of students with disabilities exiting high-school with a general education diploma

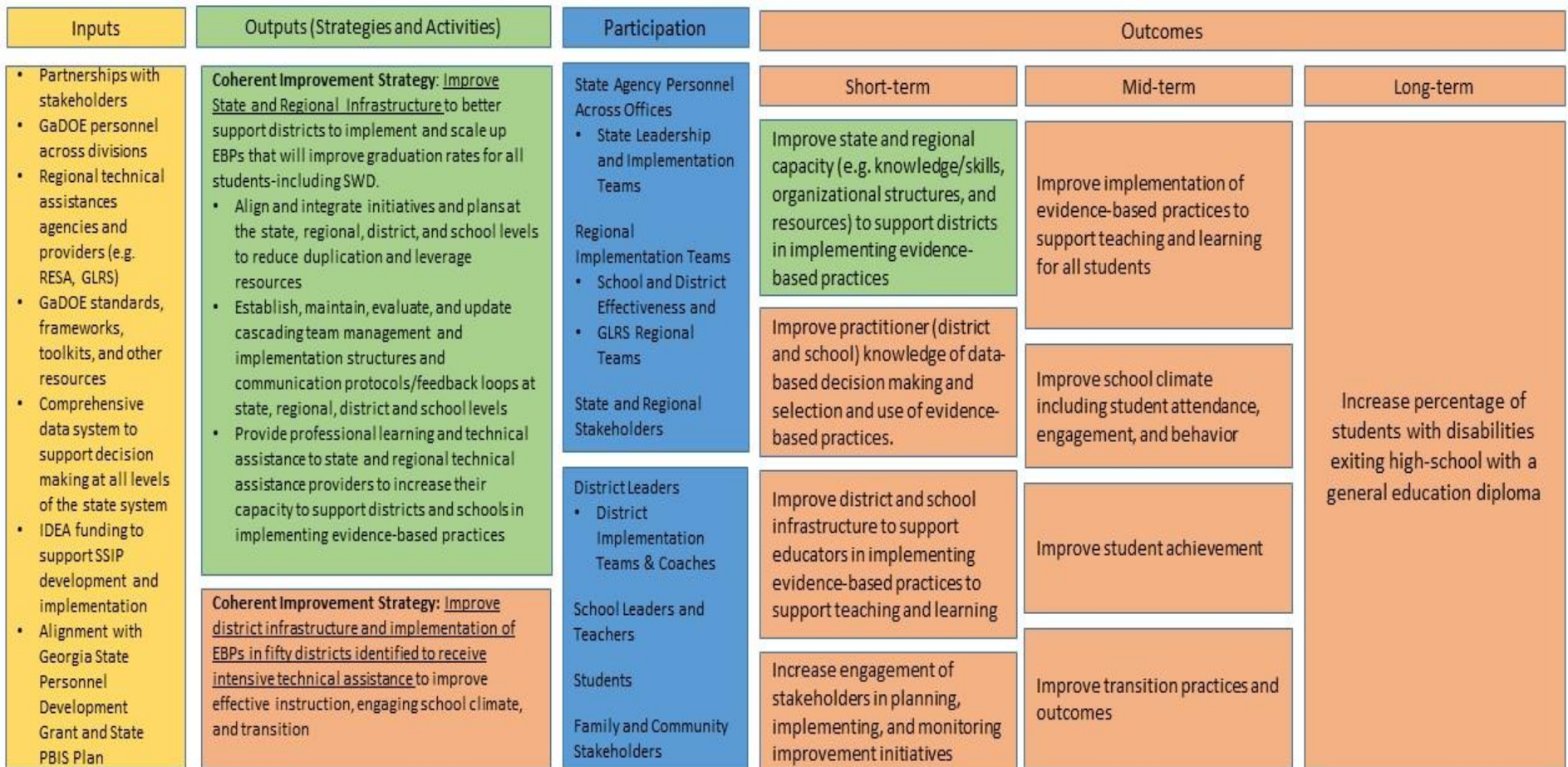
Georgia Student Success Logic Model

Theory of Action

Georgia believes that effective teachers and leaders are critical to improve outcomes for students. If state and regional teams provide seamless technical assistance that builds capacity for district leadership to support school leadership (teaching and learning), then ultimately students will achieve better outcomes and graduate from high school.

Overarching Themes

- Build the capacity of the SEA and regional agencies and programs to assist districts in supporting the implementation of evidence-based practices designed to improve graduation rates
- Build the capacity of districts in supporting schools in the implementation of evidence-based practices designed to improve graduation rate
- Engage stakeholders including families and communities in the design, implementation, and monitoring of capacity building initiatives at all levels (e.g. state, regional, district, and school)



C. Improvement Plan

I=Initiated, C+ Continuing, E= Ended

Strategy One: Improve state and regional infrastructure to better support districts to implement and scale up evidence-based practices that will improve graduation rates for all students including students with disabilities.

Activities to Meet Outcomes (Strategy 1)	Level			Steps to Implement Activities	Responsible Individuals or Groups	Timeline					Resources Needed
	State	Regional	Local			FFY 2014 (2014-2015)	FFY 2015 (2015-2016)	FFY 2016 (2016-2017)	FFY 2017 (2017-2018)	FFY 2018 (2018-2019)	
1.a. Align and integrate initiatives and plans at the state, regional, district, and school levels to reduce duplication and leverage resources	X			Integrate Student Success plans with state improvement plans	State Leadership and Implementation Teams		I	C	C	C	Staff Time, Data Support
				Develop common self-assessment for use across all federal programs	State Leadership and Implementation Teams		I	C	E		Staff Time, Data Support
				Align and integrate special education monitoring procedures and processes	State Leadership and Implementation Teams		I	C	E		Staff Time, Data Support
				Align and integrate plans for significant disproportionality and Coordinated Early Intervening Services with the Student Success Process	State Leadership and Implementation Teams		I	E			Staff Time, Data Support
				Align all projects funded with IDEA Discretionary dollars with the Student Success Process	State Leadership and Implementation Teams		I	C	E		Staff Time, Data Support, Fiscal Support

Activities to Meet Outcomes (Strategy 1)	Level			Steps to Implement Activities	Responsible Individuals or Groups	Timeline					Resources Needed
	State	Regional	Local			FFY 2014 (2014-2015)	FFY 2015 (2015-2016)	FFY 2016 (2016-2017)	FFY 2017 (2017-2018)	FFY 2018 (2018-2019)	
1.a. (Continued) Align and integrate initiatives and plans at the state, regional, district, and school levels to reduce duplication and leverage resources	X			Coordinate statewide meetings to provide information on implementation of the Student Success Process		I	C	C	C	Staff Time, Funding for Facilities and Travel	
				Develop and disseminate District Expectations Document	I	C	C	C	C	Staff Time, Data Support	
				Develop and disseminate Student Success Process Planning Guide, Template, and Rubric	I	C	C	C	C	Staff Time, Data Support	
				Develop and disseminate Data Toolkit and related data analysis resources	I	C	C	C	C	Staff Time, Data Support	
	X	X	X	Review and provide feedback on District Student Success Plans		I	C	C	C	Staff Time, Data Support	
				Recruit and hire State Success Coaches	I	C	C	C	C	Staff Time, Funding for Facilities and Travel	
				Align regional technical assistance plans				I	C	C	Staff Time, Data Support

Activities to Meet Outcomes (Strategy 1)	Level			Steps to Implement Activities	Responsible Individuals or Groups	Timeline					Resources Needed
	State	Regional	Local			FFY 2014 (2014-2015)	FFY 2015 (2015-2016)	FFY 2016 (2016-2017)	FFY 2017 (2017-2018)	FFY 2018 (2018-2019)	
1.a. (Continued) Align and integrate initiatives and plans at the state, regional, district, and school levels to reduce duplication and leverage resources	X	X	X	Support districts in the development of district teams to guide the Student Success Process	State Leadership and Implementation Teams, School and District Effectiveness, RESA, GLRS		I	C	C	C	Staff Time, Data Support
	X	X	X	Support districts in the development of school teams to guide the Student Success Process	State Leadership and Implementation Teams, School and District Effectiveness, RESA, GLRS			I	C	C	Staff Time, Data Support

Activities to Meet Outcomes (Strategy 1)	Level			Steps to Implement Activities	Responsible Individuals or Groups	Timeline					Resources Needed
	State	Regional	Local			FFY 2014 (2014-2015)	FFY 2015 (2015-2016)	FFY 2016 (2016-2017)	FFY 2017 (2017-2018)	FFY 2018 (2018-2019)	
1.b. Establish, maintain, evaluate, and update cascading team management and implementation structures and communication protocols at state, regional, and district levels	X			Establish Leadership and Implementation Teams at GaDOE	DOE Leadership		I,E				Staff Time, Data Support, Commitment from Executive Cabinet
	X	X		Coordinate monthly, regional Collaborative Community Meetings in each GLRS Region to assist districts in addressing implementation barriers and celebrating implementation successes	State Leadership and Implementation Teams, GLRS	I	C	C	C	C	Staff Time, Data Support, Commitment of District Personnel
	X	X		Collaborate with GLRS and RESA to establish and maintain GLRS Regional Teams to support districts	State Leadership and Implementation Teams, School and District Effectiveness, RESA, GLRS		I	C	C	C	Staff Time, Funding for Facilities and Travel
	X	X	X	Establish communication protocols and defined feedback loops among all levels of the state system (state, regional, district, school)	State Leadership and Implementation Teams		I	C	C	C	Staff Time, Data Support,
	X			Develop online surveys and other reporting structures for sharing information via the feedback loops	State Leadership and Implementation Teams		I	C	C	C	Staff Time, Data Support,
	X	X	X	Collect, analyze, and use information from feedback loops to adjust team structures as needed to support effective implementation	State Leadership and Implementation Teams		I	C	C	C	Staff Time, Data Support,

Activities to Meet Outcomes (Strategy 1)	Level			Steps to Implement Activities	Responsible Individuals or Groups	Timeline					Resources Needed
	State	Regional	Local			FFY 2014 (2014-	FFY 2015 (2015-	FFY 2016 (2016-	FFY 2017 (2017-	FFY 2018 (2018-	
1.c. Provide professional learning and coaching to state and regional technical assistance providers to increase their capacity to support districts in implementing evidence-based practices	X	X		Conduct on-going professional learning for State Student Success coaches, GaDOE District Liaisons and GLRS Directors on the Student Success Process	State Implementation Team	I	C	C	C	C	Staff Time, Funding for Facilities and Travel
				Provide on-going professional learning and follow-up coaching to State Student Success Coaches in systems coaching	State Implementation Team		I	C	C	C	Staff Time, Funding for Facilities and Travel
				Provide professional learning and coaching on implementation science principles and application	State Implementation Team	I	C	C	C	C	Staff Time, Funding for Facilities and Travel
				Provide professional learning and follow-up coaching to State Success Coaches, GaDOE District Liaisons and GLRS Directors in the selection and use of evidence-based practices designed to improve graduation rates	State Implementation Team		I	C	C	C	Staff Time, Funding for Facilities and Travel
				Collect and analyze data on professional learning and coaching	State Implementation Team	I	C	C	C	C	Staff Time and Data Support
				Use data to make adjustments in professional learning and coaching	State Implementation Team	I	C	C	C	C	Staff Time and Data Support

Coherent Improvement Strategy Two: Improve district infrastructure and implementation of evidence-based practices in fifty districts identified to receive intensive technical assistance to improve effective instruction, engaging school climate, and transition. **I=Initiated, C+ Continuing, E= Ended**

Activities to Meet Outcomes (Strategy 2)	Level			Steps to Implement Activities	Responsible Individuals or Groups	Timeline					Resources Needed
	State	Regional	Local			FFY 2014 (2014-2015)	FFY 2015 (2015-2016)	FFY 2016 (2016-2017)	FFY 2017 (2017-2018)	FFY 2018 (2018-2019)	
Provide professional learning and follow-up coaching to district and school personnel to support implementation of the Student Success Process (including implementation of evidence-based practices)	X	X	X	Identify districts based on state data and notify of selection	State Leadership Team and Stakeholders	I	C,E				Staff Time and Data Support
				Conduct webinars (Leadership Launches) for intensive district teams to provide information on of the Student Success Process	Student Success State Coordinator and Implementation Team		I	C	C	C	Staff Time and Data Support Funding for webinar technology
				Conduct statewide meetings for district teams to address issues in implementing the Student Success Process	Student Success State Coordinator and Implementation Team		I	C	C	C	Staff Time and Funding for Facilities and travel
				Provide technical assistance including coaching to district personnel in completing and updating the Student Success Process Plan using provided resources	GLRS Regional Team (GaDOE District Liaisons, State Success Coach, and GLRS)		I	C	C	C	Staff Time, Funding for Travel and Coaches' Salaries
				Provide technical assistance including coaching to support infrastructure changes needed to support infrastructure changes needed to support implementation	GLRS Regional Team (GaDOE District Liaisons, State Success Coach, and GLRS)		I	C	C	C	Staff Time, Funding for Travel and Coaches' Salaries
				Assist in selection of district coach	GLRS Regional Team (GaDOE District Liaisons, State Success Coach, and GLRS)		I	C	C	C	Staff Time, Funding for Travel and Coaches' Salaries

Activities to Meet Outcomes (Strategy 1)	Level			Steps to Implement Activities	Responsible Individuals or Groups	Timeline					Resources Needed
	State	Regional	Local			FFY 2014 (2014-	FFY 2015 (2015-	FFY 2016 (2016-	FFY 2017 (2017-	FFY 2018 (2018-	
Provide professional learning and follow-up coaching to district and school personnel to support implementation of the Student Success Process (including implementation of evidence-based practices)	X	X	X	Assist in selection of target school(s)	GLRS Regional Team (GaDOE District Liaisons, State Success Coach, and GLRS)		I	C	C	C	Staff Time, Funding for Travel and Coaches' Salaries
				Provide professional learning and coaching to district teams to support selection, implementation, and evaluation of evidence-based practices	State Implementation Team			I	C	C	Staff Time, Funding for Travel and Coaches' Salaries
				Collection of data to monitor progress and outcomes	State Implementation Team, GLRS Regional Team, District Team, and External Evaluator		I	C	C	C	Staff Time and Data Support
				Partner with district personnel to complete learning walks	GLRS Regional Team and District Team		I	C	C	C	Staff Time, Funding for Travel and Coaches' Salaries
				Support districts in scaling up Student Success to other schools based on data	GLRS Regional Team (GaDOE District Liaisons, State Success Coach, and GLRS)				I	C	Staff Time, Funding for Travel and Coaches' Salaries
				Collect and analyze data	State Implementation Team, GLRS Regional Team, District Team, and External Evaluator		I	C	C	C	Staff Time and Data Support

D. Evaluation

Improvement Strategy Implementation

Strategy One- Improve State and Regional Infrastructures to better support districts to implement and scale up EBPs that will improve graduation rates for all students-including SWD.

Activity 1.a.: Align and integrate initiatives and plans at the state, regional, district and school levels to reduce duplication and leverage resources								
Evaluation Questions	Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods	Responsible Individuals or Groups Timeline	Timelines/Targets				
				FFY 2014 (2014-2015)	FFY 2015 (2015-2016)	FFY 2016 (2016-2017)	FFY 2017 (2017-2018)	FFY 2018 (2018-2019)
Are the State Systemic Improvement Plan (Student Success) and identified strategies and activities aligned with other graduation improvement activities and plans from other GaDOE offices and divisions to reduce duplication and leverage resources to improve graduation rates?	Percentage of Student Success strategies and activities aligned with graduation improvement activities and plans from other GaDOE offices and divisions to reduce duplication and leverage resources to improve graduation rates	GaDOE Key Initiative and Plan Inventory	Student Success Leadership Team and External Evaluator	I 75%	I 80%	C 85%	C 85%	C 90%
Does the state have a common self-assessment that is used across all federal programs?	Percentage of all offices and divisions and offices in federally-funded programs using a common self-assessment	Common Federal Self-Assessment	Cross Division Workgroup		I 80%	C 85%	C 85%	C 90%
Are special education results-focused monitoring procedures and processes aligned with the Student Success Process, when appropriate?	Percentage of special education results-focused monitoring procedures and processes aligned with the Student Success Process	GaDOE Key Initiative and Plan Inventory	Student Success Implementation Team, Program Manager for Monitoring			I 80%	C 85%	C 90%
Are CEIS plans integrated in the district's Student Success Plans?	Percentage of districts submitting CEIS plans with CEIS plans integrated in Student Success Plans	Student Success Plan database	Student Success Implementation Team, Program Manager for Monitoring		I 80%	C 85%	C 90%	C 95%
Are IDEA discretionary funded projects supporting implementation of Student Success?	Percentage of IDEA discretionary funded projects supporting implementation of Student Success	GaDOE Key Initiative and Plan Inventory	Student Success Leadership Team and External Evaluator		I	C	C	C

Activity 1.a.: Align and integrate initiatives and plans at the state, regional, district and school levels to reduce duplication and leverage resources (Continued)								
Evaluation Questions	Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods	Responsible Individuals or Groups Timeline	Timelines/Targets				
				FFY 2014 (2014-2015)	FFY 2015 (2015-2016)	FFY 2016 (2016-2017)	FFY 2017 (2017-2018)	FFY 2018 (2018-2019)
Are processes, expectations, and resources developed in a timely manner (i.e. to support districts in completed required activities in a timely manner) and updated as needed?	Percentage of Student Success processes, expectations, and resources that were completed within proposed timelines	Student Success Alignment and Timelines Tracking	Student Success State Leadership Team and External Evaluator		I 80%	C 85%	C 85%	C 85%
Do district personnel find the Student Success Process frameworks, toolkits, and other resources to be of high quality?	Percentage of district personnel who report that the Student Success Process related resources are of high quality	District Student Success Annual Survey	Student Success State Implementation Team and External Evaluator		I 80%	C 85%	C 85%	C 90%
Do district personnel find the Student Success frameworks, toolkits, and other resources to be relevant and useful to their work?	Percentage of district personnel who report that the Student Success Process related resources are relevant and useful	District Student Success Annual Survey	Student Success State Implementation Team and External Evaluator		I 80%	C 85%	C 85%	C 90%
Are district plans of sufficient quality to support improved graduation rates for students with disabilities?	Percentage of Student Success Plans with 90% of the components rated as Operational or Exemplary	District Success Plan Rating Database	Student Success State Implementation Team and External Evaluator		I 80%	C 85%	C 85%	C 90%
Are regional Student Success strategies and activities aligned with other regional technical assistance and professional learning plans to reduce duplication and leverage resources to improve graduation rates?	Percentage of Student Success initiatives and plans at RESA and GLRS aligned with other regional activities and plans to reduce duplication and leverage resources to improve graduation rates	Regional Key Initiative and Plan Inventory	Student Success Leadership Team and External Evaluator	-		I 80%	C 85%	C 90%
Did districts and schools establish Student Success teams to guide the implementation of the Student Success Process?	Percentage of districts and schools establishing Student Success teams to guide the implementation of the Student Success Process	District Student Success Annual Survey	Student Success State Implementation Team and External Evaluator		I 80%	C 85%	C 85%	C 90%

Activity 1.b. Establish, maintain, evaluate, and update cascading team management and implementation structures and communication protocols at state, regional, district, and school levels								
Evaluation Questions	Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods	Responsible Individuals or Groups Timeline	Timelines/Targets				
				FFY 2014 (2014-2015)	FFY 2015 (2015-2016)	FFY 2016 (2016-2017)	FFY 2017 (2017-2018)	FFY 2018 (2018-2019)
Do members of the State Leadership and Implementation Teams regularly participate in scheduled team meetings?	Percentage of State Leadership and Implementation Team Meetings with over 80% attendance of team members	State Leadership and Implementation Team Meeting Sign-in Sheets	External Evaluator		I 75%	C 80%	C 85%	C 90%
Are State Leadership and Implementation Team Meetings implemented with fidelity (e.g. required members, teaming processes, components, communication protocols, feedback loops, etc.)?	Percentage of State Leadership and Implementation Team Meetings conducted with fidelity (i.e. addressed required meeting components- implementation barriers, implementation successes, next steps, feedback loops)	State Leadership and Implementation Team Meeting Fidelity Rubrics	External Evaluator		I 75%	C 80%	C 85%	C 90%
Do special education administrators feel that information acquired through their Collaborative Community is of high quality?	Percentage of participants reporting information acquired through their Collaborative Community was of high quality	Collaborative Community Annual Survey	Student Success State Implementation Team and External Evaluator		I 80%	C 85%	C 85%	C 90%
Do special education administrators feel that information acquired through their Collaborative Community is relevant and useful to their work in the Student Success Process?	Percentage of participants reporting information acquired through their Collaborative Community was relevant and useful to their work in the Student Success Process	Collaborative Community Annual Survey	Student Success State Implementation Team and External Evaluator		I 80%	C 85%	C 85%	C 90%
Do special education administrators report actual changes in practice as a result of their participation in Collaborative Community Meetings?	Percentage of participants reporting changes in practices as a result of participation in the Collaborative Community	Collaborative Community Annual Survey	Student Success State Implementation Team and External Evaluator		I 80%	C 85%	C 85%	C 90%
Are Collaborative Communities across the GLRS regions conducted with fidelity?	Percentage of GLRS regions conducting Collaborative Community Meetings rated as Operational or Exemplary on the Collaborative Community Fidelity Rubric	Collaborative Community Fidelity Rubric	Student Success State Implementation Team and External Evaluator		I 80%	C 85%	C 85%	C 90%

Activity 1.b. Establish, maintain, evaluate, and update cascading team management and implementation structures and communication protocols at state, regional, district, and school levels (Continued)

Evaluation Questions	Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods	Responsible Individuals or Groups Timeline	Timelines/Targets				
				FFY 2014 (2014-2015)	FFY 2015 (2015-2016)	FFY 2016 (2016-2017)	FFY 2017 (2017-2018)	FFY 2018 (2018-2019)
Do core team members (e.g. GLRS, State Success Coach, and School Improvement Specialists) regularly attend scheduled GLRS Regional Team Meetings?	Percentage of GLRS Regional Team Meetings with core team members in attendance	GLRS Regional Team Meeting Sign-in Sheets	State Implementation Team and External Evaluator		I 75%	C 80%	C 85%	C 90%
Are GLRS Regional Teams implemented with fidelity (e.g. required members, teaming processes, components, feedback loops, etc.)?	Percentage of GLRS Regional Teams with an average rating of Operational or Exemplary on the GLRS Regional Team Meeting Fidelity Rubric	GLRS Regional Team Meeting Fidelity Rubric	State Implementation Team and External Evaluator		I 75%	C 80%	C 85%	C 90%
Are District Teams implemented with fidelity (e.g. required members, teaming processes, components, feedback loops, etc.)?	Percentage of District Teams with an average rating of Operational or Exemplary on the District Team Meeting Fidelity Rubric	District Team Meeting Fidelity Rubric	State Implementation Team and External Evaluator		I 75%	C 80%	C 85%	C 90%
Are School Teams implemented with fidelity (e.g. required members, teaming processes, components, feedback loops, etc.)?	Percentage of School Teams with an average rating of Operational or Exemplary on the School Team Meeting Fidelity Rubric	School Team Meeting Fidelity Rubric	State Implementation Team and External Evaluator			I 75%	C 80%	C 85%

Activity 1.c. Provide professional learning and technical assistance to state and regional technical assistance providers to increase their capacity to support districts and schools in implementing evidence-based practices								
Evaluation Questions	Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods	Responsible Individuals or Groups Timeline	Timelines/Targets				
				FFY 2014 (2014-2015)	FFY 2015 (2015-2016)	FFY 2016 (2016-2017)	FFY 2017 (2017-2018)	FFY 2018 (2018-2019)
Do professional development activities provided to regional technical assistance providers include essential elements of high quality professional development?	Percentage of the essential elements of Observation Checklist for High Quality Professional Development were included in the delivery of professional development activities provided to regional technical assistance providers	Observation Checklist for High Quality Professional Development	State Implementation Team and External Evaluator		I 75%	C 80%	C 85%	C 90%
Do the regional technical assistance providers find the professional learning and technical assistance to be of high quality?	Percentage of regional technical assistance providers reporting professional learning and technical assistance to be of high quality	Student Success Post Event Survey	State Implementation Team and External Evaluator		I 80%	C 85%	C 85%	C 90%
Do the regional technical assistance providers find the professional learning and technical assistance to be relevant to their work?	Percentage of regional technical assistance providers reporting professional learning and technical assistance is relevant to their work	Student Success Post Event Survey	State Implementation Team and External Evaluator		I 80%	C 85%	C 85%	C 90%
Do the regional technical assistance providers find the professional learning and technical assistance to be useful in their work?	Percentage of regional technical assistance providers reporting professional learning and technical assistance is useful in their work	Student Success Post Event Survey	State Implementation Team and External Evaluator		I 80%	C 85%	C 85%	C 90%
Do regional technical assistance providers report that they actually used information gained through professional learning and technical assistance in working with district and school teams?	Percentage of regional technical assistance providers reporting that they have used information acquired in professional learning and in working with district and school teams	Student Success Three Month Follow-up Survey	State Implementation Team and External Evaluator		I 80%	C 85%	C 85%	C 90%

Strategy Two- Improve district infrastructure and implementation of evidence-based practices in fifty districts identified to receive intensive technical assistance to improve effective instruction, engaging school climate, and transition - Applies to 50 districts receiving intensive technical assistance

Evaluation Questions	Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods	Responsible Individuals or Groups Timeline	Timelines/Targets				
				FFY 2014 (2014-2015)	FFY 2015 (2015-2016)	FFY 2016 (2016-2017)	FFY 2017 (2017-2018)	FFY 2018 (2018-2019)
Do personnel participate in statewide meetings (webinars and face-to-face) to support implementation of Student Success?	Percentage of personnel participating in statewide meetings (webinars and face-to-face) to support implementation of Student Success	Statewide Meetings Sign-in Sheets and Database	Student Success Implementation Team and External Evaluator	I	C	C	C	C
Do personnel find the meeting content and delivery to be of high quality?	Percentage of personnel reporting the meeting content and delivery to be of high quality	Student Success Post Event Survey	State Implementation Team and External Evaluator		I 80%	C 85%	C 85%	C 90%
Do personnel find the meeting content and delivery to be relevant to their work?	Percentage of personnel reporting the meeting content and delivery to be relevant to their work	Student Success Post Event Survey	State Implementation Team and External Evaluator		I 80%	C 85%	C 85%	C 90%
Do personnel find the meeting content and delivery to be useful in their work?	Percentage of personnel reporting the meeting content and delivery to be useful in their work	Student Success Post Event Survey	State Implementation Team and External Evaluator		I 80%	C 85%	C 85%	C 90%
Do personnel report that they actually used information gained from statewide meetings in implementing the Student Success Process?	Percentage of personnel reporting that they actually used information gained from statewide meetings in implementing the Student Success Process	Student Success Three Month Follow-up Survey	State Implementation Team and External Evaluator		I 80%	C 85%	C 85%	C 90%
Do personnel report that technical assistance including coaching was effective in supporting implementation of the Student Success Process?	Percentage of personnel reporting technical assistance including coaching was effective in supporting implementation of the Student Success Process	Student Success Coaching Effectiveness Survey	State Implementation Team and External Evaluator			I 80%	C 85%	C 90%

Strategy Two- Improve district infrastructure and implementation of evidence-based practices in fifty districts identified to receive intensive technical assistance to improve effective instruction, engaging school climate, and transition (Continued) -Applies to 50 districts receiving intensive technical assistance

Evaluation Questions	Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods	Responsible Individuals or Groups Timeline	Timelines/Targets				
				FFY 2014 (2014-2015)	FFY 2015 (2015-2016)	FFY 2016 (2016-2017)	FFY 2017 (2017-2018)	FFY 2018 (2018-2019)
Are district Student Success improvement strategies and activities integrated in district improvement plans to reduce duplication and leverage resources to improve graduation rates?	90% of districts with Student Success improvement strategies and activities integrated in district improvement plans to reduce duplication and leverage resources to improve graduation rate	District Improvement Plan Analysis for Intensive Districts	Student Success Implementation Team and External Evaluator		I 80%	C 85%	C 85%	I 90%
Are school Student Success improvement strategies and activities integrated in school improvement plans to reduce duplication and leverage resources to improve graduation rates?	90% of schools with Student Success improvement strategies and activities integrated in school improvement plans to reduce duplication and leverage resources to improve graduation rate	School Improvement Plan for Intensive Districts	Student Success Implementation Team and External Evaluator			I 80%	C 85%	C 90%

Evaluation of Improvement Strategy Outcomes

Short-term Outcomes	Evaluation Questions	Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods	Responsible Individuals or Groups Timeline	Timelines (Projected Initiation and Completion Dates) and Targets
Improve state and regional capacity (e.g. knowledge/skills, organizational structures, and resources) to support districts in implementing evidence-based practices	Has collaboration among GaDOE staff increased as a result of Student Success Implementation?	Percentage of GaDOE staff from key GaDOE divisions and offices reporting high levels of collaboration with staff from other offices and divisions in implementing activities designed to improve graduation rates	Student Success Collaboration Survey	Student Success Leadership Team and External Evaluator	Annually, Spring Beginning Spring 2016 Targets: FFY 16: 86% FFY 17: 88% FFY 18: 90%
	Has collaboration among RESA and GLRS staff increased as a result of Student Success Implementation?	Percentage of RESA and GLRS staff reporting high levels of collaboration in implementing activities designed to improve graduation rates	Student Success Collaboration Survey	Student Success Leadership Team and External Evaluator	Annually, Spring Beginning Spring 2016 Targets: FFY 16: 86% FFY 17: 88% FFY 18: 90%
	Has the GaDOE demonstrated improvements in its capacity to support districts in the implementation of evidence-based practices?	Total percentage score of items on Assessment of State Capacity for Scaling-up Evidence-based Practices	Assessment of State Capacity for Scaling-up Evidence-based Practices (NIRN)	Student Success Leadership Team and External Evaluator	Annually, Fall and Spring Baseline Spring 2016: 48% Targets: FFY 16: 55% FFY 17: 65% FFY 18: 75%
	Have RESA and GLRS demonstrated improvements in their capacity to support districts in the implementation of evidence-based practices?	Total percentage score of items on Regional Capacity Assessment	Regional Capacity Assessment (NIRN)	Student Success Leadership Team and External Evaluator	Annually, Fall and Spring Beginning Fall 2016 Targets FFY 16: 70% FFY 17: 80% FFY 18: 90%

Short-term Outcomes	Evaluation Questions	Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods	Responsible Individuals or Groups Timeline	Timelines (Projected Initiation and Completion Dates) and Targets
<p>Improve practitioner (district and school) knowledge of data-based decision making and selection and use of evidence-based practices.</p> <p>Applies to 50 districts receiving intensive technical assistance</p>	<p>Does professional development result in increased knowledge of data-based decision making and selection and use of evidence-based practices?</p>	<p>Percentage of the participants demonstrating an increase in knowledge from to pre- to post-tests</p>	<p>Pre- and Post-Professional Development Measures</p>	<p>State Implementation Team and External Evaluator</p>	<p>End of each professional development opportunity</p> <p>Targets FFY 15: 75% FFY 16: 80% FFY 17: 85% FFY 18: 90%</p>

Short-term Outcomes	Evaluation Questions	Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods	Responsible Individuals or Groups Timeline	Timelines (Projected Initiation and Completion Dates) and Targets
<p>Improve district and school infrastructure to support educators in implementing evidence-based practices to support teaching and learning</p> <p>Applies to 50 districts receiving intensive technical assistance</p>	<p>Has collaboration among district General Education, Special Education, and Management (e.g. Data, Finance, etc.) increased as a result of implementation of Student Success?</p>	<p>Percentage of districts reporting high levels of collaboration among General Education, Special Education, and Management (e.g. Data, Finance, etc.) in implementing activities designed to improve graduation rates</p>	<p>District Student Success Annual Survey</p>	<p>State Implementation Team and External Evaluator</p>	<p>Annually, Spring Beginning Spring 2016</p> <p>Targets: Baseline established Spring 2016. Targets set after baseline established.</p>
	<p>Have districts demonstrated improvements in their capacity to support schools in the implementation of evidence-based practices?</p>	<p>Total percentage score of items on District Capacity Assessment</p>	<p>District Capacity Assessment (NIRN)</p>	<p>State Implementation Team and External Evaluator</p>	<p>Annually, Fall and Spring Beginning Spring 2016</p> <p>Targets: Baseline established Spring 2016. Targets set after baseline established.</p>
	<p>Have districts implemented the District Success Planning Process with fidelity?</p>	<p>Percentage of districts scoring “Operational” or “Exemplary” on the Student Success District Fidelity Rubric</p>	<p>Student Success District Fidelity Rubric</p>	<p>State Implementation Team and External Evaluator</p>	<p>Annually, Fall and Spring Beginning Fall 2016</p> <p>Targets: Baseline established Fall 2016. Targets set after baseline established.</p>
	<p>Have schools implemented the Student Success Process with fidelity?</p>	<p>Percentage of schools scoring “Operational” or “Exemplary” on the Student Success School Fidelity Rubric</p>	<p>Student Success District Fidelity Rubric</p>	<p>State Implementation Team and External Evaluator</p>	<p>Annually, Fall and Spring Beginning Fall 2016</p> <p>Targets: Baseline established Fall 2016. Targets set after baseline established.</p>

Short-term Outcomes	Evaluation Questions	Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods	Responsible Individuals or Groups Timeline	Timelines (Projected Initiation and Completion Dates) and Targets
<p>Increase engagement of stakeholders in planning, implementing, and monitoring improvement initiatives</p> <p>Applies to 50 districts receiving intensive technical assistance</p>	<p>Have the districts increased stakeholder engagement in planning, implementing, and monitoring improvement initiatives?</p>	<p>Percentage of districts with stakeholders reporting engagement at collaborative or transforming levels in planning, implementing, and monitoring improvement initiatives</p>	<p>Leading by Convening Engagement Rubrics</p>	<p>State Implementation Team and External Evaluator</p>	<p>Annually Beginning Fall 2016</p> <p>Target: Baseline established Fall 2016. Targets set after baseline established.</p>

Mid-term Outcomes	Evaluation Questions	Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods	Responsible Individuals or Groups Timeline	Timelines (Projected Initiation and Completion Dates) and Targets
<p>Improve implementation of evidence-based practices to support teaching and learning such as effective instruction</p> <p>Applies to 50 districts receiving intensive technical assistance</p>	<p>Are teachers in targeted schools implementing evidence-based practices to support teaching and learning to ensure access to the curriculum for all students?</p>	<p>Percentage of teachers in targeted scoring Level III or IV on Academic Rigor and Differentiation Components of TKES</p>	<p>Teacher Keys Effectiveness Evaluation System</p>	<p>Teacher and Leader Effectiveness, Implementation Team and External Evaluator</p>	<p>Annually, Beginning Fall 2016 Targets: Baseline established Fall 2016. Targets set after baseline established.</p>
		<p>Percentage of teachers in targeted schools implementing evidence-based practices with fidelity</p>	<p>Classroom Learning Walks</p>	<p>District Personnel, State Implementation Team and External Evaluator</p>	<p>Annually, Fall and Spring Beginning Fall 2016 Targets: Baseline established Fall 2016. Targets set after baseline established.</p>
<p>Improve school climate including student attendance, engagement, and behavior</p> <p>Applies to 50 districts receiving intensive technical assistance</p>	<p>Is school climate improving in targeted schools?</p>	<p>Percentage of targeted schools scoring a 4 or 5 on the STAR School Climate Rating</p>	<p>STAR School Climate Rating</p>	<p>School Climate Staff, State Implementation Team, and External Evaluator</p>	<p>Annually Beginning Spring 2016 Targets: Baseline established Spring 2016. Targets set after baseline established.</p>
	<p>Are targeted students in targeted schools demonstrating less absenteeism?</p>	<p>Percentage of targeted students with less than six days absent</p>	<p>Targeted Student Data Report</p>	<p>State Implementation Team, and External Evaluator</p>	<p>Annually, Spring Beginning Spring 2016 Targets: Baseline established Spring 2016. Targets set after baseline established.</p>
	<p>Do targeted students in targeted schools have less than five days in ISS/OSS?</p>	<p>Percentage of targeted students with less than five days in ISS/OSS</p>	<p>Targeted Student Data Report</p>	<p>State Implementation Team, and External Evaluator</p>	<p>Annually, Spring Beginning Spring 2016 Targets: Baseline established Spring 2016. Targets set after baseline established.</p>

Mid-term Outcome	Evaluation Questions	Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods	Responsible Individuals or Groups Timeline	Timelines (Projected Initiation and Completion Dates) and Targets
<p>Improve student achievement</p> <p>(Baseline for participating schools established Spring 2016. Targets will be established based on baseline.)</p> <p>Applies to 50 districts receiving intensive technical assistance</p>	<p>Are students in targeted schools improving academically as measured by statewide assessments?</p>	<p>Percentage of students scoring developing or above on the Georgia Milestones Assessment System</p>	<p>Georgia Milestones Assessment System</p>	<p>Office of Assessment and Accountability</p>	<p>Annually, Spring Beginning Spring 2016</p> <p>Target: Baseline for participating districts from Spring 2016. Targets will be established based on baseline once data becomes available.</p>
	<p>Are students in targeted schools improving academically as measured by statewide assessments?</p>	<p>Percentage of students scoring Typical to High Growth</p>	<p>Student Growth Profile Calculations</p>	<p>Office of Assessment and Accountability</p>	<p>Annually, Spring Beginning Spring 2016</p> <p>Targets: Baseline established Spring 2016. Targets set after baseline established.</p>
	<p>Do targeted students in targeted schools demonstrate improved course completion?</p>	<p>Percentage of targeted students in targeted schools with one or less course failure per semester</p>	<p>Targeted Student Data Report</p>	<p>State Implementation Team, and External Evaluator</p>	<p>Annually, Spring Beginning Spring 2016</p> <p>Targets: Baseline established Spring 2016. Targets set after baseline established.</p>

Mid-term Outcome	Evaluation Questions	Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods	Responsible Individuals or Groups Timeline	Timelines (Projected Initiation and Completion Dates) and Targets
Improve transition practices and outcomes Applies to 50 districts receiving intensive technical assistance	Are targeted districts implementing quality transition practices?	Percentage of targeted districts obtaining an overall domain score of 2.0 or higher on the Quality Indicators of Exemplary Transition Programs Needs Assessment (QI)	Quality Indicators of Exemplary Transition Programs Needs Assessment (QI)	Program Manager and Specialist for Secondary Transition	Annually, Spring Beginning Spring 2016 Targets: Baseline established Spring 2016. Targets set after baseline established.
	Are targeted districts implementing compliant transition practices?	Percentage of targeted intensive districts with 100% compliance	Secondary Transition Data Checklist	Program Manager and Specialist for Secondary Transition	Annually, Spring Beginning Spring 2016 Target: 100% for each year through FFY 2018

Long-term Outcome	Evaluation Questions	Performance Indicators	Data Collection Methods	Responsible Individuals or Groups Timeline	Timelines (Projected Initiation and Completion Dates)
Increase percentage of students with disabilities exiting high school with a general education diploma Applies to 50 districts receiving intensive technical assistance	Are graduation rates improving for students with disabilities in targeted districts?	Percentage of students with disabilities in intensive Student Success districts graduating with a general education diploma	Annual Event Graduation Rate	Accountability and Assessment Office Part B Data Manager	Annually, Spring Summer beginning 2016 Targets: FFY 14: 41.00% FFY 15: 59.00% FFY 16: 61.00% FFY 17: 63.00% FFY 18: 65.00%