



THE EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT: Implications for Equity in Georgia

June 2016

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is legislation that rewrites the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* and replaces the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB). The new law represents new opportunities for shaping education policy and recasts the federal, state, and local roles in ensuring educational equity. **Input and support from a broad and politically inclusive set of stakeholders is critical to the successful development, implementation, and ultimate sustainability of ESSA in the states.**

ESSA represents a shift in roles and responsibilities through a redistribution of centralized control toward more localized input and planning. The law's increased flexibility poses significant risks for communities where

there is little engagement or political will to make meaningful improvements on behalf of underserved students and schools. However, it also presents great opportunities for state-based civil rights and equity communities and local education leaders to develop and strengthen a comprehensive system of accountability and improvement based on local context and with support from local stakeholders: **civil rights organizations, family and community groups, teachers and educator groups, organized labor and education personnel, early education and childcare providers, faith-based organizations, researchers and advocacy organizations, elected officials, student groups, teacher educators and others from higher education, school boards, and the business community.**

Broadly speaking, in collaboration with stakeholders, states and districts will be required to:

- **set long-term goals for their schools and students**, including student achievement and rates of high school graduation;
- **measure performance and progress** via indicators based on student academic achievement, graduation rates, student growth, English language proficiency, and through an additional indicator (or indicators) of school quality or student success;
- **identify schools in need of additional support** based on the above indicators for all students and by subgroup;
- **write plans for intervention** in schools with the lowest performance and the highest need; and
- **determine how funds will be distributed and effectively used** to support these interventions and supports.

The law also includes some key shifts in how states and districts will address early education, English language proficiency, educator equity, and at-risk students. For more in-depth information about these and other requirements and opportunities within ESSA, please refer to the list of referenced resources on the last page of this document.

Throughout this document, **new requirements and opportunities for potential decision points within ESSA are indicated with an arrow: DP**



To support SEAs as they engage state stakeholders in the process of aligning current policy with ESSA, Partners *for* (in collaboration with several members of our Network and others) has put together a *Handbook for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement*. The *Handbook*, along with a companion brief, "*In Consultation With... The Case for Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement*," are available here:

[Download the Handbook](#)
[Download the Case](#)

The Development of ESEA, in Brief:

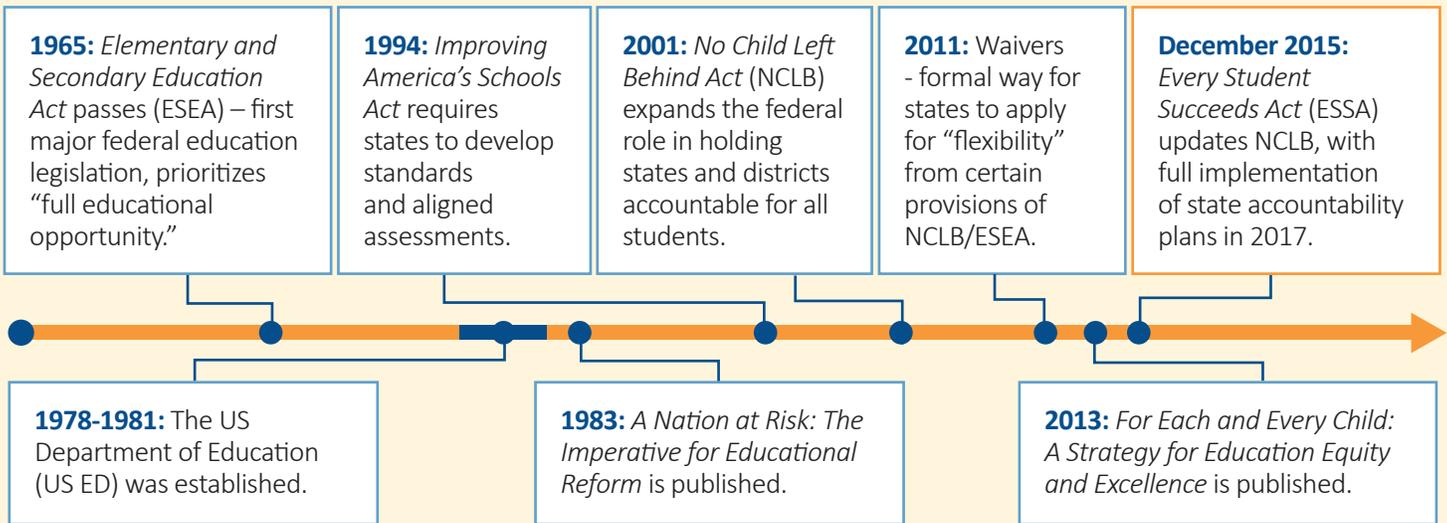


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Goals for Student Achievement

DP **ESSA:** States must set long-term goals with measurements of interim progress for student achievement in ELA and math (as measured by proficiency); high school graduation rates; and English language proficiency.

The goals and interim progress measures must take into account the improvement to make significant progress in closing proficiency and graduation rate gaps.

Currently in GA: GA's performance goal is to reduce by half the percentage of all students and in each subgroup who are not proficient within 6 years (by 2019-2020), with annual measures of interim progress. Subgroups include students with disability, low-income and migrant students, english learners, and student race/ethnicity and gender.

Moving Forward: GA will need to align these goals with ESSA, and engage with **GA stakeholders** around this decision point.

Goals for High School Graduation Rates

ESSA: States must set a long-term goal for 4-year high school graduation rates with measurements of interim progress.

In addition, states **may** set goals for extended-year high school graduation rates, but those goals must be higher than the 4-year graduation rate goal.

Currently in GA: GA has set 4-Year graduation rate target of 89.6% by 2021. Graduation rates (4-year) are included in the state's performance index and are reported both overall and by subgroup. GA also measures a 5-year graduation rate.

Moving Forward: GA will need to ensure that its graduation goals are aligned with ESSA, and determine whether and how to use the 5-year graduation rate data collected for the state report card system to determine statewide goals.

Accountability Indicators

ESSA: ESSA requires states to utilize a multiple-indicator accountability system that includes the performance of all students and each student subgroup in each indicator. The required accountability indicators are:

For elementary, middle and high schools:

- Achievement in ELA and math as measured by proficiency on statewide assessments*
- English language proficiency rates*

DP • *At least 1 additional indicator of school quality or student success that allows for meaningful differentiation among school performance, can be disaggregated, and is valid, reliable, statewide, comparable (e.g., rates of school discipline, chronic absenteeism) (See page 4 for more)*

Currently in GA: GA uses a set of indicators in the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI), which has 3 main components:

- Achievement (includes content mastery, post-grade band (for example, 9th grade) readiness, 4-year graduation rate)
- Progress
- Achievement Gap

GA schools may earn bonus points through a set of "Exceeding the Bar" indicators:

- Student performance data (includes: 9th grade performance; STEM program certification; career-related program completion; world language credit)



Accountability Indicators - Continued

For elementary and middle schools:

- A measure of student growth or other academic indicator that allows for meaningful differentiation in school performance*

For high schools:

- 4-year graduation rate (in addition, states may use an extended-year graduation rate)*

DP * This indicator must carry “substantial” weight. In the aggregate, these indicators must carry “much greater weight” than the indicator(s) of school quality or student success.

- Teacher and Leader evaluation (includes: % teachers using the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) to inform data-driven decisions; innovative practice; evidence-based program/practice for school/classroom climate; performance on GA’s Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Measures (TEM, LEM))
- ELL performance/advancement is included at the elementary and middle school levels as part of the post-grade band readiness indicator.

Moving Forward: GA must ensure that its academic indicators carry substantial weight as decisions about additional indicators are considered (see below) within its accountability system.

Additional Accountability Indicators and N-Size

DP **ESSA:** For all schools, states must include at least 1 additional indicator of school quality or success that allows for meaningful differentiation among student groups (e.g., school discipline, chronic absenteeism).

DP States must set the minimum number of students from a subgroup needed for reporting and accountability purposes. The N-size must be the same for all subgroups and for all indicators.

DP NOTE: states may include **more than one** additional indicator of school quality or success so long as that indicator is measured for all students and subgroups.

Currently in GA: GA has indicators of school and student success as part of its main accountability indicators and as part of the index that earns schools bonus credit, such as attendance, teacher and leader performance indicators, and use of practices that support school and classroom climate.

Moving Forward: In order to use GA’s school and student success measures to fulfill the requirement within ESSA, GA will need to disaggregate this information by subgroup. GA should further consider which of these indicators will make the most sense to use within the accountability system under ESSA. GA will also need to determine appropriate weights for all indicators, with academic indicators receiving “substantial weight” individually, and collectively making up a “much greater weight” than the additional indicator(s) of school quality or student success.

These considerations provide an opportunity for **GA stakeholders** to be involved in the design and implementation of the appropriate additional indicator(s) for the state’s system going forward.



Report Cards and Data Reporting

ESSA: Annual state and district report cards are required. The following are a subset of the information required by ESSA to be included on the state and district report cards:

- DP** • Long-term goals, measures of interim progress for all students and subgroups, on all accountability indicators;
- DP** • Minimum number of students for subgroups (N-size);
- The system used to meaningfully differentiate among schools (including indicators and their specific weights, methodology for differentiating schools, and schools identified for *Support & Improvement* and respective exit criteria) (see page 6);
- Performance on annual assessments (See page 10) disaggregated by: economic disadvantage; each major racial and ethnic group; gender; disability, English learner (EL) and migrant status; homeless; foster care; and military-connection.
- DP** • Educator Equity: professional qualifications of teachers overall and in high-poverty schools compared to low-poverty schools, including the percentage of teachers who are inexperienced, teaching with emergency or provisional credentials, or who are not teaching in the field they are certified;
- DP** • Measures of school quality, climate, and safety, which may include data reported as part of US ED's Office for Civil Rights Data Collection; and
- Early Childhood Data: percent of students enrolled in preschool programs.

Currently in GA: GA uses the CCRPI for both accountability and reporting.

Reports include:

- Accountability indicators: highly qualified teachers (HQTs); student participation rates in specific courses; and CCPI performance, graduation rates, and performance targets overall and by subgroup.
- Demographic, other data: attendance for all students and subgroups; demographic information; dropout rates; eligibility for the HOPE scholarship (undergraduate tuition assistance administered by the Georgia Student Finance Commission, and based on academic achievement)
- National, Georgia assessment performance
- Personnel & fiscal data: personnel certifications, race/ethnicity, positions, and salary; school revenues & expenditures
- Early Childhood: at-risk children served; pre-K enrollment; 4-year-olds enrolled in Head Start, GA Pre-K program

See Accountability Indicators, page 3 for more on the CCRPI.

Moving Forward: GA will need to disaggregate student performance data by all subgroups not currently measured, including homeless, foster care, and military-connected youth.



Schools Identified for Comprehensive Reform Based on *Performance of All Students*

ESSA: States must identify schools for *Comprehensive Support & Improvement*, at least once every 3 years:

- the lowest performing 5% of Title I schools; and
- all high schools with a graduation rate at or below 67%.



NOTE: *Targeted Support and Improvement* schools (see below) that are consistently underperforming over a period of time, and that fail to achieve state determined “**exit criteria**,” must be reclassified by the state as *Comprehensive Support & Improvement* schools.

Currently in GA: *Priority* schools are schools that have been identified as among the lowest performing 5% of Title I schools, measured by a 3-year average of “content mastery” indicator, as well as schools with 4-year graduation rates less than 60% for 2 consecutive years.

Additionally, the Title I Reward Schools Program recognizes and honors two categories of Reward schools: highest-performing Reward schools and high-progress Reward schools. Schools are identified based on student performance on state assessments.

Moving Forward: GA will have to reclassify schools identified for support and improvement in different ways based on all of the annual accountability indicators, disaggregated by subgroup. For each *Comprehensive* school identified by the state, each district, in partnership with stakeholders, should locally develop and implement a *Comprehensive Support & Improvement* plan for the school to improve student outcomes. Plans must be approved by the school, district, and state, and must include evidence-based interventions, a school-level needs assessment, and an identification of resource inequities – all areas of opportunity for **GA stakeholder engagement**.

Schools Identified for Targeted Reform Based on *Subgroup Performance*

ESSA: States must identify, annually, any school with a subgroup of students that is consistently underperforming based on all of the indicators in the state accountability system for *Targeted Support & Improvement*.

States must also identify schools where the performance of any subgroup of students is at or below the level used to identify Title I schools for the bottom 5% in the state for *Targeted Support & Improvement*. If these schools fail to meet “**exit criteria**,” (state-defined and for a state-determined period of time) they will be reclassified as *Comprehensive Support & Improvement* schools.



Currently in GA: *Focus* schools are Title I schools not identified as *Priority* schools that are among the lowest 10% of schools, measured by the 3-year average of “achievement gap” indicator – both in terms of the size of the gap and the rates at which gaps are closing.

Moving Forward: Each *Targeted* and *Additional Targeted* school should develop and implement school-level plans in partnership with stakeholders. Plans must be approved by the district, include evidence-based interventions, and identify resource inequities – areas of opportunity for **GA stakeholder engagement**.



Interventions and Supports for Struggling Schools

ESSA: 1. Comprehensive Support & Improvement Schools

At least once every 3 years, states must identify the lowest-performing 5% of Title I schools and high schools with graduation rates at or below 67% for *comprehensive*, locally-determined, evidence-based intervention.

Districts have the responsibility of developing improvement plans which must:

- be informed by all of the accountability indicators;
- be evidence-based;
- be based on a school-level needs assessment;
- be approved by the school, district, and state;
- be monitored and periodically reviewed by the state; and
- identify resource inequities to be addressed.

2. Targeted Support & Improvement Schools:

Annually, states must identify any school with any student subgroup that is “consistently underperforming” based on all indicators in the state accountability system. Those schools must receive targeted, locally-determined, evidence-based intervention. Schools have the responsibility of developing improvement plans which must:

- be informed by accountability indicators;
- be evidence-based;
- be approved and monitored by the district; and
- result in additional action for underperformance over a period of time determined by the district.

3. Additional Targeted Support Schools:

A school with a subgroup performing at the level of the lowest-performing 5% of all Title I schools must also be identified. These schools must identify resource inequities to address through the implementation of its improvement plan in addition to meeting the requirements described above.

Currently in GA: All *Priority* and *Focus* schools will develop and implement:

- a comprehensive review of performance on key school standards;
- Short-term (1-2 year) action plans that are developed with and monitored by the school leadership team with support from GaDOE and/or Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) as formal partners; and
- a signed 3-year Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with GaDOE that outlines the “Non-Negotiable Actions and Interventions” (specific interventions aligned with turnaround principles) for each *Priority* and *Focus* school and the district.

Additionally, Districts with *Priority* schools are assigned a “district effectiveness specialist” by the GaDOE who assesses need and brings in further staffing or other support based on that assessment.

NOTE: Title I schools in GA are not required to offer supplemental educational services, and instead may offer a Flexible Learning Plan to provide eligible students academic intervention services designed by the district.

Moving Forward: GA should align *Priority* and *Focus* school interventions and supports with those required for ESSA's *Comprehensive*, *Targeted*, and *Additional Targeted* schools. (See page 6 for more information about how these schools must be identified.)

ESSA also only requires districts to submit improvement plans for their *Comprehensive* schools, without specific implications for district level changes.

GA's existing guidance and support system for districts and schools could serve as an important capacity-building infrastructure that strengthens GA's approach to continuous improvement.



Intervention Timeline

ESSA: *Comprehensive Support & Improvement* schools have 4 years to meet state-set criteria that allow them to exit the *Comprehensive* intervention status. If they do not meet these criteria, they must implement more rigorous **state-determined interventions**, which may include school-level operations.

DP

Any school with a subgroup performing at the level of the lowest-performing 5% of all Title I-receiving schools and implementing Targeted interventions must reach state-set "**exit criteria**" by a state-set **time period** or the school will be identified for *Comprehensive Support & Improvement*.

Currently in GA: *Priority* schools achieve exit status by:

- no longer meeting the definition of a *Priority* school;
- demonstrating a 5-%age point increase in "content mastery" performance; and
- having graduation rates (most recent year and prior year 4-year cohort rates) greater than or equal to 60% (only for *Priority* schools identified by graduation rate)

Focus schools achieve exit status if the school's 3-year average of "achievement gap" points earned increases by 2.5 points from the 2014 baseline.

2 years after a school is identified as *Focus* or *Priority*, GaDOE may provide a district review if a significant number of the district's schools have not exited status, and may revise the MOA to include interim expectations or interventions of the school and district.

Schools that have not made sufficient progress to exit after 3 years receive further technical assistance and involvement from GaDOE, including district needs assessment/root cause analysis, funding review, district monitoring (e.g. Indistar system) by the state, or leadership development.

Moving Forward: GA will need to determine a timeline for intervention that aligns with the requirements under ESSA (4-year). Determining both the timeline and the required interventions are opportunities for **GA stakeholder engagement**.



School Improvement Funding

ESSA: States must use 7% of Title I allocations for school improvement activities. States will determine if these funds are distributed by formula or competitive grants.

DP States **may** use 3% of Title I allocations for “direct student services,” in consultation with districts, including:

- Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and other advanced coursework; career and technical education that leads to an industry-recognized credential;
- credit recovery programs;
- personalized learning; and
- transportation from *Comprehensive Support & Improvement* schools to higher performing schools.

Currently in GA: Only districts with *Priority* schools are eligible to compete for the School Improvement Grant (SIG) 1003(g). The awarded districts receive SIG funds to implement a school intervention model. GA allocated \$16 million in SIG grants in 2015.

In addition to funds, GaDOE also provides SIG schools with:

- state professional learning opportunities (e.g. Instructional Leadership Academy);
- regional professional learning opportunities
- school effectiveness specialists to support implementation of reform initiatives/school improvement plans.
- targeted technical assistance workshops

Moving Forward: In order to receive ESSA’s school improvement resources, the state and districts must develop implementation plans with input from GA stakeholders. Another opportunity to use school improvement resources, outside of Title I, is through the use of Title II professional learning funds to support teacher and staff development in high-poverty schools.

Standards

ESSA: States must demonstrate that their challenging academic standards are aligned with entry-level course requirements in the state’s public system of higher education and the state’s career and technical education standards.

NOTE: The US Secretary of Education cannot mandate, direct, control, coerce, or exercise any direction or supervision over standards adopted or implemented by the state.

Currently in GA: After initially adopting the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards, GA standards were reviewed and updated to become the Georgia Standards of Excellence in 2015.

Moving Forward: GA will need to demonstrate that the Georgia Standards of Excellence are “challenging” and aligned to the GA public system of higher education standards.



Student Assessment

ESSA: States must:

- assess at least 95% of all students and include participation rates in the state accountability system;
- DP** • assess students annually in grades 3-8, and at least once in high school, in math and ELA, with science assessments required at least once in each grade span (3-5; 6-9; 10-12);
- not assess more than 1 % of students using an alternate assessment

for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities; and

- make “every effort” to develop assessments in languages other than English that are present to a “significant extent” in its participating student population.

States **may**:

- DP** • use computer adaptive assessments, interim assessments that result in a single summative score, and/or complementary assessments that use projects, portfolios, and extended performance tasks.
- DP** • allow districts to use a locally-selected, nationally-recognized high school assessment in place of the required statewide high school assessment;
- DP** • apply to implement an *innovative assessment and accountability pilot*, which may include the use of competency- or performance-based assessments that may be used in place of the annual statewide assessments (flexibility will only be afforded to up to 7 states, and a consortia not to exceed 4 states); and
- DP** • set a target limit on the aggregate amount of time spent on assessments.

Assessment Audit Grants are available for states to audit the number and quality of assessments statewide and by district; and to provide district subgrants to improve assessment systems and capacity to use results to improve teaching and learning.

Currently in GA: GA uses the Georgia Milestone Assessments System. Assessments include:

- annual assessments in grades 3-8 in ELA, math, science, and social studies.
- end-of-course assessments in high school in ELA (9th grade and American literature and composition); math (algebra and geometry); science (biology, physical science); social studies (U.S. history, economics/business/ free enterprise)
- GA does offer the Georgia Alternative Assessment (portfolio) for students with the most severe cognitive disabilities.

NOTE: GA is currently transitioning from paper to computer-based tests.

The Georgia Milestones Assessment system highlights some potentially innovative features including:

open-ended (constructed-response) and items in language arts and mathematics; and

a writing component (in response to passages read by students) at every grade level and course within the language arts assessment.

GA also offers the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS) for assessing interim academic and social-emotional progress and 1st-grade readiness.

Moving Forward: GA will need to ensure compliance with the subset of students participating in alternative assessments, as well as overall participation in state assessments.

GA will need to consider the opportunity to apply for specific assessment audit grants. GA will need to provide a structured process to get feedback from school-level stakeholders on the supports they will need to better use assessment data to improve instruction and how data can be regularly provided to communicate effectively with and build understanding among all **GA stakeholders**.

If GA applies for the Innovative Assessment/Accountability pilot, the design and implementation plans should be developed in consultation with GA stakeholders representing students with disabilities, ELLs, and other vulnerable children. GA will need to specify how parents can learn about the system at the beginning of each year of implementation, and **engage and support teachers** in developing and scoring assessments that are part of the innovative assessments system.



Educator Equity

ESSA: States no longer need to define and track Highly Qualified Teachers (HQTs), but states must develop, report and share plans describing how they will identify and address educator equity disparities that result in poor and minority students being taught by ineffective, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers at higher rates than other students.

DP States must collect and publicly report data on these disparities and describe the metrics used to determine the disparities. States must also report on, where available, the annual retention rates of effective and ineffective teachers, principals, and other school leaders.

DP States *may* use federal professional development funds to increase access to effective teachers for students from low-income families and students of color.

Districts must describe how they will identify and address educator equity, and must have mechanisms to notify parents regarding the professional qualifications of their child's teacher.

Currently in GA: GA's Race to the Top grant and the "Great Teachers and Leaders Project" support efforts to promote educator equity. As part of this effort, GA's thorough data analysis enabled it to rank regions by "variables of concern" around educator equity, and to identify specific districts where it needed to conduct additional root cause analyses. The strategies included in GA's Educator Equity plan focused mainly on recruitment and teacher preparation; teacher and principal effectiveness, retention and professional growth; and factors that impact the learning and working environment.

GA reports on HQTs, teacher certification, and salary as part of the state report card system.

Moving Forward: Broader public reporting to community groups and stakeholders through school/district report cards might strengthen stakeholder engagement efforts in GA and provide regular feedback on educator equity interventions. Additional data could be helpful to guide implementation, such as teacher experience or advanced degree attainment.

Title II funding allocations, which are specifically meant to support preparing, training, and recruiting high-quality teachers and principals, require the state and local districts to work with **GA stakeholders** to assess, develop, and refine strategies to meet the state's goals around quality teachers and school leaders.

Teacher and Leader Evaluation Systems

ESSA: States are not required to have teacher and leader evaluation systems.

States *may* use federal professional development funds and Teacher and School Leader Incentive Fund competitive grants to implement teacher and leader evaluation systems based on student achievement, growth, and multiple measures of performance, and to inform professional development.

Currently in GA: The Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) and the Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) both produce teacher and leader Effectiveness Measures (TEM and LEM, respectively) used in GA's accountability system. The TKES and LKES were implemented in all districts in 2014-15 year, and are set to include student growth data to inform high stakes personnel decisions in 2016-17 year.

Moving Forward: GA may decide to use federal professional development funds and/or Teacher and School Leader Incentive Fund grant funds to support the ongoing implementation of its system, and to continue to inform professional development. These decisions are important opportunities for **GA stakeholder engagement**.



Early Childhood Education

DP ESSA: ESSA's provisions aim to promote:

- early learning coordination within communities;
- greater alignment with the early elementary grades; and
- early childhood education focused on capacity building for teachers, leaders, and other staff serving young children.

ESSA includes a birth to 12th grade literacy initiative, and also includes early childhood as a component of education and interventions for Native American and Alaskan Native students, dual language learners, and children experiencing homelessness.

A new authorization has been created for a *Preschool Development Grant (PDG)* program:

Authorized at \$250M for FYs 2017-20, the PDG is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) jointly with US ED. Funds can be used to develop, update, or implement a plan to increase collaboration or coordination among existing early childhood programs and participation of children from low-income families in high quality early childhood programs. Secretaries of HHS and US ED are restricted from prescribing early learning development guidelines, standards, specific assessments, and specific measures or indicators of quality early learning and care.

In addition to the stakeholder engagement required in the development and implementation of PDGs, school districts will need to determine whether they plan to use Title I funds for early childhood education more broadly. If so, their plans must describe the district strategy to support participating students' transition to local elementary schools. These decisions should be made with engagement of stakeholders, especially local early childhood and childcare experts.

Currently in GA: The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL), "Bright from the Start" department is responsible for childcare and early education. Bright from the Start Activities include:

- administering GA's Pre-K Program;
- licensing and monitoring all center-based and home-based childcare facilities;
- housing the Head Start State Collaboration Office;
- administering the federal Child Care and Development Fund and state matching funds;
- funding All Georgia Kids, a childcare information program for families;
- providing technical assistance and professional development to early childhood educators and programs through the child care resource and referral agencies;
- offering support to families and early care and education programs who care for children with special needs; and
- collaborating with Head Start, Family Connection Partnership, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Public Health and Smart Start Georgia to blend federal, state, and private dollars to enhance early care and education.

There has been collaboration between GaDOE and DECAL to modify Early Learning and Development Standards, and train preschool administrators and leaders for addressing the need of preschool-aged students with disabilities. Additionally, and along with WIDA, these groups collaborated to bring English Language Development standards to EL children birth to pre-kindergarten.

NOTE: The Governor's Reform Commission produced a series of recommendations for early education in 2015. These include changes to compensation structure, increased pay, smaller class size, increased funding & funding for positive behavior support, and more.

Moving Forward: GA districts will need to determine if they plan to use Title I funds for early childhood education. If so, their plans must develop and describe the district strategy to support participating students' transition to local elementary schools. Title I allocation, especially focused on early learning transitions, can further strengthen GaDOE's collaboration with DECAL, and increase funding for early education programming. These decisions should be made with engagement of **GA stakeholders**, especially local early childhood and childcare experts.



English Learners

ESSA: Accountability for ELs is shifted to Title I, which increases funding opportunities and visibility for ELs. States must:

- DP** • include English proficiency as an indicator in their accountability systems;
- DP** • annually assess and report English proficiency, and students who have not attained English proficiency within 5 years of identification as an EL;
- clarify a standardized process for classifying ELs and re-designating students as English proficient; and disaggregate ELs with a disability from ELs in general.

DP States have two options regarding timing for testing ELs:

- Include test scores after they have been in the country 1 year (consistent with current law); OR
- Refrain from counting EL test scores in a school's rating in their first year, but require ELs to take both math and ELA assessments and publicly report the results.

In order to receive Title III funding to support EL programs, state and district plans must explicitly include parent, family, and community stakeholder engagement as part of their EL strategy, and develop implementation plans with all state stakeholders.

Currently in GA: EL students are identified based on a home language survey and, as GA is part of the WIDA consortium, students are placed and their progress measured using the WIDA-ACCESS for ELs assessments.

To support EL students, English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) is a state-funded instructional program in grades K-12 (Georgia School Law Code, enacted in 1985). ESOL coursework is based on the WIDA Consortium English Language Development (ELD) standards.

GA's Accountability system includes an indicator for % English Learners with positive movement from one Performance Band to a higher Performance Band as measured by the ACCESS for ELs (part of the post-grade band readiness indicator). While scores for ELs will also be included in the "content mastery" (overall performance) indicator after 2 years of instruction in U.S. schools, recently arrived ELs in grades 3-8 may exempt one year's ELA assessment due to limited EL proficiency. EL and migrant student data are reported in the state report card system.

NOTE: GA is now 8th in the nation in its number of unaccompanied children, immigrants and refugees, and enrollment data for the school year 2013-2014 indicate that 3.2% of all English Learners were new-to-the U.S.

Moving Forward: GA has invested in robust data collection, assessment and accountability practices for ELLs. Areas for further development might include:

- including family or student interviews as part of initial language proficiency assessments; and
- further tracking of EL students beyond achievement of EL proficiency status.

At-Risk Students

- DP** **ESSA:** HSGI is eliminated, but a new funding program, the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant, authorizes formula grants to states for three purposes: (1) provide students a well-rounded education; (2) improve school conditions; and (3) improve the use of technology to support digital literacy. These funds may be used to support dropout prevention and re-entry programs.

Currently in GA: GaDOE also administers the statewide Graduation Coach program to identify and provide early intervention services to students at risk of dropping out. Initiated in 2006-07 for high schools, the program was expanded in 2007-08 to include middle schools, based on early warning indicators.

GA also has a number of other programs that support at-risk students. These include:



At-Risk Students - Continued

- Student Support Teams (SST) that identify and plan alternative instructional strategies for students prior to or in lieu of a special education referral (teams may include teachers, counselors, parents, and others);
- The Southern Education Board's High Schools that Work initiative supports students' academic and technical performance and post-high school placement; and
- Career Clusters and Pathways courses for high school students that includes a separate set of standards and assessments (plans of study include agriculture, finance, business management, arts/AV and communications, health science, and STEM).

In Chicago, the Department of Dropout Prevention and Recovery has implemented district-wide programming targeting 9th grade course completion and success and credit recovery for students in 10th-12th grade.

Moving Forward: GA now has the opportunity to take advantage of the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant program (see left), and would need to determine which student supports to implement with this new funding. These decisions should be made in consultation with local **GA stakeholders**.

Funding

ESSA: The new law includes some funding provisions that include:

- Supplement not supplant requirements are maintained.
- Maintenance of Effort requirements for K-12 remain in place.
-  A school with at least 40% poverty is eligible for Schoolwide Title I programs.
- The Title II formula shifts to a more significant weight on poverty (80% of the formula by 2020).
- *Weighted Student Funding* (WSF) pilot: 50 school districts working to improve school finance systems, including system evaluation.

Currently in GA: GA schools are funded by local taxes (primarily property and sales taxes, ~40% of total funding) and state revenue (~51% of total funding).

The Quality Basic Education Act (1985) determines how these funds are allocated to school systems in GA. The key components of the formula include:

- a "foundation grant" determined by the number of students and the weighted (based on educational programming) "foundation" cost per-pupil;
- required minimum local funding (Local Five Mill Share);
- "austerity reductions" (cuts, introduced 2003) in response to reduced revenues following the recession;
- categorical grants for transportation, nursing, and sparsity costs;



Funding - Continued

ESSA: The new law includes some funding provisions that include:

- Supplement not supplant requirements are maintained.
- Maintenance of Effort requirements for K-12 remain in place.
- A school with at least 40% poverty is eligible for Schoolwide Title I programs.
- The Title II formula shifts to a more significant weight on poverty (80% of the formula by 2020).
- *Weighted Student Funding* (WSF) pilot: 50 school districts working to improve school finance systems, including system evaluation.

- equalization grants that provide funding to schools that cannot meet local base funding requirements; and
- capital funds that include grants for technology, facilities, and low-wealth programming.

Moving Forward: The Governor's Reform Commission produced a series of recommendations, including a revision of the school funding formula:

- to be student-based, determined by enrollment;
- to encompass weighted student characteristics; and
- to decouple the base amount and specialized grants that are necessary to support the unique needs of districts.

A full assessment should be conducted, with the input and engagement of multiple **GA stakeholder groups**, as part of deciding whether to apply for the WSF pilot; districts who apply should develop their proposals with the input of **GA stakeholders**.

Rural Schools

DP **ESSA:** Spending flexibility of SRSA- and RLIS-directed funds is expanded to best meet the needs of underperforming students and schools.

These funds can be used to support teacher recruitment and retention, teacher professional development, increasing access to educational technology, family engagement, ELL support, as well as partnerships that increase access to student enrichment, during and after the school day.

Currently in GA: 24 districts in GA received REAP (SRSA/RLIS) grant funding in 2014-15, though over 100 districts were eligible.

Moving Forward: With nearly 1/3 of all GA schools in rural districts, the often limited staff, scarce resources, and sparse tax base that affect rural schools, as well as the potential for innovative learning and school structures that are often more readily available to rural schools, should make rural education supports a priority in GA.

GA should determine if they will utilize SRSA and RLIS funding in year to come, and whether they will use these funds for increasing access to student enrichment, which is another opportunity for **GA stakeholder engagement**.



Charter Schools

ESSA: All public schools are included in the state’s accountability system, including charter schools. States must:



- establish charter school authorization standards, which may include approving, monitoring and re-approving or revoking the authority of an authorized public chartering agency based on charter school performance in the areas of student achievement, student safety, financial and
- operational management, and compliance with all applicable statutes and regulations;
- ensure charter school annual reports include academic measures that are part of the state accountability system (4 academic, 1 additional indicator), as well as adjusted 4-year and extended cohort graduation rates, disaggregated by subgroups, including plans for intervention and supports; and
- provide assurance of equitable distribution of effective educators.

Currently in GA: There are 115 charter schools in GA, with 20 state charter schools (2015-16) that are managed independently and are treated as local education agencies (LEAs). Charters can be “Start-up” (new schools) or “Conversion” charters (previously traditional district schools), and must be authorized by the state and local Boards of Education. Charters denied approval at the local level can be authorized by the GA State Board of Education or the GaDOE, and become “state-chartered special schools.”

Charter schools are subject to the state accountability assessments, and must receive the same level of funding as traditional schools. However, accountability structures are determined by the charter agreement.

Moving Forward: GA will have to ensure compliance and annual reporting on indicators used for charter schools under the revised state accountability system, and ensure equitable distribution of teachers.

Mitigating the Effects of Poverty



ESSA: Funds include competitive grants for supportive programs, such as *Full-Service Community Schools*, *Promise Neighborhoods* and *21st Century Community Learning Centers*. These grants are intended to expand equitable access to comprehensive student enrichment and supports, including integrated community partnerships and professional development for educators to work effectively with families and communities.

Currently in GA: GA programming to support low-income students, their families, and schools include the following:

- GA’s 21st CCLC program office supervised and supported 115 subgrantees in 3 cohorts in 2014-15 for a total funding amount of \$36M (5-year term).
- The GaDOE Parent Engagement Program builds parent capacity through the Georgia PIC Network, which is divided into five regions (~900 Parent Involvement Coordinators statewide)
- 3 Promise Neighborhood initiatives, supported federally (\$500K annually)
- A partnership with Communities in Schools, which operates Performance Learning Centers (PLC) as part of state school turnaround efforts.
- The New Teacher Project (TNTP) helps to strengthen the effectiveness of new teacher hires and ensure the highest-need subject areas and schools attract high-quality teachers through the Georgia Teaching Fellows (GTF) program.



Mitigating the Effects of Poverty - Continued

- The Governor's Office of Student Achievement administers the GA Innovation Fund, which began under the GA RttT plan, to support teacher and leader development and literacy development; and RESA's Growing Readers Program, which is a K-3 literacy professional learning grant program.

Moving Forward: The state senate recently introduced the "Unlocking the Promise Community Schools Act" (SB 124), which would provide for sustainable community school operational grants. These competitive grant programs (also including Promise Neighborhoods) provide an opportunity for deeper understanding of student, family and community needs, by working directly with parents, families, and community stakeholders in the planning and implementation of strategic programs.

The lessons from GA's many programs that support Community Schools and in-school programming for low-income students are integral to the continued development of comprehensive school reform efforts that expand and deepen partnerships with community organizations, public agencies, hospitals, institutes of higher learning, and public sector partners.

GA's application for Title IV funding, and its plans to allocate funds to local districts and partnerships will need to emphasize and incentivize greater collaboration between education decision makers, including state and local agencies that fund before and after school programs, health and mental health agencies, afterschool networks, and representatives from **GA stakeholder groups** (e.g., teachers, districts, and community based organizations).

APPENDIX A: Stakeholder Engagement in ESSA

The ESSA sections below highlight specific opportunities for engagement with various stakeholders in the state:

Title I, Section 1111 – State Plans

- *Development*: Requirement that to receive grant funds plan must be developed by SEA with timely and meaningful consultation with the Governor, members of the State legislature and the State board of education, LEAs, representatives of Indian tribes located in the State, teachers, principals, other school leaders, charter school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, administrators, other staff, and parents (Sec. 1111(a)(1)(A)).
- *Public Comment*: Requirement that each state shall make the State plan publicly available for comment for no less than 30 days. Must be available electronically in an easily accessible format. Must happen before submission of the plan to the Secretary. Assurances must be provided in the plan that this has taken place.
- *Determining ‘N’ size*: States must demonstrate how it determined N size, including how it collaborated with teachers, principals, other school leaders, parents, and other stakeholders when determining the minimum number (Sec. 1111(c)(3)(A)(ii)).
- *Comprehensive Support and Improvement Plans*: For each Comprehensive school identified by the state, and in partnership with stakeholders (i.e., parents, teachers, principals, school leaders) locally develop and implement a Comprehensive plan for the school to improve student outcomes (Sec. 1111(d)(1)(B)).
- *Targeted Support and Improvement Plans*: For each Targeted school identified by the district, and in partnership with stakeholders (i.e., parents, teachers, principals, school leaders), shall develop and implement school-level Targeted plans (Sec. 1111(d)(2)(B)).
- *Assurances – Parent/Family Engagement*: Each SEA plan shall include assurances that the SEA will support the collection and dissemination to LEAs and schools of effective parent and family engagement strategies, including those in the parent and family engagement policy under section 1116 (Sec. 1111(g)(2)(F)).
- *State Report Card*: Must be presented in an understandable and uniform format that is developed in consultation with parents, and to the extent practicable, in a language parents can understand (Sec. 1111(h)(1)(B)(ii)).

Title I, Section 1112 – LEA Plans

- *LEA subgrants*: May only be received by the LEA if it has on file with the SEA an SEA-approved plan that is developed with timely and meaningful consultation with teachers, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals, specialized instructional support personnel, and charter school leaders, administrators, other appropriate school personnel, and with parents of children in Title I schools (Sec. 1112(a)(1)(A)).
- *LEA plans*: In its plan, each LEA shall describe the strategy it will use to implement effective parent and family engagement under section 1116 ... and how teachers and school leaders, in consultation with parents, administrators, paraprofessionals, and specialized instructional support personnel, in schools operating a targeted assistance school program under section 1115, will identify the eligible children most in need of Title I services (Sec. 1112 (b)(9)).

Title I, Section 1202 – State Option to Conduct Assessment System Audit

- *Application:* Applications for state assessment audit grants must include information on the stakeholder feedback the State will seek in designing the audit (Sec. 1202(d)(1)(B)).
- *State assessment system audit:* Each State assessment system audit shall include feedback on the system from stakeholders including, for example- how teachers, principals, other school leaders, and administrators use assessment data to improve and differentiate instruction; the timing of release of assessment data; the extent to which assessment data is presented in an accessible and understandable format for all stakeholders (Sec. 1202(e)(3)(C)).

Title I, Section 1204 – Innovative Assessment and Accountability Demonstration Authority

- *Application:* Applications for innovative assessments must demonstrate that the innovative assessment system will be developed in collaboration with stakeholders representing the interests of children with disabilities, English learners, and other vulnerable children; teachers, principals, and other school leaders; LEAs; parents; and civil rights organizations in the State (Sec. 1204(e)(2)(A)(v)). The application shall also include a description of how the SEA will inform parents about the system at the beginning of each year of implementation (Sec. 1204(e)(2)(B)(v)), and engage and support teachers in developing and scoring assessments that are part of the innovative assessment system (Sec. 1204)(e)(2)(B)(v)).

Title I, Section 1501 – Flexibility for Equitable Per-Pupil Funding

- *Assurances:* LEAs interested in applying for the weighted student funding flexibility pilot shall include in the application an assurance that the LEA developed and will implement the pilot in collaboration with teachers, principals, other school leaders, administrators of Federal programs impacted by the agreement, parents, community leaders, and other relevant stakeholders (Sec.1501(d)(1)(G)).

Title II, Section 2101 – Formula Grants to States

- *Application:* Each SEA shall meaningfully consult with teachers, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals, specialized instruction support personnel, charter school leaders, parents, community partners, and other organizations or partners with relevant and demonstrated expertise, and seek advice regarding how to best improve the State’s activities to meet the purpose of this title (Sec.2101(d)(3)(A)).

Title II, Section 2102 – Subgrants to LEAs

- *Application:* In developing the application LEAs shall meaningfully consult with teachers, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals, specialized instructional support personnel, charter school leaders, parents, community partners, and other organizations or partners with relevant and demonstrated expertise and seek advice regarding how to best improve the State’s activities to meet the purpose of this title (Sec. 2102(b)(3)).

Title III, Section 3102 – English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement

- *Assurances:* SEA and specifically qualified agency plans must provide an assurance that the plan has been developed in consultation with LEAs, teachers, administrators of programs implemented under this subpart, parents of English learners, and other relevant stakeholders.

Title III, Section 3115 – Subgrants to Eligible Entities

- *Local Plans:* Local grants must describe how the eligible entity will promote parent, family, and

community engagement in the education of English learners and contain assurances that the eligible entity consulted with teachers, researchers, school administrators, parents and family members, community members, public or private entities, and institutions of higher education in developing the plan.

Title III, Section 3131 – National Professional Development Project

- Grant use: Grants awarded under this section may be used to support strategies that strengthen and increase parent, family and community member engagement in the education of English learners (Sec. 3131(3)).

Title IV, Section 4106 – LEA Applications

- *Applications*: an LEA, or consortium of LEAs, shall develop its application through consultation with parents, teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, students, community based organizations, local government representatives (including law enforcement, local juvenile court, local child welfare agency, or local public housing agency), Indian tribes or tribal organizations, charter school teachers, principals, and other school leaders, and others with relevant and demonstrated expertise in programs and activities designed to meet the purpose of this subpart. The LEA or consortium shall engage in continued consultation with the entities described above (Sec 4106(c)(1)).

Title IV, Section 4203 – State Application

- *Applications*: SEAs shall submit an assurance that the application was developed in consultation and coordination with appropriate State officials, including the chief State school officer, and other State agencies administering before and after school programs and activities, heads of the State health and mental health agencies or their designees, statewide after-school networks and representatives of teachers, LEAs, and community based organizations and a description of any other representatives of teachers, parents, students, or the business community that the State has selected to assist in the development of the application if applicable (Sec. 4203(a)(13)).

Title IV, Section 4624 – Promise Neighborhoods

- *Application*: Eligible entities desiring a grant under this part must include in their application an analysis of the needs assets of the neighborhood identified including a description of the process through which the needs analysis was produced including a description of how parents, families, and community members were engaged (Sec. 4624(a)(4)(B)), and an explanation of the process the eligible entity will use to establish and maintain family and community engagement including how a representative of the members of such neighborhood will be involved in the planning and implementation of the activities of each award granted (Sec. 4624(a)(9)(A)).

Title IV, Section 4625 – Full Service Community Schools

- *Grant awards*: in awarding grants under this subpart, the Secretary shall prioritize eligible entities that are consortiums comprised of a broad representation of stakeholders or consortiums demonstrating a history of effectiveness (Sec.4625(b)(2)).

APPENDIX B: Resources for Further Information about ESSA

The following are overviews and analyses of ESSA from *Partners for Network* partners and others who have contributed to the national and local conversations about ESSA implementation. This list is not exhaustive, and will be updated as resources become available. We welcome your input on expanding and revising this list.

The Alliance for Excellent Education (The Alliance) is a nonpartisan policy and advocacy non-profit that focuses on high school transformation and policy implementation recommendations. They have produced valuable summary materials - both print and video - summarizing ESSA's implications for **accountability, assessments, high schools, teachers and school leaders, and Linked Learning**. These materials and more can be found at all4ed.org/essa. The Alliance is part of the *Partners for* advisory group, leading our national issue-based group in governance and accountability.

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) is a national teachers union that represents 1.6 million members nationwide. AFT resources on ESSA can be found at aft.org/position/every-student-succeeds-act. The AFT is a member of the *Partners for* advisory group focused on teaching, leading and learning.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. They have produced several materials, including a [FAQ on ESSA](http://ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/Every_Student_Succeeds_Act.html), which can be found at [ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/Every Student Succeeds Act.html](http://ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/Every_Student_Succeeds_Act.html). CCSSO is working with *Partners for* on ESSA implementation efforts in several states.

EducationCounsel (EdCounsel) is an education consulting firm that focuses on policy strategy, research, and implementation at the national level for all students. In December 2015, EdCounsel produced a [Summary Analysis of the Every Student Succeeds Act](http://educationcounsel.com) immediately following the passage of the law, and has since produced an analysis of the Law's [opportunities and risks](http://educationcounsel.com). These and more can be found at educationcounsel.com. EdCounsel is working with *Partners for* on analysis of federal policy, and is part of our advisory group focused on early childhood education.

Education Trust (EdTrust) is a national non-profit advocacy organization that promotes high academic achievement for all students at all levels, particularly for students of color and low-income students. EdTrust has many resources that can be found at edtrust.org/issue/the-every-student-succeeds-act-of-2015/, including an [overview](http://edtrust.org/issue/the-every-student-succeeds-act-of-2015/) of the law as it relates to Equity.

The National Education Association (NEA) is a national teachers union representing 3 million members nationwide. NEA's resources on ESSA can be found at nea.org/essabegins. The NEA is a member of the *Partners for* advisory groups focused on teaching, leading and learning, and governance and accountability.

National Council of La Raza (NCLR) is a nonpartisan voice for Latinos, leading research, policy analysis, and state and national advocacy efforts in communities nationwide. NCLR's resources on ESSA can be found at nclr.org, and include a webinar focused on [what the ESSA means for the Latino community](http://nclr.org), and an [article](http://nclr.org) on the same topic.

The Thomas B. Fordham Institute (The Fordham Institute) is a national non-profit research organization that aims to challenge and frame the educational debate, specifically around standards, school quality and choice, and capacity-strengthening for more effective, efficient, and equitable education. The Fordham Institute put together a video panel about ESSA called [Implementing ESSA: What to expect in 2016](http://edexcellence.net). This and other resources can be found at edexcellence.net.

The National Urban League (NUL) is a national non-profit focused on research and advocacy efforts that are grounded by the direct service and program experience of over 90 affiliates nationwide. The NUL produced a [series of webinars](http://nul.iamempowered.com) focused on ESSA that includes an [Overview of ESSA](http://nul.iamempowered.com). These and other resources can be found at nul.iamempowered.com.

The U.S. Department of Education (US ED) produced a [set of FAQs on ESSA](http://ed.gov/essa). This and other US ED resources can be found at ed.gov/essa.

These resources and More can be found at the
Partners for Each and Every Child website ([Click Here!](#))