



Richard Woods, Georgia's School Superintendent
"Educating Georgia's Future"

Note takers and participants recorded extensive stakeholder feedback during the Gordon County ESSA meeting. This document highlights the high-level summary and common themes from the meeting.

Accountability Common Themes

1. Stakeholders favored accountability measures that emphasize student growth and multiple measures. The accountability system should track school climate, college and career readiness and equity indicators.
2. Most stakeholders did not feel that current rating system accurately reflects the performance of their schools. Problems include inconsistency in grading, too many measures and not enough allowance for socioeconomic factors.
3. Recommendations for improvement include simplifying and streamlining the reporting and using multiple measures to create a rating.

Assessment Common Themes

1. Assessments should be formative and informational, reflecting students' ability and measuring growth. Assessments should be used to drive instruction and provide feedback to teachers, parents and students.
2. Assessments should be developmentally appropriate with less testing for elementary students, flexible and varied formats. Students should be assessed at different times and in less time.
3. Stakeholders want assessments that measure problem-solving and critical skills through authentic and portfolio-based assessments. Assessments should measure college- and career-readiness and real-life skills.

Educator and Leader Development Common Themes

1. Stakeholders mentioned several qualifications they felt were important for teachers and principals including: effective management and pedagogical skills, classroom experience, knowledge about child development and the curriculum.
2. There are significant barriers to providing all students with access to effective teachers and leaders including: socioeconomic factors, lack of effective training and support for teachers and administrators, teacher and administrator placement in rural and low-income areas and cultural and language barriers.
3. Stakeholders mentioned several partnerships that are working for Gordon County and recommend continued attention to building partnerships, providing more flexibility for teacher certification and continuing to improve professional development opportunities for teachers and principals.

Federal Programs to Support School Improvement Common Themes

1. Georgia has put into place several initiatives that stakeholders found helpful in continued school improvement such as Title 1 funding, instructional support for teachers and administrators and whole school accountability measures.
2. To build capacity to sustain improvements, stakeholders suggested collaboration and communication among programs, continued attention to support systems in schools for all professionals, guidance on whole school reforms that work and flexible funding that includes matched funding for mandates.

3. Stakeholders appreciated the opportunity to learn and ask questions and suggested that face to face feedback opportunities, especially in small regional groupings, should be continued through implementation of ESSA reforms. Timely feedback from all stakeholders before implementing various reforms is important.

Education of the Whole Child Common Themes

1. Schools and educators should make a concerted effort to provide students with opportunities to discover and engage in their passions and interests through electives, field trips, clubs, partnerships and internship opportunities.
2. Educators should ensure that all students have access to resources including technology, after school activities, field trips, mental health supports and regular physical education.
3. Stakeholders recommended several strategies for encouraging whole child education including: more hands-on and student-driven learning experiences, attention to school climate and social/emotional learning, access to highly qualified teachers and strong curriculum in all subject areas.

