Georgia's Living, Learning, Leading for Life Evaluation (L4GA) Grant Planning Survey Report (2020) Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

The Literacy for Learning, Living and Leading in Georgia (L4GA) Grant Planning Survey was designed to explore the context and constraints of local education agencies (LEAs) in 5 core areas: (1) need for support with L4GA assessments (2) modality of assessment administration (3) use of non-mandated literacy assessments (4) access to technology and virtual instructional platforms and (5) areas of emphasis for pre-planning period professional development support. The State of Georgia is in the unique position to serve both 2017 (SRCL) and 2019 (CLSD) grant recipients simultaneously. The Grant planning survey aligns with Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement framework. Survey responses will be used to inform decision-making processes regarding the need to offer additional targeted supports for L4GA grant recipients.

Across 59 local education agencies (LEAs), 66 LEA staff members and teachers involved with L4GA completed the survey. LEA staff members accounted for the majority of respondents (92%), while teachers only accounted for 8% of respondents. The majority of teacher responses were incomplete due to discontinuation once they realized that they were not able to answer the questions on behalf of their entire LEA.

Key Findings
Below are the key findings from this analysis:

Respondents' Need for support with L4GA Assessments
- Both the 2017 (23%) and 2019 (100%) grantee cohorts reported the need for support with at least one of the L4GA mandated assessments.
- A small number 2017 (n=7) grantees still are requesting support with the PPVT-4 (n=4), PALS (n=2), Acadience (n=3), and RI (n=2). The types of support varied depending on the L4GA assessment. The request for more in-depth support (e.g., learning about the test and how it is administered, scoring, testing children with exceptionalities) was restricted to the PPVT while support for the other tests was related to data reporting.

Modality of Assessment Administration
- LEAs overhwleming reported that they preferred to administer assessments face to face.

Respondents' use of non-mandated literacy assessments
- All LEAs who responded to the survey reported that they administer non-mandated literacy assessments. NWEA Map was the most commonly adopted non- mandated literacy assessment.

Organizational supports for technology and virtual learning platforms across LEAs
- LEAs have access to technological resources like Google Hangouts and Zoom which make virtual learning possible for the 2020-2021 term.

Area(s) of emphasis for pre-planning period professional development
- LEAs prioritized topics related to remote instruction and technology use for pre-planning period professional development

Tables and Figures

Grant Planning Survey Overview

Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement framework focuses on the systems and structures that need to be in place for improvement in student outcomes. Embedded in this framework is a plan that ensures that schools are able to implement complex tasks and make real-time adjustments where and when need. Due to COVID-19, the Georgia Department of Education needed to collect information regarding LEA changes in their Literacy for Learning, Living and Leading in Georgia (L4GA) grant plans. Our evaluation team felt it necessary to gather details about these changes to ensure we had a more robust understanding of what is occurring in each LEA amidst the pandemic. Additionally, we knew LEAs would have different needs and limitations due to distance learning. Our Grant Planning Survey allowed us to obtain more comprehensive understanding using a common set of questions for each LEA.

The L4GA Grant Planning Survey was designed to explore the context and constraints of local education agencies (LEAs) as it related to five core areas:

1. Respondents' need for support with L4GA assessments
2. Modality of assessment administration
3. Respondents' use of non-mandated literacy assessments
4. Organizational supports for technology and virtual learning platforms across LEAs
5. Area(s) of emphasis for pre-planning period professional development

Method
The evaluation team designed a survey to reflect the specific needs of the grant and to align with changes happening nationwide as virtual learning has been integrated into my LEAs due to a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey consisted of 23 items. These included demographic items (n=6 items) and items related to the 5 core areas (n=17 items). The items targeted towards the core areas were distributed as follows: (1) need for support with L4GA assessments (n=8; 2 per assessment), (2) modality of assessment administration (n=2 items, (3) use of non-mandated literacy assessments (n=2 items), (4) access to technology and virtual instructional platforms (n=3 items) and (5) areas of emphasis for pre-planning period professional development (n=2 items). Logic was added to the survey so that respondents were only shown item stems which were consistent with their grade level band for Domains 1 and 2.

The evaluation team designed and administered the survey using Qualtrics, an online survey platform. The team provided an anonymous survey link to each LEA coordinator, with the expectation that if the L4GA coordinator did not manage all grade levels they would distribute the link, via email, to other staff in each participating district.
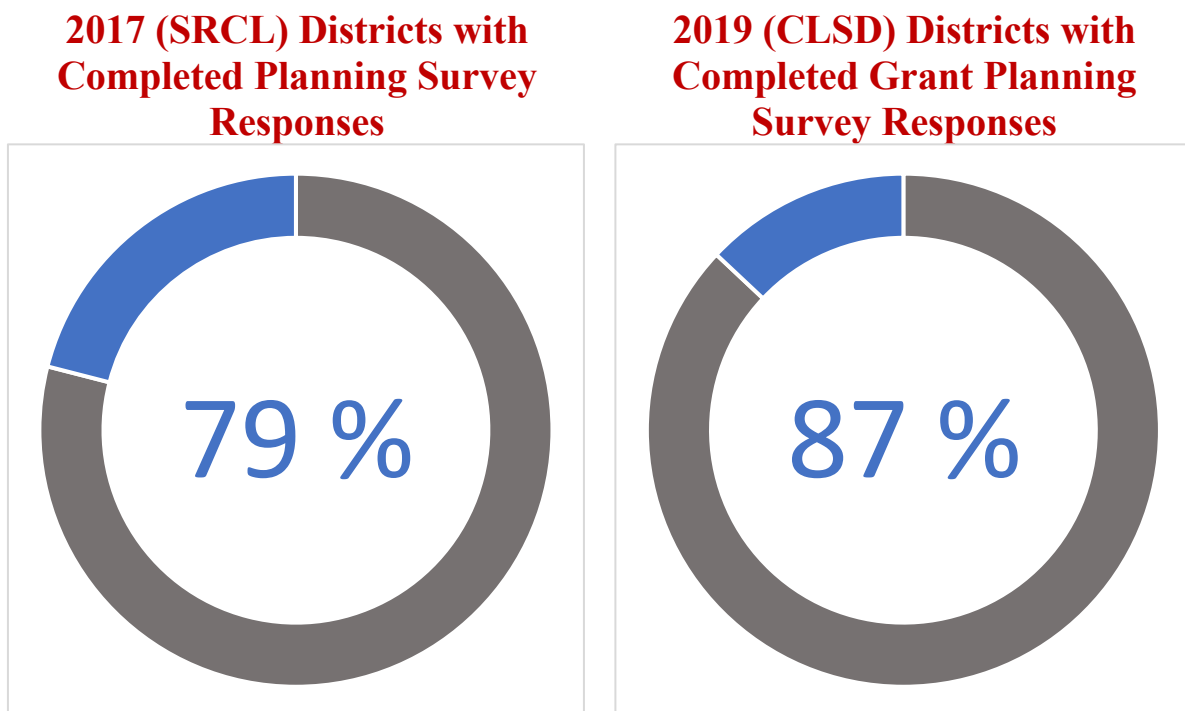
Respondents
Across 59 local education agencies (LEAs), 66 LEA staff members and teachers involved with L4GA completed the survey. LEA staff members accounted for the majority of respondents (92%), while teachers only accounted for 8% of respondents. The majority of teacher responses

were incomplete due to discontinuation once they realized that they were not able to answer the questions on behalf of their entire LEA.

A majority of LEAs, 2017 grantees (*n*=30) and 2019 grantees (*n*=20) provided responses to the survey. Responses were not received from the following 2017 LEA grantees: Atkinson, Baldwin, Ben Hill, Clay, Jefferson, Lamar, Wilkes and Troup. Responses were not received from the following 2019 LEA grantees: Lanier, Terrell, and Troup. Figure 1 shows the percentage of respondents within each grantee award period. Troup provided email correspondence while the survey response period was active. The contents of the email are reflected in the summary of Domain 2 only.

Figure 1. 2017 and 2019 LEAs Grant Planning Survey Respondents

2017 (SRCL) Districts with Completed Planning Survey Responses

2019 (CLSD) Districts with Completed Grant Planning Survey Responses

79 %

87 %

Individual responses were gathered from 52 staff members. These staff members self-selected as having knowledge about certain grade levels. Grade level categories included B-5, elementary (K-5), middle school (6-8), high school (9-12), or all of the grade levels within an LEA. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of respondents across grade levels.

Figure 2. Survey Respondents by Grade Level
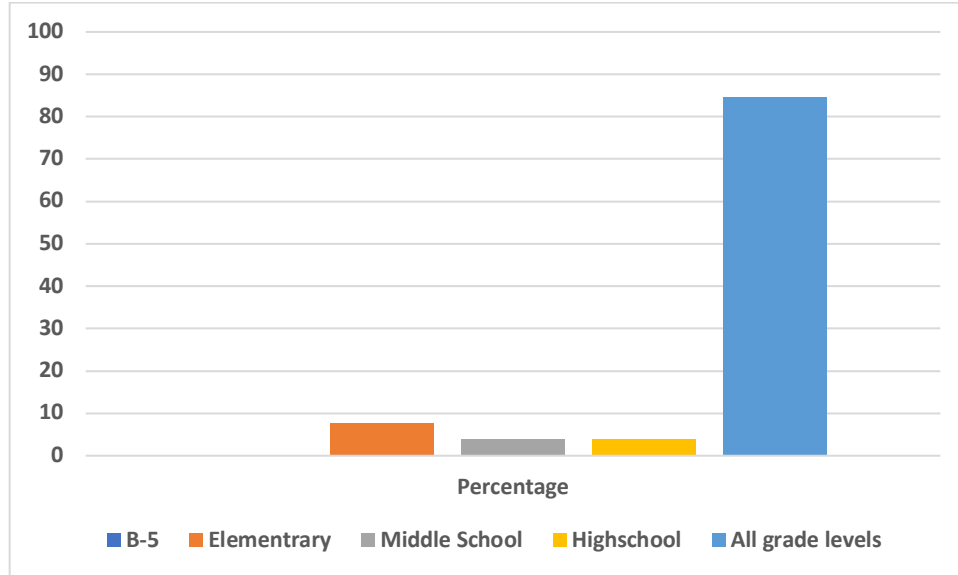
Following this introduction, the report is organized into four sections based on the survey components:
1. Respondents' need for support with L4GA assessments
2. Modality of assessment administration
3. Respondents' use of non-mandated literacy assessments
4. Organizational supports for technology and virtual learning platforms across LEAs
5. Area(s) of emphasis for pre-planning period professional development

Respondents could choose more than one response for certain survey items. Percentages shown in Figures 3-7 reflect the proportion of responses for each subcategory.

Respondents' need for support with L4GA assessments

Only a few 2017 Grantees (*n*=7) reported that they needed support with L4GA assessments. The needs for each LEA by L4GA assessment are displayed in Table 1. Only one LEA reported that it needed assistance with Acadience.

Table 1. 2017 Support Needed with L4GA Assessments

PPVT	PALS	Acadience	RI
Dublin City	Bibb	Dublin City	Dublin City
Gordon	Brooks	Paulding	Richmond
Richmond		Valdosta City	
Valdosta City			

A large number of 2019 Grantees (*n*=20) reported that they needed support with L4GA assessments. The needs for each LEA by L4GA assessment are displayed in Table 2. Only one LEA reported that it needed assistance with Acadience.

Table 2. 2019 Support Needed with L4GA Assessments

PPVT	PALS	Acadience	RI
Burke	Burke	Colquitt	Atlanta Schools
Cook	Glascock	Fannin	Burke
Elbert	Grady	Glascock	Randolph
Glascock	Pike	Laurens	Rockdale
Grady	Randolph	Newton	
Liberty	Rockdale	Rockdale	
Randolph	Thomas	Thomas	
Rockdale	Treutlen	Treutlen	
Thomas	Union		
Toombs	Vidalia		
Treutlen			

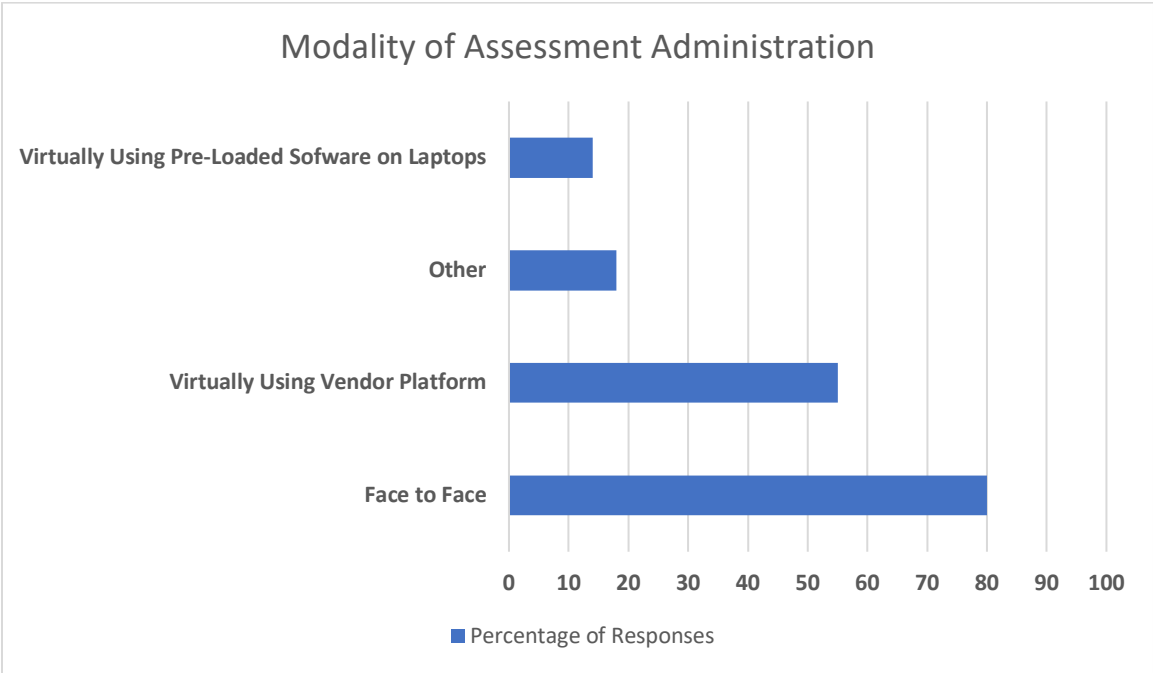Figure 3. Additional Needs of LEAs when Using PPVT, PALS, and RI
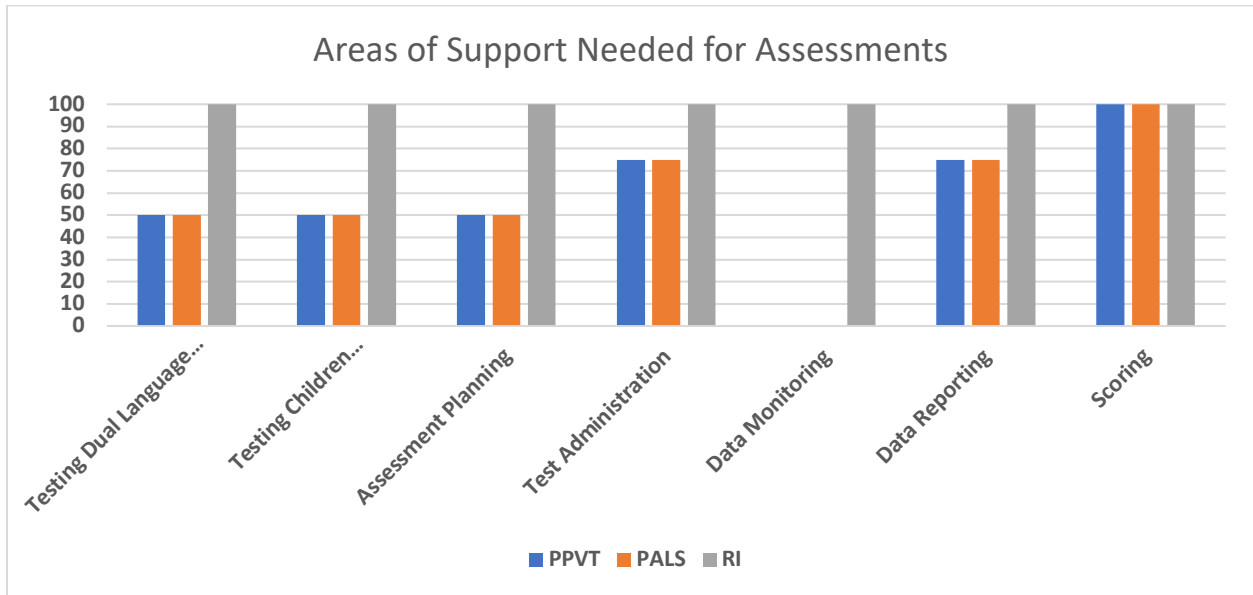
When LEAs reported that they needed assistance with PPVT and PALS they indicated that they needed the greatest amount of support with data reporting and scoring. In contrast, LEAS reported that they needed assistance with all categories of related to the administration, population, scoring, and reporting.

Modality of Assessment Administration

LEAs were asked how they were planning to administer tests during the 2020-2021 school year. The overwhelming preference was to administer assessment face to face. Some LEAs also indicated that they were giving some assessments virtually using the vendor's platform. Additionally, some LEAs were administering tests using pre-loaded software on laptops.

Figure 4. Modality of Assessment Administration

Modality of Assessment Administration

(Bar chart showing percentage of responses by modality:)

- Virtually Using Pre-Loaded Sofware on Laptops: ~14
- Other: ~18
- Virtually Using Vendor Platform: ~55
- Face to Face: ~80

■ Percentage of Responses

Respondents' Use of non-mandated Literacy Assessments

Due to the fact that literacy assessments are designed to target specific developmental age ranges responses are group by grade level instructional categories (e.g., elementary, middle school, and high school). We did not receive responses related to birth through 5. Even though each LEA adopted at least one non mandated literacy assessment. Table 3 shows a listing of all of the non mandated assessments that have been adopted across grade levels. A variety of literacy assessments are used in LEAs. LEAs utilize these assessments for progress monitoring, benmarking, and screening. NWEA MAP is used in both elementary and middle school. ACT aspire and I Ready are used across all grade bands.

Table 3. Developmental Range of Literacy Assessments Used

Elementary School	Middle School	High School
ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire	ACT Aspire
NWEA MAP	NWEA MAP	i-Ready
Iowa Test of Basic Skills	Iowa Test of Basic Skills	Star Early Literacy Assessment
i-Ready	i-Ready	Other
i-Station Indicators of Progress	i-Station Indicators of Progress	
Star Early Literacy Assessment	Star Early Literacy Assessment	
Other	Other	

Table 4. Literacy Assessments Used by 2017 and 2019 LEAs

Assessment	2017 LEAs	2019 LEAs
ACT Aspire		Clayton*
NWEA MAP	Fannin Floyd* Gilmer Gordon Jones Rome City Thomasville City	Clayton* GaDOE State Schools Glascock Liberty Truelten Union
Iowa Test of Basic Skills	Glynn Thomas	Newton
i-Ready	Brooks Dooly Richmond Valdosta	Clayton* Grady Pike Toombs
i-Station Indicators of Progress	Pelham Thomasville	

Star Early Literacy Assessment	Bibb Carrollton City Douglas Thomasville Valdosta	GaDOE State Schools
Other	Cook Doughtery Marion Paulding Stewart Valdosta	GaDOE State Schools Charlton Liberty Paulding Pike Treutlen

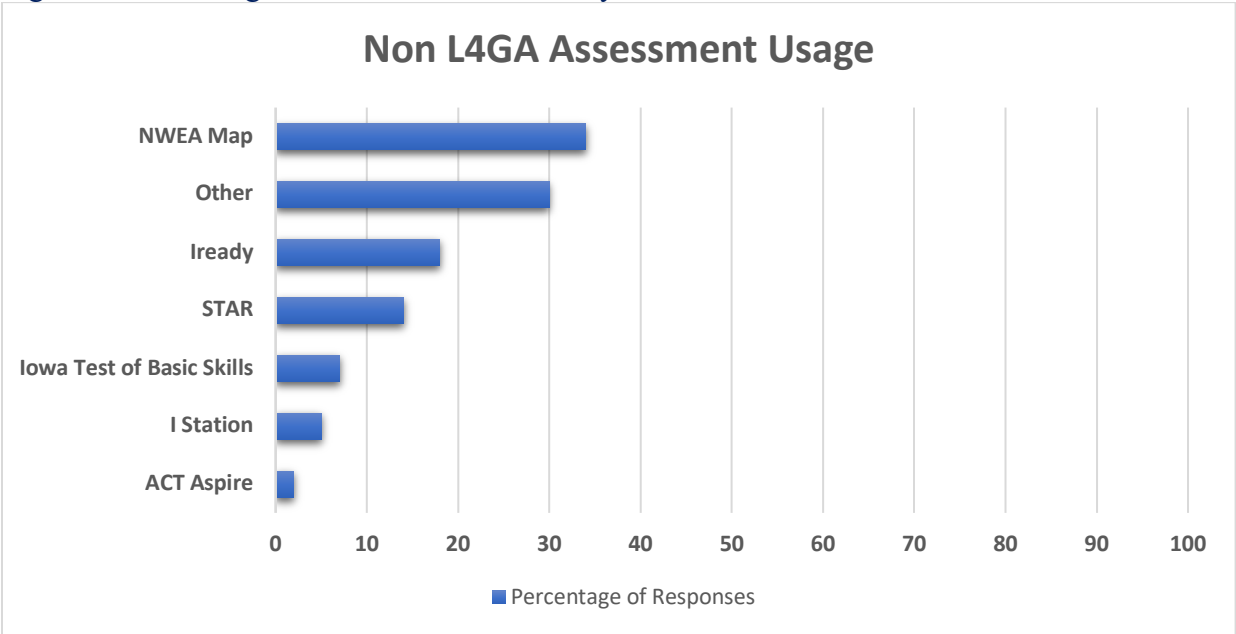Figure 5. LEA Usage of NonMandated Literacy Assessments

Figure 5 shows that there the most widely used assessment is the NWEA Map. LEAs reported that they use NWEA map as frequently as three times per year in order to identify students' skills and to determine appropriate instruction in both reading and math. NWEA Map usage corresponds with LEAs who are participating in a pilot study to examine concordance with other state mandated assessments. Examples of assessments that were included in the *Other* category include Running Records and Exact Path.

Access to technology and virtual instructional platforms

In terms of the access to technology and virtual instructional platforms, acknowledgement of a variety of platforms was evident in the survey respondents. Webex and Canvas were among the least likely to be used by LEAs as videoconferencing apps. In contrast, Google meet/hangouts and MS Teams were the most commonly reported videoconferencing apps. The percentages of responses reflect the fact that LEAs (*n*=44) could choose more than one option. Figure 6 shows the rank ordering of responses.

Figure 6. Videoconferencing Apps Available in LEAs
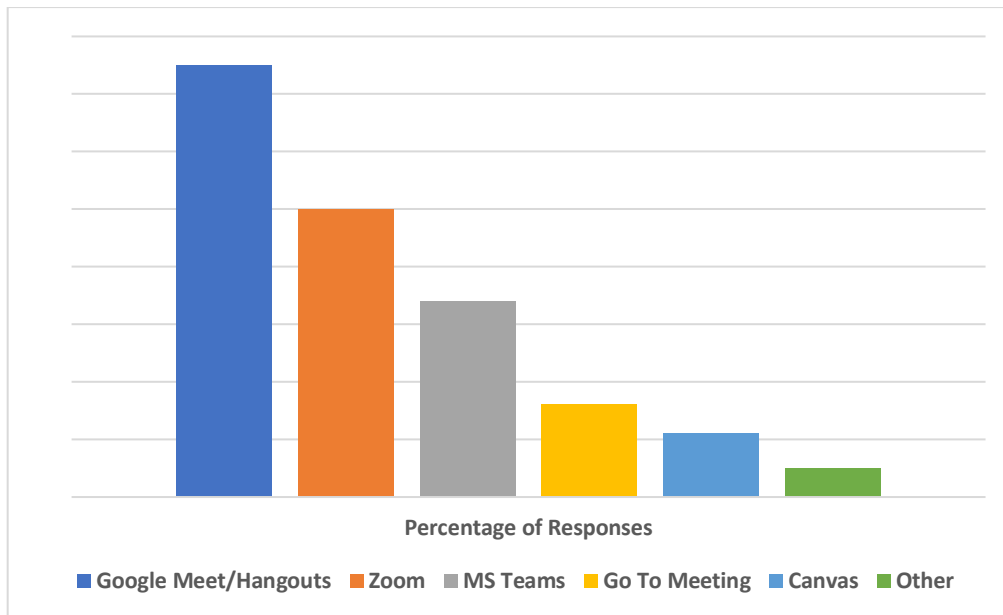
Area(s) of emphasis for pre-planning period

Respondents were also asked about the area(s) of emphasis for their pre-planning period ahead of the 2020-2021 academic term. (*n*=44). Remote learning was the most likely area of emphasis for LEA's pre-planning, followed by technology use. In comparison, social-emotional learning and assessment were the least likely to be a point of focus. The percentages of responses reflect the fact that LEAs (n=44) could choose more than one option. Figure 7 shows the rank ordering of responses.

Figure 7. Emphasis for Pre-Planning
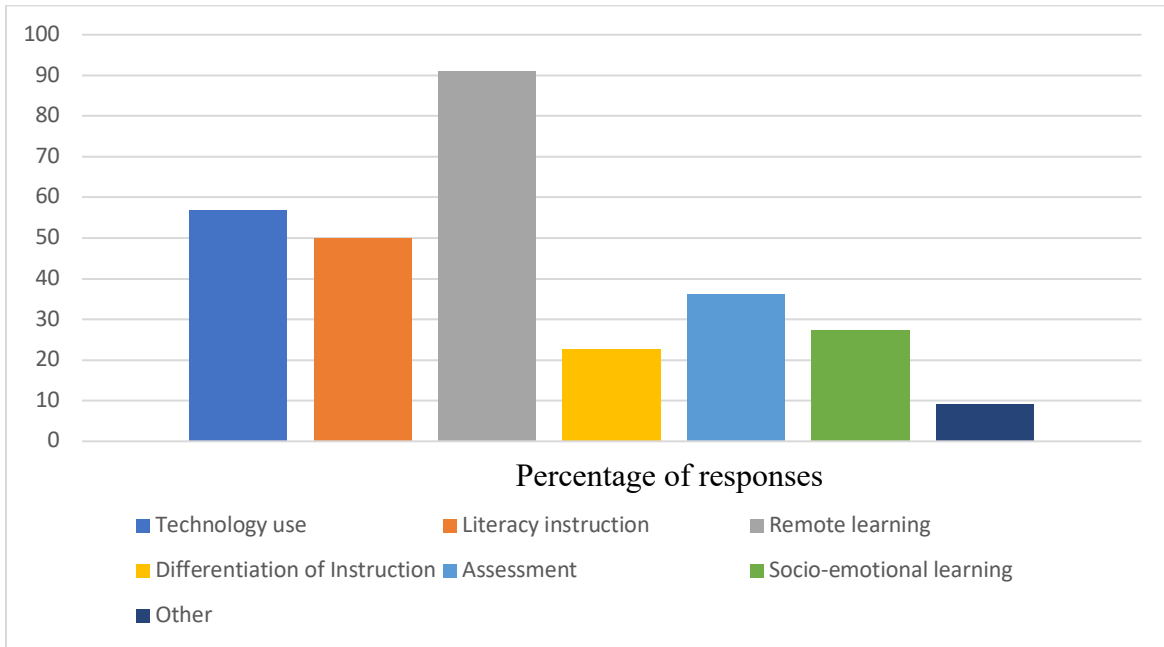
Responses were gathered during the summer after the onset of the COVid-19 pandemic.

Summary and Conclusions

An initial look at the needs of L4GA grantees for both 2017 and 2019 award periods reveals needs that are consistent with making adjustments due to COVID-19 and onboarding a new grant award. There is a need to follow-up with the small number of 2017 grantees who still need assistance with L4GA mandated measures to determine how to provide support given their current instructional modality. Even though the prevailing choice for assessment modality is face to face, there will be the need to account for variability in modality when recording test scores during the 2020-2021 year. There is also a need to provide professional development to the 2019 grantees to support all topics related to L4GA mandated assessments. GADOE should explore the opportunity to look for concordance between non-mandated L4GA assessments and L4GA assessments. NWEA maybe of particular interest given the wide level of adoption. Both 2017 and 2019 grantees have access to a wide range of videoconferencing apps with the most common matching the preferred platform for GADOE. The topics for preplanning periods are also consistent with making adjustments after the onset of COVID-19. It is reasonable that the emphasis on pre-planning topics were largely related to technology use for the purposes of remote learning, technology use in general, or remote learning.