

February 1, 2023

The Honorable Miguel Cardona
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Cardona:

I am pleased to present you and the U.S. Department of Education with several proposed changes to Georgia's school accountability system and school identification process through an amendment to our state's approved ESSA plan. The flexibility you provided to states in 2021-2022 was vital in acknowledging the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on data and school accountability systems and enabling us to use that data responsibly to support improvement efforts.

Through this amendment we are requesting to make several long-term changes to our plan based on what was approved in 2021-2022 through our addendum, as well as make several additional changes considering the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Georgia is committed to providing a high-quality education to all students, and I believe that these changes will better enable us to both highlight the excellent work of schools and districts in educating students and identify areas in need of continued improvement in a post-COVID schooling environment.

Through this amendment, we are requesting the following changes:

- Align the literacy indicator with the Georgia Milestones on-grade-level reading measure
- Expand the high school College and Career Readiness indicator to include military readiness as measured by performance on the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) as an additional option to demonstrate postsecondary readiness
- Include additional content areas (career exploratory, computer science) in the Beyond the Core indicator
- Eliminate the overall, single 0-100 score while maintaining 0-100 scores for all indicators and components
- Incorporate students with significant cognitive disabilities who participate in the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) 2.0 in the ELA and mathematics Progress indicators

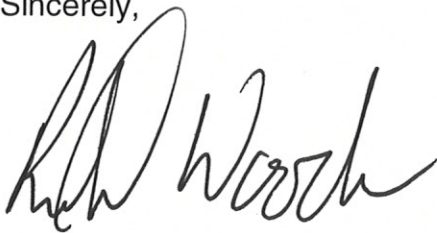


- Update the Closing Gaps improvement target formula to align with the maintenance level and to reward districts and schools that meet improvement targets for the most at-risk student populations (Economically Disadvantaged, English Learners, Students with Disabilities)
- Continue utilizing the staged Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) identification approach approved in Georgia's one-year addendum (2022), updated to include all components
- Eliminate the Promise Schools designation and replace it with a Universal Supports Schools designation to enable the state to support statewide improvement efforts to provide a high-quality education for all students in Georgia's schools

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) consulted with educational stakeholders and the Governor's Office in proposing these updates. GaDOE also provided an opportunity for the public to comment on these proposed changes. During the public comment period, we received 335 responses, with 93% of respondents expressing support.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding this amendment. Should you have any questions, please contact Allison Timberlake, Deputy Superintendent for Assessment and Accountability, by phone at 470-579-6353 or email at atimberlake@doe.k12.ga.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Woods". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard Woods
Georgia's School Superintendent