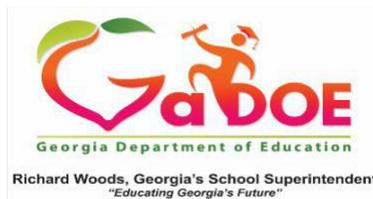


Evidence-based Strategies and Practices for Improving Learning Opportunities

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General Information

Introduction and Purpose

First and foremost, the objective for use of education funds is to ensure student learning. Please aim toward serving the Whole Child by providing a safe, healthy, engaging, challenging, and supportive learning environment. A long-term strategic plan for use of funds may ultimately not only help recovery, but [evidence suggests](#) that this approach can create a [new, improved restart](#).

Strategic use of funds will be important to ensuring that students get the most learning advantage as schools recover from the COVID pandemic. We suggest that school leaders consider the strategic planning process, including any charter contracts, waivers, and the needs identified in the consolidated LEA improvement plan (CLIP) and all School Improvement Plans (SIP), when determining needs and coordinating fund sources (state, federal, and local) that could be used to address those needs. Various fund sources may have allowability requirements that should be considered during this coordination process.

Please ensure that the district and school strategies are determined through collaborative planning groups that include: School leaders, teachers, curriculum directors, student support services directors, researchers, assessment/accountability directors, Title Directors, and technology directors as well as finance and business leaders for the district offices. This will ensure that budgets follow strategic thinking.

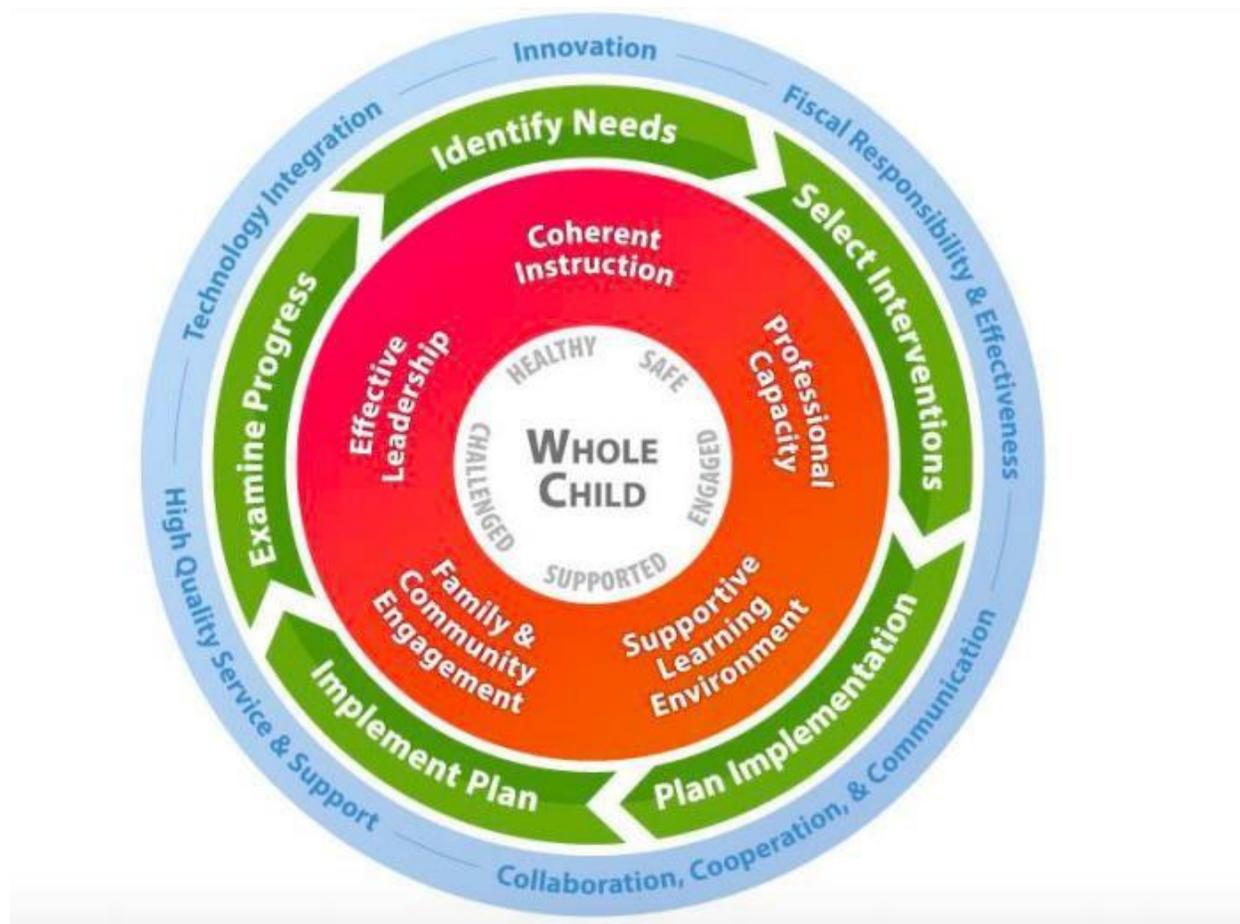
In addition to this document, the Georgia State University's MAPLE Policy Center's [literature review](#) and [EdResearch for Recovery website at Brown University](#) provide helpful guidance for system recovery.

Georgia System for Continuous Improvement

The Georgia Systems of Continuous Improvement offers an evidence-based framework for strategic planning.

NOTE: See the CARES Act for additional information on use of federal funds

<https://www.georgiainsights.com/cares-act.html>



General Operating

- Purchase **educational technology (including hardware, software, and connectivity)** for students to aid in regular and substantive educational interaction between students and their classroom instructors, including low-income students and students with disabilities, which may include assistive technology or adaptive equipment.
- Practice activities that are necessary to **maintain the operation of and continuity of services** in local educational agencies and continuing to employ existing staff of the local educational agency.
- **Plan for and coordinate for future long-term closures**, including how to provide **meals** to eligible students, how to provide technology for **online learning** to all students, how to provide guidance for carrying out requirements under the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** ([20 U.S.C. 1401](#) et seq.) and how to ensure other educational services can continue to be provided consistent with all Federal, State, and local requirements.

Coherent Instruction

- Utilize a comprehensive **district-level strategy** for assessing what learning changes have occurred. See the [toolkit](#) by the [Regional Educational Laboratory \(REL\) Midwest](#) in partnership with the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) at the district level to better understand how students are faring after widespread school closures resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The toolkit is a step-by-step guide for districts that want to learn where learning changes may have occurred, understand how to use that knowledge to inform decision-making, and identify next steps for future analysis and planning. This toolkit can help to address the unique learning needs of each student group, especially low-income children or students, children with disabilities, English learners, students who are from racial and ethnic minorities, students experiencing homelessness, and foster care youth, including how outreach and service delivery **will meet the needs of each** population.
- Accelerate learning by focusing on essential knowledge and skills necessary for completing a grade level; this [toolkit](#) from The New Teacher Project provides a **school/teacher-level strategy** to addressing individual student needs while ensuring high expectations and building supports.
- [Address individual needs of each student](#), including through assessment, evidence-based activities, parent engagement, tracking attendance, and improving student engagement
- Provide in-school [high-frequency tutoring](#), a [highly effective strategy](#) specifically when it involves:

- Formative assessment
 - 3 or more sessions a week during the school day
 - Up to 3 or 4 students per session
 - Trained tutors
 - High quality curriculum materials
- Adopt valid and reliable formative and diagnostic assessments to identify individual students' needs and abilities and to [progress-monitor student learning](#)
 - Address the [unique learning needs](#) of each student through [cognitive, academic, social and emotional learning supports](#)
 - Consider altering the use of time to increase face-to-face instructional time with students ([4-day week + 1-day enrichment](#); [year-round](#) calendars); lengthen the school day and/or year.
 - Provide principals and others school leaders with the resources necessary to address the needs of their [individual schools](#).
 - Reduce [class-size](#) (also see this [research summary](#) and [this](#))
 - Implement evidence-based methods for [multi-age classrooms](#) and/or [looping](#) in order to group students flexibly
 - Purchase and design or refresh a [learning management system](#)
 - Consider [integrating content](#) in order to (a) address more learning standards in a single lesson; and (b) provide opportunities for deeper learning. The district can convene/hire curriculum experts (e.g., internal or external) to review curricula to determine how to streamline content through vertical articulation plans and essential content for each grade level.
 - Develop teacher-leaders who can provide ongoing, job-embedded support to their peers during collaborative planning and professional learning communities. The teacher-leaders' focus could extend beyond personalized or online teaching – but supporting overall high-quality instructional planning and delivery to meet the needs of all students.
 - Build a cohort of [teacher leaders](#) who earn a PSC-approved [Endorsement for Online Teaching](#) and/or [Endorsement for Personalized Learning](#)). Develop teacher-leaders who can provide ongoing, job-embedded support to their peers during collaborative planning and professional learning communities. The teacher-leaders' focus should extend beyond personalized and online teaching to include high-quality instructional planning and delivery to meet the needs of all students.

- Increase [access to and engagement](#) in art, music, physical education, health, computer science, and foreign language courses
- Plan and implement activities related to quality [summer learning](#), [peer assisted](#), and [supplemental afterschool programs](#), including providing classroom instruction or online learning during the summer months and addressing the needs of low-income students, students with disabilities, English learners, migrant students, students experiencing homelessness, and children in foster care.

Professional Capacity

- Provide [induction and retention](#) support for educators
- Provide [recruitment and retention](#) bonuses for educators
- Provide [loan-payoffs](#) for educators
- Ensure that new [educators have local housing options](#) (and/or possible discounted rates)
- [Hire paraprofessionals](#) to assist educators
- Invest in memberships to Georgia’s educational professional organizations for professional learning supports and develop [collective teacher efficacy](#)
- Work with P-20 partners to:
 - Develop [beginning teacher-residency](#) programs
 - Develop/refresh “[Grow Your Own](#)” programs
 - Refresh preparation programs, including [Alternative Preparation Programs](#)
 - Conduct [recruitment fairs](#)
 - Provide [Service fields and/or endorsements](#) for specialized areas
 - Pay for [mentor teachers and administrators](#)
- Hire/support [MTSS](#) coordinators: provide professional learning for school staff about tiered supports; provide data analysis for district level supports
- Hire/support other support personnel: school nurses, school counselors, school psychologists, and school media specialists

School Nurses

[National Association of School Nurses](#) recommends a formula-based approach with minimum ratios of nurses-to-students depending on the needs of the student populations as follows: 1:750 for students in the general population, 1:225 in the student populations requiring daily professional school nursing services or

interventions, 1:125 in student populations with complex health care needs, and 1:1 may be necessary for individual students who require daily and continuous professional nursing services.

School Counselors

[American School Counselor Association](#) recommends a ratio of 250-to-1

School Psychologists

[National Association of School Psychologists](#) recommends a ratio of 1 school psychologist to every 500 to 700 students

School Media Specialists

The [American Library Association](#) suggests that a ratio worthy of praise would be about 1:200

Supportive Learning Environment

School Safety Response and Preparedness

- Repair/improve School facilities to enable operation of schools to reduce risk of virus transmission and exposure to environmental health hazards, and to support student health needs; improve indoor air quality
- Purchase supplies to sanitize and clean the facilities of a local educational agency, including buildings operated by such agency
- Train and conduct professional development for staff of the local educational agency on [sanitation and minimizing the spread of infectious diseases](#). Coordinate of preparedness and response efforts of local educational agencies with State, local, Tribal, and territorial public health departments, and other relevant agencies, to improve coordinated responses among such entities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to coronavirus.
- Improve [school climate and safety](#); This [school culture survey](#) from John Hopkins University can be used to assess local online and school culture.
- Provide [mental health services and supports](#)
- Increase efforts to [improve attendance](#)
- Allow for [Emergency Sick Paid Leave](#) for staff
- Increase [workplace health improvements](#) for professional educators and staff

Family and Community Engagement

- Continue supports for online/hybrid instructional supports that will ensure that [families are empowered](#) to support their children

- [Increase or enhance language assistance \(interpretation and translation\) services](#) to provide equity and engagement of parents of English learners
- [Hire wrap-around student services](#) coordinator
- Consider [housing solutions](#) for students struggling with homelessness
- Hire **School Social Workers**
The [National Association for Social Work](#) suggests that school social work services should be provided at a ratio of one school social worker to each school building serving up to 250 general education students, or a ratio of 1:250 students. When a social worker is providing services to students with intensive needs, a lower ratio, such as 1:50, is suggested.
- Increase or enhance language assistance (interpretation and translation) services to provide equity and engagement of Limited English Proficient (LEP) parents.
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ellresources.html>

Optional Planning Templates:

[Community Partnership Planning Template](#)

[STEM PBL Planning Template](#)

[STEAM PBL Planning Template](#)

[Interdisciplinary Planning Template](#)

Appendix F -- Declination of awarded competitive grant funds

Once the Georgia State Board of Education has approved the RFA and awarded funds to the awardee, the total amount of the award can be returned. Once funds are declined, they cannot be reallocated during the fiscal year of the declined grant. Districts may apply for future grants the following fiscal year provided the grant is being offered and the district maintains all eligibility requirements.

Competitive grant funds may be declined if the district does not intend to fully implement the grant as approved. In the event that expenditures have been charged to the grant prior to declining funds, the district will be required to initiate a return of all funds to the grant account. The district's superintendent must submit a letter (on district letterhead) formally declining the funds to GaDOE, Title IV, Part A program manager. Once the letter has been received, the program manager will initiate the collection of 100% of the grant award via GAORS.