

**Literacy for Learning, Living, and Leading in Georgia (L4GA):  
Georgia’s Plan for the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant**

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**Literacy for Learning, Living, and Leading in Georgia (L4GA):**  
**Georgia’s Plan for the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant**

**NARRATIVE**

**Introduction and Priorities**

L4GA offers a unique approach to improving literacy by unifying community-driven action with research-proven instruction. Georgia’s state plan promises to improve literacy learning by establishing partnerships that utilize evidence-based practices (EBP) with proven success for improving student learning, teacher learning, classroom literacy instruction (birth to grade 12), school climate, family literacy and community-school partnerships. Sub-grants from L4GA will be awarded by conducting an independent peer-review process by an expert panel of literacy researchers, teachers, and community members (**Absolute Priority 1**). These sub-grant proposals employ *Georgia’s Systems for Continuous Improvement Framework* and Georgia’s B-5 and K-12 literacy needs assessment to identify local needs, develop an evidence-based instructional programs, delivery strategies and interventions, use local and state data to inform leaders, and create a routine process of data analysis in order to continuously improve local plans to meet local needs (**Absolute Priority 2**).

Georgia will award L4GA sizable sub-grants to serve the greatest numbers of disadvantaged children, including children living in poverty, English learners, and children with disabilities, by including these data in sub-grant proposals, prioritizing this in sub-grant awards, and maximizing capacity for expenditures (**Competitive Priority 1**).

State funding allocations will sub-grant no less than 95 percent of funds to eligible sub-grantees ensuring that at least 15 percent of the funds serve children from birth through age five; 40 percent of the funds serve student in kindergarten through grade five and 40 percent serve

students in middle and high school including an equitable distribution of funds between middle and high schools (**Statutory Requirement for State Funding Allocations**).

Georgia’s state literacy plan utilizes a “population–focused” framework for aligning the continuum of experiences that a child may have from birth, through grade five, and into the upper grades (**Competitive Priority 2**).

Georgia’s literacy plan, *Literacy for Learning, Living, and Leading in Georgia* (L4GA), began with attention to “appreciative inquiry” (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010)—offering a close examination of successes and challenges of literacy in Georgia. The state plan is viewable online at [L4GA.GaDOE.org](http://L4GA.GaDOE.org). Too often, new initiatives and policies do not pay credence to the successes of previous ones in order to create continuous improvement. L4GA is designed for continuous, data-informed improvement; therefore, it started with a review of the *Georgia State Literacy Plan* (2012) and analysis of statewide data.

Georgia’s students continue to improve on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, moving from the bottom of the state comparisons to the national average over the past decade. However, performance on the state Milestones assessment reveals that 66% of third graders are reading below “proficient” when compared to national peers. At the same time, over 600,000 of Georgia’s children (about 25%) are growing up in extreme poverty (Kids Count Georgia, 2017). In many of Georgia’s rural areas, poverty rates are 100%, and a visitor could drive for 100 miles before reaching a more prosperous community. Unfortunately, literacy outcomes often correlate directly to these poverty rates. The literacy outcomes of Georgia’s students will remain stagnant unless there is a coherent, unified, systematic approach to addressing the needs of Georgia’s children in sustainable ways (Beaudette, Chalasani, & Rauschenberg, 2017).

Georgia's literacy outcomes are significantly correlated to poverty ( $r^2 = .674$ ). Thus, the L4GA plan seeks to unite communities, early care centers, K-12 schools, and higher education in service to children. In Georgia, over 24.4% of children under age 18 live in poverty (United States Census Bureau, 2016). Of children who are growing up in poverty, 84,000 (or 59%) of Georgia's youngest learners do not receive early education (Kids Count Georgia, 2017). While the reasons for lack of attendance are varied, Georgia's schools find that students who come from impoverished communities miss many days of school, are suspended, and drop out at a higher rate than their wealthier peers. This can be for many reasons, including difficulty getting timely appointments for healthcare and lack of transportation. Furthermore, once in the K-12 system, children who live in families who are struggling to make ends meet are less likely to do well on literacy outcomes (Adelman & Taylor, 2018; Dickinson & Tabors, 1991; Campbell & von Stauffenberg, 2008; Jensen, 2009; Noble, Norman, & Farah, 2005). In short, living in poverty seems to hamper many students' ability to be successful literacy learners.

The L4GA plan seeks to improve literacy outcomes across all age ranges within feeder systems (early childhood, elementary, middle, and high schools). **We seek to improve early language outcomes in early childhood education settings.** We will measure this goal with the Narrative Assessment Protocol in prekindergarten. **We seek to improve early literacy outcomes in elementary settings.** We will measure this goal with growth in the Kindergarten Readiness screener, DIBELS Next components for First Sound Fluency, Phoneme Segmentation, and Oral Reading Fluency (grades K-3) and scores produced by outcomes from Georgia's End-of-Grade Milestones Assessments (grades 3-5). **We seek to improve literacy outcomes in middle and high school settings.** We will measure this goal using scores produced from the Milestones End-of-Grade Assessments (grades 6-8) and End-of-Course Assessments for 9<sup>th</sup>

Grade Literature and Composition and American Literature and Composition. The evaluation will disaggregate outcomes by demographic sub-groups (e.g., economically disadvantaged [ED]; students with disabilities [SWD]; English Learners [EL]) to investigate how to address inequities in literacy achievement (**Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)**).

Sustainability of these improvements will be, in part, influenced by aligning partnerships that include early childhood education providers, Regional Education Service Agencies, Local Education Agencies (LEAs), schools, and community organizations so that they collectively focus on literacy as a priority. The strength and influence of these coalition partnerships will be demonstrated through a social network analysis.

### **State Level Activities**

This section provides an overview of Georgia's *Literacy for Learning, Living, and Leading* (L4GA) plan and describes state level activities funded from this L4GA grant.

#### ***Literacy for Learning, Living, and Leading***

Georgia's L4GA plan guides the state level activities and sub-grantees will align to this plan. Developed over two years, Georgia's plan emerged from conversations with P-12 teachers, higher education faculty, community leaders, school leaders, and state leaders about what has worked in their communities and what challenges they still face. Building on this strong foundation, the L4GA plan leverages extant successful frameworks in a convergent way to develop system-wide and sustainable improvements (Collins, 2005; Kania & Kramer, 2011).

#### **(Statutory Requirement for State Comprehensive Literacy Plan)**

##### **Development of L4GA State Plan**

Development of the plan included multiple stakeholder meetings and presentations:

- 15 statewide community meetings across the state with representatives from families, early childhood education providers, libraries, teacher preparation providers, K-12 schools (teachers and leaders), community organizations and businesses, a few legislative representatives;
- 1 meeting with the Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs);
- 4 meetings with the state’s English Language Arts Advisory Board which consists of teachers, school leaders, curriculum specialists, and RESA literacy specialists;
- 2 two-day meeting and 4 subsequent meetings with literacy faculty and researchers from Georgia’s institutes of higher education and teacher preparation programs;
- 1 presentation to the Get Georgia Reading Campaign cabinet which includes leaders of all state agencies that serve children and the First Lady of Georgia, Mrs. Sandra Deal; and 2 follow-up meetings with the Get Georgia Reading Campaign Director;
- 1 presentation at the 2016 Georgia Association of Educational Leaders conference;
- 1 presentation to the State Board of Education; and follow-up meetings with State Board members;
- 1 presentation to the 2017 State Legislative Joint Education Committee; and follow-up meetings with individual Legislators.

Each of these meetings and presentations has offered opportunities for feedback and refined the L4GA plan.

### **Building on Successful Statewide Literacy Initiatives**

The L4GA plan builds on two promising statewide initiatives: Georgia’s previous *Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy* grant (2011-2016; hereafter called GaSRCL) and the *Get Georgia Reading Campaign* (see <http://getgeorgiareading.org/>; part of the national

Campaign for Grade Level Reading [2017]). By building on current successes, and using “lessons learned” to improve performance (**Continuous Improvement**), Georgia is taking a unique, sustainable approach to aligning resources and improving literacy outcomes (**Alignment of Resources**). The plan is posted online at L4GA.GaDOE.org.

**Building on Georgia’s *Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy* grant (2011-2016).**

The L4GA plan applies lessons learned from Georgia’s previous *Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy (GaSRCL)* grant. In 2011 Georgia was one of six states that was competitively awarded the SRCL grant for a period of five years (the grant ended in 2016). The GaSRCL project promoted evidence-based practices for classroom literacy instruction and provided lasting resources for the state that will be leveraged in L4GA. One study of outcomes from GaSRCL meets IES *What Works Clearinghouse* qualifications for Moderate Evidence for the elementary-level interventions, per a forthcoming quasi-experimental study produced by the grant team to be published in the *Elementary School Journal* (Walpole, McKenna, Amendem, Pasquarella, & Strong, forthcoming). Many lessons learned gleaned from GaSRCL evaluations have informed the design of L4GA (**State-Level Activities: Continuous Program Improvement**). At the state level, these lessons include:

- (1) Create more convergence between the SEA’s literacy initiative and other state-level initiatives so as to reduce the complexity and burden at the local level. Thus, the L4GA plan concentrates on existing statewide initiatives such as improving school climate (see <http://www.gadoe.org/External-Affairs-and-Policy/Policy/Pages/School-Climate.aspx>; National School Climate Center, 2017; Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D’Alessandro, 2013) and implementing the continuous improvement processes required by *Every Student Succeeds Act*.

- (2) Include Georgia’s teacher education faculty as professional learning providers, so as to improve both P-12 teacher learning and teacher education simultaneously. GaSRCL relied on out-of-state experts who successfully intervened in P-12 schools and early learning centers. However, their activities did not affect Georgia’s educator preparation programs. Therefore, Georgia continues to have high variability among preparation providers. L4GA relies on a newly established “Think Tank” of literacy faculty from Georgia’s educator preparation programs. All 60+ members of the Think Tank have volunteered to come together to improve literacy by learning collaboratively, working alongside our best P-12 teachers, and conducting peer-reviews of each others’ proposals for professional learning to ensure high quality. The SEA will organize this Think Tank to provide professional learning about IES Evidence-Based Practices (see <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/ProcessBriefs>) and will insist on Evidence-Based Practices in all approved professional learning proposals. We believe this convergence will not only create networks for local school improvement, but also create a state-wide networked improvement community of teacher educators that can sustain beyond the L4GA.
- (3) Add to the *Comprehensive Reading Solutions* online professional learning library of evidence-based practices. The *Comprehensive Reading Solutions* website and online coaching were essential to teacher learning and provided a catalogue of topics used for GaSRCL professional learning institutes. To date, the website has had over 263,800+ sessions and 123,940+ users in Georgia and beyond. According to the GaSRCL evaluations and L4GA feedback, users would appreciate growing the catalog of topics.

The L4GA team is poised to provide evidence-based content and resources for these topics while also coalescing research-practitioner partnerships to investigate how to continuously improve

professional learning and implementation of classroom instruction relative to these topics and others as they arise.

In addition, lessons learned through GaSRCL for sub-granting include:

(4) Require sub-grant applicants to form partnerships that include feeder systems (birth through grade 12) and specific partners that serve the children and families within that community as children grow and learn. GaSRCL showed that gains earned in early grades were sometimes lost when the upper-level grades were not coherently connected.

(5) Require sub-grant applicants to invest in SEA-provided professional learning.

According to GaSRCL evaluations, professional learning required a more coherent involvement among educators—from the time they engage in large institutes, to the time they enact instruction. Thus, the L4GA plan systematically includes a coherent professional learning model and requires sub-grantees to maximize their involvement with this professional learning model. GaSRCL’s schools that performed best were those that invested in SEA-offered professional learning, often sending school teams that included leadership and taking advantage of multiple opportunities to learn. Thus, L4GA requires that sub-grantees send teams, led by their administration, to face-to-face professional learning and then follow up with site-based professional learning communities, peer coaching, and collaborative planning time.

Whereas GaSRCL served 298 schools, we expect that the L4GA partnerships will include more schools and communities through the power of community coalitions and research-practitioner partnerships (Epstein, 2001; Huffman, H., Guindon, Takahashi-Rial, & Socol, 2014).

**Building on the *Get Georgia Reading Campaign*.** L4GA will create more enduring and sustainable promotion of evidence-based practices through community coalitions and research-

practitioner partnerships. The *Get Georgia Reading Campaign* (2017), part of the National Campaign for Grade-Level Reading (2017), has already begun some of this coalition building among LEAs; thus, L4GA seeks to reinforce these coalitions with research-practitioner partnerships. The Campaign has recruited 56 communities (thus 56 of 181 LEAs are involved) that are working with K-12 schools, providers of early care and learning, and local family service agencies. In addition to a strong partnership with the Department of Education, the *Get Georgia Reading Campaign* Cabinet has benefited from a tremendous level of involvement of leaders from multiple state agencies, including Georgia’s Governor’s Office of Student Achievement, Department of Health, Department of Child and Family Services, Department of Early Care and Learning, University System of Georgia, Technical College System, community and legislative leaders, state-wide social services organizations, and philanthropic partners (**Alignment of Resources**). The Campaign primarily targets issues related to poverty.

Like many states, Georgia’s literacy issues are directly correlated to poverty levels.

Figure 1 provides an image of the correlation between poverty and third grade reading outcomes ( $r^2 = .674$ ).

**Figure 1.** Poverty and 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Reading Improvement Scatterplot.



Thus, in order to systematically address literacy, the Georgia Department of Education is heavily involved in the Campaign. The Campaign cabinet has a four-pillar theory of action that requires improvements to (a) early language development, (b) access to family and child social services, (c) learning climate, and (d) teacher learning. Campaign communities use local data to inform how to meet the needs of families and children as well as engage them in literacy learning (see the *Community Action Toolkit* here <http://getgeorgiareading.org/resources-overview/community-action-toolkit/> ). This plan simultaneously addresses instructional interventions for literacy while also implementing evidence-based interventions that correlate to disrupting the effects of poverty through community partnerships, progressive school climate interventions such as social-emotional engagement, and instructional interventions that have strong to moderate evidence or have a thick research literature. As such, L4GA sub-grantees will design plans that include community partners who can support literacy-related services that improve children’s access to print and language through activities such as book fairs, summer reading camps, library services, after/before-school programs that utilize evidence-based practices for literacy learning. A rich literature supports this comprehensive, community-driven approach to improving learning (c.f., Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007; Allington, & McGill-Franzen, 2013; Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy, 2011; Hiebert, & Mesmer, 2013; Kim & Quinn, 2013; Melosh, 2013; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017; Neuman, & Celano, 2001; Schacter & Bo, 2005; Smith & Foorman, 2015).

### **Georgia’s Framework for Using Evidence-based Practices (EBP)**

The L4GA plan uses Georgia’s definition of evidence-based practices consistent with *Georgia’s State Plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act*. Evidence-based practices are research-

proven (e.g., strong, moderate, and promising practices), data-informed, appropriate to the community, and include educators in professional decision-making processes (**Statutory Requirement for State Comprehensive Literacy Plan**). L4GA Partnerships that apply for sub-grants will describe how their plans align to the following:

- *Research-based* –The Georgia Department of Education encourages the use of high-quality research to inform practice. LEAs are encouraged to use repositories of research, such as the What Works Clearinghouse, Promising Practices Network, Blueprints for Violence Prevention, Social Programs that Work, as well as Regional Education Labs that can provide timely research advisement.
- *Data-informed* - The Georgia Department of Education assists LEAs to create a means of conducting on-going formative assessment of interventions so that continuous improvement can take shape. These data can include student-level outcomes and outputs, opportunities to learn (e.g., courses provided), and supplementary support services in partnership with schools. Data literacy will be a focus of professional learning throughout the regions and LEAs.
- *Responsive to the Community* - The Georgia Department of Education assists LEAs in selecting interventions that have been effective in serving identified communities. Instructional practices should be culturally, linguistically, and developmentally appropriate (Hollie, 2011). Furthermore, the LEAs must consult with local community stakeholders in a meaningful way to ensure that interventions are appropriate for the community context.
- *Professionalizes educators* - The Georgia Department of Education encourages LEAs to select interventions that encourage mindful, data-informed decision making among classroom teachers, school staff, and other school leaders. Utilizing data in formative fashion,

interventions should promote collaborative analysis. This will promote educators as collaborative, conscientious decision-makers and will, in turn, promote more sustainable, data-informed actionable feedback this is essential to continuous improvement models and teacher retention.

Sub-grantees are encouraged to use tools for evaluating evidence-based practices developed by the Institutes of Education Sciences (IES) in collaboration with the Southeast Regional Education Lab (REL-SE) and the National Implementation Research Network (Blase, Kiser, & Van Dyke, 2013). Specifically, the Literacy Roadmap (see <http://fcrr.org/literacyroadmap>) provided by REL-SE for local literacy planning will be particularly helpful to LEA-Partnerships as they design their local plans.

#### **EPB for Literacy Learning and Instruction: Adding to the Toolbox**

The L4GA project builds on a plethora of evidence-based practices for literacy instruction (see IES Practice Guides here <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuides>). When designing their sub-grant applications, LEA-Partnerships and professional learning providers will be advised to use IES practice guides. Some of the prominent topics that will be promoted because they have strong to moderate evidence for improving literacy will include, but are not limited to: dialogic reading (**moderate evidence**); peer-assisted learning (**strong evidence**); small-group reading interventions (**strong evidence**); developing academic English (**strong evidence**); and explicit comprehension strategy instruction (**strong evidence**); and explicit vocabulary instruction (**strong evidence**). Many of these topics were addressed in GaSRCL, and the Georgia Department of Education is transferring content from the Comprehensive Reading Solutions website, the IES practice guides, and IES/REL YouTube videos (see

<https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southeast/plc.asp> ) into packaged, free, online courses that can be accessed by any Georgia educator.

Through the development of the L4GA plan, Georgia has found several additional topics that are in demand across the state. These topics have varying levels of evidence. However, with the help of Georgia's literacy researchers, teacher educators, and P-12 educators, we will address the following topics by tapping into expertise across the state:

**Writing development and instruction.** The L4GA team includes the four National Writing Project (NWP) sites in Georgia. Together, we have developed a cohesive group that can promote (a) writing instructional strategies across content areas and across developmental phases/ages; (b) research on writing development as well as formative ways to assess writing; and c) professional learning that involves teacher leadership. The NWP has a long history of offering high-quality professional learning about writing and was recently deemed as having **moderate evidence** for improving student outcomes (Gallagher, Woodworth, & Arshan, 2015; National Writing Project & Nagin, 2007). In addition, IES offers practice guides complement and support many of the writing practices promoted by the NWP (Berninger, Nagy, & Beers, 2011; Bielenberg, & Fillmore, 2005; Gallagher, Woodworth, & Arshan, 2015; Graham et al., 2016; Graham, & Hebert, 2012; Graham, McKeown, Kihara, & Harris, 2012; MacArthur, 2012; MacArthur, 2014; Ogletree, & Allen, 2013; Philippakos, & MacArthur, in press; Sadler, 2007; Saddler, Behforooz, & Asaro, 2008; Troia, 2014).

**Language development.** Through discussions with the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning as well as analysis of Kindergarten learning outcomes, the L4GA development team determined that instructional and conversational interventions for language development need to be addressed. There is **strong evidence** that early language development is

correlated to children's early reading abilities, and this focus on early language is consistent with IES instructional guidance about building foundational reading skills (see Foorman et al., 2016; Lesaux, Crosson, Kieffer, & Pierce, 2010). Building children's narrative and inferential language skills, vocabulary, and lexical knowledge, Georgia's teachers will learn strategies for engaging students' in authentic conversation and growing academic language. In addition, across the grade levels, the L4GA professional learning will include a focus on how language differences among English learners can be addressed through a culturally sensitive focus on academic language and attention to improving classroom discourse (see Baker et al., 2014; Dickinson & Snow, 1987; Dickinson & Tabors, 1991; Gonzalez, Moll, & Amanti, 2005; Hollie, 2011; Kiemer, Groschner, Pehmer, & Seidel, 2015; Schleppegrell, 2004). Furthermore, because of the unique context of Georgia's children (e.g., southeastern accents and varied dialects), L4GA professional development will add a focus on how instructional practices can address dialectal differences to improve foundational reading skills. The L4GA team is coordinating with several Georgia professors who are national experts in this area (e.g., Washington, Patton-Terry, Seidenberg, Stone, & Silliman, 2013) and with Dr. Barbara Foorman's Regional Education Lab at Florida State University to grow this area of practice. This emerging research was recently funded by the National Institutes of Health (award # 1R24HD075454-01). Outcomes suggest several **promising practices** for supporting young children with dialectal differences as these differences have potential to influence their phonemic and phonological development.

**Social, emotional, and cognitive development.** The L4GA team is especially interested in promoting educators' understandings and practices that support students' social, emotional, and cognitive development in a connected way because social-emotional engagement improves not only academic outcomes, but also the climate for learning in Georgia's schools (Gou,

Connor, Tompkins, & Morrison, 2011). In Georgia, school climate ratings directly correlate to reading outcomes (see <https://tinyurl.com/y759ffln> for an explanation). Georgia was the first state in the nation to implement K12 school climate ratings in 2011. Annual measurement of school climate is mandated in Georgia law via Part 3 of Article 2 of Chapter 14 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (see <http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/20112012/127822.pdf>). **Strong theory** connects social and emotional development, school climate and learning (Benbenishty, Astor, Roziner, & Wrabel, 2016; Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning, 2013; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). The Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards (GELDS; see <http://www.gelds.decal.ga.gov/>) include standards for social and emotional development from birth through age five, and the K-12 Georgia Standards of Excellence include social and emotional development within the practices they promote (although Georgia does not have explicit standards for social-emotional learning). Vertical alignment of the GELDS and GSEs will be essential to the success of the LEA-Partnerships (**Absolute Priority 2**).

Therefore, the L4GA team will assist educators in promoting social and emotional engagement as a way to ensure that students are engaged in positive learning climates. In early childhood classrooms (birth through grade 2), professional learning will include a focus on Universal Design for Learning (Universal Design Learning Center, 2012) and Pyramid practices for Positive Behavior Support (Hemmeter, Fox, Jack, & Broyles, 2007). Additionally, Georgia's Early Education Alliance for Ready Students (GEEARS) is creating a plan for engaging communities and early education providers to focus on these important skills in and out of schools (see [https://gears.org/research/readiness\\_radar/](https://gears.org/research/readiness_radar/)). In grades 3-12, Universal Design for

Learning and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (see [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)) will be a focus of professional learning. These foci also will be integrated into professional learning about specific content such as reading comprehension strategies, writing instruction, and content literacy for social studies and science (c.f., Rubin, Townsend, & Vittori, 2015). While helpful to *all* students, these interventions have been shown to be especially helpful for students with disabilities and communication disorders (Benbenishty, Astor, Roziner, & Wrabel, 2016; Carpenter et al., 2011; Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). Georgia promotes multi-tiered systems of support that integrate social-emotional, behavioral, and academic supports for learners; therefore, this focus will complement SEA-offerings by contributing specific support for literacy classrooms (**Alignment of Resources**).

**Digital literacies and online communications.** One-hundred percent of Georgia's schools are internet-connected, and many school leaders, community members, and families are asking questions about how to support students' digital literacies and online communications. The L4GA team will leverage partners from Google (see the *Be Internet Awesome* curriculum, grades 4-6), the International Society for Technology in Education, Common Sense Media (see the *Digital Citizenship* curriculum, grades K-12), the Family Online Safety Institute, the Internet Keep Safe Coalition, and Connect Safely, as well as researchers of digital literacies to ensure that educators, community members and families understand how to be safe and responsible communicators when reading and writing online (Alper, 2011; Coiro, 2011; Gray, Thomas, & Lewis, 2010; Ito et al., 2013; Jenkins, 2008; Judge, Puckett, & Bell, 2006; Miller, 2011; Pepler, 2013; Swaminathan & Wright, 2003).

**Dyslexia.** The L4GA team has had several conversations with parents of students who have been diagnosed with dyslexia as well as educators and professors who want to support

screening tools and professional learning about how dyslexia is different from garden-variety poor reading (Berkeley, Lindstrom, Nealy, Southall, & Stagliano, 2012; Lindstrom & Sayeski, 2013; Vellutino, Fletcher, Snowling, & Scanlon, 2004). This group has agreed to become part of the Literacy Think Tank and coordinate a research-proven, data-informed method for differentiating dyslexia from other reading difficulties and methods for ensuring that all students are offered early interventions and free appropriate public education. In recent years there has been growing attention around the unique instructional needs of students with dyslexia. While the Georgia Department of Education has adopted the definition of dyslexia offered by the International Dyslexia Association, students in the state could benefit from early screening and intervention in grades K-2; therefore, the L4GA team will incorporate these aims to the work of the project. The Literacy Think Tank will support for professional development by offering professional learning opportunities, course materials, and resources related to dyslexia for inservice and/or preservice teachers and teacher educators.

These topics have been determined as priorities during the development of the L4GA plan; however, as data from the project are collected and analyzed through the evaluation process, other topics will emerge. The L4GA team will work with the IES/REL and the Literacy Think Tank to request proposals for professional learning on those emergent topics (**State-level Activities: Continuous Improvement**).

### **EPB for Professional Learning for Educators**

Professional learning will be offered for school leaders, teachers, and community literacy program providers in a coherent series of opportunities to focus collaboratively (online and face-to-face) on improving practice. Georgia's L4GA team piloted this "tiered" approach to professional development in the 2016-17 school year and survey findings from over 1000

educators demonstrated that participants liked this coherent, hybrid approach. This approach ensures that professional learning is consistent and coherent across an extended time and, after awareness is generated from embedded within the context of the schools (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardener, 2017; Flint, Zisook, & Fisher, 2011). Professional learning opportunities will include Institutes, online learning, and local professional learning communities. Educators, from early childhood through grade 12, should be offered targeted professional learning that is appropriate for children’s developmental needs and abilities. For example, Georgia’s Department of Early Care and Learning and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offer the “Watch Me Grow” modules about child development, with classroom posters, checklists for parents, and books for families; by aligning these high-quality, evidence-based efforts for supporting families, the L4GA LEA-Partners can further disseminate high-quality resources to reach more families across the state. In addition, the L4GA website will host resources and links to partnership opportunities not only to support the professional development of educators and school leaders, but also to support non-educators who are essential to children’s lives and literacy learning (Diamond, Justice, Siegler, & Snyder, 2013). In essence, the Partnerships will thrive because of the access families and community organizations will have as a result of the L4GA-Partnership efforts. All resources will be explicitly linked to the Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES) and Leader Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) which are Georgia’s evaluation tools for meaningful feedback and support. These TKES and LKES links will provide teachers and leaders with information about how their practices and performance impacts student learning (**Alignment of Resources**).

**Institutes.** L4GA Institutes offer face-to-face opportunities to gather all sub-grantee partners to meet each other, discuss statewide findings, and improve particular evidence-based

practice areas that, as determined by data, require additional emphasis. Building on the experience from GaSRCL, these face-to-face institutes serve to engage educators and leaders and attract them to the online supports. These Institutes will also ensure that participants are familiar with and technically able to use the online platform, GeorgiaLearns. Institutes conducted across the state will be targeted to specific audiences:

- District leaders and school leaders,
- Leaders and teachers of the early education and primary grades,
- Leaders and teachers of the primary and elementary grades;
- Leaders and teachers of the middle and secondary grades;
- Out-of-school providers (e.g., summer reading camps, library literacy programs; museum, park, and theatre programs)

Professional learning providers for the Institutes will be selected by their peers. After a meeting to discuss L4GA baseline data, members of the Georgia Literacy Think Tank, RESAs, and ELA Advisory will be invited to propose and peer-review Institute proposals based on “content focus strands” initiated by the GaDOE. Each proposal will include the following:

- Focal content
- Description of how the session will actively engage participants
- Targeted “tier” of support (core instruction strategies; strategies for students who are not making progress; intensive instructional strategies)
- Research evidence base for the proposed strategies
- Online follow up (course content, online coaching, PLC moderation)
- Face-to-face options for local partners (consultation and local coaching)
- Capacity and resources for conducting the institute and follow-up services

All professional learning providers are expected to explicitly link to evidence-based practices and research; link to the *Georgia System for Continuous Improvement* by identifying how each strategy might affect “effective leadership,” “coherent instruction,” “community and family engagement,” etc. and what formative data might be helpful to monitor progress. They will also provide specific curricular materials (lesson plans, unit plans, etc.), link to children’s literature and other authentic texts, and provide video examples of instructional strategies being promoted.

**Online courses, professional learning communities, and coaching for educators.**

GeorgiaLearns is a professional learning platform that can host social online learning networks and is maintained by Georgia’s Virtual Learning program which serves over 30,000 students and 1000s of teachers each year. Online courses will include online coaching and PLC conversations, moderated by teacher educators from the RESAs, Literacy Faculty Think Tank, and L4GA partners who have passed the peer-review process for proposing Institutes. The subject matter experts who host Institutes also will be the online PLC moderators and coaches. Content on evidence-based practices produced for Institutes will contribute to online course development. The course catalog for GeorgiaLearns will grow continuously; the platform has already ingested course offerings from the Comprehensive Reading Solutions website funded by GaSRCL and merged them with online PLC opportunities. GeorgiaLearns also has capacity for interoperability with course offerings from Georgia’s Institutions of Higher Education which use the Desire2Learn (D2L) platform (Note: the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning hosts professional learning modules in D2L, and those will be accessible through D2L and GeorgiaLearns). GeorgiaLearns also has capacity to integrate videos and resources from existing national platforms such as the *Watch Me Grow* modules and resources offered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (see <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/watchmetraining/index.html>)

**Local Professional Learning Communities.** School leaders and teachers will join local professional learning communities to discuss their progress and to engage their peers in critical conversations (Fakey & Ippolito, 2014), give and receive feedback (Flom, 2014), and develop sustainable change cultures. Any Institute session offered will include a facilitator’s guide for local PLCs to continue the content focus through a series of peer observations and conversations, similar to the guides provided by the IES and REL-SE (see <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southeast/plc.asp>). These professional learning communities should be supported through collaborative planning time offered by schools so that teachers have time to review research-proven strategies, analyze formative data, discuss ideas, and conduct peer-mentoring and observations.

**Evidence of Quality.** The comprehensive professional learning strategies employed by the L4GA plan is informed by the literature on professional literature and research on changing instructional practices (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardener, 2017); effective professional learning includes:

- **Content focus** on specific teaching strategies with specific content supports for literacy within English Language Arts and other disciplinary content areas. L4GA not only emphasizes the need for teacher knowledge about how early literacy develops, but also how school leaders and teachers can adapt that knowledge into practical pedagogical approaches for content and disciplinary literacy in mathematics, science, social studies, as well as in English language arts. As L4GA data are collected and analyzed, findings will be used to identify content priorities. Participants in the feeder systems will be directed to focus their efforts on these instructional goals and this will be a requirement of LEA-partnership sub-grantees so as to avoid having competing priorities.

- **Active learning** that engages teachers and school leaders directly in trying out new strategies and connecting their own experiences as learners to their classroom contexts. L4GA includes partnerships in-state professionals who work with Reading Recovery P-12 and National Writing Project (both programs have **Strong Evidence** of high-quality professional learning according to the IES-evidence standards). These professionals are active members of the Literacy Faculty Think Tank and will be essential to ensuring that any professional learning proposals for the Institutes included is element as well as follow-up collaboration, demonstration, and feedback opportunities.
- **Collaboration** among peers ensures that teachers and school leaders communicate about their instructional changes, encourage each other, engage in critical conversations, and positively change the culture of their environments. L4GA utilizes fact-to-face convenings via Institutes and Local Professional Learning Communities as well as online courses, online Professional Learning Communities, and coaching (Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen, & Grissom, 2015).
- **Demonstrations of curricular models** can provide a clear vision for what effective instruction looks like. The L4GA will provide teachers and school leaders opportunities to discuss sample lesson plans, assessments, curricular planning guides, videos their own and others' effective practices, and classroom observations.
- **Feedback and reflection** are critically important to changing practices. Therefore, the L4GA plan includes supports for school leaders and teachers on now to give and receive feedback, both online and in face-to-face contexts.

- **Sustained duration** is necessary for teachers and school leaders to engage with a particular content focus over time, offering opportunity to practice, implement, and improve new strategies that, in turn, improve instruction.

By working closely with partners in Georgia’s teacher preparation programs and RESAs, the L4GA project attempts to align professional learning providers with what schools need, based on data. This strategy also closely aligns the Institutes and professional learning content with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) career ladder for teacher certification as well as the PSC-approved K-12 Reading Endorsement Standards, as well as the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Standards for Teacher Development (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011) and Professional Standards for Educational Leaders (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2015).

#### **EPB for Research-Practitioner Partnerships and Community Coalitions**

Research is emerging about how to support learners even when they are not in classrooms in ways that result in academic outcomes. For example, Smith and Foorman (2015) provide a summary of how summer reading camps provided a fun and meaningful opportunity for summer learning. Furthermore, Sheldon (2003) links family-school-community partnerships to academic outcomes. Summer school and other summer learning opportunities may be an essential element to partnerships (Boorman, 2016). This body of evidence provides **promising practices** for addressing students’ literacy needs with less conventional interventions (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007; Allington, & McGill-Franzen, 2013; Campbell, S. B., & von Stauffenberg, 2008; Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy, 2011; Hiebert, & Mesmer, 2013; Kim & Quinn, 2013; Melosh, 2013; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017; Neuman, & Celano, 2001; Schacter & Bo, 2005; Smith & Foorman, 2015).

In Georgia, communities are creating coalitions that include leaders from K-12 schools, early childhood education centers, and community organizations and are calling themselves “Get Georgia Reading Communities.” These coalitions review their local data from the U.S. Census, Kids Count Georgia, and student academic outcomes. In addition, the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning can offer local county-level data and information about children and family needs and local assets. Through these conversations, leaders generate ideas about which data are important for their local region and for supporting local families and children—from library literacy clubs to securing housing and food for families. By mapping local needs to local resources and following where the students come from, community coalitions are essential to the L4GA partnerships. LEA-Partnerships can utilize L4GA allocations to engage with family and child care providers who may not have been engaged before, such as caregivers paid for with child care subsidies, healthcare providers, Babies Can’t Wait, and social workers. For example, “Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care” providers may be good partners to pull into museums, theatres, libraries, and parks so that children have exposure to more of the community’s learning resources. In addition, this approach has been proven to create a sustainable infrastructure for continuous improvement in Georgia’s schools (Southern Education Foundation & Annenberg Institute for School Reform, 2015) (**State-Level Activities: Continuous Improvement**). The SEA is currently aligning LEA Title 1 programs with Georgia Family Community Partnership liaisons who provide social service connections within every county in the state (**Alignment of Resources**); therefore, LEAs should have a social worker in the community poised to help build connections.

### **Systems Approach to Sustainable Improvements in Literacy Outcomes**

By engaging LEAs in partnerships across the ecological system that surrounds students, the L4GA uses an ecological theory of sustainable change. In other words, L4GA is based on the assumption that literacy outcomes are tied to systemic (or ecological) challenges that schools, communities, and families face when trying to serve students. Thus, the L4GA plan attempts to align partnership networks of early learning providers, schools, community organizations, and families to better serve students and ensure that literacy outcomes improve in a sustainable way.

Building on the momentum of success from the *Get Georgia Reading* and GaSRCL, the L4GA plan also aligns with *Georgia's State Plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act* by requiring local needs assessments, engagement with multiple stakeholders, and continuous improvement via the use of evidence-based practices and *Georgia's System for Continuous Improvement* uses an evidence-based “systems approach” for continuous school improvement **(State-level Activities: Continuous Improvement)**.

A systems approach is especially fitting for school improvement because schools exist at the confluence of many interests and issues (Adelman & Taylor, 2018; Betts, 1992; Bryk, 2010; Bryk, Gomez, & Grunow, 2010). The more issues and influences there are, the more likely that the system becomes rigid and constrained because of competing interests. This is true for Georgia's schools. When a school is struggling to meet the needs of children living in poverty, trying to improve literacy becomes increasingly constrained and the risk is that literacy curriculum becomes reduced to the “pedagogy of poverty” (Haberman, 1991). Thus, Georgia is supporting schools and LEAs in creating systems that are more purposively organized to improve literacy learning. We are doing this by promoting the use of high-quality, proven, evidence-based practices for literacy instruction within a local system for continuous improvement. We are also promoting convergence among community partners who serve the

school population by promoting the “Get Georgia Reading” campaign communities. As such, we hope to reduce the complexity of the system--from a reactive system that serves many interests to a singularly focused system that promotes literacy.

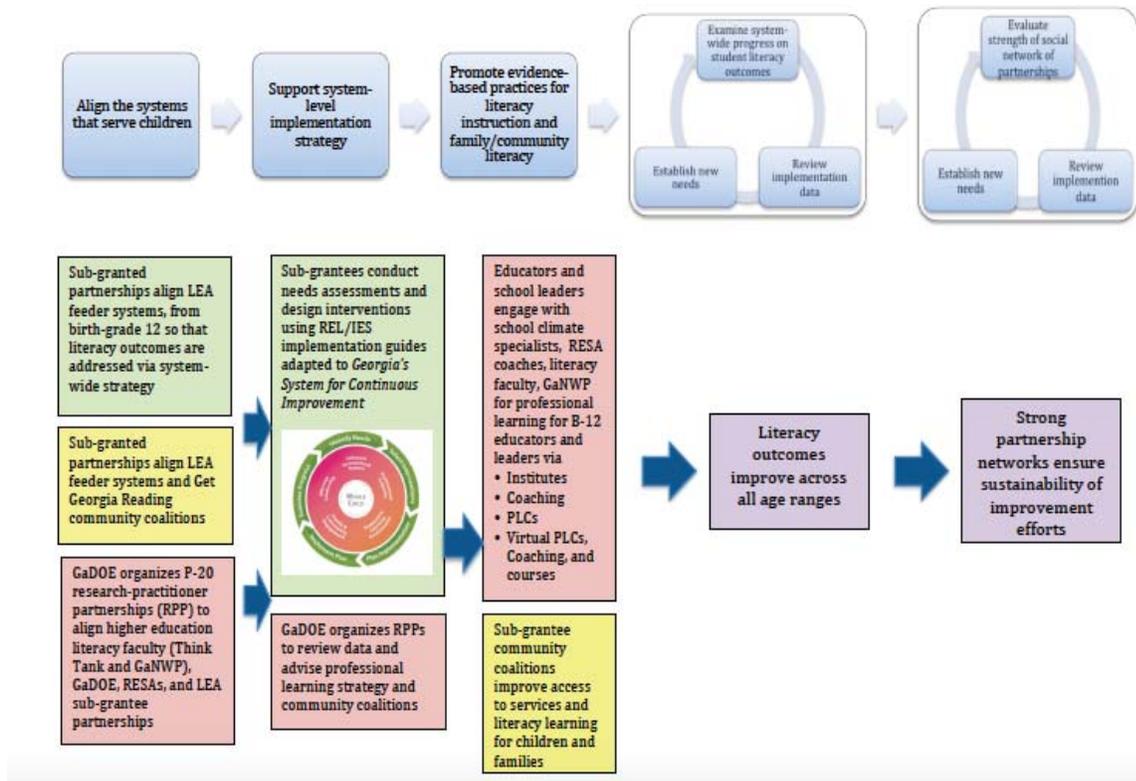
*Georgia’s System for Continuous Improvement* (see <https://tinyurl.com/yc52tjyr>) is modeled after successful comprehensive school reform efforts (Bryk, 2010; Bryk, Gomez, & Grunow, 2010). As part of Georgia’s state plan for the *Every Student Succeeds Act*, every Georgia LEA must use *Georgia’s System for Continuous Improvement* in order to allocate federal Title formula funds to improve school quality. All LEAs must elicit stakeholder input to conduct a local needs assessment, collect and analyze data about the conditions of the school, as well as student learning outcomes, and then create a plan for using evidence-based practices. This process is facilitated by an online tool called the *Comprehensive Needs Assessment* (CNA). The L4GA sub-grantee application process will use the same improvement process and utilize data from the CNA to conduct their needs assessment for this competitive grant, thus aligning the SEA demands on local LEAs. This also provides LEAs with a common tool for identifying needs and aligning resources so that any sub-grant awards **supplement, and do not supplant**, other funds targeting literacy outcomes (**Alignment of Resources**). By using a high-quality, developmental evaluation to provide data and information that can serve as the focus of conversation about how to improve systemic supports as all partners move toward a shared goal of improving literacy outcomes (**State-Level Activities: Continuous Improvement**). Resources for planning, evaluation of evidence, and research-proven interventions for literacy that have been produced by the Florida Center for Reading Research and IES are linked to the Georgia Department of Education website for *Georgia’s System for Continuous Improvement*; these will be promoted in technical assistance for sub-grants and will help guide LEAs as they develop and

implement improvements (**State-Level Activities: Technical Assistance and Professional Learning Support for Strong-Moderate Evidence-Based Practices**).

### **Logic Model for Activities and Outcomes**

The L4GA Logic Model, below, visually represents the systemic continuous improvement cycle that is being promoted for LEA-Partnerships. By funding LEA-Partnerships, L4GA asks LEAs to identify how all of their schools and local partners serve children, from birth through grade 12, in their community. LEAs will look at data longitudinally to discover how the current system is performing, therefore, taking a proactive approach to inform decision-making about system-level supports that can help children. As LEA-Partnerships design system-wide improvements, they can use L4GA to support implementation of research-proven, evidence-based practices. Throughout the three-year implementation cycle of the L4GA project, data on student performance will be fed back to the LEA-Partnerships to continuously improve the system-wide supports and implementation strategies.

**Figure 2.** L4GA Logic Model.



System-level alignments require that people at each level of the educational system coordinate with each other to focus on children’s needs. Therefore, we expect collaboration among teachers and leaders within feeder-schools (early childhood, elementary, middle, and high), district-level administrators, community leaders, regional educational service providers, higher education literacy faculty, and teacher preparation providers. This logic requires that actors across levels of the system have clarity about what is expected of their role in the LEA-Partnership. **Local literacy plans** should incorporate these expectations. Therefore, Table 1, below, demonstrates what is expected of each role.

Table 1

*System-level Roles and Expectations*

| Who | What |
|-----|------|
|-----|------|

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Students (birth through grade 12)             | <p>Will have access to high-quality materials in both print and digital form, fiction and non-fiction, that support the <i>Georgia Standards of Excellence</i> in all content areas.</p> <p>Will receive an evidence-based curriculum that will ensure adequate delivery of the Georgia Standards of Excellence.</p>   |
| Students (PreKindergarten to grade 5)         | <p>Will receive an evidence-based literacy block that includes all elements of a comprehensive literacy program (e.g., dialogic reading, peer-assisted learning, small group reading interventions, developing academic English, explicit comprehension strategy instruction, explicit vocabulary instruction) using a variety of engaging, high-quality texts.</p>  |
| Students (grades 6-12)                        | <p>Will receive evidence-based instruction in Literacy (Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking, Viewing) within content area courses using evidence-based delivery models as well as robust, engaging text.</p>   |
| Teachers of literacy (birth through grade 12) | <p>Will engage learners by establishing a positive learning climate and using instructional approaches that are responsive to the community (e.g., linguistically, culturally, developmentally appropriate).</p> <p>Will implement ongoing formative and summative assessments and use data to inform instructional decisions and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.</p> <p>Will engage in high-quality professional learning to build their competence in evidence-based practices in literacy instruction, delivery of content, and peer support.</p> |
| School leadership teams                       | <p>Will engage in high-quality professional learning to build their competence in evidence-based practices for literacy instruction and evaluation of instructional performance.</p> <p>Will demonstrate commitment to literacy by convening partners (teachers, community organizations, families, students) to focus on literacy-related services and activities together.</p>   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| School and District leaders            | <p>Will use local and state data to create literacy plans for feeder patterns, focusing on growing potential for the local community to meet the needs of children from birth through grade 12.</p> <p>Will ensure that grants funded to L4GA partnerships are supported through proper and timely allocations and resources.</p> <p>Will ensure that the district goals align, and do not conflict, with those of the funded schools.</p> <p>Will facilitate partnerships with community organizations to provide social services for families and children attending local schools.</p>                                    |
| Teacher educators/literacy researchers | <p>Will partner with B-12 teachers and leaders to lead professional learning about evidence-based practices for literacy instruction.</p> <p>Will engage in a networked improvement community called the “Literacy Think Tank” to improve their own competence in evidence-based practices in literacy instruction.</p> <p>Will engage with local community partners to support literacy-related activities and communications for families, youth, and children.</p>  |
| Community members                      | <p>Will provide support services for children, youth and families as determined by the local needs defined by the partnership.</p> <p>Will demonstrate commitment to literacy by providing and supporting literacy-related activities and communications for families, youth, and children.</p>  |
| GaDOE                                  | <p>Will align SEA initiatives and requirements as much as possible and support sub-grantees by provide guidance about alignments.</p> <p>Will deliver a communications system provides real-time access updated online and face to face training as well as assessment windows and new resources both internal and developed by outside partners.</p> <p>Will provide state data to support local efforts.</p> <p>Will convene and facilitate teacher educators and literacy researchers to improve the network’s capacity and competence.</p> <p>Will facilitate a comprehensive approach to professional learning that</p> |

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promotes evidence-based practices and involves alignments face-to-face statewide convenings, online learning, and on-site interactions among sub-grantee partnerships via professional learning communities and coaching.

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### **L4GA Continuous Improvement Approach to Outcome Evaluation**

A three-tiered approach to evaluating L4GA will be pursued to ensure that the project itself benefits from a continuous improvement cycle by (a) documenting positive practices and (b) gauging the overall the impact of the L4GA project. Although each tier of evaluation is designed to examine how participation in L4GA relates to student outcomes, different methodological designs and analyses are employed. Generally, and across tiers, L4GA will be evaluated utilizing a longitudinal, mixed methods design. This approach allows for (a) the evaluation of program impacts consistent with rigorous evaluation research and (b) the examination of how certain factors or changes/improvements within a community, school, classroom, and home relate to student learning. Analyses will take into account collective, as well as unique, contributions of various structures. In addition, they will document factors related to the implementation of evidenced based practices in schools and how these relate to student outcomes. The first evaluation tier focuses on examining the impacts of L4GA implementation with attention to student performance using a regression discontinuity design (RDD). This design allows us to document the overall effects of the L4GA approach. The second evaluation tier uses a sequential, mixed methods approach for a deeper dive into L4GA activities with attention to how each activity relates to student achievement. This approach involves a more fine-grained examination of mechanisms and factors associated with successful L4GA implementation as well as a closer look at important teacher and student outcomes across time. The third tier evaluation approach includes a complex system/social network analysis of L4GA with attention

to community, school, classroom, and student variables. Each tier is explained in detail below. Importantly, evaluation efforts are complementary and will be used to inform L4GA program activities and technical assistance (see Logic Model). They will allow for the triangulation of L4GA project activities and impacts in ways that build capacity and yield results that will be extended beyond the period of the grant.

### **Research Questions**

Three key evaluation research questions will examine L4GA program effects on student achievement and drive Tier 1 and 2 data analyses and evaluation activities.

1. To what extent does participation in L4GA program impact students' literacy achievement outcomes on state assessments in PreK, Kindergarten, and grades 3-8?
2. For whom is L4GA most impactful? To what extent does student improvement vary as function of student demographic (i.e., economic disadvantage, race, sex, disability status, ELL status) and achievement (i.e., initial literacy scores) variables?
3. If programs improved student achievement, what specific mechanisms, strategies and resources produced these gains?

Two additional research questions will address Tier 3 to make explicit the system influences on outcomes:

4. Who is involved in L4GA partnerships? What is the nature of each partner (type [school, community org, etc.], location, size, reach)?
5. Which organizations and institutions influence whether and how L4GA partnerships use evidence-based literacy interventions? What is the efficacy of the partners' involvement as reported by others in the network?

### **Data Collections**

Table 2

*Overview of Measures Used for Program Continuous Improvement, Evaluation and Reporting*

| Assessment | Purposes | Age | Skills Measured | Data Source |
|------------|----------|-----|-----------------|-------------|
|------------|----------|-----|-----------------|-------------|

Data to answer the research questions above will come from the assessments listed in Table 2. As the table outlines, assessments cover a wide range of age groups, skills, and stakeholders and are reliable and valid indicators of the constructs they are designed to assess. The table below describes the measures to report for **Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) performance measure**. While the SEA already collects many assessments noted in this table, for documenting student success, others will be collected expressly for the purpose of this project. A few measures (e.g., parent and community) will be developed once this application is funded. The table also describes project-based assessments selected for reporting and continuous improvement (**State-Level Activities: Continuous Improvement**). Other assessments in the table describe both formative and informal assessments given by teachers to determine instructional focus and improvement.

**Student Outcomes**

|                            |                      |      |   |                         |
|----------------------------|----------------------|------|---|-------------------------|
| Work Sampling Online (WSO) | Formative assessment | PreK | Learning and Development across Domains | Existing Data 2X a year |
|----------------------------|----------------------|------|---|-------------------------|

*Reliability & Validity:* Measure demonstrates high internal reliability across time (school year;  $r_s = .69-.89$ ). Strong concurrent validity estimates when compared with standardized achievement measures ( $r = .66 - .75$ ) and good predictive validity ( $b = .17, p < .01$ ) (Meisels, Liaw, Dorfman, & Nelson, 1995).

|   |                         |      |                     |                                 |
|---|-------------------------|------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Narrative Assessment Protocol (NAP)-<br><b>GPRA 1</b> | Formative/<br>Summative | PreK | Oral Language Skill | *Teacher Administered 2X a year |
|---|-------------------------|------|---------------------|---------------------------------|

*Reliability & Validity:* NAP evidences high internal consistency ( $\alpha = .83$ ) and criterion-related validity has been established against standardized oral language measures (Justice et al., 2010).

|  |                                    |        |   |                                 |
|--|------------------------------------|--------|---|---------------------------------|
| Phonological Literacy Screening (PALS) | Screeners/<br>Formative Assessment | PreK-K | Early Reading (alphabet knowledge, concepts of print, phonological awareness) and Writing Skills. | *Teacher Administered 3X a year |
|--|------------------------------------|--------|---|---------------------------------|

*Reliability and validity:* Individual domains on the PALS evidence strong inter-rater reliability ( $r_s$  range from .96 to .99) and good test-retest reliability ( $r_s$  range from .83 to .92) (Invernizzi, Justice, Landum, & Booker, 2004).

|   |                                    |              |   |                       |
|---|------------------------------------|--------------|---|-----------------------|
| GKids/ Readiness Check & GKids Performance Based Assessment | Screeners/<br>Formative assessment | Kindergarten | Literacy, Math & General Learning and Development | Existing Data 2X Year |
|---|------------------------------------|--------------|---|-----------------------|

*Reliability and Validity:* Good interrater reliability on individual items (ranging from 79% to 90%). Concurrent validity for GKids Readiness Check demonstrate modest associations with WSO scores (rs. .37 to .39). Content validity established through alignment to performance standards.

|             |                                     |                     |  |                                     |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| DIBELS-Next | Screener/<br>Progress<br>Monitoring | K – 3 <sup>rd</sup> | Reading<br>K = Composite<br>1 <sup>st</sup> = Nonsense Word,<br>Oral Reading<br>Fluency<br>2 <sup>nd</sup> - 3 <sup>rd</sup> = Oral<br>Reading Fluency | *Teacher<br>Administered<br>3X Year |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|--|-------------------------------------|

Reliability & Validity: Measure demonstrated high levels of test-retest ( $rs = .74 - .93$ ) and high levels of inter-rater ( $rs = .82 - .94$ ) reliability. Moderate to high concurrent validity ( $rs = .62 - .81$ ) when compared to other standardized reading measures (Elliott, Lee, & Tollefson, 2001).

|   |          |                                    |                          |                                     |
|---|----------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Houghton Mifflin<br>Harcourt Reading<br>Assessment<br>(formerly Scholastic<br>Reading Inventory<br>(SRI)) | Screener | 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> | Reading<br>Comprehension | *Teacher<br>Administered<br>3X Year |
|---|----------|------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|

Reliability & Validity: High test-retest reliability ( $rs = .83- .90$ ). High concurrent validity ( $r = .89$ ) when compared with a similar reading measures (e.g., STAR assessment) (Scholastic, 2014).

|   |                         |   |             |               |
|---|-------------------------|---|-------------|---------------|
| Georgia Milestones-<br>End of Grade<br>(EOG) 3-8<br><br>End of Course<br>(EOC)<br><b>GPRA 2</b><br><b>GPRA 3</b><br><b>GPRA 4</b> | Summative<br>Assessment | EOG 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 8 <sup>th</sup><br>9 <sup>th</sup> Lit. and<br>Comp EOC<br>American Lit.<br>and Comp. EOC | Achievement | Existing Data |
|---|-------------------------|---|-------------|---------------|

Reliability & Validity: Measure demonstrated high levels of internal consistency ( $as = .87 - .92$ ). Content validity established through content mapping with Georgia Performance Standards (Georgia DOE, 2016).

|                                     |                         |                                   |         |                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|
| Analytic Writing<br>Continuum (AWC) | Formative<br>Assessment | 3 <sup>rd</sup> -12 <sup>th</sup> | Writing | *Teacher<br>Administered<br>3X Year |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------|

Reliability & Validity: high inter-rater reliability (89%-93%) and test-retest reliability. Construct validity established through factor analysis and good concurrent validity as evidenced through associations with other writing assessments (National Writing Project. 2006, 2008).

| <b>Teacher/Classroom Assessments</b> |                       |         |                       |                 |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Professional Learning Survey         | Survey                | Teacher | Professional capacity | Evaluation Team |
| TKES                                 | Classroom observation | Teacher | Instructional Quality | Existing Data   |

Reliability & Validity: Measure demonstrated moderate to high levels of internal consistency ( $r_s = .49 - .73$ ). Demonstrated construct validity ( $r_s = .75 - .87$ ). (Georgia Center for Assessment, 2014)

|  |                       |         |                       |                 |
|--|-----------------------|---------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Classroom Assessment Scoring System (Pre-K & K-3 versions) | Classroom observation | Teacher | Instructional quality | Evaluation Team |
|--|-----------------------|---------|-----------------------|-----------------|

Reliability & Validity: Good internal consistency and factor structure. Predictive validity demonstrated through associations with children's social and academic outcomes (Hamre, Pianta, Mashburn & Downer, 2010; Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008).

|  |        |         |                       |                 |
|--|--------|---------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Report of evidence-based practices/surveys | Survey | Teacher | Instructional Quality | Evaluation Team |
|--|--------|---------|-----------------------|-----------------|

To Be Developed

|                                       |                       |         |                       |                 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Fidelity of evidenced-based Practices | Classroom Observation | Teacher | Instructional Quality | Evaluation Team |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|-----------------------|-----------------|

To Be Developed

| <b>Community Measures</b>           |        |           |                       |                 |
|-------------------------------------|--------|-----------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Survey of Participation/Involvement | Survey | Community | Community Involvement | Evaluation Team |

|                         |  |           |                       |                 |
|-------------------------|--|-----------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Social Network Analysis |  | Community | Community Involvement | Evaluation Team |
|-------------------------|--|-----------|-----------------------|-----------------|

**Program Quality and School Climate**

|   |           |             |                 |               |
|---|-----------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Quality Rated Child Care Centers (QRIS) | Summative | ECE Program | Program Quality | Existing Data |
|---|-----------|-------------|-----------------|---------------|

Reliability & Validity: Ratings are based upon portfolio review and observations with the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS; Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2014), which have strong inter-rater agreement, internal consistency and good predictive validity.

|                            |                           |                                    |  |               |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|--|---------------|
| School Climate Star Rating | Summative, yearly Ratings | 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 12 <sup>th</sup> | School climate: Safety, Relationships, Teaching and Learning, and External Environment | Existing Data |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|--|---------------|

Reliability & Validity: Establish construct validity. Good internal consistency ( $\alpha=.74$  to  $.85$ ) (GA DOE, 2016; La Salle et al., 2016).

**Outcome Evaluation Tier 1 Approach: Regression Discontinuity Design**

The primary research objective of Tier 1 evaluation efforts focus on examining growth in student literacy outcomes as a function of L4GA involvement. To accomplish this, a regression-discontinuity (RD) design will be employed to examine program impacts. Student outcome data used for these analyses, across age bands (PreK, K, 3-12), will be culled from existing data sources collected by the state of Georgia (see Table 2). These data sources provide common metrics by which to compare student outcomes across programs that were and were not funded (i.e., were and were not included) in L4GA activities. As outlined in the *What Works Clearinghouse*, RD design is an approach that allows for researchers to evaluate program impacts when random assignment to a program is not deemed possible (Schochet et al., 2010). Given practical and logistical implications of selection criteria explained later in the L4GA

application, random assignment is not possible within the current study. Rather, RD design will be used to estimate the effects of the L4GA intervention on student learning.

Consistent with RD design, a continuous scoring rule based upon the LEA-Partnership's grant scores (as part of the sub-grant process) will be used as a "cut off" value to assign a feeder system within each LEA to treatment and comparison conditions. In other words, grant scores given to LEA-Partnerships, as part of the L4GA application process will be used to sort feeder systems within each sub-granted LEA-Partnership into groups that receive L4GA funds and those that do not (i.e., treatment = funded, comparison = not funded). The effect of the intervention will then be estimated as the difference between student literacy outcomes between treatment and comparison feeder systems after controlling for the association between the literacy outcomes and the grant application score (i.e., the variable used to assign units to the intervention). Regression lines for each outcome variable (based upon student literacy outcomes for each age group) will be estimated for children in both the treatment and comparison groups. These regression lines will be examined at the cutoff value of the forcing variable (i.e., grant cut score) to determine if there is "discontinuity" across scores (i.e., an intervention effect). In other words, discontinuity of the regression lines at the cutoff allows one to determine if treatment effects exist. Importantly, an RD design, along with the proper analysis of the data, will allow us to attribute student outcomes to program impacts after controlling for various factors that might bias the estimates of L4GA effectiveness (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell 2002; Hahn, Todd, & Van der Klaauw, 2001). Effects will be estimated separately across different age bands to account for the way in which L4GA participation impacts student literacy growth across the P-12 system. In other words, RD effects will be estimated for each measure that exists in the state for PreK, K, and grade 3-11 students (e.g., Work Sampling, GA Readiness Check/GKids, Milestones). As

outlined in evaluation timeline at the end of this document, RD analyses will be undertaken at the end of each year of L4GA implementation.

### **Outcome Evaluation Tier 2 Approach: Sequential Mixed Methods**

Tier 2 program evaluation efforts focus on understanding specific mechanisms, strategies and resources that produced positive teacher and student outcomes (RQ3). In addition to Tier 1 evaluation activities that use existing data, Tier 2 measures include a variety of summative and performance based assessments collected for the express purpose of understanding who L4GA benefited the most and why. This will be accomplished by employing a sequential mixed-methods approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) designed to demonstrate the relative impact of grant activities on teacher and child outcomes and to explore factors associated with L4GA project activities. In addition to using existing data within the RD design (i.e., Tier 1), additional data will be collected on L4GA programs for the express purpose of evaluating teachers' implementation of evidenced based approaches and their association with student learning gains on progress monitoring and summative student outcomes (see Table 2 for a list of measures that will be collected by teachers during Tier 2 activities). These "deeper dives" into L4GA programmatic and quality data systems will allow for more fine grained analyses into specific mechanisms and strategies that may be responsible for positive student literacy outcomes (RQ3). They also allow for more direct attention to **GPRAs 1-4**. Examination of student performance across L4GA programs will be undertaken. In addition, to examining L4GA student level outcomes for all LEA-Partnerships, a random sample of programs will be selected by the evaluation team for deeper dive data collection activities. These activities will involve direct observations of teachers' implementation of evidenced based literacy practices as well as

standardized assessments of teacher quality using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (Pianta, La Paro, & Hamre, 2008).

Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM) will be employed to examine factors associated with student literacy growth across various years of implementation. HLM is a regression analysis that is specifically designed to analyze data that are nested in a manner that may affect the nature and degree to which variables are related. In other words, HLM allows one to examine how the context of school and classroom environments impact student achievement (i.e., students are nested within classrooms that are nested within schools). Because children's presence in certain schools is not random (i.e., children's presence in certain schools is related to host of school and community factors), HLM allows one to account for variation in educational settings that is attributed to the way in which students are naturally grouped (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). In this way, HLM will allow us to examine how a variety of school level (school climate data, % of children in poverty, etc.) and classroom level factors (teacher qualifications & characteristics, classroom instruction variables, etc.) relate to students' literacy growth. In addition, HLM not only allows one to estimate school and classrooms effects but also makes it possible to examine improvements and/or contributions of demographic and home learning variables to student literacy growth. We will estimate intra-class correlation coefficients (ICCs), which express the proportion of variation occurring within each level of our models, to determine the appropriateness of HLM for our sample of LEA Partnerships. HLM analyses will then be used to determine the mechanisms that are generally responsible for students' literacy improvement in order to identify malleable factors associated with this growth.

Consistent with a sequential mixed methods design, qualitative analyses will also be undertaken to provide insight into features associated with L4GA program success. L4GA-

Partnerships that are “beating the odds” (i.e., literacy performance in relation to student poverty is better than others’) across the B-12 continuum will be selected for case studies (**Competitive Priorities 1 and 2**). These qualitative analyses will be undertaken to identify promising community and school partnership activities. A total of five L4GA-Partnerships will be identified for case studies (Yin, 2009). Interviews with key stakeholders (school and community leaders, teachers, parents, etc.) will yield important information about the implementation of L4 activities as well as important qualifiers regarding the barriers overcome and success achieved while implementing. Identifying L4GA-Partnerships that are “high performing” in the face of demographic risk factors will yield key information into the successes and constraints of the L4GA program across varying contexts. Data will be analyzed using Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2014) to explain variations and similarities among LEA-Partnerships in relation to their earned outcomes. The explanations will pull from a variety of informants to construct narratives that are grounded in the experiences of various people within the Partnerships, thus providing some suggestion of lived realities throughout the L4GA project. This analysis will specifically investigate the relationships, hidden networks, and influence of power hierarchies to interpret various roles within Partnerships. This analytic approach will also identify social networks (i.e., “micro-systems”) within L4GA-Partnerships that were successful at improving student literacy outcomes.

### **Outcome Evaluation Tier 3 Approach: Social Network Analysis**

The final evaluation tier seeks to understand the way in which L4GA systems (as articulated by the Logic Model) support important community, school, and student improvement. Systems thinking in evaluation is an emerging field which involves “making sense of a particular system by seeing it in terms of wholes and relationships, rather than breaking it into component

parts and looking at each in isolation” (Ramage & Shipp, 2009). Using community coalitions and partnerships among B-5, K-12, and higher education teacher prep providers, the L4GA plan is designed to influence the multiple levels of the system that may affect student literacy outcomes. Further, through developmental evaluation framework (Quinn, McKegg, & Wehipeihana, 2015), a systems approach provides Georgia with periodic feedback about the effectiveness of L4GA, thus allowing for pivots in the implementation that can build on early lessons learned.

Developmental evaluation is a complexity-based evaluation approach that aims to investigate extremely difficult problems in complex, dynamic environments, and also incorporates systems thinking. Further, developmental evaluation includes systems frameworks and concepts in varying levels of detail, including social network analysis, system dynamics, system perspectives, boundaries, inter-relationships, tipping points.

Consistent with this methodological approach, Social Network Analysis (SNA) is an appropriate method to examine the relationships that exist among all of the L4GA-Partnerships, and can provide important information regarding the nature and strength of the relationships that exist within L4GA networks. SNA is a method used to detect and interpret structures of relationship linking social actors, such as the people or organizations within an L4GA partnership. While traditional social science methodologies assess outcomes based on variables associated with actors themselves, network theory is unique in that it examines the ties among actors. Specifically, SNA focuses on understanding the relationships that exist among actors in the network, assuming that these ties between or among actors are important for understanding how information, behavior, attitudes, or other social factors travel through a network. The Center for Education Integrating in Science, Mathematics, and Computing (CEISMC) will conduct a social network analysis (Wasserman & Faust, 1994) to examine the relationships that exist

within and across L4GA partnerships. CEISMC began conducting the initial study of Georgia's educational system in concert with the Georgia Department of Education in 2016. This initial study has revealed the importance of strong network influence on partnership with different organizations across Georgia.

Several organizations influence Georgia's schools. The Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs) and teacher preparation programs in Georgia's Institutions of Higher Education (also called P-20 partnerships) are essential elements to Georgia's educational system, as they are often key to informing district leaders about evidence-based practices. However, other influencers are also key to system-wide implementation of evidence-based practices, such as vendors, other LEAs, other state agencies, the Get Georgia Reading Campaign, and public-private partners. As such, a social network analysis is important to examine how the structure and nature of the relationships between key influencers to better understand how to create convergence among collaborative coalitions that work together towards a common outcome across the state.

In this study, we examine the social networks that exist across L4GA partnerships to better understand how the relationships among partners may affect literacy outcomes. The use of SNA will provide a number of advantages to this project, including identifying L4GA partners, understanding the relationships that exist between partners (i.e.: strength of ties between partners), and understanding the manner in which information flows through the L4GA network. Within this evaluation framework, we will also identify points (POC) for each L4GA partner. These POCs will be nominated by peers and, thus, are likely to be considered "influencers" in the system (Patterson, Grenny, Maxfiel, McMillan, & Switzler, 2007). The POCs will participate in focus groups and the SNA survey. In these interviews and surveys, the POCs will further

nominate people who influence the network as well as define levels of use of evidence-based literacy interventions and the efficacy of partners' involvement.

Understanding the strength of relationships between partners in this network in various regions of Georgia may provide an indication of how effectively statewide literacy interventions move between partner organizations, such as LEAs, community coalitions and early childhood educational settings. In addition, the ties that exist between L4GA partners can provide further information regarding how information regarding literacy interventions flows throughout the state, where gaps may exist, and who may act as an important “bridge” in the network to pass information to less connected LEAs. For example, the SNA may illustrate two distinct and dense information networks among LEAs – one Metro Atlanta LEA and another in South Georgia. If one LEA in Metro Atlanta acts as a bridge, or has a relationship, with one other LEA in the dense network in South Georgia, that Metro LEA may be targeted to aid in the dissemination of information to the southern region of the state. Understanding these relationships may prove important in sustaining improved literacy outcomes throughout Georgia. In addition, by understanding exactly who is in the L4GA network and the relationship among those partners, gaps in the network can be identified and purposefully filled to aid in literacy interventions disseminated at the state level.

By emphasizing the network of partnerships and “influencers,” the Georgia Department of Education itself is moving into a new and different role—away from being a compliance monitor and more toward supporting collaboration among a network of LEAs, schools, and communities. This is a necessary new phase in the Department’s existence for two reasons. First, the state budget constraints have increased over time, eliminating about half of state education department positions in the past seven years. In addition, the state school superintendent’s

strategic plan emphasizes an ideological perspective that ecological approaches to sociological issues require strong partnership efforts. These partnerships can create a more sustainable social network to promote evidence-based practices.

A timeline is provided at the end of this document for this three-tiered evaluation approach and continuous improvement efforts. Note that the SEA and all sub-granted LEA-Partnerships will cooperate with a national evaluation of the SRCL program, including a random-assignment process and only implement literacy interventions proposed to be funded under L4GA in schools or early learning providers that will receive sub-grant funds **(Cooperation with National Evaluation)**.

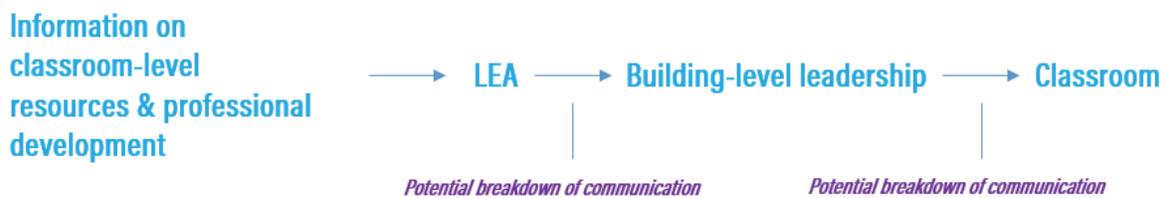
### **Communications Plan**

The L4GA state team will ensure communication using tools that target a variety of audiences. These audiences include but are not limited to; district-level administrators, classroom teachers, legislators, parents and the public. The GaDOE Communications team will support communications for public audiences via proactive media relations, social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), the Georgia Department of Education website Georgia Department of Education's *Educating Georgia's Future* blog ([www.educatinggeorgiasfuture.org](http://www.educatinggeorgiasfuture.org)) which highlights positive developments in Georgia K-12 education. The L4GA team will contribute monthly blog posts about the project and LEA-partnership "bright spots." The L4GA team, in partnership with the Get Georgia Reading Campaign, will provide bi-annual updates to the Campaign Cabinet, which includes all family/child-serving state agencies as well as the Governor's office. The L4GA team will also work with RESA directors to provide communications to regional networks of LEAs.

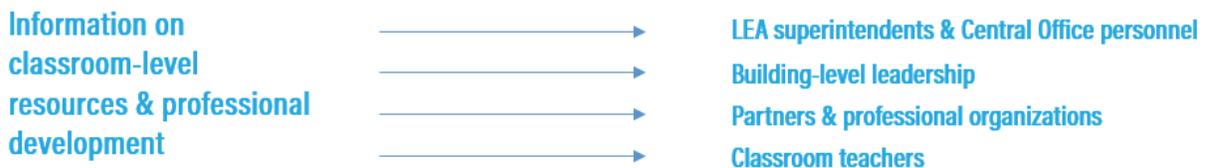
Communications targeted to educators will be provided via the GeorgiaLearns platform as well as through targeted email campaigns using the GaDOE’s email service that includes email lists for every teacher and leader in the state, disaggregated by grade level, certification area, region, and district. These email lists, developed through a partnership with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC), will allow us to reach classroom teachers with specific, targeted information about L4GA resources and professional learning opportunities. It is our strongly-held belief that these direct, two-way communications are a more effective way to reach individual classrooms than a top-down information system which assumes, but does not engage in, communication with the teachers who will be on the front lines of the L4GA work.

**Figure 3.** Communications Strategy for L4GA.

## Moving from this...



## To this...



In addition, the L4GA team will facilitate LEA-Partners in proposing presentations at education-related conferences throughout the state and ensure that all grantees know who is presenting at the various conferences.

In addition, the L4GA Literacy Think Tank is poised to conduct research on local efforts and, as research-practitioner partners in the design and development of the professional learning plan, they will be uniquely well-positioned to provide accounts of what works and lessons learned. In addition, one of the evaluators, Dr. Gary Bingham, also a member of the L4GA Literacy Think Tank, will lead a team to produce a formal evaluation study of the statewide L4GA project that meets WWC standards for high-quality research of program effectiveness (see <https://ies.ed.gov/pdf/CommonGuidelines.pdf> ).

### **SEA Plans for Sub-grants and Competition**

This section describes how LEA-Partnerships will apply for sub-grants, how peer-reviewers will be selected and conduct their reviews, and how the sub-grants will be allocated.

#### **Eligible Entity for Sub-grants**

Georgia will initiate a competitive sub-granting process for LEAs and their community partners (including early education centers, schools that matriculate students as a “feeder system,” and other local organizations, such as libraries, museums, parks, and theatres). The LEA is the eligible entity for receiving a sub-grant for the partnership.

#### **Absolute Priorities and Application Requirements for Sub-grants**

The following are absolute priorities for Georgia’s LEA-Partnerships:

1. Each LEA-Partnership must include a feeder system that includes at least one early education center (e.g., Headstart, Early Headstart, Quality Rated (QR) child care (or a QR applicant), and/or Georgia’s PreK), a community partner organization, and schools serving students from Kindergarten through grade 12.
2. Each LEA-Partnership must allocate funds according to the following ratios:  
15% to serve students from birth to age 5;

40% to serve students from Kindergarten to grade 5;

40% to serve students from grade 6 to grade 12 in an equal distribution (20% grades 6-8;

20% grades 9-12).

3. Each LEA-Partnership must have at least one school with a K-12 School Climate Rating of 4 or 5 and/or be implementing Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS).
4. Each LEA-Partnership must already be involved as a Get Georgia Reading Campaign community or applying to become one.
5. Each LEA-Partnership must include a P-20 partner from a Georgia Institution of Higher Education.
6. Each LEA-Partnership must include a liaison from the Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) that serves that LEA.

LEA-Partnerships will coordinate to create funding proposals based on these Absolute Priorities and the following requirements listed in Table 3, below.

Table 3

*L4GA Sub-grant Application Requirements*

| <b>L4GA Sub-grant</b> | <b>Areas Addressed</b> | <b>Quality Points</b> |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|

**Total Points Possible = 100**

|  |  |           |
|--|--|-----------|
| <b>1. LEA-Partnership Narrative</b>                | <p>Absolute Priorities for L4GA-Sub-grants:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of feeder system(s) and community served</li> <li>• Identification of all LEA-Partnership partners</li> <li>• A brief description of the feeder system(s) identified, and history of the L4GA LEA-Partnership</li> <li>• Population demographics of the community</li> <li>• Climate Ratings for each school involved in the proposed partnership and/or status of implementation of PBIS</li> <li>• Student literacy/ELA outcomes of the feeder system</li> </ul> <p>Plan for engaging</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• early childhood education providers</li> <li>• P-20 research-practitioner partnership(s) and literacy faculty in the local teacher preparation programs</li> <li>• community coalition</li> </ul> | <b>15</b> |
| <b>2. Established Need</b>                         | <p>Established need for a L4GA Project based on GaDOE analysis of third-grade reading growth for students who are economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, and English learners.</p>  | <b>10</b> |
| <b>3. Needs Assessment and Root Cause Analysis</b> | <p>Outcomes of analyses conducted with <i>Georgia's System for Continuous Improvement</i>:</p> <p>Coherent Instructional System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past instructional initiatives</li> <li>• Current instructional initiatives</li> </ul> <p>Community and Family Engagement</p> <p>Engaged Leadership</p> <p>Positive Learning Environment</p> <p>Professional Capacity</p> <p>Other Supports for the Whole Child</p>   | <b>10</b> |
| <b>4. School Literacy Plans</b>                    | <p>Leadership Team</p> <p>School literacy needs assessments and plans</p>  | <b>15</b> |

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| <b>5. Professional Learning Plans</b>                       | <p>Plan for engaging LEA-Partners with L4GA Professional Learning offerings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutes,</li> <li>• Online PL supports, and</li> <li>• Local PL supports (e.g., PLCs, collaborative planning, coaching, mentoring)</li> </ul> <p>Time allocated for collaborative planning time per grade level team and vertical teams. NOTE: LEA-Partners must agree to utilize their L4GA professional learning plan as their singular plan for literacy-related professional learning to avoid layering conflicting professional learning opportunities that could be available in a large LEA.</p> <p>Topics of interest for PL for each audience (e.g., early learning; secondary education; community/family liaisons; etc.)</p> <p>Topics that the LEA-Partnership could provide to the L4GA PL catalog due to particular LEA-Partners' expertise or experiences with positive outcomes. (Involve the P-20 and RESA partners and outstanding teacher leaders when determining what the LEA-Partnership can offer to the L4GA program)</p> | <b>10</b> |
| <b>6. Assurances and Memo of Understanding</b>              | Compliance with FERPA, GPRA, GADOE rules and state and federal laws  | Required  |
| <b>7. LEA-Partnership Management Plan and Key Personnel</b> | <p>LEA office support for grant management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are the key people involved in the grant?</li> <li>• How will the grant function in terms of the whole district strategic plan and comprehensive needs assessment?</li> <li>• How will financial aspects of the grant be handled?</li> <li>• Will there be a dedicated staff member at the district office with the responsibility of grants administration?</li> </ul> <p>Ability of the LEA to adequately administer the funding.</p> <p>Any financial audit findings over the past three years should be discussed in this section.</p> <p>Controls for spending should be pointed out.</p>  | <b>10</b> |

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| <b>8. Project Goals, Objectives, Activities, Outputs, Outcomes, and Supports needed</b>                            | <p>Implementation plan proposed for funding.</p> <p>The plan should show how the instructional strategies, delivery models and programs are consistent with EBP and directly address the needs of the students and educators.</p>  | <b>10</b>        |
| <b>9. Assessment/Data Analysis Plan</b>  | <p>Assurance that assessment and evaluation requirements for the SEA will be completed.</p> <p>Estimated cost for assessments included in proposed LEA-Partnership budget</p> <p>Detailed assessment protocols are specifically detailed including: who, what, and when the assessments will be given as well as analyzed.</p> <p>Procedures for educators' analysis of local assessment data to inform instruction</p>  | <b>10</b>        |
| <b>10. Resources, Strategies and Materials including Technology to Support Implementation of the Literacy Plan</b> | <p>Instructional resources that will be used or purchased as a result of L4GA funding. Services that will be purchased as a result of the L4GA funding.</p> <p>Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All expenditures should all tie back to community and student data, the comprehensive needs assessment, and root cause analysis.</li> <li>• All expenditures should directly impact literacy, access to print, student engagement, and teacher support. They should be consistent with EBP.</li> <li>• This is not a technology grant; only technology supports vital to literacy improvement and instruction should be allocated.</li> </ul> | <b>10</b>        |
| <b>11. Budget</b>  |  | <b>No points</b> |

All proposals will be submitted through *Fluid Review*. *Fluid Review* is the online data management system that allows all aspects of the L4GA grant to be managed in a centralized location. All applicants will utilize the platform to develop, upload, and submit grant applications

as well as supplemental documents throughout the funding period. The peer review process will also be conducted using the platform. Potential peer reviewers will submit applications for employment. Once they have been chosen, peer reviewers will read and score LEA applications. Following the grant review, *Fluid Review* will be utilized to perform all of the grant management and desk monitoring throughout the three year project. All monitoring forms will be uploaded by GaDOE staff and can be completed and uploaded by sub-grantees at any time.

### **Sub-grant Process**

The independent review process (**Absolute Priority 1**) is an integral step in the success of L4GA, which begins by only funding sub-grants with well-articulated goals grounded in evidence-based practices with clear procedures for implementation.

**Peer-Review Selection Process.** Members of the State ELA Advisory, Literacy Think Tank, and GaDOE Literacy Task Force will develop the call for peer reviewers. The call will be distributed to universities, school systems, and professional organizations. As the review is instrumental to the sub-grant process, use of a selection rubric will be employed to choose members for the grant review. Criteria for a peer reviewer includes:

- Demonstrated expertise in teaching birth to five, K-5, middle and high school;
- Practitioner experience working in schools either as a teacher, school leader, or member of a research-practitioner partnership;
- Master's degree or higher in Early Childhood, English Education, Reading, Literacy, Educational Psychology, Speech and Language, or Educational Leadership.
- Extensive knowledge and understanding of evidence-based instructional practices.

Peer reviewers will submit an application via *Fluid Review*, which includes:

- a copy of their vita

- information about any past or ongoing contracts held with a publisher or company that might constitute conflict of interest, including anyone who produces for-profit reading materials, assessments, or commercial professional learning.

Once selected, peer reviewers will be required to sign a Georgia Department of Education contract that includes a confidentiality agreement and disclosure of conflict of interest. Peer reviewers will attend one of two required reviewer online trainings. These trainings will explain the LAGA project and the use of *Fluid Review*. Each reviewer will complete a sample review and submit prior to beginning the reading period. Peer reviewers will receive \$100.00 per application read, scored, and submitted. Peer reviewers will likely review at least 15 sub-grant applications. Table 4 provides a timeline for the sub-granting period.

Table 4

*Sub-grantee Selection Timeline*

| <b>SEA Sub-grant Timeline</b> |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| <b>Dates</b>                  | <b>Activity</b>  |
| 10/1/2017-<br>11/1/2017       | <p><b>Sub-grant Awareness for eligible LEA-Partnerships and support staff:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine district eligibility.</li> <li>• Contact eligible superintendents via email to ensure all are informed of the upcoming sub-grant competition.</li> <li>• Set up face-to-face meeting with RESA directors to provide information on upcoming sub-grant competition.</li> <li>• Hold online awareness sessions for all GaDOE employees that work in eligible schools. Include all members of the GaDOE Literacy Task Force, Charter Systems, Department of Early Care and Learning, Get Georgia Reading Cabinet, Deans of the Colleges of Education, and members of the Literacy Think Tank.</li> <li>• LEAs will submit letters of intent which will include schools and community partners within the feeder patterns that will participate in the grant competition.</li> </ul> |

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| 10/1/2017-<br>11/1/2017 | <p><b>Sub-grant competition development:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop <i>Fluid Review</i> workflow for the grant competition</li> <li>• Develop and circulate request for peer-reviewers</li> <li>• Develop and load online interactive resources including those developed by outside providers.</li> <li>• Develop sub-grant assurance document that includes compliance guidance in the event of discontinuation of funding.</li> </ul> |
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| 11/1/2017-<br>1/30/2018 | <p><b>Conduct sub-grant competition and review:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch <i>Fluid Review</i> and assist LEAs with developing their individual platforms</li> <li>• Conduct online interactive meetings and load recordings into <i>Fluid Review</i> for on-demand viewing</li> <li>• Provide additional face to face technical assistance to LEAs and community partners upon request.</li> </ul> |
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| 11/1/2017-<br>1/30/2018 | <p><b>Conduct sub-grant review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select and contract with peer reviewers</li> <li>• Conduct online interactive trainings and load recordings for peer reviewers who will read and score grants</li> <li>• Conduct internal review on all projects recommended for funding by peer reviewers.</li> <li>• Prepare all required State Board of Education documents to fund sub-grantees.</li> </ul> |
|-------------------------|---|

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|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| 02/1/2018-<br>4/1/2018 | <p><b>Award new grants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommend LEAs for funding by State School Superintendent/State Board of Education</li> <li>• Contact LEA superintendents and send official notice of sub-grant awards</li> <li>• Conduct online meeting to give preliminary requirements and information about the upcoming new grantee summit.</li> <li>• Plan new sub-grantee summit for district and school leaders.</li> </ul> |
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**Pre-L4GA Technical Assistance Interactive Virtual Resources.** Providing short and clear technical assistance modules will assist all LEA-Partnerships to develop a proposal as well as a **local literacy plan**. The process developed is intended build on the already completed

*Georgia Systems of Continuous Improvement*. Through completion of the model, LEAss have identified a need to implement an L4GA plan. Writing a district and school literacy plan and then requesting L4GA funds to assist in implementing are the next natural steps to continuous improvement. The development of the virtual resources highlighted in the table below will allow for on-demand access for all LEAs writing proposals.

Table 5

*Interactive Virtual Resources for Technical Assistance*

| <b>Interactive Virtual Resources</b>  | <b>Topic</b>  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>L4GA TA Session I</b><br/>Co-presented by the GaDOE Research Analyst, Project Director (PD) and Get Georgia Reading Campaign Director</p>   | <p>Eligibility; selection of a feeder system and developing partnerships</p> <p>Ensuring access to high quality literacy instruction and supports for all populations, including ED, SWD, and EL (<b>GEPA, section 427</b>)</p> |
| <p><b>L4GA TA Session II</b><br/>Co-presented by the PD, GaDOE Associate Superintendent for Teacher and Leader Support and Development and DECAL Professional Learning Director Practitioner from a GaSRCL site</p> | <p>Leadership; professional development; and supporting successful implementation of professional learning</p>  |
| <p><b>L4GA TA Session III</b><br/>Co-presented by the PD and GaDOE School and District Effectiveness Director</p>   | <p>Using data and analyses from the comprehensive needs assessment already in use by each LEA with the <i>Georgia System for Continuous Improvement</i> and developing a Local Literacy Plan (L4GA-LLP)</p>                     |
| <p><b>L4GA TA Session IV</b></p>  | <p>Standards (Georgia Early Learning and Development Standards [GELDS] and the</p>  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Co-presented by the PD, GaDOE ELA program manager and a practitioner from a GaSRCL site.  | Georgia Standards for Excellence [GSE]); Evidence-based Practices using WWC levels of evidence and Georgia’s Evidence-based Practices framework                         |
| <b>L4GA TA Session V</b><br><br>Presented by the PD and a practitioner from a GaSRCL site   | Writing a L4GA LEA-Partnership proposal; Budgeting (including OMB A-87) for partnerships, services, and materials selection   |
| <b>L4GA TA Session VI</b><br><br>Co-Presented by the PD and L4GA Grant Evaluator  | Data-driven instruction and assessments; Reporting and evaluation requirements for L4GA   |
| <b>L4GA TA Session VII</b><br><br>Presented by the GaDOE PBIS Director and GaDOE Special Education Director                                   | Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and Universal Design for Learning; School Climate, the relationship between social-emotional engagement and academic performance |
| <b>L4GA TA Session VIII</b><br><br>Co-Presented by the ELA Program Manager and a Literacy Think Tank/GaNWP member                             | Writing across the curriculum   |
| <b>L4GA TA Session IX</b><br><br>Co-Presented by ELA Program Manager, Special Education Director, and L4GA Think Tank members                 | Culturally and linguistically appropriate literacy strategies; English learners and Students with Disabilities ( <b>GEPA, Section 427</b> )                             |
| <b>L4GA TA Session X</b><br><br>Co-presented by PD and DECAL/GaDOE Early Childhood Education Specialist and a practitioner from a GaSRCL site | Early Literacy: Importance of language; balancing developmentally appropriate and explicit instruction for foundational skills  |
| <b>L4GA TA Session XI</b><br><br>Co-presented by the PD and GaDOE   | Developing transition plans- Pre-K to K, K to 1 <sup>st</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> -MS, MS-HS and engaging community coalitions  |

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Family Community Engagement Specialist  
and a practitioner from a GaSRCL site

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**L4GA TA Session XII**

Using Technology and Print Materials for  
literacy instruction

Co-presented by the PD and Georgia  
Virtual Learning Specialist and a  
practitioner from a GaSRCL site

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**L4GA TA Session XIII** Co-presented by  
the PD and the Grants Accounting Director

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Budget, Financial Controls and

In addition to the virtual resources listed above, *Fluid Review* and the L4GA website will contain a library and links to evidenced-based resources necessary to develop a well-crafted literacy plan. The REL-Southeast has agreed to review district templates and provide technical assistance as well. In addition to use by the LEAs and schools developing applications, grant peer reviewers will have access to all of the resources that were made available for sub-grant development. The GeorgiaLearns platform will have a moderated discussion board (linked to the *Fluid Review* and L4GA website) that can provide a space for on-going support for applicants and peer reviewers. Thus, ample resources and supporting documents for literacy planning will be available online and linked to the L4GA site, including:

- *Literacy for Learning, Living and Leading in Georgia* (LAGA) State Literacy Plan
- GaDOE-provided pre-populated data from the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) for Federal Programs using the framework of *Georgia's System for Continuous Improvement*
- GaDOE-provided pre-populated data from the Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) for Federal Programs using the framework of *Georgia's System for Continuous Improvement*

- *Georgia’s System for Continuous Improvement* with links to Evidence-based IES-REL Practice Guides
- Georgia’s Literacy Needs Assessment Templates B-5 and K-12 (these are adapted to align the IES/REL Needs Assessments to *Georgia’s System for Continuous Improvement*)
- Georgia’s Literacy Needs Assessment Templates B-5 and K-12 (these are adapted to align the IES/REL Needs Assessments to *Georgia’s System for Continuous Improvement*)
- Revised “Why, Who, What, and How” document to implement an evidenced-based literacy curriculum
- Collection of resources for professional learning via [www.comprehensivereadingsolutions.com](http://www.comprehensivereadingsolutions.com) (also available in GaDOE’s Learning Object Repository which populates the Teacher Resource Link)

**Scoring Process.** Applicants can earn up to 100 points based on the quality of the alignment of needs and proposed activities as well as the capability of the applicant to implement the proposed project. Each sub-grant application will be independently reviewed by five peer reviewers. GaDOE staff will review all applications that have an average quality score greater than or equal to 75 prior to the addition of competitive priority points. GaDOE staff will determine if the grant meets L4GA project requirements and adheres to state, Federal, and local laws. Applications that do not meet the established criteria will not be recommended for internal review.

Following the peer-review scoring of sub-grant proposals, all of the proposals that score greater than 75 will be eligible for additional points based on an analysis of the number of students who are economically disadvantaged (ED), as it relates to two-year student growth rates on the state’s third-grade ELA Milestones assessment. Competitive Priority points will be

applied to any LEA-Partnership proposal scoring a minimum of 75. The GaDOE internal L4GA team will prioritize the proposals that score greater than 75 in order to sub-grant LEA-Partnerships to serve the greatest number of disadvantaged students (**Competitive Priority 1; Alignment of Resources**).

Three factors are considered as part of the selection process of systems receiving grant funds through their sub-grant applications. These three factors are the poverty index, the system's free and reduced lunch percentage and the percentage of students with disabilities. Each one of these factors does not weights the same in the overall system performance as shown by correlations ran between each factor and the systems average Georgia Milestones scale score (see <https://goo.gl/P8XvVn>). These calculations showed that poverty level have the greatest impact in the average student performance (a Pearson coefficient of -0.82 and a r-squared of 0.67) followed by the percentage of students in free and reduced lunch (a Pearson coefficient of -0.77 and a r-squared of 0.59) (ED), and the number of students with disabilities (SWD) (a Pearson coefficient of -0.15 and a r-squared of 0.02). We studied an additional factor, the percentage of students with limited English language proficiency (EL); however, we were not able to determine a meaningful impact in student performance at the district level, this the result, must likely, of the small n number of these group of students compared to the other groups studied.

An algorithm was designed to calculate the number of points that the system will receive for competitive priority, up to a maximum of 20 points. This algorithm considers the relative "beating-the-odds performance" of the LEA as compared with the value predicted by calculated linear regression for each factor (ED, SWD, EL). School systems are then ranked from largest "against-the-odds performance value" to the lowest and divided into eight subgroups. First the

groups are divided into quartiles, and then each quartile divided into two more groups. An arbitrary point scale from 1 through 8 is then used by assigning 8 to systems that are farther away from the “beating-the-odds performance” index and a 1 to those LEAs that are better at “beating the odds.” These numbers are then multiplied by the r-square value for the distribution. The next step consists of adding the total number of points for each system and ranking the systems accordingly. The distribution is again divided into quartiles and each quartile further divided into five groups. LEAs in each of the five subgroups were further distributed by calculating the standard deviation of the values on each quartile with respect to the mean of that quartile. This process allows for identification of 20 sub-groups. Points are then allocated in the same way as it was done for each individual factor, with 20 points given to the group farther away from “beating the-odds” and 1 point to those systems that are better at beating-the-odds. The final distribution is shown below. The **prioritization ranking for sub-grants** will be based on this analysis (see Table 6).

Table 6

*Prioritization of Sub-grants Based on 2-Year Growth Rates and Poverty*

| System ID | System Name          | Against Odds Total | Points | System ID | System Name        | Against Odds Total | Points |
|-----------|----------------------|--------------------|--------|-----------|--------------------|--------------------|--------|
| 730       | Talbot County        | -62.31             | 20     | 653       | Emanuel County     | 1.85               | 10     |
| 743       | Twiggs County        | -54.08             | 20     | 689       | Liberty County     | 1.93               | 10     |
| 718       | Quitman County       | -53.30             | 20     | 710       | Paulding County    | 2.23               | 10     |
| 694       | Macon County         | -52.76             | 20     | 621       | Candler County     | 2.24               | 10     |
| 670       | Hancock County       | -50.17             | 20     | 617       | Burke County       | 2.27               | 10     |
| 749       | Warren County        | -47.86             | 20     | 786       | Social Circle City | 2.64               | 10     |
| 776       | Gainesville City     | -44.43             | 20     | 792       | Valdosta City      | 3.24               | 10     |
| 646       | Dooly County         | -41.70             | 20     | 663       | Glynn County       | 3.37               | 10     |
| 662       | Glascoc<br>County    | -36.47             | 19     | 728       | Stewart County     | 3.57               | 10     |
| 731       | Taliaferro<br>County | -36.27             | 19     | 759       | Worth County       | 3.89               | 9      |

|     |                            |        |    |     |                      |       |   |
|-----|----------------------------|--------|----|-----|----------------------|-------|---|
| 605 | Baldwin County             | -35.09 | 18 | 680 | Jeff Davis<br>County | 4.35  | 9 |
| 681 | Jefferson<br>County        | -34.86 | 18 | 634 | Coffee County        | 4.54  | 9 |
| 721 | Richmond<br>County         | -33.78 | 18 | 623 | Catoosa County       | 4.82  | 9 |
| 619 | Calhoun County             | -33.48 | 18 | 779 | Jefferson City       | 4.94  | 9 |
| 661 | Gilmer County              | -31.56 | 18 | 789 | Thomasville City     | 5.77  | 8 |
| 765 | Calhoun City               | -31.13 | 18 | 678 | Jackson County       | 6.14  | 8 |
| 720 | Randolph<br>County         | -30.63 | 18 | 716 | Pulaski County       | 6.57  | 8 |
| 611 | Bibb County                | -30.45 | 18 | 793 | Vidalia City         | 6.64  | 8 |
| 627 | Chattooga<br>County        | -28.28 | 17 | 714 | Pike County          | 6.83  | 8 |
| 745 | Thomaston-<br>Upson County | -28.23 | 17 | 737 | Tift County          | 7.08  | 8 |
| 630 | Clay County                | -28.05 | 17 | 766 | Carrollton City      | 7.14  | 7 |
| 724 | Screven County             | -27.96 | 17 | 649 | Early County         | 7.20  | 7 |
| 772 | Dalton City                | -27.67 | 17 | 640 | Crisp County         | 7.50  | 7 |
| 729 | Sumter County              | -27.25 | 17 | 757 | Wilkes County        | 7.51  | 7 |
| 785 | Rome City                  | -26.58 | 17 | 639 | Crawford County      | 7.55  | 7 |
| 712 | Pickens County             | -25.99 | 17 | 740 | Treutlen County      | 7.68  | 7 |
| 631 | Clayton County             | -25.05 | 17 | 707 | Newton County        | 8.53  | 7 |
| 699 | Meriwether<br>County       | -23.74 | 16 | 687 | Laurens County       | 8.65  | 7 |
| 632 | Clinch County              | -23.65 | 16 | 683 | Johnson County       | 9.18  | 6 |
| 671 | Haralson<br>County         | -22.61 | 16 | 756 | Wilcox County        | 9.20  | 6 |
| 715 | Polk County                | -22.45 | 16 | 665 | Grady County         | 9.35  | 6 |
| 679 | Jasper County              | -22.29 | 16 | 738 | Toombs County        | 9.37  | 6 |
| 700 | Miller County              | -22.15 | 16 | 698 | McIntosh County      | 9.46  | 6 |
| 654 | Evans County               | -21.98 | 16 | 606 | Banks County         | 9.52  | 6 |
| 726 | Spalding County            | -21.62 | 16 | 616 | Bulloch County       | 9.89  | 6 |
| 784 | Pelham City                | -21.57 | 16 | 781 | Marietta City        | 10.56 | 6 |
| 657 | Floyd County               | -20.70 | 16 | 752 | Webster County       | 10.69 | 6 |
| 711 | Peach County               | -20.61 | 16 | 622 | Carroll County       | 10.87 | 6 |
| 644 | DeKalb County              | -19.80 | 16 | 607 | Barrow County        | 11.31 | 6 |
| 709 | Oglethorpe<br>County       | -18.93 | 16 | 620 | Camden County        | 11.87 | 6 |
| 741 | Troup County               | -18.62 | 16 | 645 | Dodge County         | 11.97 | 6 |
| 732 | Tattall County             | -17.43 | 16 | 727 | Stephens County      | 12.45 | 6 |
| 614 | Brooks County              | -17.39 | 16 | 751 | Wayne County         | 12.70 | 6 |
| 758 | Wilkinson                  | -17.15 | 16 | 696 | Marion County        | 13.37 | 6 |

| County |                   |        |    |     |                 |       |   |
|--------|-------------------|--------|----|-----|-----------------|-------|---|
| 669    | Hall County       | -16.84 | 16 | 747 | Walton County   | 13.50 | 5 |
|        | Whitfield         |        |    |     |                 |       |   |
| 755    | County            | -16.39 | 15 | 633 | Cobb County     | 14.27 | 5 |
| 733    | Taylor County     | -16.38 | 15 | 722 | Rockdale County | 14.45 | 5 |
|        | Dougherty         |        |    |     |                 |       |   |
| 647    | County            | -16.26 | 15 | 717 | Putnam County   | 14.59 | 5 |
|        | Chatham           |        |    |     | Habersham       |       |   |
| 625    | County            | -15.50 | 15 | 668 | County          | 14.90 | 5 |
| 635    | Colquitt County   | -15.38 | 15 | 667 | Gwinnett County | 15.94 | 5 |
| 767    | Cartersville City | -15.06 | 15 | 660 | Fulton County   | 16.18 | 5 |
| 624    | Charlton County   | -14.98 | 15 | 676 | Houston County  | 18.94 | 4 |
|        |                   |        |    |     | Chattahoochee   |       |   |
| 652    | Elbert County     | -14.17 | 15 | 626 | County          | 19.85 | 4 |
| 739    | Towns County      | -13.58 | 15 | 636 | Columbia County | 20.24 | 4 |
| 603    | Bacon County      | -13.23 | 14 | 666 | Greene County   | 20.81 | 4 |
| 742    | Turner County     | -13.18 | 14 | 763 | Bremen City     | 21.52 | 4 |
| 673    | Hart County       | -13.04 | 14 | 719 | Rabun County    | 21.75 | 4 |
| 618    | Butts County      | -12.96 | 14 | 672 | Harris County   | 21.91 | 4 |
| 701    | Mitchell County   | -11.98 | 14 | 674 | Heard County    | 22.01 | 4 |
| 682    | Jenkins County    | -11.64 | 14 | 686 | Lanier County   | 22.68 | 4 |
| 685    | Lamar County      | -10.30 | 13 | 690 | Lincoln County  | 23.72 | 4 |
| 675    | Henry County      | -10.06 | 13 | 688 | Lee County      | 24.38 | 3 |
| 601    | Appling County    | -9.74  | 13 | 656 | Fayette County  | 24.55 | 3 |
| 734    | Telfair County    | -9.12  | 13 | 744 | Union County    | 25.37 | 3 |
| 736    | Thomas County     | -8.53  | 13 | 609 | Ben Hill County | 25.80 | 3 |
| 705    | Murray County     | -8.25  | 13 | 791 | Trion City      | 26.16 | 3 |
| 746    | Walker County     | -7.97  | 13 | 643 | Decatur County  | 26.21 | 3 |
|        | Washington        |        |    |     | Effingham       |       |   |
| 750    | County            | -7.92  | 13 | 651 | County          | 26.68 | 3 |
| 684    | Jones County      | -7.29  | 12 | 691 | Long County     | 26.78 | 3 |
| 638    | Coweta County     | -7.02  | 12 | 702 | Monroe County   | 29.24 | 3 |
|        | Muscogee          |        |    |     |                 |       |   |
| 706    | County            | -6.78  | 12 | 695 | Madison County  | 30.04 | 3 |
| 637    | Cook County       | -6.29  | 12 | 704 | Morgan County   | 30.25 | 3 |
|        | Montgomery        |        |    |     |                 |       |   |
| 703    | County            | -6.27  | 12 | 692 | Lowndes County  | 34.10 | 3 |
| 642    | Dawson County     | -5.46  | 12 | 693 | Lumpkin County  | 34.73 | 3 |
|        |                   |        |    |     | Chickamauga     |       |   |
| 659    | Franklin County   | -5.23  | 12 | 769 | City            | 35.05 | 3 |
| 735    | Terrell County    | -4.20  | 11 | 613 | Brantley County | 36.00 | 3 |
| 774    | Dublin City       | -3.67  | 11 | 713 | Pierce County   | 39.42 | 2 |
| 615    | Bryan County      | -2.92  | 11 | 725 | Seminole County | 40.26 | 2 |

|     |                 |       |    |     |                 |       |   |
|-----|-----------------|-------|----|-----|-----------------|-------|---|
| 648 | Douglas County  | -2.59 | 11 | 723 | Schley County   | 40.73 | 2 |
| 664 | Gordon County   | -2.24 | 11 | 612 | Bleckley County | 42.66 | 2 |
| 604 | Baker County    | -2.07 | 11 | 602 | Atkinson County | 43.24 | 2 |
| 650 | Echols County   | -1.08 | 11 | 753 | Wheeler County  | 43.54 | 2 |
| 628 | Cherokee County | -0.98 | 11 | 771 | Commerce City   | 47.33 | 1 |
| 677 | Irwin County    | -0.61 | 11 | 764 | Buford City     | 50.31 | 1 |
| 754 | White County    | -0.40 | 11 | 658 | Forsyth County  | 53.35 | 1 |
| 697 | McDuffie County | -0.39 | 11 | 773 | Decatur City    | 56.57 | 1 |
| 629 | Clarke County   | -0.22 | 11 | 748 | Ware County     | 57.34 | 1 |
| 608 | Bartow County   | -0.11 | 11 | 610 | Berrien County  | 58.49 | 1 |
| 655 | Fannin County   | -0.01 | 11 | 708 | Oconee County   | 59.45 | 1 |
| 641 | Dade County     | 0.99  | 11 |     |                 |       |   |

### **SEA Monitoring Plan**

The SEA views grant monitoring both fiscally and programmatically. Tools have been developed to address both fiscal and programmatic monitoring, virtually and face-to-face. The SEA Monitoring team will use online tools so that proximity is not a deterrent to outstanding technical assistance. By using virtual communications, the monitoring team can provide just-in-time support. These efficiencies also allows for a reduced monitoring staff, thus allowing financial resources to be used to provide more resources and supports.

#### **Post-Award Technical Assistance and Local Monitoring Plans**

After sub-grants are awarded, leadership teams from each LEA-Partnership will attend a post-award Summit. The date and location of this meeting will be posted in the sub-grant application materials. Attendance at this meeting will be mandatory for the release of grant funds. The purpose of this two-day event is to (a) discuss grant basics, (b) allow each school time to develop their year one implementation plan and budget timeline, (c) create a plan for initial project assessment collection, and (d) receive training on delivering a state of the school and district address to all stakeholders. This meeting will provide time for the grant evaluators to

discuss the assessment design and plan trainings. The Grants Accounting manager will be present to explain the budget, monitoring, and compliances requirements of the grant. Use of the Georgia Learns platform will be discussed and plans for attendance at the 2018 summer institutes will be highlighted. Members of the Literacy Think Tank and the National Writing Project will be available to discuss newly developed and on-going partnerships. Travel and registration costs for the summit will be paid by using district L4GA grant funds.

During the first semester of the grant, a L4GA education specialist will meet with each sub-grantee to (a) develop a personal relationship with leadership, (b) assist with implementation needs, and (c) ensure that all teachers and leaders are aware of specific technical requirements for conducting assessments. In addition, the GaDOE team will provide interactive virtual resources to clarify expectations about L4GA assessments and to ensure reliable administration. Each L4GA education specialist will be then be responsible for communicating with each school quarterly via electronic platform (Adobe Connect, GoToMeeting). These online meetings will have a consistent agenda developed by the GaDOE L4GA team. Each LEA-Partnership leadership team should include a total of eight representatives: a district leader, a RESA liaison, a local teacher preparation provider (P-20 partner), an early childhood education provider, a community partner, and the K-12 school leaders. While specific topics about project implementation will be discussed, one of the desired outcomes of the online meeting will be to discuss positive outcomes as well as discuss possible solutions to ongoing challenges the school and LEAs are facing. The results of each meeting will be collected and submitted to the project director with any feedback needed. The outcome of the quarterly meeting is to determine which LEA-Partnerships require more direct technical assistance so that the L4GA team and others in GADOE can help the partners achieve their best outcomes. Use of this model will ensure that

challenges are addressed in a timely fashion so that solutions can be developed and implemented swiftly and all team members are informed.

### **Fiscal Monitoring**

Once grants are competitively awarded and approved by the Georgia State Board of Education, letters of award are sent to school superintendents and the district grant contact. Each budget is loaded into the State's Consolidated Application (Con App) by grade band. Con App is designed to control for drawdowns by LEAs; this grants management system contains accounts of all grant funds and creates workflow between the LEAs and GaDOE. The following steps are in place before grant funds are released: 1) Each LEA creates budgets for each LEA-Partnership within the Con App in accordance with the grade band. 2) Budget amendments are approved by the LEA superintendent and sent to the L4GA program manager for GaDOE approval. 3) LEA-Partnership's funding then transfers into the Invoice Application. 4) The L4GA grant funds are paid out on a reimbursement basis. 5) The LEA creates an request for payment of invoices that are submitted by either individual invoice or their general ledger. 6) The LEA requests the funding. Upon invoice approval by the L4GA program manager, the LEA receives their reimbursement of grant funds. The L4GA Project Director will review annual budgets and performance plans to ensure that required earmark ratios are followed within LEA-Partnership sub-grants.

### **Programmatic Monitoring**

When LEA-Partnerships receive sub-grant awards from the Georgia State Board of Education, time must be spent clarifying and refining annual implementation plan and budget timelines. During the initial grant rollout Summit, LEA-Partnership leadership teams (which include a school leader from each school involved) will receive training about performance

expectations, planning for performance, and performance assessment for each school in the Partnership. The performance plans will be used during face-to-face monitoring visits as well as during online meetings and may be revised as LEA-Partnership leadership teams review their data. The plans provide guidance to the district, school personnel and creates a strategy for GaDOE staff to assist with implementing. Additionally, the performance plan will assist with transition should there be a leadership change. A school's performance plan informs teachers, parents, and community members about what they can expect. Prior to LEA-Partnership budgets being approved, each school within the Partnership must upload the performance plan, timeline, and budget into *Fluid Review* for approval by the L4GA specialist. When their plans are approved, the responsible party will receive a message back from *Fluid Review*. Then, when all schools in an LEA-Partnership have approved plans, the LEA contact person will receive a message.

Sites will be monitored both in-person and by online meetings. Each site will receive an initial face-to-face meeting with another online meeting scheduled later in the school year. With limited SEA staff, this monitoring provides opportunities to work directly with individual schools in a state that is very large. GaDOE staff will follow established monitoring/technical assistance protocols so that all members of the team, including appropriate district personnel, are informed should a challenge arise.

The performance plan and the budget timeline are the documents used for programmatic monitoring. Upon completion of site visit or online meeting, the L4GA member conducting the review will complete a form that is uploaded into the *Fluid Review* workflow. This workflow will be shared with the L4GA Project Director and school leadership. Should follow up be required, the Project Director will meet with GaDOE staff to determine the level of challenges

the site is facing and schedule follow-up contact. In the event of a severe compliance transgression, the Project Director, Deputy Superintendent, and GaDOE Legal Office will send a memo of non-compliance in accordance with the Compliance Protocol established within the grant application and approved by the LEA Superintendent.

### **Alignment of Resources**

L4GA takes a unique and research-proven approach by addressing literacy as an opportunity for both schools and communities. By requiring LEAs to use *GA System for Continuous Improvement* must utilize data to align local resources to local needs. Georgia's ESSA plan for consolidation of Title funds also uses *GA System for Continuous Improvement*; therefore, LEAs should strategically align their federal Title funds with their use of L4GA funds to design effective interventions. Annual outcomes reports allow each LEA-Partnership to reflect on progress and potential pivots to continuously improve literacy outcomes. Moreover, by requiring LEAs to develop partnerships within feeder systems and to involve community, higher education, and RESA partners, the L4GA-Partnerships are designed to create sustainable networks for systemic change. The L4GA-Partners will review annual network analyses to discover who "influences" their networks, what amplifies the progress of the group, and what impedes communication and effectiveness within the local context. This systemic approach aligns community and school resources, allowing flexibility (within the constraints of federal earmarks) to to maximize effect on student learning. The L4GA sub-grants are designed to complement, not compete, with other statewide initiatives, such as the Governor's Office of Student Achievement's (GOSA) Growing Readers grant for instructional interventions in second grade, GOSA K-12 Innovation grants, as well as Get Georgia Reading Campaign's philanthropic investments in community partnerships.

## **Adequacy of Resources**

By establishing community partnerships with birth-5 and K-12 systems, the L4GA project will provide a significant national model for how states can advance systemic change. L4GA's comprehensive evaluation will offer on-going, high-quality information on which LEA-Partnerships and the state agency can act in order to create system-wide learning.

The investment in L4GA addresses literacy improvement in all Georgia schools, not only schools receiving sub-grant awards. This is because the state agency will promote all professional learning offerings, the online platform, and all resources as free and open to all. This will ensure sustainability in schools receiving the grants, but also all schools as they undertake *Georgia's System for Continuous Improvement*. The state agency's communications team is poised to promote case studies of how schools, communities, and families worked together to improve literacy outcomes--thus providing a vision of how sustainable improvements happen across the state.

The costs of the L4GA project are reasonable. Given the direct correlation between literacy outcomes and poverty rates, the L4GA plan seeks to leverage community and school services to meet the needs of Georgia's children in ways that directly and proximally support literacy learning. Georgia is the 24th largest and 8th most populous state in the U.S.. In 2016, 1,764,215 students attended Georgia's public schools; over 60% were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (indicating that their families live at or below 130% federal poverty rate) (Southern Education Foundation, 2015). The Georgia poverty rate for children is one of the worst in the nation, ranking 42nd of the 50 states.

The resources requested are adequate. The total annual sub-grant budget will be \$19,500,010. This allows for the following allocations:

|                        |             |
|------------------------|-------------|
| Early Childhood (15%)  | \$2,925,000 |
| Elementary (40%)       | \$7,800,000 |
| Middle-Secondary (40%) | \$7,800,000 |

Given a cost-per-pupil range of \$500-250 (based on the previous Striving Reader grant at \$500 per pupil and attention to cost-cutting efficiencies), we anticipate being able to serve between 37,050 to 74,100 children in the state of Georgia each year. While this number is far fewer than the number of children living in poverty in Georgia, L4GA has potential to make significant strides by improving outcomes for the students served directly through the project as well as developing local Partnership networks that can continuously improve as they serve children for years to come.

### **Project Design Quality and Sustainability**

Georgia’s L4GA plan is designed to build capacity and yield results well beyond the period of Federal financial assistance. By using a “systems approach” to intervention, L4GA includes multiple levels of the system in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of locally designed plans created by local partnerships. The system includes state, regional, district, community and school levels. As the L4GA evaluation demonstrates improvement and success, the L4GA Project Director groom successful LEA-Partners to carry their story out to peers conferences, professional organizations teacher preparation providers, and public audiences. As improvement happens in the schools, the LEA-Partners, Literacy Think Tank, RESA partners, and teacher preparation providers will be able to spread access to resources, professional learning, and visits to see model community-school partnerships. This approach ensures that multiple layers of a system are working in coordination to attain a common goal. In the case of L4GA sub-grantees, the common goal is **continuous improvements to literacy outcomes.**

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## Evaluation Activities and Timeline

| Timeline  |                      |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
|   | Sub-grant Period     |                    |                    | Year 1 Implementation |                    |                    | Year 2 Implementation |                    |                    | Year 3 Implementation |                    |                    |
| Activity  | Fal<br>1<br>201<br>7 | Spri<br>ng<br>2018 | Summ<br>er<br>2018 | Fal<br>1<br>201<br>8  | Spri<br>ng<br>2019 | Summ<br>er<br>2019 | Fal<br>1<br>201<br>9  | Spri<br>ng<br>2020 | Summ<br>er<br>2020 | Fal<br>1<br>202<br>0  | Spri<br>ng<br>2021 | Summ<br>er<br>2021 |
| <b>Tier One: Regression Discontinuity</b>                       |                      |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |
| Data Sharing Agreement Between Georgia State University & GaDOE |                      |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |
| IRB Application, Approval, or Renewal                           |                      |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |
| Hiring and Training of Staff                                    |                      |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |
| Selection Criteria for Regression Discontinuity (RD) Analyses   |                      |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |
| Create and Maintain RD Longitudinal Database                    |                      |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |
| Cull Data for RD Database from Treatment and Comparison         |                      |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |                       |                    |                    |

| Timeline   |                  |             |             |                       |             |             |                       |             |             |                       |             |             |
|--|------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Activity   | Sub-grant Period |             |             | Year 1 Implementation |             |             | Year 2 Implementation |             |             | Year 3 Implementation |             |             |
|  | Fal 2017         | Spring 2018 | Summer 2018 | Fal 2018              | Spring 2019 | Summer 2019 | Fal 2019              | Spring 2020 | Summer 2020 | Fal 2020              | Spring 2021 | Summer 2021 |
| n LEA-Partnerships                                       |                  |             |             |                       |             |             |                       |             |             |                       |             |             |
| Data Analysis for Years 1, 2 and 3 implementation        |                  |             |             |                       |             |             |                       |             |             |                       |             |             |
| Data Feedback Loop Processes into Program Implementation |                  |             |             |                       |             |             |                       |             |             |                       |             |             |
| Interim and Final Reports of Tier 1 Evaluation Results   |                  |             |             |                       |             |             |                       |             |             |                       |             |             |

**Tier Two: Sequential Mixed Method Evaluation Activities Timeline**

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| IRB Application, Approval, or Renewal                             | █ |   |   | █ |   |   | █ |   |   |   |   |
| Family Literacy and Community Assessment Protocols Developed      |   | █ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Develop Assessment Training Protocols for Teachers                |   | █ | █ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Training of Classroom Observers to Evaluate Classroom Instruction |   | █ | █ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| Child Assessment Windows for Funded LEAs                          |   |   |   | █ | █ |   | █ | █ |   | █ | █ |
| Classroom Observations for Subsample of Funded Sites              |   |   |   | █ | █ |   | █ | █ |   | █ | █ |
| Assessment Reliability & Fidelity Checks                          |   |   |   | █ |   |   | █ |   |   | █ |   |
| Teacher and Family Surveys Given                                  |   |   |   | █ |   |   | █ |   |   | █ |   |
| Selection of “Beating the Odds” Programs                          |   |   |   |   |   | █ |   |   |   |   |   |
| Qualitative Study of “Beating the Odds” LEAs                      |   |   |   |   |   |   | █ | █ | █ | █ |   |
| Data Feedback Loop Processes Implemented                          |   |   |   | █ |   |   | █ |   |   | █ |   |
| Interim and Final Reports of Tier 2 Evaluation Results            |   |   |   | █ |   |   | █ |   |   | █ | █ |

| Tier Three: Social Network Analysis Evaluation Activities Timeline                                  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| Renew Data Sharing Agreement between GaDOE and Georgia Tech   | █ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |
| Analyze Gaps and Needs for Additional Data.   |   | █ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |
| Identify Points of Contact (POC) for each L4GA Partner for focus groups and social network analysis |   | █ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |
| Define Levels of “Use of Evidence-based Literacy Interventions”.                                    |   | █ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |
| Define “Efficacy of Partners’ Involvement” as a Metric.   |   | █ |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |
| Develop Protocols for Focus Groups and Stakeholder Input.   |   |   | █ | █ |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |
| IRB Application, Approval, or Renewal   |   |   | █ |   |   | █ |   |   | █ |   |  |   |
| Schedule and Conduct Interviews with Relevant Stakeholder Groups.                                   |   |   |   |   | █ |   |   | █ |   |   |  |   |
| Develop and Implement Social Network Analysis.  |   |   |   |   |   | █ | █ |   | █ | █ |  |   |
| Interim and Final Reports of Tier 3 Evaluation Results  |   |   |   | █ |   |   |   |   | █ |   |  | █ |

Note: Darker shading indicates the time frame in which evaluation activities will be initiated and, in some cases, finalized. Lighter shading indicates ongoing effort in certain activities that will take multiple time points to complete or in cases when activities are ongoing.