

Student Success: Imagine the Possibilities

Executive Summary



The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) will implement a State Systemic Improvement Plan, “Student Success,” in FY16 to improve graduation outcomes for Students with Disabilities (SWD). Why implement Student Success, and what data trends were paramount in selecting graduation as the priority?

During the 2012 State of the State Address, Governor Nathan Deal stated the following:

“We must make a concerted effort to increase the percentage of children reading at grade level by the completion of 3rd Grade...Students must learn to read in order to be able to read to learn, and when we fail to invest in our youngest students, we are forced to spend money on remediation for the remainder of their academic careers.”

Despite comprehensive efforts to ensure readiness during the beginning years of the P-12 Pipeline, Georgia’s 2014 “All Students” Graduation Rate was 72.5% as compared to the SWD subgroup rate of 36.5%. While glaring disparities were evident between the two groups; all students could benefit from additional resources.

What did the data tell us?

Using the 2014 Cohort, what were the salient data trends and barriers that negatively impacted the postsecondary outcomes? Could Georgia generalize the trends for a statewide impact?

- 2004-2005, the 2014 Graduating Cohort was Georgia’s 3rd Grade Students! SWD “Did Not Meet” percent trailed the “All Students” data 10 percentage points for reading and 15 percentage points for mathematics.
- By the end of middle school, this gap widen to 15 percentage points for reading and 35 percentage points for mathematics.
- There was approximately a 36 percentage point gap for SWD (Did Not Meet) for both 9th Grade Literature and Composition and Mathematics I.
- In 10th Grade, SWD 9-12th grade dropout rate almost doubled for that of the “All Students” rate.
- Out of 1468 Assessment Scores for 12th Grade SWD, 952 were Performance 1 Scores (Did Not Meet Standard)!
 - 57.67% were Black SWD.
 - 70.69% were male SWD!
 - 40.33% were Black Males with Disabilities!
 - By Disability Categories: SLD (46%) OHI (23%) and EBD (15%)
 - When disaggregating the Performance 1 Scores for 2014 3rd Grade Students : 40% SLD 15% OHI 12% SI
- 50% of districts identified as having low graduation rates for SWD were identified as having disproportionality for discipline, over-identification, and/or Placement for SWDs within the past three years.

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How did Georgia's infrastructure and capacity contribute to this challenge?

1. Georgia has policies that positively and negatively impact outcomes in this area. More TA is needed to ensure awareness, coordination, and fidelity of universal practices such as implementation of Individualized Graduation Plans for all students.
2. Current infrastructure provides opportunities to support school effectiveness and teacher effectiveness; a systematic approach for district effectiveness has started.
3. There have been collaboration efforts to provide TA for districts and schools, but there is a need for a coherent alignment among state, region, district, and school.
4. Local districts develop various improvement plans to meet targeted needs for federal and/or state programs; however, there could be better alignment across programs and assurance that these plans yield positive student outcomes.
5. Despite robust resources and training modules to support Georgia's Response to Intervention (RTI) Model, local districts and schools are in various implementation phases for a Multi-Tiered System of Supports for students-especially SWD.

What were the main barriers?

1. Access to the General Curriculum for All Students that support Cognitive Skills
 - a. Access to Effective Instruction utilizing the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
 - b. Access to Research-based, Evidence Based Interventions and Supports
2. Access to Positive School Climates for All Students that support Affective and Behavioral Skills
3. Provision of Specially Designed Instruction in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) for SWD, which support appropriate outcomes such as high graduation, low dropout, assessment proficiency, improved preschool outcomes, and lower discipline removals

What was Georgia's big take-away?

- Low graduation rate is a complex adaptive challenge that evolves over a period of time.
- Leaders must have the capacity to address their own complex issues and include appropriate stakeholders to support this ongoing process through authentic engagement.
- Effective leaders create professional learning communities that foster effective teaching practices.
- All students must access effective instruction in a positive school climate that addresses the affective, behavioral, and cognitive needs of the "whole student," such as demonstrated with preschool outcomes (acquisition of skills, behavior and social emotional) and measured as important risk factors (attendance, behavior and course completion) for high school students.

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How will Georgia move forward?

Implications for the Department

The State Leadership Team will continue to coordinate systems that directly address systematic barriers at state and local levels.

Implications for All Districts

The State will provide universal TA for all districts to develop a district-wide plan with coherent strategies to improve graduation outcomes for SWD. Each district must stakeholders to support the planning and implementation process.

Implications for Targeted TA

Some districts may receive Targeted TA around specific focus areas such as Disproportionality.

Implications for Districts Receiving Intensive TA

The State Implementation Team will provide technical assistance and guidance for Regional Teams and ensure fidelity of implementation of the identified coherent improvement strategies. Regional Leadership Teams will ensure alignment among all initiatives. Some of the Regional Leadership Team may serve as the Implementation Team for districts identified as receiving Intensive TA. 50 Districts are selected with approximately 3 school districts in each of the Georgia's 18 regions. In return, each district will convene a district leadership team to include appropriate internal and external stakeholders. The primary purpose of the District Leadership Team is to use data to identify a root cause leading to the identification of local coherent strategies to improve graduation rate for students.

In addition to the planning process, each district must identify a District Coach and Implementation Team to assist with capacity efforts at the school level. A district may opt to use the same team for both tasks but should consider the discreet functions!

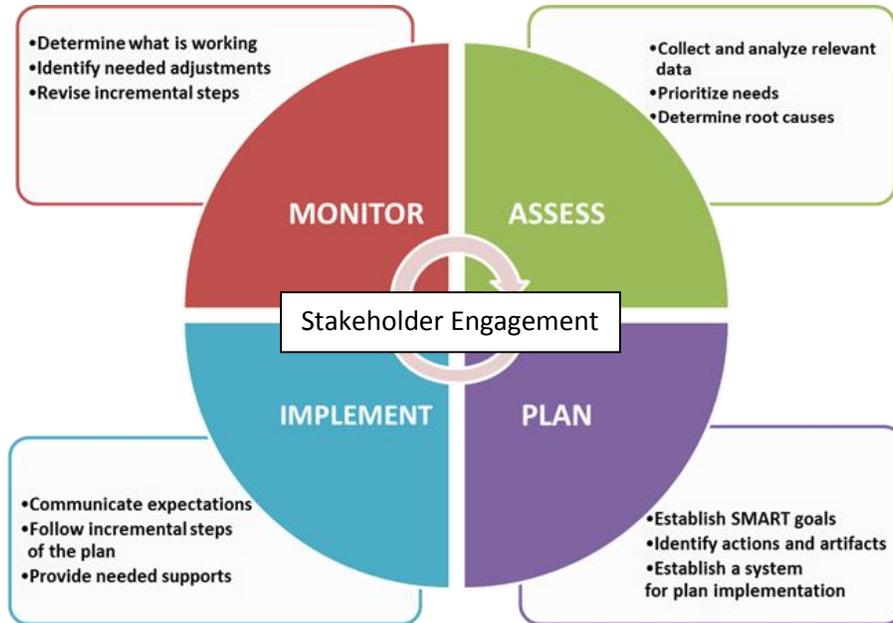
During Year One, each district receiving Intensive TA will target a high school for implementation of a framework to identify strategies to support individual students. The District Team will support the school leadership, to include internal and external stakeholders, in establishing or repurposing a leadership team to execute the data-driven planning components of the process. Each school will target approximately 50 students with disabilities to receive interventions and supports.

Middle school leadership should participate on leadership team to build capacity for these efforts during the middle school years. There must be a continuous flow of feedback among the various Implementation Teams that inform further improvement and refinements. Also, please note that teams can be repurposed at various levels. Districts and schools should always consider current structures and initiatives.

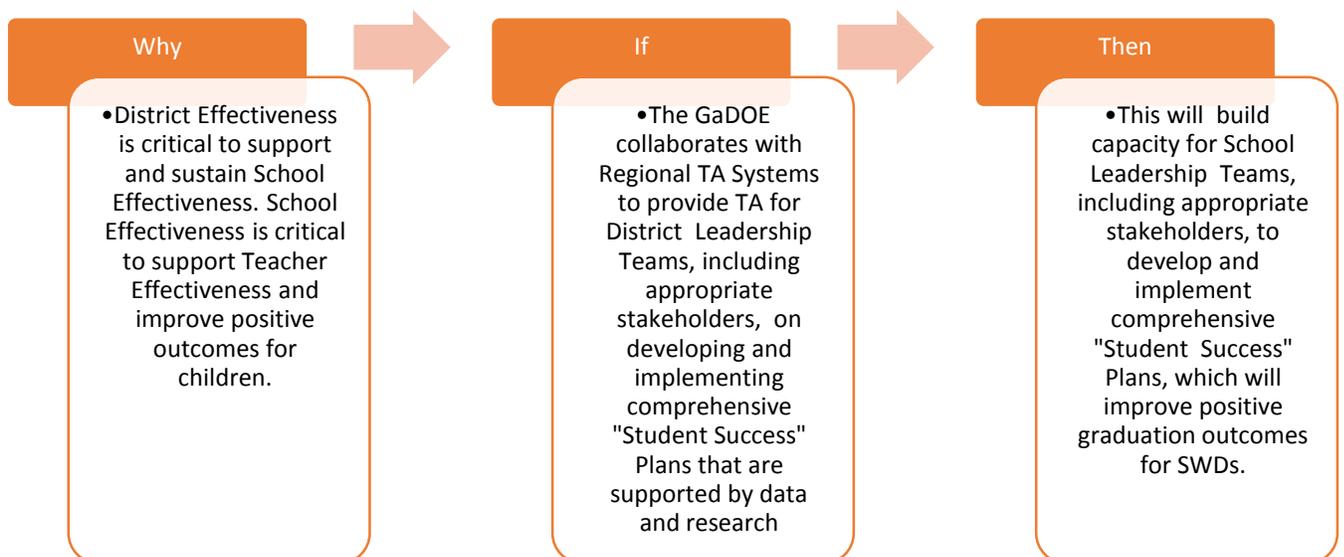
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Imagine the Possibility for the Graduating Class of 2019!



Note: This is one example of a problem solving process as used in School and District Effectiveness and referenced in the ESEA waiver.



State Leadership and Implementation Team

