A. Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies (LEAs)

1. **Challenging State Academic Standards and Assessments** (*ESEA section 1111(b)(1) and (2) and 34 CFR §§ 200.1–200.8.*)

   Please see Appendix C and D for supplemental information.

2. **Eighth Grade Math Exception** (*ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(C) and 34 CFR § 200.5(b)(4)):**

   i. Does the State administer an end-of-course mathematics assessment to meet the requirements under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(l)(bb) of the ESEA?
   
   X Yes
   □ No

   ii. If a State responds “yes” to question 2(i), does the State wish to exempt an eighth-grade student who takes the high school mathematics course associated with the end-of-course assessment from the mathematics assessment typically administered in eighth grade under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(l)(aa) of the ESEA and ensure that:

   a. The student instead takes the end-of-course mathematics assessment the State administers to high school students under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(l)(bb) of the ESEA;

   b. The student’s performance on the high school assessment is used in the year in which the student takes the assessment for purposes of measuring academic achievement under section 1111(c)(4)(B)(i) of the ESEA and participation in assessments under section 1111(c)(4)(E) of the ESEA;

   c. In high school:

   1. The student takes a State-administered end-of-course assessment or nationally recognized high school academic assessment as defined in 34 CFR § 200.3(d) in mathematics that is more advanced than the assessment the State administers under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(l)(bb) of the ESEA;

   2. The State provides for appropriate accommodations consistent with 34 CFR § 200.6(b) and (f); and

   3. The student’s performance on the more advanced mathematics assessment is used for purposes of measuring academic achievement under section 1111(c)(4)(B)(i) of the ESEA and participation in assessments under section 1111(c)(4)(E) of the ESEA.

   X Yes
   □ No

   iii. If a State responds “yes” to question 2(iii), consistent with 34 CFR § 200.5(b)(4), describe, with regard to this exception, its strategies to provide all students in the State the opportunity to be
prepared for and to take advanced mathematics coursework in middle school.

Expanding Educational Opportunities While Eliminating the Double-Testing of Students
Georgia is committed to providing accelerated learning opportunities for all students. To provide opportunities for engaging, relevant, and challenging curriculum for all Georgia students, the state provides a variety of advanced academic and career pathway courses that strengthen student readiness for college, careers, and life. Opportunities for advanced coursework are offered to middle school students, primarily but not exclusively, in the content area of mathematics.

Support for Accelerated Models in Mathematics
Georgia districts are provided with middle school acceleration model resources for mathematics at https://www.georgiastandards.org/Georgia-Standards/Pages/Math-6-8.aspx. Please note that the suggested acceleration model requires that all grade six Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) standards and a portion of the grade seven GSE standards are addressed in sixth grade and that the remainder of grade seven GSE standards and all grade eight GSE standards are addressed in seventh grade. Grade six and seven acceleration teachers are provided with suggested curriculum maps and comprehensive course overviews and are expected to deliver the unit frameworks posted in the grades 6-8 resource toolkits. Students will then begin high school mathematics coursework as eighth graders with enrollment in either Algebra I, Coordinate Algebra, Accelerated Algebra I/Geometry A, or Accelerated Coordinate Algebra/Analytic Geometry A and must be administered the appropriate End of Course assessment before high school credit is awarded.

District Flexibility to Choose Accelerated Instructional Models
Additionally, districts are afforded flexibility regarding acceleration; some choose to initiate acceleration at grade eight (rather than at grade six) by embedding grade eight standards in their study of high school courses: Algebra I, Coordinate Algebra, Accelerated Algebra I/Geometry A, or Accelerated Coordinate Algebra/Analytic Geometry A. This acceleration model does not compact standards associated with grades 6-8 in grades six and seven as described earlier. Districts that choose this model are required to administer the Algebra End of Course assessment before granting high school credit.

Expanding Access to Accelerated Coursework through Virtual Opportunities
Such advanced opportunities are available to all students throughout Georgia. The Georgia Department of Education ensures this access through utilizing the Georgia Virtual School (GAVS), a supplemental online instructional program. The Georgia Department of Education recommends that GAVS be used as a resource for LEAs, particularly when there are too few students, too few teachers, or too low demand to sustain face-to-face course offerings (as is the case in some small, rural LEAs). Students can take courses during the school day or after school hours. Historically, GAVS has been utilized to promote access to advanced coursework. For example, currently 27 Advanced Placement courses are offered. During the 2015-2016 school year, GAVS provided AP instruction to 2,006 unique students in 240 high schools.

Since the introduction of Georgia’s college and career ready academic standards, advanced course-taking opportunities have been expanded across the state to increase the offering of high school courses at the
middle school level as State Board of Education rules do not prohibit the offering of high school courses at the middle school level. During the 2015-2016 school year, 16,689 middle school students took an advanced high-school mathematics course (Algebra) while enrolled in middle school; 27,454 middle school students took an advanced high-school science course (Physical Science); and 4,010 middle school students took an advanced high-school language arts course (9th Grade Literature and Composition). Each of these students participated in Georgia’s End of Course assessments.

**Continuing Flexibility for Advanced Coursework in Science**
Under the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA), Georgia intends to continue the flexibility granted under its *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* (ESEA) waiver in June 2015, for the content area of science. Because many districts offer the advanced, high-school Physical Science course at the middle school level in lieu of grade 8 science, Georgia will assess middle school students with the corresponding advanced, high school level End of Course assessment (EOC) for Physical Science rather than the grade 8 science End of Grade assessment (EOG). It is important to note that Georgia will assess only the students enrolled in an advanced, high school level science course with the advanced, high school level EOC science assessment; all other middle school students will take the grade 8 EOG assessment in science. As a result, students are assessed with a measure aligned to the instruction they received. The results of the EOC assessments taken by middle school students will be utilized in the College and Career Ready Performance Index Content Mastery calculations for middle schools.

Georgia’s EOC program assesses two high-school science courses – Physical Science and Biology. It is important to note that Physical Science is not required of all students; per State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.48 students may take either Physical Science or Physics (which is not assessed). All high school students are required, by State Board Rule, to take Biology, which is also assessed with an EOC measure per State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.48. Therefore, middle school students who are enrolled in the high-school Physical Science course and tested while in middle school will later take Biology when they enroll in high school and will, as a requirement for the Biology course, take the Biology EOC. In other words, middle school students who complete Physical Science in middle school will take the associated EOC at that time. They will then take Biology when enrolled in high school and take the associated EOC at that time. The results of the EOC assessments taken by high school students will be utilized in CCRPI Content Mastery calculations for high schools.

**Expanding Flexibility for Accelerated Coursework to English Language Arts (ELA)**
Likewise, Georgia is seeking to expand this flexibility to include English Language Arts (ELA). As previously mentioned, during the 2015-2016 school year over four thousand eighth graders completed an advanced high-school ELA course (9th Grade Literature and Composition), including participating in the associated EOC. These students were also required to take the grade 8 End of Grade (EOG) ELA test. If granted, middle school students who complete advanced ELA coursework while enrolled in middle school will be assessed in high school with the American Literature and Composition EOC. Thus, all students will be assessed while in high school and resulting scores will be utilized in CCRPI Content Mastery calculations for high schools.
Flexibility Strengthens Georgia’s Track Record of Offering Advancement or Accelerated Opportunities for Students

Allowing students to advance academically while in middle school offers the opportunity for additional advancement or acceleration once enrolled in high school. Students who complete core requirements are eligible to complete more Advanced Placement courses as well as enroll in Georgia’s highly successful dual-enrollment program, Move on When Ready (MOWR). Currently, these students earn both high school and postsecondary credit at no cost; the state pays tuition for all MOWR high school students.

2 The Secretary anticipates collecting relevant information consistent with the assessment peer review process in 34 CFR § 200.2(d). A SEA need not submit any information regarding challenging State academic standards and assessments at this time.

3. Native Language Assessments (ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(F) and 34 CFR § 200.6(f)(2)(ii) and (f)(4):

   i. Provide its definition for “languages other than English that are present to a significant extent in the participating student population,” and identify the specific languages that meet that definition.

Stakeholder Engagement in the ‘Present to a significant extent’ Decision-making Process

Discussions concerning the definition of “languages present to a significant extent” began with our statewide ESOL advisory committee in December 2015, immediately after the passage of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This group consisted of fifteen members representing rural and metropolitan, consortium and non-consortium school districts, as well as teacher educators from universities and Regional Educational Service Agencies. Meetings were held in-person as well as virtually and the committee’s input guided the Georgia Department of Education’s final decision on its definition of “present to a significant extent.” In Georgia, any language spoken by 3.0% or more of the participating student population meets the definition of “present to a significant extent.”

Overview of Georgia’s English Learner (EL) Population

Georgia’s student population is diverse and school districts across the state will serve nearly 110,000 English learners this year. Like the English-speaking population, our English learners are varied in their ethnicity, economic and disability status. However, despite the high refugee resettlement population in the Atlanta area, the majority of our ELs statewide (eighty percent) are Spanish-speakers. This constitutes 4.73% of the state’s overall student population but just 3.3% of the EL population in the grades assessed for accountability purposes. At the overall state level our next most common language groups are represented at the following levels: Vietnamese: .13%; Chinese: .10%; and Arabic: .08%.

‘Spanish’ Identified as ‘Present to a significant extent’

Still, some local school districts serve a greater proportion of English Learners (ELs) than others, and this was considered in final deliberations related to the definition of language prevalence. An analysis of language prevalence was performed for each of the 204 LEAs in Georgia, ensuring grade-level, school-level and district-level reviews of non-English languages spoken by EL students in each tested grade. It was
confirmed that Spanish is the most prominent language of our ELs, not only at the state level, but in every one of our local school districts. In 39 districts, the ratio of Spanish-speaking ELs to native English speakers is higher than that of the state as a whole. For this reason, the Title III regional specialist assigned to these school districts is a native Spanish speaker who possesses a strong background in instructional support for high-density EL schools. In addition, the Georgia Department of Education’s curricular staff is supporting a number of these districts in piloting dual-language immersion (Spanish) initiatives in their elementary schools. Research suggests that such programs will prove highly beneficial to our Spanish-speaking ELs both in the development of content area, native language, and English language skills.

Although Georgia does enroll a small number of students who identify as Native American, these students are not Native American-language-speaking ELs. The Migrant EL student community is robust, however, and the majority are Spanish speakers. Of the 118 LEAs with Migrant ELs in participating grades, 62 of them serve only Spanish speakers. Of the remaining 56 LEAs, just seven have a non-Spanish language presence of 3% or greater. In one of these LEAs, Burmese is spoken by 26 students in grades 3 through 12. None of the other prevalent languages (Kanjobal, Navajou, Quechua, South African, Karen, Madurese, Nepali or Swahili) is spoken in any of these LEAs by more than 7 students across the ten assessed grade levels. For this reason it is deemed impracticable to consider any of these low-incidence languages in the state’s definition of ‘present to a significant extent’.

ii. Identify any existing assessments in languages other than English, and specify for which grades and content areas those assessments are available.

English is designated as the official language of the State of Georgia (O.C.G.A. §50-14-1). Accordingly, State Board of Education Rule 160-3-1-07 stipulates that all assessments be administered in English.

iii. Indicate the languages identified in question 3(i) for which yearly student academic assessments are not available and are needed.

Not Applicable.

iv. Describe how it will make every effort to develop assessments, at a minimum, in languages other than English that are present to a significant extent in the participating student population including by providing
   a. The State’s plan and timeline for developing such assessments, including a description of how it met the requirements of 34 CFR § 200.6(f)(4);
   b. A description of the process the State used to gather meaningful input on the need for assessments in languages other than English, collect and respond to public comment, and consult with educators; parents and families of English learners; students, as appropriate; and other stakeholders; and
   c. As applicable, an explanation of the reasons the State has not been able to complete the development of such assessments despite making every effort.
English is designated as the official language of the State of Georgia (O.C.G.A. §50-14-1). Accordingly, State Board of Education Rule 160-3-1-.07 stipulates that all assessments be administered in English.

Georgia works diligently to ensure assessments are accessible to English learners (ELs). Consideration of needs begin with test development and continues through score reporting. For well over a decade, Georgia has employed Universal Design within its test development process; teachers of EL students participate in all test development activities; test administration accommodations are allowable and guidance directs school teams to consider not only the student’s English language proficiency (as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs) but also the student’s proficiency and school experience in his/her native language. Translated student score report templates are available to help parents understand their child’s achievement.

4. **Statewide Accountability System and School Support and Improvement Activities (ESEA section 1111(c) and (d))**:

   i. **Subgroups (ESEA section 1111(c)(2)):**
      a. List each major racial and ethnic group the State includes as a subgroup of students, consistent with ESEA section 1111(c)(2)(B).

        English, American Indian/Alaskan, Asian/Pacific Islander, Black, Hispanic, Multi-Racial, White

      b. If applicable, describe any additional subgroups of students other than the statutorily required subgroups (i.e., economically disadvantaged students, students from major racial and ethnic groups, children with disabilities, and English learners) used in the Statewide accountability system.

        Georgia will include economically disadvantaged students, students from the major racial and ethnic groups described in 4ia, English learners, and students with disabilities. The state will continue to include in the students with disabilities subgroup former-SWD students in years 1 and 2 of monitoring. This will ensure consistency in the calculation and provide for a more stable subgroup for accountability determinations.

      c. Does the State intend to include in the English learner subgroup the results of students previously identified as English learners on the State assessments required under ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I) for purposes of State accountability (ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(B))? Note that a student’s results may be included in the English learner subgroup for not more than four years after the student ceases to be identified as an English learner.

          X Yes
          □ No

      d. If applicable, choose one of the following options for recently arrived English learners in the State:

          □ Applying the exception under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(i); or
          X Applying the exception under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(ii); or
Appendix C: Commitment to state-developed and adopted academic standards

Georgia is committed to state-developed and adopted academic standards. Georgia’s standards revision/creation and adoption process includes Georgia educators, business and industry, state nonprofit organizations, and representatives from higher education. Stakeholder feedback is gathered at the onset of the standards development process as well as during public review/comment period.

Appendix D: Federal versus state testing requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Georgia Required Tests (O.C.G.A. §20-2-281)</th>
<th>Federally Required Tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (SKIDS)</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Literacy / Numeracy Formative: TBD</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Literacy / Numeracy Formative: TBD</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Georgia Milestones End of Grade or Georgia Alternate Assessment: ELA / Math</td>
<td>ELA / Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Georgia Milestones End of Grade or Georgia Alternate Assessment: ELA / Math</td>
<td>ELA / Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Georgia Milestones End of Grade or Georgia Alternate Assessment: ELA / Math / Science / Social Studies</td>
<td>ELA / Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Georgia Milestones End of Grade or Georgia Alternate Assessment: ELA / Math</td>
<td>ELA / Math</td>
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<td>Georgia Milestones End of Grade or Georgia Alternate Assessment: ELA / Math</td>
<td>ELA / Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Georgia Milestones End of Grade or Georgia Alternate Assessment: ELA / Math / Science / Social Studies</td>
<td>ELA / Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School (9-12)</td>
<td>Georgia Milestones End of Course or Georgia Alternate Assessment: ELA (9th Grade Lit / American Lit) / Math (Coordinate Algebra or Algebra I / Analytic Geometry or Geometry) / Science (Physical Science / Biology) / Social Studies (US History / Economics)</td>
<td>ELA / Math</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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