O.C.G.A. §20-14-47 requires the individual assessment of students identified as low performing and the coordination of targeted interventions to these students based on the assessment outcomes.

Additionally, students must be provided academic support and enrichment, access to programs promoting parental involvement, access to supports for addressing and improving mental and physical health, access to learning resource centers and access to expert supports.

Code Section 20-14-48 requires the State Board of Education to ensure these schools receive priority for the receipt of federal and state funds available to the Georgia Department of Education to the full extent possible.

Grants from the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement may be provided to assist schools in local systems under a contract amendment or intervention contract pursuant to Code Section 20-14-45 with demonstrated financial need. Possible sanctions for continued failure to improve are available in the statute (http://www.legis.ga.gov/Legislation/en-US/display/20172018/HB/338).

If a turnaround designated school is improving, as determined by the Chief Turnaround Officer, based on the terms of the amended contract, amended charter, or the intervention contract and other applicable factors, then the school is able to exit Turnaround status.

d. Resource Allocation Review. Describe how the State will periodically review resource allocation to support school improvement in each LEA in the State serving a significant number or percentage of schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement.

In addition to access to support staff from the Georgia Department of Education offered to districts and their schools to support improvement efforts, funding is also provided. Below are the principles followed in developing effective financial strategies to support continuous improvement in Georgia schools.

Tier 1 Universal support resources and tools within the Georgia Systems of Continuous Improvement are made available to all schools and districts across the state, including, but not limited to: research-based strategies/interventions, district best practices, processes/procedures, self-assessments, data sets, etc.. Other tiers exist within Georgia’s tiered system of supports with specific resources allocated as schools are identified for more intensive, tailored needs.

Leveraging Funding to Support Improvement Goals
All 1003 funding from the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) to districts/schools will be based on the goals identified in common improvement plans that connect with the common, Comprehensive Needs Assessment. 1003 funds are part of the bundle of funding used to support the goals for improvement in schools and districts. These processes ensure that districts are positioning funds around improvement goals and priorities.

Because the needs assessment and the improvement planning template are built around a state developed common framework of improvement, the goals generated by districts and schools are able to be served with a more cohesive, effective, and aligned approach at the state, regional, and local levels.
LEA budgets must reflect the evidence-based interventions based on identified needs in order to be approved. The Comprehensive Needs Assessment as well as district and school improvement plans will undergo periodic reviews by a cross-divisional team at GaDOE. A process of periodic cross-functional monitoring will ensure the alignment of expenditures and budgetary approvals to identified goals and priorities.

e. Technical Assistance. Describe the technical assistance the State will provide to each LEA in the State serving a significant number or percentage of schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement.

The Achievement Gap that Exists in Our Districts and Schools
In the past, our state’s educational efforts have largely focused on setting high expectations for districts, schools, and students and developing accountability models to ensure they meet those expectations. This culture has been rooted in compliance—checking boxes, monitoring, and counting. For many districts and schools, there exists a gap between the high expectations that have been laid out and those accountability models that measure outcomes. This ‘achievement gap’ is what is keeping our schools from meeting their full potential.

Our highest performing districts and schools have bridged this gap with strong systems of supports; however, many of our districts and schools do not have the capacity, skill set, or stability to lay this strong foundation of supports. Recently, the culture of the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) began the shift from one rooted in compliance to a more balanced approach that is focused on closing the achievement gap through high quality service and support with a powerful focus on pinpointing what impacts schools and what are barriers to academic success as evidenced in State Board of Education Rules 160-5-1-.33; 160-4-9-.07).

A Tiered Approach to Supporting Schools
It has been widespread practice for districts and schools to receive support from the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) only after they have been placed on an underperforming list. This reactive approach limits our shared responsibility and does not prevent issues before they happen. To address this shortcoming, GaDOE will be developing and adopting a tiered system of supports for all schools.

See Appendix F for the Georgia’s Systems of Continuous Improvement – Tiered Supports chart

Tier 1 includes universal supports (resources, tools, guidance, etc.) that GaDOE will provide to every school. Tiers 2 and 3 will complement the federal definitions of targeted and comprehensive schools. Tier 4 will be designated for turnaround schools. As schools are placed on different tiers, they will be given more intensive and tailored interventions and supports. This is a comprehensive, aligned, and proactive approach that has never been done by GaDOE or any entity within our state.

The tiered approach will also include a monitoring status, recognizing schools that are on an upward trajectory of achievement but haven’t yet met the criteria to exit. Once schools have a plan in place and can demonstrate progress, GaDOE will monitor the implementation of those plans. This feature will ensure that interventions that are showing promise are given the opportunity to progress, instead of an approach that switching up interventions based on a checklist or unproven formula.
Building the Capacity of Leaders, Teachers, and Communities

With identified schools having a lower teacher retention rate than all schools, building capacity to address this problem is key. Providing schools with a common needs assessment, interacting with schools in a cohesive way through a common framework, and delivering Tier 1 Universal supports ensures a strong foundation for leaders to address the needs of teachers and frees them up to focus on layering supports that meet the individual needs of their students and schools.

Experience has shown us that the churn of leaders and teachers at these schools has often led to a weak or eroded foundation of Tier 1 supports. With Tier 1 supports being provided at the state level, leaders and teachers are empowered to layer additional supports to address the individual needs of schools and students – efforts that many leaders and teachers of these schools are not typically able to fully focus on or realize.

Leadership is another critical element of addressing the issue of underperformance. Working with institutions of higher education’s teacher preparation programs as well as Georgia’s alternative preparation programs, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) is committed to ensuring that our incoming teachers and leaders are acclimated and aware of tools, resources, and systems provided by GaDOE to support efforts in our schools. These efforts are likely to increase retention rates while empowering these professionals.

Often when discussing leadership, the scope is narrowed to principals or superintendents, but there are leaders that need to be identified and supported at all levels. There are teacher, parent, student, and community leaders that need to be brought into and engaged with our leadership efforts. For example, as part of the rollout of new science standards, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) formed a Science Ambassadors program that identified master science teachers to deliver professional learning and be the point person for districts and schools. These ambassadors receive support from GaDOE, but also are given the flexibility to address specific areas of need. The group then shares those tools and resources among all ambassadors. This transforms the delivery of science to students while at the same time recognizing teachers as leaders.

The GaDOE will continue its efforts to seek out partnerships with professional organizations and school districts to create personalized professional learning and aligned training for current and prospective leaders so that districts and schools have a strong pipeline of talent.

A Common Needs Assessment that Aligns Efforts and Resources Around Common Goals

In the past, school districts had to complete a separate needs assessment for each federal program. This process was structured around compliance and a checklist before school districts could have access to federal funds. Recently, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) has focused on linking federal funds around school improvement goals by consolidating the needs assessments. Consequently, GaDOE developed a Comprehensive Needs Assessment that is aligned to the shared school improvement framework which helps school districts thoroughly analyze data, identify root causes of underperformance, prioritize needs oriented around the development of strategies, and implement a relevant and rigorous problem-solving process. This tool will link to district and school improvement plans (templates provided by and reviewed by GaDOE), which are also organized around the common framework, to actionable steps to address underperformance.

GaDOE’s Consolidated Funds Pilot, which will allow schools more flexibility on how to leverage and use federal funds, empowers districts to position federal funds around school improvement goals and
priorities. Currently, the GaDOE is working with several LEAs on this initiative to fully consolidate federal, state, and local funds in specific Title I schools that operate schoolwide programs, offering them maximum flexibility to position funds around identified improvement goals.

**A Common Framework of Improvement: Georgia’s Systems for Continuous Improvement**

In the past, the work of improving schools rested primarily on one area within the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE). There was very little if any cross-division cooperation and interaction. Currently, teams across agency are working together to support schools. The “whole Department” approach allows the expertise in various teams to work together to benefit schools and school districts. GaDOE developed and adopted a common framework for supporting schools called Georgia’s Systems for Continuous Improvement. The “Who” of the framework is the Whole Child, which is the center of the work. The “What” of the framework comprises five systems focused on Coherent Instructional System, Professional Capacity, Supportive Learning Environment, Effective Leadership, and Family and Community Engagement. The “How” of the framework is the continuous improvement/problem solving process: Identify Needs, Select Interventions, Plan, Implement, and Examine Progress. GaDOE uses the following graphic to illustrate and communicate with teachers, leaders, parents and other stakeholders how the continuous improvement model focuses on the whole child. This model also helps GaDOE staff to focus on those components that improve the conditions for learning.

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) will align programs, initiatives, tools, and resources across the agency around this framework to keep the focus of GaDOE on the components that support the whole child. Additionally, GaDOE will be developing and implementing a “toolbox” for school districts and schools with effective practices, processes, and supports that is mapped onto the framework.

**Cohesion and Alignment: Supporting Schools in a Unified, Focused Way**

In the past, LEAs and individual schools interacted with the teams of the Georgia Department of Education based on an often disconnected and isolated method that discouraged supportive interaction. The burden of support and compliance rested with local school leaders because GaDOE was organized and operated not as a true partner with school districts, but as a passive compliance monitor. Now, the GaDOE is
aligning major programs/initiatives across the agency around the common framework to interact and support districts and schools in a focused, cohesive way that utilizes and encourages innovative approaches to teaching, leading, and learning.

**Engaging Other State Agencies**

Just as the GaDOE has placed a priority on supporting schools with the greatest needs, other state agencies must prioritize serving the communities in which these schools are located. External factors impact the challenges and opportunities that exist within a school, such as poverty, lack of physical health services like dental care, lack of mental health services, etc. The Georgia Department of Education is committed to establishing new and strengthening existing partnerships with state agencies to focus existing state programs, initiatives, and services in communities with struggling schools.

**Engaging Communities**

Engaged leadership is essential, both in our underperforming schools and school districts as well as at the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE). Several of the state’s underperforming schools are located in underserved communities. To break this cycle, we must engage both schools and communities in a meaningful way and bring community partners into the school improvement process that includes identifying shared improvement goals and creating common action plans that truly engage community stakeholders.

**Transforming Our Agency**

Our School and District Effectiveness (SDE) team, whose primary responsibility is to support identified schools, has undergone a major transformation. The team was reorganized to provide a regional approach to push more support to districts and schools. With a focus on leadership, all Effectiveness Specialists now have an educational leadership background and undergo specialized leadership training. The team is also taking a district approach by working closely with the local administrators. We know from research and experience that turning schools around cannot be done without effective leadership and understanding that the local superintendent and district office must be more hands-on and must focus district resources and support in areas of need.

f. **Additional Optional Action.** If applicable, describe the action the State will take to initiate additional improvement in any LEA with a significant number or percentage of schools that are consistently identified by the State for comprehensive support and improvement and are not meeting exit criteria established by the State or in any LEA with a significant number or percentage of schools implementing targeted support and improvement plans.

Georgia House Bill 338 O.C. G. A. § 20-14-49 requires that, in the case of schools which – after three years of implementing the intensive school improvement plan – are not improving based on the terms of the amended contract, amended charter, or the intervention contract and on other applicable factors, the Chief Turnaround Officer shall require one or more of the following interventions to be implemented at the school.

- Continued implementation of the intensive school plan developed pursuant to O.C. G. A. § 20-14-46;
- Removal of school personnel, which may include the principal and personnel whose performance has been determined to be insufficient to produce student achievement gains;
  - Implementation of a state charter or special school;
- Complete re-constitution of the school, appointing a new principal and hiring new staff.
• Operation of the school by a private non-profit third party operator selected and contracted by the local board of education;
• Mandatory parental option to relocate the student to another public school in the local system that does not have an unacceptable rating, chosen by the parents from a list provided by the local school system. Transportation for the student shall be provided;
• Complete restructuring of the school’s governance arrangement and internal organization;
• Operation of the school by a successful school system and pursuant to funding criteria established by the State Board of Education; or any other interventions or requirements deemed appropriate by the Chief Turnaround Officer or the State Board of Education.
• The operation of the school by a for profit entity shall be prohibited.

Before the implementation of any interventions required by the Chief Turnaround Officer, the local board of education may request a hearing before the State Board of Education to show cause as to why an intervention should not be required or to propose an alternative intervention. The decision of the State Board of Education shall be final.

5. Disproportionate Rates of Access to Educators (ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(B)): Describe how low-income and minority children enrolled in schools assisted under Title I, Part A are not served at disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers, and the measures the SEA agency will use to evaluate and publicly report the progress of the State educational agency with respect to such description.¹

State Level Comprehensive Needs Assessment Equity Data
Annually, Georgia provides LEAs with equity data which includes data variables reported at the district and school level regarding the effectiveness, experience, and background of teachers. LEAs are charged with identifying gaps, analyzing district and evaluating school processes and programs that may have led to these gaps and then selecting strategies/activities that will address identified inequities. LEAs can address these through their annually submitted district improvement plan, which includes an equity component and school improvement goals.

In the next year, the GaDOE anticipates the incorporation of this data in the form of an online equity dashboard that will be made available to districts. Currently, Georgia has this data available and will publicly report it as an addition to one of the current public reporting mechanisms. The implementation of these plans is monitored during federal programs cross-functional monitoring and in technical assistance conversations that are supportive and data focused.

Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan Procedures
In order to ensure that every LEA in Georgia thoughtfully develops procedures to safeguard against low-income and minority children enrolled in Title I schools being served at disproportionate rates by ineffective, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers, the GaDOE is requiring all LEAs to address these gaps within their consolidated LEA improvement plan (CLIP).

Ongoing Equity Technical Assistance

¹ Consistent with ESEA section 1111(g)(1)(B), this description should not be construed as requiring a State to develop or implement a teacher, principal or other school leader evaluation system.
Appendix E: Georgia’s Systems of Continuous Improvement – School Identification

**Tier I: Universal**

All Schools

The GaDOE believes that each agency has a shared responsibility in the school improvement process. Part of that responsibility is developing and delivering a suite of universal supports that can be utilized by every district and school in the state.

This approach ensures that GaDOE:

1. remains focused on delivering high-quality service and support to districts and schools, in a more cohesive and aligned manner; and

2. proactively provides support before schools are identified for more intensive, tailored assistance.

**Tier II: Targeted (TSI)**

The TSI criteria are designed to focus on schools that have significant subgroup issues. Requiring three years of inadequate performance ensures that the school is experiencing a chronic issue. However, by isolating the criteria to overall low-performing schools, it ensures that any school with chronic subgroup underperformance will receive state support to assist those students.

**Criteria #1:** Consistently Underperforming Subgroup

*Entrance Criteria:* NCLB or more subgroups that failed to make progress towards meeting subgroup achievement or four-year graduation rate improvement targets for three consecutive years (red flag for the same subgroup and target for three years)

**Criteria #2:** Low Performing Subgroup

*Entrance Criteria:* NCLB or more subgroups that failed to make progress towards meeting subgroup achievement or four-year graduation rate improvement targets for three consecutive years (red flag for the same subgroup and target for three years)

**Tier III: Comprehensive (CSI)**

**Criteria #1:** Lowest 5% of Title I

*Entrance Criteria:* Have an overall CCRPI score less than 60 for the three most recent consecutive years.

**Criteria #2:** Low Graduation Rate

*Entrance Criteria:* Have a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate less than 67%

**Criteria #3:** TSI Low Performing Subgroup

*Entrance Criteria:* Have been identified as a targeted support and improvement (TSI) school for a low-performing subgroup for three consecutive years without exiting TSI status.

**Tier IV: Turnaround (Subset of CSI)**

State Designated Turnaround Schools

On April 27, 2017, the Governor of the State of Georgia signed into law the First Priority Act – Helping Turnaround Schools: Part Students First (House Bill 380). O.C.G.A. 5-20-14-3 establishes the position of Chief Turnaround Officer with the duties of managing and overseeing a system of supports and assistance to the lowest-performing schools in the state identified in the greatest need of assistance.

**Criteria for Turnaround Supports:**

These schools will be a subset of the lowest 5% identified for Comprehensive Improvement and Support. The identification of these schools will be determined by the Chief Turnaround Officer, in consultation with the Georgia Department of Education and the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement.

**Additional Supports**

Some state support, including but not limited to professional learning and targeted technical assistance, will be made available to the schools described below, dependent upon the availability of funding and resources:

- Schools that have an overall CCRPI score less than 60 for three consecutive years but do not meet the full CSI entrance criteria defined above
- Identified CSI schools that meet the exit criteria outlined above but do not attain an overall CCRPI score of at least 60
- Schools that fail to meet performance goals under their Charter or Strategic Waiver contacts

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Appendix F: Georgia’s Systems of Continuous Improvement – Tiered Supports

**TIER I: Universal**
- **Technical Assistance & Support**
  - Self-Service Supports
    - Schools and districts can choose from a menu of tools designed to assist them with the school improvement process.
  - Aligned Tools & Resources
    - Continuous Improvement Framework
    - Best practices Toolbox
    - Webinars
    - Pre-populated Comprehensive Needs Assessment (District & School)
    - Improvement Plan (District & School)
    - Sample Processes (District & School)
    - Data Literacy & Access
    - Regional Supports (RESA)
- **Funding**
  - CLIP Funding
- **Monitoring**
  - State monitoring and feedback on CLIP
  - District monitoring and feedback on SIP
  - CLIP Review Rubric

**TIER II: Targeted**
- **PLUS:**
  - District provides direct support to School

**TIER III: Comprehensive**
- **PLUS:**
  - GaDOE provides direct support to District
  - GaDOE provides direct support to School

**TIER IV: Turnaround (Subset of CSI)**
- **PLUS:**
  - Turnaround Team: direct support to School
  - Third-party expert conducts comprehensive on-site technical review

- **PLUS:**
  - Evidence-based targeted interventions based on individual assessment of students

**Additional Supports**
Some state support, including but not limited to professional learning and targeted technical assistance, will be made available to the schools described below, dependent upon the availability of funding and resources:
- Schools that have an overall CCRPI score less than 60 for three consecutive years but do not meet the full CSI entrance criteria defined above
- Identified CSI schools that meet the exit criteria outlined above but do not attain an overall CCRPI score of at least 60
- Schools that fail to meet performance goals under their Charter or Strategic Waiver contracts

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