

Guiding Principles & Areas of Focus

Georgia's State Plan: Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

BACKGROUND

Georgia's State ESSA Advisory Committee represents a broad cross-section of education stakeholders: representatives from state agencies, education groups, the Office of the Governor, the State Board of Education, and the General Assembly, as well as the State School Superintendent, Georgia Teacher of the Year, and National Superintendent of the Year.

This group worked to develop guiding principles and areas of focus for each of Georgia's ESSA working committees. Those areas of focus served as discussion points for each working committee, while the guiding principles, committee descriptors, and feedback from Georgians guide their efforts.

ACCOUNTABILITY

This committee will examine Georgia's current accountability platform, the College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI), and help make refinements to the model, taking a responsible approach to accountability and finding a way to represent school performance in a public-friendly manner. The goal is to develop a tool that is flexible enough to align with the individual strategic goals of schools and districts, capturing and encouraging innovation while also providing useful data to guide improvement. The end result should be less cumbersome and burdensome for districts and schools, while still providing an accurate assessment of student achievement and school quality.

Guiding Principles

1. Develop clear, transparent, stakeholder-friendly reports
 - a. Include summary information; use user-friendly language; explore data visualization and analytic possibilities
2. Maintain consistency across districts and across years
3. Ensure the summative rating reflects student outcomes
 - a. Not processes that force schools to take specific actions. Schools should have flexibility to determine what actions to take.
 - b. Have a good balance between achievement and growth
4. Provide results in a timely manner to inform improvement
5. Seek ways to measure growth or progress on other indicators

Areas of Focus

- Assessment – multiple forms, mixed options, multiple measures
- Release data in a more timely manner
- Report with context – what do the numbers mean?
- Focus on subgroup data
- Address unintended impact on charter and strategic waivers
- Prioritize information – what is important for the purpose of the index?
- Validity
- Focus on growth vs. static numbers
- Comparability – comparisons to other schools with similar populations

ASSESSMENT

This committee will review statewide assessment requirements and needs, examine ways to take a more innovative approach to assessing students, strengthen formative tools, and make assessment data more timely and useful.

Guiding Principles

1. Ensure summative assessments (i.e., Georgia Milestones) inform teaching and learning rather than drive.
2. Ensure assessments are fair, credible, transparent, accessible, and useful.
3. Ensure the assessment process effectively communicates to all stakeholders.
4. Ensure the assessment results are appropriately used within accountability to mitigate unintended consequences.

Areas of Focus

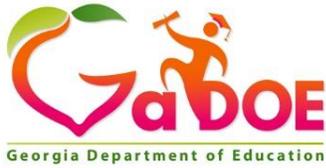
- Timing of assessments – including amount of time and timing of results
- Clarifying value and purpose of each assessment and commit (stay on course)
- Ensure/Promote equity to technology - students' access and parent access to info
- Develop state and local communication strategies regarding purpose and role of assessments

EDUCATION OF THE WHOLE CHILD

This committee will discuss social/emotional learning, climate and personalized education in Georgia's pre-K through 12 education system. Members will examine ways to maximize opportunities and provide an excellent education to all students, recognizing that all children learn at different rates and have individual needs.

Guiding Principles

1. Services in and out of schools are coordinated and synergistically support children's learning, physical health, mental health, and social and emotional development
2. Services align to meet the needs of a child from birth through post-high school
3. Services support soft skills, integrated learning, and successful relationship-building
4. Learning is supported with engaging, student-focused, relevant curriculum and personalized through tiered supports, recognizing that a child may excel in one area but not another
5. Learning includes applied/experiential learning, financial literacy, and life skills to ensure that all students graduate as college-, career-, and life-ready
6. Policies and programs are evidence-informed, evidence-based, routinely evaluated, and built to capacity to ensure equitable access to high quality for all students



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Areas of Focus

- Transitions (PreK-K; 5 to 6; 8 to 9; 12 to post-secondary)
- Professional learning about children's development (cognitive, social, emotional, physical)
- Continua from health/wellness for cognition, social, emotional and physical development to services for all of the above
- Deep learning (applied learning/experiential learning/relevant learning) and arts focus (fine arts, creativity, arts integration)
- Critical self-reflection on programs/policies

EDUCATOR AND LEADER DEVELOPMENT

Teacher and leader quality has an enormous impact on student achievement. This committee will examine ways to strengthen the teaching profession and empower and support school leaders. Members will discuss teacher preparation, recruitment, retention, and development and personalized professional learning, and will help define supports on the teaching continuum from first-year teacher to teacher leader.

Guiding Principle: All Georgia teachers and leaders will display a high level of professionalism.

Areas of Focus:

- On and off the job
- Appropriate relationships
- Ethical understanding to guide behavior

Guiding Principle: All Georgia leaders will enter the school teacher and learner ready.

Areas of Focus:

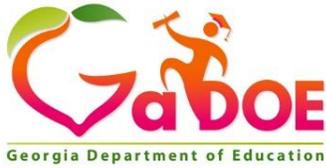
- Preparation
- Induction
- Coaching and ongoing support

Guiding Principle: All Georgia teachers will enter the classroom learner ready.

Areas of Focus:

- Preparation
- Induction
- Coaching and ongoing support

Guiding Principle: Georgia teachers and leaders will participate in job-embedded sustainable professional learning/development which informs practice.



Guiding Principles & Areas of Focus

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Areas of Focus:

- Induction
- Layered support throughout career

Guiding Principle: Georgia will define, develop, and employ effective and sustainable recruitment strategies (efforts).

Areas of Focus:

- Traditional paths to teaching and leadership
- Non-traditional paths to teaching and leadership

Guiding Principle: Georgia will define, develop, and employ effective and sustainable development and retention strategies (efforts).

Areas of Focus:

- Traditional
- Non-traditional
- Recognition efforts
- Career milestones honored

FEDERAL PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

This committee will address the various federal programs that support school improvement at the state level, examining the way Georgia identifies schools in need of assistance and the type and quality of assistance provided by the state. Members will provide suggestions on using federal programs/dollars to the maximum benefit of Georgia's schools and students. The goal is to leverage state and community resources more effectively to support schools, streamlining the process for schools and districts and affording maximum flexibility while ensuring transparency. The state's role should, ultimately, shift to service and support – in other words, the state's efforts to support schools should complement local efforts.

Guiding Principles

1. The community must be engaged in local school improvement efforts
2. There should be the maximum allowable flexibility with federal funds
3. School improvement activities must be aligned across the Georgia Department of Education

Areas of Focus:

- Build sustainable leadership and capacity in school districts
- Build capacity to share best practices evidenced in high performing schools districts