

The background of the page features a complex, overlapping geometric pattern of triangles and polygons in various shades of green and blue, creating a sense of depth and movement. The colors transition from light green at the top to darker green and blue at the bottom.

# *Family-Friendly*

PARTNERSHIP SCHOOLS

**2019-2021 Overview**

# Georgia Family-Friendly Partnership School Initiative

## HISTORY

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) launched the Georgia Family-Friendly Partnership School Initiative in the summer of 2010 to assist Title I schools, families, and communities in working together to create welcoming environments that lead to increased student achievement. Based on the National Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Standards for Family-School Partnerships, which the Georgia State Board of Education (SBE) endorsed in 2010, the FFPS initiative highlights the first standard—Welcoming All Families. Since 2012, this initiative was most noted for its annual awards in partnership with the Georgia Foundation for Public Education (GFPE), The Ritz-Carlton Hotels of Georgia, and the Georgia Association of Educators (GAE). At the end of the 2016-2017 school year, the FFPS initiative phased out the awards program and in 2017-2018 transitioned to supporting schools that voluntarily invested time and resources in improving their welcoming environments over a period of two school years.

In 2017, the GaDOE developed a framework, Georgia’s Systems of Continuous Improvement, to assist school systems in the “what” and “how” of school improvement. The Family and Community Engagement System is one of the five systems in the framework and has six structures. These six structures are based on the six standards of the National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships. The first standard of Welcoming All Families and the Community—aligns with the purpose of the FFPS initiative. The FFPS initiative will support Title I schools in planning their improvement efforts based on the Welcoming All Families standard as well as to measure their progress in that standard.



## ELIGIBILITY

All Title I schoolwide schools are invited to submit an online application to join a two-year professional development opportunity to improve its welcoming environment. All previous finalist schools of the Georgia Family-Friendly Partnership School Awards program during 2012-2017 are welcome to apply. A previous Georgia Family-Friendly Partnership School Winner from 2012-2017 is ineligible to apply. Please note that the schools chosen to be a part of the 2017-2019 cohort of schools in need of progress may not apply again after its completion of the program so that other Title I schoolwide schools may participate.

The GaDOE used the recognition process from the previous years to develop the professional development model for the cohort of selected Title I schools and will continue to reach out to award-winning schools to become partners and mentors to the new cohort. In addition to the award-winning schools, partners from the GAE, the State Superintendent’s Parent Advisory Council (PAC), the Georgia Statewide Afterschool Network, and the Georgia Family Connection Partnership were invited to continue their roles as application readers, site judges, or

professional development specialists. A panel of representatives will review the online applications and select up to five schools based on geographical location in Georgia, location of available site judges, representation of small, medium, and large school systems, and other factors. Each school team's application must identify two S.M.A.R.T. goals to focus its improvement efforts related to the Welcoming All Families and the Community Standard of Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement.

## **TWO-YEAR COHORT OF SCHOOLS**

New this year, the cohort of schools will take an exclusive Welcoming Environments online course to develop their school team's professional development S.M.A.R.T. goals, to further enhance their professional learning, and to spark active discussions among participants across school teams. Part 1 will be available at the beginning of the program, and Part 2 will be available at the conclusion in 2021. Upon successful completion of the online course, a digital badge will be provided. The course will be required for all participants.

Groups of visitors will conduct a surprise school site visit beginning January 2020 to provide feedback to the school team. Site visits are not announced in advance. During the site visits, the group of visitors judge will use a rubric to conduct a surprise walk-through and interview school staff and visitors to assess each school's welcoming environment. After the site visit, the visitors will provide their feedback to the school team and discuss the school team's chosen S.M.A.R.T. goals.

School team members (up to 5) will have the opportunity to participate in a full-day professional development session at the [Chick-fil-A Backstage Tour](#) in Atlanta in spring 2020. Participants will engage in a professional development morning session, and then take a two-hour afternoon tour to enjoy learning about a business model based on customer service. This opportunity is designed to further enhance the school teams' ability to provide welcoming environments to help improve student academic achievement.

Toward the end of the second school year, the same group of visitors will again visit the school and use the same rubric to conduct a second surprise walk-through and interview school staff and visitors to assess its improvement in the school's welcoming environment. After the site visit, the visitors will provide their feedback to the school team and its growth in achieving the selected S.M.A.R.T. goals.

At the end of the two-year initiative, as scheduling allows, State School Superintendent Richard Woods will visit the school(s) to see their improvements in creating welcoming environments.

## **TARGETS FOR SPECIFIC OUTCOMES**

Part of the GaDOE Strategic Plan and Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement is to provide opportunities for all stakeholders to play active roles in the education decision-making process. The FFPS Initiative ensures that school leaders, teachers, parents, students, and community

members have opportunities to provide feedback on the welcoming environment of the school by using a survey as well as a walk-through tool for the school staff to conduct. The walk-through tool is a scoring rubric that also allows site visitors to use as a measurement of a school’s welcoming environment. Site visitors will use the walk-through tool twice, once at each of the five schools identified as the cohort at the beginning of the initiative and again at the same five schools at the end of the second year. School teams will take the Welcoming Environments online course and receive a digital badge for completion. In addition, schools in Georgia will become knowledgeable in the SBE’s endorsed Welcoming All Families standard as well as the Family and Community Engagement System of Georgia’s Systems of Continuous Improvement.

**EXPENSES**

There is no cost to apply or register for this initiative. All applicable travel expenses, staff time, and/or materials are the responsibility of the school or school system. Federal Title I-A funds may be used in alignment to its Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP), School Improvement Plan, and approval of the school system’s Federal Programs Director. The travel costs for the site visitors will be covered by the Georgia Foundation for Public Education.

**TIMELINE**

Date	Activity
November 2019	2019-2021 Georgia Family-Friendly Partnership Schools (FFPS) Application Packet is Available
December 2019	Deadline for Application Packet to be Received by the GaDOE
December 2019	Cohort of Schools Selected by Partner Application Readers and GaDOE Team. Invited to participate will be comprised of the GaDOE Continuous Improvement Teams, Federal Programs, School and District Effectiveness, Special Education, and Other Agency Partners; Principals Notified by the GaDOE
Winter 2020	Cohort of Schools will conduct the required Welcoming Schools FFPS Training, Part 1
Beginning January 2020	Surprise School Site Visits by Partners including Former Family-Friendly Partnership School Winners; Feedback Provided to School Team by Partners to Develop Improvement Goals; GaDOE Team Given Copy of Feedback
February 2020	Schools Begin Working on Improvement Goals Related to its Welcoming Environment

February 2020	Cohort of Schools Participate in a Professional Development Day Focused on Improvement Goals
March - May 2020	Schools Continue to Improve Its Welcoming Environment Based on its Improvement Goals
August 2020	GaDOE Team Follows up with Schools on their Improvement Goals
August 2020 – May 2021	Schools Continue to Improve Its Welcoming Environment Based on its Improvement Goals
Spring 2021	Surprise School Site Visits by Same Partners; Feedback Provided to School Team to Highlight Growth in Improvement Goals; GaDOE Team Given Copy of Feedback
Spring 2021	Cohort of Schools will conduct the required Welcoming Schools FFPS Training, Part 2. Successful schools will earn a digital badge for completion.
Spring or Fall 2021	As Scheduling Allows, State School Superintendent Visits School(s)