



Georgia’s Systems of Continuous Improvement Comprehensive Needs Assessment FAQs

The following frequently asked questions (FAQs) are maintained by the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) to support districts and schools in their implementation of Georgia’s Systems of Continuous Improvement. Currently, the FAQs focus on planning for FY18 and the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP), which encompasses the following components:

1. Single Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA)
2. Program Specific Questions
3. Plans for District and School Improvement

The GaDOE will continue to update this document as additional questions are received. Please submit questions to federalprograms@doe.k12.ga.us

Important Updates

- A blank CNA District Report document is available here: <http://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Pages/Migrant-Education-Program.aspx>
- Page 27 of the district report contains an error. The standard to rate for indicator 2.3.1 should show the narrative below. When your team reaches indicator 2.3.1 on page 27, please use this narrative or skip the indicator.

GDPS - Learning and Teaching (Standard 5): Assesses the impact of professional learning on staff practices and student learning and makes adjustments as needed		
<i>Exemplary</i>	The impact of professional learning on staff practices and student learning is systematically monitored at the district and school levels by examining performance data throughout the year and timely, appropriate adjustments are made as needed.	
<i>Operational</i>	The impact of professional learning on staff practices and student learning is assessed and adjustments are made as needed.	
<i>Emerging</i>	The impact of professional learning on staff practices or student learning is assessed on a limited or inconsistent basis, or appropriate adjustments are not always made.	
<i>Not Evident</i>	The impact of professional learning on staff practices or student learning is not assessed by district or school staff.	
<i>Data Sources</i>		
<i>Comments (optional)</i>		

CNA Tool (Report) Template

1. What is the format of this template?

This template is a “fillable” PDF document. This means that there are areas in the document where text and data can be entered by the user.

2. Will info be prepopulated annually?

Yes, annual updates to the prepopulated data in the district level CNA template (report) will be completed by the state, and the updated report will be available to the districts. The current plan is that, beginning in FY19, annual updates to the prepopulated data in the school level CNA report will be completed by the state for all schools, and the updated report will be available to the schools.

3. Will the formative data be able to be uploaded from SLDS or at least in chart form?

It is currently the goal of the state to fully integrate the CNA reports, for both districts and schools, into the SLDS platform in FY19. The CNA reports will be prepopulated through migrations of data directly within the SLDS system.

4. What can GaDOE do to provide current data sooner in this process?

The GaDOE intends to fully integrate the CNA reports, for both districts and schools, into the SLDS platform in FY19 as noted in the response to questions two and three. This migration and direct population of current data into the reports directly within the SLDS will facilitate the availability of the reports sooner.

5. If our district can pull data quicker than the DOE, can we change the prepopulated data and add recent data?

Because the CNA reports are to benefit the districts and schools in the most productive and meaningful manners, there would be no concern with the districts and schools utilizing more current and accurate data. The district and schools will be able to change prepopulated fields with the report. There is also space available within the report to cite additional or more current data during the CNA process.

6. Some of the data may be confusing in the manner in which presented in the report. Will the DOE provide clarification?

Yes, we realize that the organization of some tables and related data may cause confusion, so the GaDOE is currently building a “Cheat Sheet” of interpretation for some of the data tables. This document will be posted alongside the CNA template on the GaDOE website by mid-March.

Professional Development

1. Will there be any face-to-face training opportunities available for district leaders via the RESAs?

Currently, there is no planned face-to-face district leader training, via the RESAs, for support in completing the initial 2017-2018 CNA report. The GaDOE will deliver on-line training on

the CNA process, as already outlined through its webinar series, and face-to-face regional trainings in May 10, 2017.

2. Will curriculum directors, HR directors, principals, assistant principals, and superintendents be trained in this also?

The GaDOE encourages districts to develop their own communication and implementation procedures that will ensure and enable all stakeholders in a district to become familiar with and active participants in the CNA process. All webinars, tools, and communications from the GaDOE to the districts are intended for all stakeholder use. The GaDOE believes that its school districts are the best ones to determine how to engage all stakeholders in the CNA process. The GaDOE is currently developing a dedicated webpage on the GaDOE website that will house all resources and information related to the CNA process. The Office of School & District Effectiveness will hold trainings for select groups following a schedule available through their office.

3. Can we do an amendment and use Title I funds to pay for stipends for school level teams to come together and learn how to conduct a CNA for the school level? PL will be provided by the Title I Director.

Because a CNA is a requirement of Title I at the school level when a school is designing a Title I schoolwide program, it would be allowable to pay for stipends for school level teams to come together and learn the CNA process at the school level. Standard expectations remain that any activities funded through Title I must meet allowability requirements, and districts should consult with the GaDOE Title I staff prior to implementing a stipend option. Title I is the main federal program that requires funding at the school level, so using Title I funds is appropriate at that level for CNA activities. Should a district wish to organize similar team learning activities at a district level with staff from multiple federal programs, then Title I should not be viewed as the sole funding source for stipends or other related and allowable activities.

4. How do you expect a Title I Director to know enough about a Needs Assessment or the different systems in the Framework? It seems this is an administrative project not a Federal Programs Manager assignment.

The responsibility for completing district and school level CNAs under Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement should not be considered the responsibility of a single individual within a school district. While a primary function of the CNA process is to identify and develop plans for the use of federal funds, a Title I Director will, in most cases, not have the professional knowledge to support leading the planning in the five system areas of Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement framework. This is a broad administrative project whose ownership must cross a multitude of offices within a district or school.

Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP)

1. Are districts and schools required to use the CNA template? How often?

Yes, districts and schools are required to use the CNA template because the template is being used as a component of a district's consolidated application to the state for federal funding.

Schools that are required to complete a CNA for their federal funding must also use the GaDOE's template. Schools not held to federal funding requirements for local CNAs are not required, but are encouraged to use the template because it is now aligned with the GaDOE's Systems of Continuous Improvement. The CNA template must be reviewed annually.

2. Are districts and schools required to use the improvement planning template? And will this plan suffice for the various required plans?

Yes, districts will be required to use the improvement planning template because it is being used as a component of a district's consolidated application to the state for federal funding. Schools that are required to complete a local school level plan for their federal funding must also use the GaDOE's template. Schools not held to federal funding requirements for local plans are not required, but are encouraged to use the plan template because it is now aligned with the GaDOE's Systems of Continuous Improvement.

3. How and when will the CLIP be submitted?

For the 2017-2018 school year, the CLIP will continue to be submitted through the MyGaDOE portal as a core component of the district's consolidated application to the state. The CLIP will be due on July 31, 2017.

4. How and when will the CLIP be approved?

All CLIPs will be approved through a comprehensive team review process at the GaDOE from August 1 through 4, 2017. CLIPs requiring revisions will be promptly returned to the districts, and a second comprehensive team review of resubmissions will occur on August 14, 2017. The GaDOE will convene a final CLIP comprehensive team review on September 11, 2017 to review any final revisions to district CLIPs for the 2017-2018 school year. There is not anticipated to be any need for additional CLIP approvals after this date.

5. How flexible is the timeline for submission?

The timeline for submission is not flexible beyond what has been defined in the response to question number four.

6. When do the schools move forward with this and the SWP/SIP?

While originally signed into law in December, 2015, all requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) are to be implemented on July 1, 2017, meaning that schools must utilize the GaDOE's CNA tool to develop schoolwide and School Improvement plans for the 2017-2018 school year.

7. Where does the Equity Plan fit in?

All equity data variables and analysis of equity data variables relative to the LEA Equity Action Plan must occur within the GaDOE CNA tool. Districts are still required to complete an annual LEA Equity Action Plan. GaDOE program staff are working to incorporate the LEA Equity Action Plan into the GaDOE District Improvement Template. Districts that do not complete the District Improvement Template must upload the LEA Equity Action as part of the CLIP.

8. How will you measure whether the systems were successful? Example: cultivating and distributing leadership; welcoming all families.

Accountability for success within Georgia's Systems of Continuous Improvement will be measured by the outcomes of the SMART goals that are established by districts and schools under the improvement/strategic plans that are generated as a result of the CNA process.

9. Does this process of conducting a Comprehensive Needs Assessment start at district and then continue or trickle down to the individual schools or is this a simultaneous process?

The design of the needs assessment process should take a productive and efficient path, and districts and schools are encouraged to use the GaDOE's CNA tool and resources in ways that ensure such productivity and efficiency. It is logical to assume that simultaneous work on identifying needs, at both a district and school level, could foster a much clearer articulation and alignment of efforts. The GaDOE will not require a stringent path for districts and schools to follow in completing this process; however, established deadlines must be met.

10. Will small districts with one school at each level be required to have a needs assessment for each school?

No, it may be possible that a small school district with only one school at each level can clearly articulate the needs of the students through the sole use of the district level comprehensive needs assessment. Statute language for most federal programs, whose funds are in part or wholly distributed to operate programs at the school level, require that those funds be used in accordance with a comprehensive needs assessment. In only completing a district level needs assessment, the district must ensure that the needs assessment clearly articulates school needs that become the basis for required school plans, e.g., Title I schoolwide plan.

11. What does stakeholder involvement look like in this process?

Broad-based and on-going stakeholder involvement is a key tenet of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The CNA tool developed by the GaDOE clearly defines the stakeholders who must be documented as included throughout the CNA processes. The GaDOE's webinar session, specific to stakeholder engagement, will be a foundation upon which districts and schools will build their engagement efforts.

Other

1. How will monitoring be affected?

Monitoring of programs will be guided by the district and school needs assessments and improvement plans. Since the need for services and supports provided by the various federal programs will be identified in the needs assessment, the improvement plans will be used during monitoring activities (cross-functional monitoring, self-monitoring, and on-going fidelity of implementation progress monitoring) to determine the LEAs progress on their initiatives. Both state and local staff will use the needs assessments and improvement plans.

2. How will the CNA and common plan impact local special education directors and the student success work? Are there other requirements for IDEA above and beyond the CNA and common plan?

The Student Success work must integrate into the larger improvement planning process for the district. At a minimum, the special education director will be a required team member. Other internal and external stakeholders may be critical for this work. Special Education will participate in the district-wide CNA and plan development. As a result, specific actionable steps, previously included in the separate SSIP template, may be integrated into the comprehensive plan. The district will not be required to complete a separate SSIP process or submit a separate plan. The CLIP will address these goals for IDEA:

- IDEA Performance Goal 1: Improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities
- IDEA Performance Goal 2: Improve services for young children (3-5) with disabilities
- IDEA Performance Goal 3: Improve the provision of a free and appropriate public education to students with disabilities
- IDEA Performance Goal 4: Improve compliance with state and federal laws and regulations

3. Will the SSIP be a revised system alone document or will pieces of SSIP be included in the needs assessment?

The comprehensive needs assessment will replace previous data analyses used by the SSIP process.

4. Will there be a consideration for a comprehensive evaluation/monitoring system?

Within the Systems of Continuous Improvement framework, the evaluation and monitoring of programs and initiatives is embedded. The outer ring of the graphic shows the problem-solving model which includes on-going evaluation and monitoring. Schools and districts should use this model to guide and inform decision making at the district, school, and teacher level.

5. Will there be a cross walk between AdvancED and the Needs Assessment?

The GaDOE is committed to working towards common sense approaches to organizing systems so that districts and schools do not carry the burden of having to create a multitude of improvement plans and documents. FY18 represents the start of the GaDOE's efforts to organize systems that will support and feed into each other under a common framework and system umbrella. AdvancED requirements are included for analysis and discussion, as are the requirements that exist under the Strategic Waiver School System and Charter System contracts. While no definitive comprehensive alignment across all of these areas is currently in place for FY18, it is the GaDOE's desire to ensure a common sense alignment in subsequent years.