

Statewide Technical Assistance Meeting

1% Participation Rate on the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA 2.0)

January 31, 2023

State Director's Welcome





Data Discussion

Elena Nightingale

Office of Assessment & Accountability

GAA 2.0 Statewide Learner Characteristics

Statewide Technical Assistance Meeting: 1%
Participation Rate on the GAA 2.0

Overview

Understanding the (over) 1%

- Demographic characteristics of Georgia's 1%
- Primary Disability and the GAA 2.0 from 2019-2022
- Academic and Communication Characteristics of GAA 2.0 Learners
- Breakout Room Discussion
- Sharing Strategies

Demographics

Spring 2022

- Gender
 - Male: 68%
 - Female: 32%
- Ethnicity
 - Black: 46%
 - White: 31%
 - Hispanic: 15%
 - Multiracial: 4%
 - Asian/Pacific Islander: 4%
 - American Indian/Alaska Native: <1%
- 7% of GAA 2.0 students are English Language learners.
- The number/proportion of GAA 2.0 students increases by grade, with the highest counts in high school, and the lowest in grade 3.

Primary Disability

2019-2022

	2019	2021	2022
Visual Impairment or Blind	<1%	<1%	<1%
Deaf or Hard of Hearing	<1%	<1%	<1%
Deaf and Blind	<1%	<1%	<1%
Specific Learning Disability	<1%	<1%	<1%
Mild Intellectual Disability	22.5%	22.0%	21.1%
Traumatic Brain Injury	<1%	<1%	<1%
Moderate/Severe/Profound Intellectual Disability	30.2%	28.3%	27.7%
Autism	32.6%	35.7%	37.6%
Orthopedic Impairment	<1%	<1%	<1%
Speech-Language Impairment	<1%	<1%	<1%
Emotional and Behavioral Disorder	<1%	<1%	<1%
Other Health Impairment	7.5%	7.3%	7.2%
Significant Developmental Delay	3.8%	4.8%	4.5%

Learner Characteristics

Communication Needs – Spring 2022

- **Expressive Communication**
 - Uses symbolic language: 63%
 - Uses intentional communication: 25%
 - Uses non-verbal only: 12%
- **Receptive Language**
 - Follows directions from words: 43%
 - Requires additional cues: 44%
 - Alerts to sensory input from another person: 10%
 - Uncertain response to sensory stimuli: 3%
- **17% of GAA 2.0 students use augmented communication systems.**
- **87% of GAA 2.0 students engage in social interactions within their learning environments.**

Learner Characteristics

Academics – Spring 2022

- **Reading**

- Reads fluently with critical understanding: 5%
- Reads fluently with basic understanding: 22%
- Reads basic sight words, simple sentences, directions: 36%
- Aware of text, follows directions, makes letter distinctions: 21%
- No observable awareness of print: 16%

- **Mathematics**

- Applies computational procedures to solve real-life or word problems: 6%
- Does computational procedures with or without a calculator: 43%
- Counts with 1:1 correspondence to at least 10: 28%
- Counts by rote to 5: 9%
- No observable awareness or use of numbers: 15%

- **84% of GAA 2.0 students attended school at least 90% of the year in 2021-2022.**

Learner Characteristics

Highest-Functioning Students – Spring 2022

- For the past couple of years, Georgia has used LCI data to better understand the characteristics of those served by this assessment.
- To better understand students in the highest categories in the learner characteristic inventory, students at the highest level of expressive and receptive communication, and highest two levels of reading and mathematics were identified.
- This group of students was over 20% of the total GAA 2.0 testing population.
- A few trends were identified:
 - Grade: Frequency of this highest-level profile expected increased in upper grades, with over 25% of records flagged being grade 11 students.
 - Achievement Level: The greatest achievement level difference between this group of students and the total population was observed in ELA, with over 50% of highest-level students achieving a Level 4 in Spring 2022.

Breakout Room Discussion

15 minutes

- What primary disabilities rates were surprising to you, for students on the GAA 2.0? We observe some trends statewide, such as the slight reduction in students with mild intellectual disability placed on this assessment. What observations do you have regarding this in your districts?
- We observe a high proportion of students on the GAA 2.0 in the highest functioning categories using learner characteristic data. How might this information inform placement decisions? LCI data is available for students tested on the GAA 2.0 in 2019-2022. How might multiple years of LCI data be used to better understand students in your districts on the GAA 2.0? How can this be used in your district's efforts to meet the 1% cap?
- What other learner characteristic information can be used in your districts to inform eligibility decisions?
- [Notes: State 1% Meeting - Breakout Group Questions.docx](#)

Breakout Room Discussion

Key Takeaways

- What primary disabilities rates were surprising to you, for students on the GAA 2.0? We observe some trends statewide, such as the slight reduction in students with mild intellectual disability placed on this assessment. What observations do you have regarding this in your districts?
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- What other learner characteristic information can be used in your districts to inform eligibility decisions?
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Additional Questions

Elena Nightingale, Ph.D.

Lead Psychometrician

Office of Assessment & Accountability

Phone: 470.579.6390

enightingale@doe.k12.ga.us



Elements of Decision-Making

Anne Myers

Program Specialist, Intellectual Disabilities

Emily Adams

Program Specialist, Vision/Deaf/Deaf-Blind-DHH

Barbara Ross

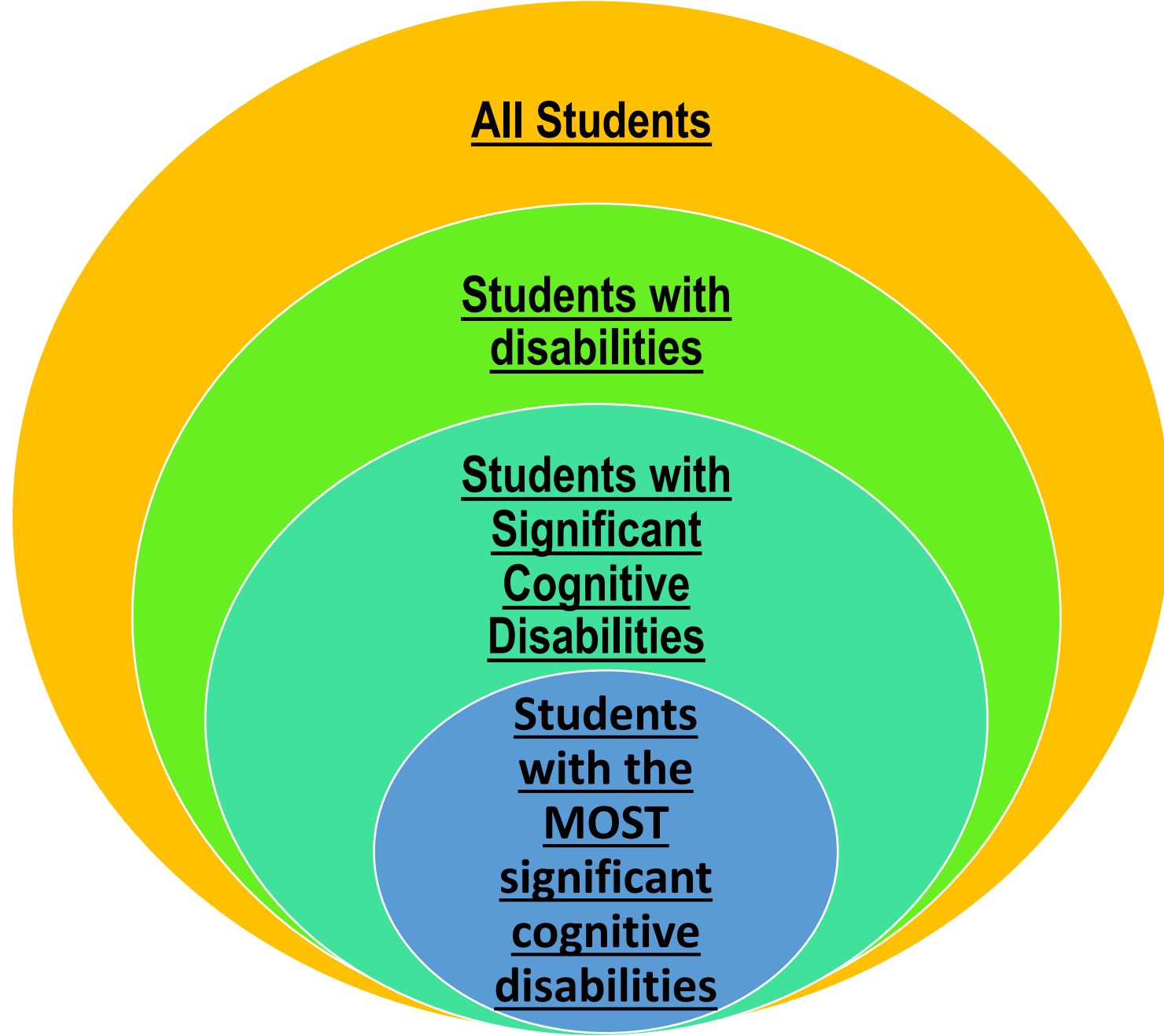
Program Specialist, Speech-language and Pre-School

Intellectual Functioning and Adaptive Behavior

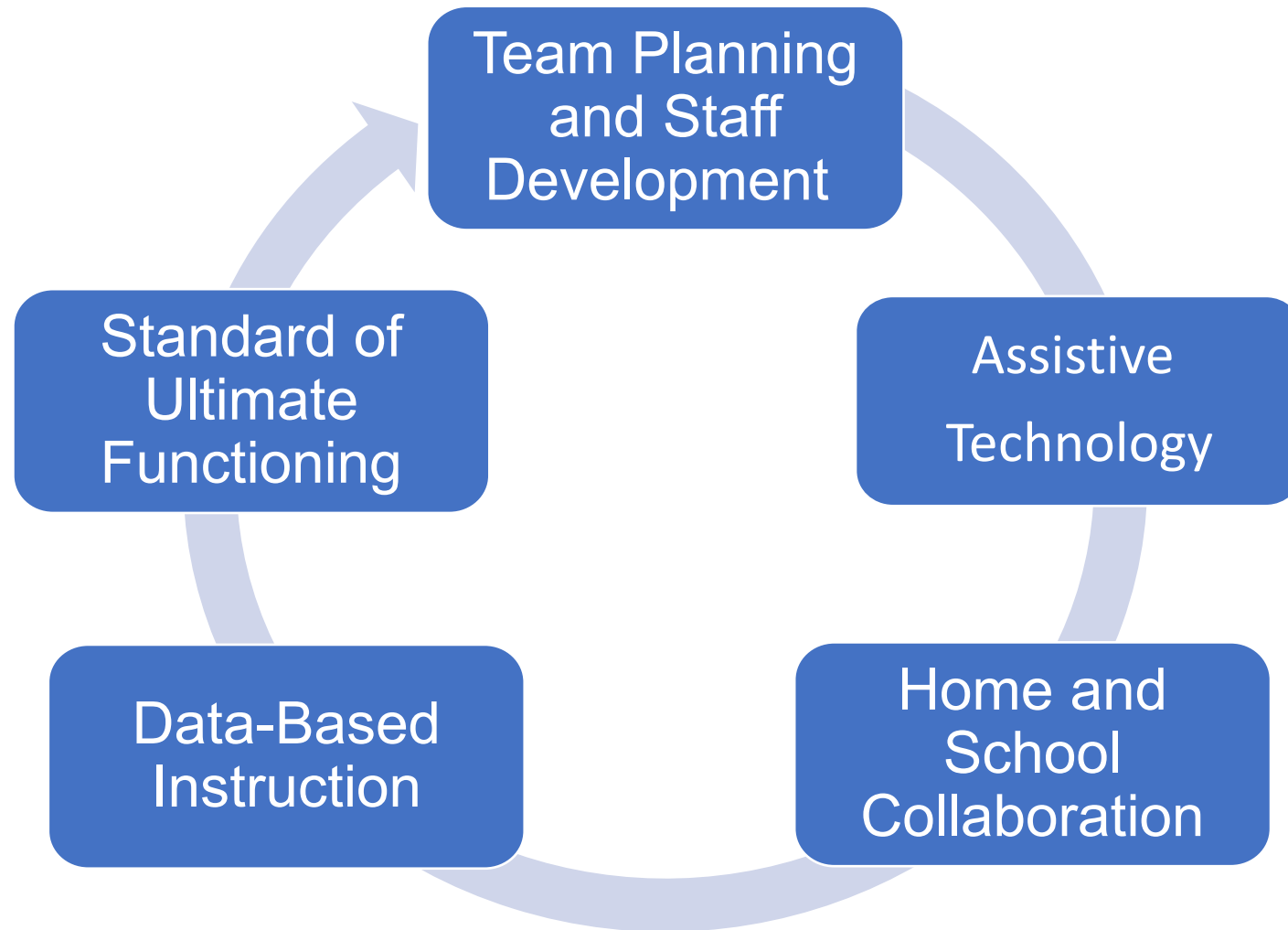
- A child with a disability or disabilities that are not temporary in nature and that significantly impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior(s).
- Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities are students who require repeated, extensive, direct, individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains across all content areas and settings.

Students with Significant Disabilities

- Most of our students with significant disabilities are eligible in the categories of intellectual disabilities, autism and multiple disabilities.
- These students typically enter special education during early childhood and continue special education services through their 22 birthday.
- These students have varied receptive and expressive communication skills.
- High probability that these students will require significant supports across their lifespan.



How Do We Meet the Students' Needs?



How Do We Meet the Students' Needs?

- We must assume that a student's limitations often coexist with their strengths.
- A student's level of life functioning will improve if appropriate personalized supports are provided over a sustained period.
- Instruction utilizing extended content standards and IEPs include goals in communication, adaptive skills and offer technology supports.

Least Dangerous Assumption

3 Principles of LDA:

- Everyone has different abilities and talents.
- You can't judge a person's entire future based on one area.
- People learn best when they are valued.

Present Levels

- The student's initial and/or most recent evaluation
- Results of recent state and/or district assessments
- Description of academic, developmental and/or functional strengths

Present Levels

- Description of academic, developmental and functional needs, and
- Description of how the disability affects the student's involvement and progress in general education
- Parental concerns regarding their student's education stated on the IEP

Goals and Objectives

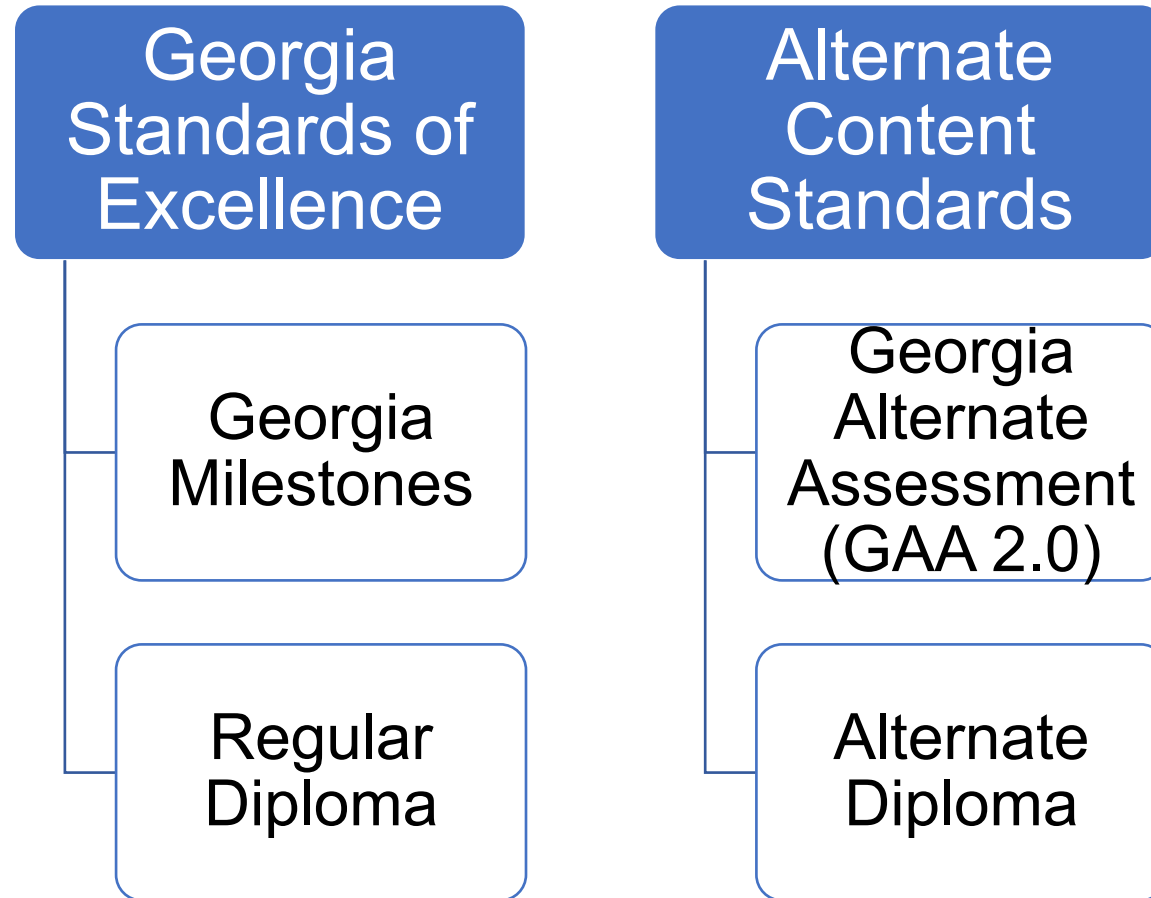
- Academic
 - ELA, Math, Social Studies, and Science
- Adaptive Behavior
 - Conceptual Skills, Social Skills, Practical Skills
- Communication
 - Expressive, Verbal, Nonverbal, Receptive, Pragmatic

Instruction First!



Instruction Drives the Decision

[GAA 2.0 2022-2023 GSE Extended Content Standards \(gadoe.org\)](https://gadoe.org)



Scenario

John

- 7th grade student with an intellectual disability
- Alternate Content Standards for ELA and Math
- Georgia Standards of Excellence for Science and Social Studies with one-on-one paraprofessional support
- Participates in the GAA 2.0

Critical Points

- Instruction for students with the most significant cognitive disability is based on extended content standards, which are aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence at a reduced depth, breadth, and complexity
- Prior to reviewing the eligibility criteria for GAA, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team must understand all assessment options, including the characteristics of each assessment and the potential implications of each assessment choice
- GAA 2.0 is intended for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities

Preschool Special Education

Early Decisions Require Thoughtful Consideration

What Happens in Preschool....

- Sets the tone for discussions around inclusive environments moving forward
- Can have a positive or negative influence on future placement decisions
- Must focus on the neuroscience of brain development
- Holds a key to the developmental trajectory of each child





"Begin With the End in Mind"

Stephen Covey, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People



Brain Facts

- The structure or architecture of the brain is an ongoing process that begins before birth.
- First few years – a million new neural connections are formed every second!
- Simple neural connections are first followed by more complex skills.
- Interaction of genes and experience shape the developing brain
- Process continues into adulthood reduced by pruning- the brain becomes more efficient

What is Early Intervention?

- Services and supports for babies and young children with developmental delays and disabilities including:
 - Speech Therapy
 - Occupational Therapy
 - Physical Therapy
 - Parent Education
 - Special Education Services in daycare or general education preschool classroom
 - Special Education Services in separate settings/classrooms
 - Special Education Services in the home



Why is Early Intervention Critical?

- Neural circuits create the foundation for learning, behavior, and health are strongest early in life.
- Brain is strengthened by positive early experiences and stable relationships with positive and caring adults.
- Cognitive and language skills begin to develop early.
- High quality early intervention can change a child's developmental trajectory.
- Early intervention can change outcomes for children, families, and communities.
- Early intervention is likely to be more effective and less costly in the big picture.

Eligibility in Preschool

What is Significant Developmental Delay (SDD)?

- A delay in a child's development in one of five areas:
 - Adaptive behavior
 - Cognition
 - Communication
 - Motor (fine and gross)
 - Emotional
- The delay must be evident to the extent that, if not provided with special intervention, the delay may adversely affect the child's educational performance in age-appropriate activities.

Characteristics of Students with Hearing and/or Vision Impairments

- Children with hearing and/or visual impairments often experience developmental delays in multiple domains.
- Children may have significant delays in language and cognitive development due to a lack of implicit learning opportunities.
- The degree of impact on development is typically correlated with the degree of sensory impairment, but may also be impacted by family supports, early intervention, and concomitant disabilities.



Hearing/Vision Impairments and Instruction

- Children with hearing/vision impairments benefit from opportunities to interact with peers but may require supports in acquiring appropriate social skills.
- Decisions about whether a student would benefit from instruction in Braille should be based on a robust learning media assessment and IEP team decision.
- The learning media decision should be addressed annually.
- There are instructional Braille programs to support students with intellectual disabilities

Hearing/Vision Impairments and Instruction

- Children may need Assistive Technology or other accommodations to access their curriculum and assessments.
- A lack of fluency in Braille or ASL are not sufficient reasons to determine a student eligible for GAA 2.0.
- IEP teams must work together to determine the best way to support students with sensory impairments.



Additional Questions

Anne Myers

Program Specialist

Results Driven Accountability
404-548-9790

anne.myers@doe.k12.ga.us

Barbara Ross

Program Specialist

Results Driven Accountability
404-548-9790

Barbara.ross@doe.k12.ga.us

Emily Adams

Program Specialist

Results Driven Accountability
678-241-0660

Emily.adams@doe.k12.ga.us

Communication, Assistive Technology, and Adaptive Behavior

Barbara Ross

Program Specialist, Speech-language and Pre-School

Emily Adams

Paula Gumpman

Program Specialist, Assistive Technology

Anne Myers

Program Specialist, Intellectual Disabilities



Communication Characteristics

Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities



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Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities

- Demonstrate restricted communication abilities compared to age-matched peers
- Can be expected to use idiosyncratic communicative forms
- May use conventional communicative forms
- Communicate for a variety of purposes

Communication Pre-Symbolic or Non-Symbolic

- Restricted communication abilities compared to age-matched peers
- Does not use symbols (no objects, pictures, words, or text)
- May not have clear communicative intent
- Partner interpretation may be challenging

[The CEEDAR Center, Document I-C 17, August 2018.](#)

Communication Symbolic

- Expressed with symbols such as objects, pictures, icons, speech, text, or manual signs (Rowland, 2011)
- Requires a shared meaning of symbols
- Symbols may be concrete or abstract



[The CEEDAR Center, Document I-C 17, August 2018.](#)



Use of Conventional Communicative Forms

- Gestures
- Vocal speech-like approximations
- Eye Gaze
- Words
- Non-speech symbols

[The CEEDAR Center, Document I-C 17, August 2018.](#)

Use of Idiosyncratic Communicative Forms

- Body movements
- Squeals and cries
- Facial expressions
- Behaviors



[The CEEDAR Center, Document I-C 17, August 2018.](#)

Examples of Communicative Function

- Requesting
- Demonstrating knowledge
- Protesting
- Asking questions
- Rejecting
- Commenting
- Gaining attention
- Confirming or denying in response to a question

[The CEEDAR Center, Document I-C 17, August 2018.](#)

Receptive Language Characteristics Students with Significant Cognitive Disability

- May understand multiple symbol forms and even simple grammar, or may only possess general environmental awareness (Ogletree, Bruce, Finch, Fahey, & McLean, 2011).
- Limited receptive vocabulary
- Difficulty following directions

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

- AAC refers to all of the ways someone communicates besides talking.
- Students with significant cognitive disabilities often require AAC in order to communicate.
- Augmentative means to add to someone's speech.
- Alternative means to use instead of speech.
- AAC may be No-tech, low-tech or high tech.
- Twenty-five to thirty-seven percent of students with significant cognitive disabilities do not use oral speech. (Erickson & Geist, 2016)

Georgia Alternative Assessment (GAA 2.0)

Learner Characteristics Inventory (LCI)

- Developed by the National Alternate Assessment Center (NAAC) to investigate the learning characteristics of students participating in alternate assessments
- Designed to enhance the demographic data collection for the test and when used appropriately, provides additional data to consider in the validity evaluation for Alternate Assessments based on Alternate Achievement Standards
- Is not meant to be used to classify or diagnose students and should not be used as the basis for decision making about student placement or instruction

LCI Expressive Communication

(check the best description)



- Uses symbolic language to communicate
- Uses intentional communication, but not at a symbolic language level
- Student communicates primarily through cries, facial expressions, change in muscle tone, etc.

LCI Receptive Communication

(check the best description)



- Independently follows 1–2 step directions presented through words
- Requires additional cues to follow 1-2 step directions
- Alerts to sensory input from another person but requires actual physical assistance to follow simple directions.
- Uncertain response to sensory stimuli

Expected Communicative Abilities

Students with severe disabilities demonstrate restricted communication abilities compared to age-matched peers.

This does not suggest that people with severe disabilities do not communicate.

PRESUME Competence

Resources

[Preparing Teachers to Facilitate Communication Skills in Students with Severe Disabilities, The CEEDAR Center, Document I-C 17, August 2018.](#)

[Learner Characteristics Inventory \(LCI\), Georgia Department of Education and Data Recognition Corporation.](#)

[The IRIS Center, Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities.](#)

Assistive Technology (AT)

What is Assistive Technology

“Any item*, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability.”

IDEA '04

*except surgically implantable devices

Low Incidence Disabilities – 1%

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities should have assistive technology indicated in their IEP. Assistive Technology is an avenue to give our students the ability to be as independent as possible.

Examples of the disabilities that can use AT

- Cognitive Impairments
- Complex Health Issues – Multiple Disabilities
- Significant Developmental Delay

Functional Skills

Eating, Drinking, Dressing, Transferring, Communication

Mobility

Wheelchairs, Walkers, Gait Trainer

Low Tech

- Low Tech – These Devices are readily available, inexpensive and typically do not require batteries or electricity.
 - Pencil Grips
 - Page Holders, Page Fluffers
 - Modified Scissors

Mid Tech

- Mid Tech – Devices that are usually digital and may require batteries or other power source.
 - Calculator
 - Audio Book
 - Digital Recorder

High Tech

- High Tech – Devices that are typically computer based and can be tailored to the specific student.
 - Tablet
 - Screen reader
 - Voice Recognition Software
 - High End Communication Device

Functional Skills, Schedules and Communication

Eating

- Adapted utensils, plates and bowls

Drinking

- Adapted cups, hand cups, cups with straw

Dressing

- Sock aids, shoehorn, button hooks, zipper pulls, elastic waist

Schedules

- Daily Picture/Word Schedules, Task Completion Schedules, This – Then Boards

Communication

- Aided Language Stimulation (Modeling), Core Boards, Voice Output

Mobility

- Wheelchairs
 - Power, Manual
 - Walkers
 - Gait trainers
 - Stroller



Seating and Positioning, Desks

Seating

- Classroom Chairs
- Adapted Chairs
- Corner/Floor Chairs
- Beanbags



Communication

- Using objects
- Using pictures of the object
- Using object representation
- Using 2-word (objects) request
- Use of simple voice output button(2) for choice
- Use a communication “Core Board”
- Model the use of communication systems

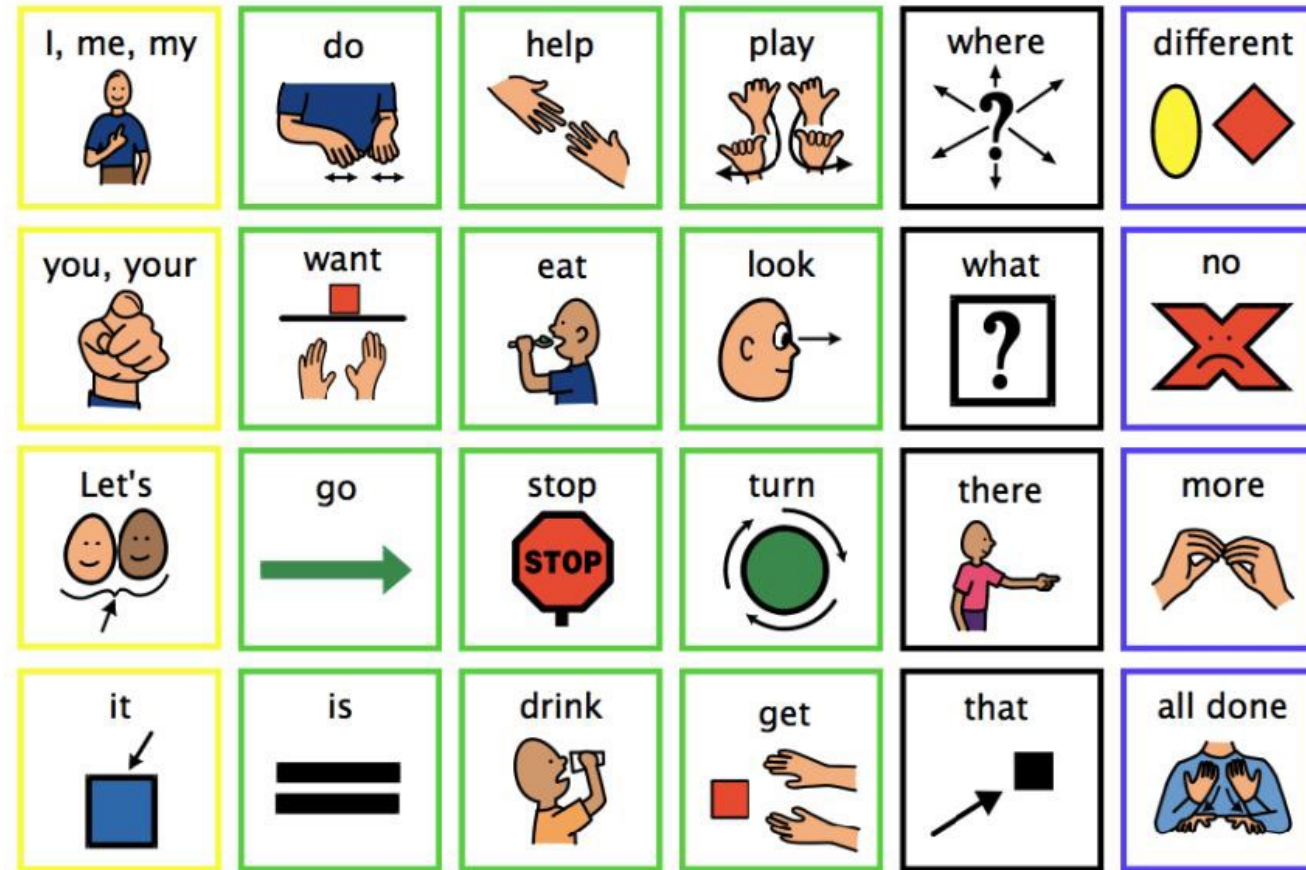
Communication - Pragmatics

Pragmatic Language is the social use of language, and it is the communication of feelings, thoughts and ideas. When a student has trouble understanding the meaning of what others are saying. They may also have difficulty using language appropriately to get their needs met and to interact with others.

Pragmatic or Social Communication should be modeled and practiced regularly in the classroom.

- Role Play – Practice responding to others, Nonverbal communication
- Video Self Model
- Play Based Practice
- Practice in Different Settings
- Real World Practice (CBI, Work Setting, and Home)

AAC - Core Board



AAC – Eye Gaze



AAC – Speech Generating Device



AAC - Communication Board

The AAC board is divided into several sections:

- Top Section:** 'head' (face icon) and 'hand' (hand icon).
- Left Section:** A collection of icons including 'I', 'my/mine', 'it', 'you', 'here', 'yes', 'no', 'want', 'do', 'can', 'have', 'go', 'help', 'like', 'read', 'stop', 'tell', 'write', 'front', 'sing', 'see', 'finish', 'what', 'to', 'first', 'good', 'and', 'write', 'front'.
- Right Section:** A grid of 10 columns and 10 rows of icons and text.

friend	boy	girl	mother	father	brother	sister	head	hand	foot	feet
I	me	what	where	now	later	today	same	diff'nt	big	little
my/mine	is / am are	to	first	next	last	all gone	ready	busy	happy	sad
it	can	have	come	feel	know	give	angry-mad	messy	good	bad
you	do	eat	drink	finish	get	sing	that	a the	and	more
your	don't-not	go	help	open	put	see	again	in	away	on
here	there	like	play	read	stop	walk	show	out	up	off
yes	no	want	take	tell	turn	watch	write	front	down	with

Literacy

Book Holders

Page Turners (any items that allow for space between the pages)

Audio Boks and E books

- Bookshare
- Project Gutenberg
- Tar Heel reader
- Learning Ally
- Storyline Online



Literacy – Reading and Writing

Adapted Writing Tools

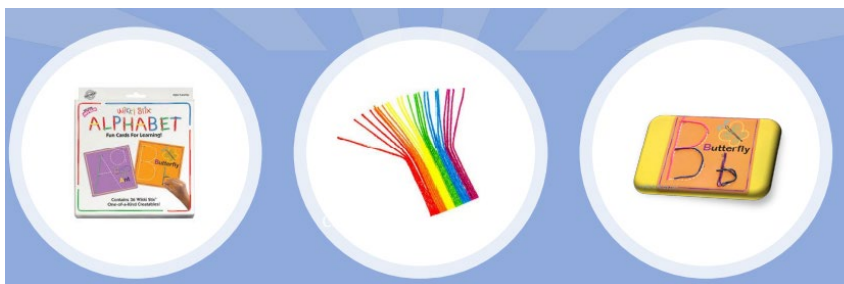
Name Stamps

Shaving Cream

Letters

Numbers

Wikki Stix



Adaptive Behavior

Adaptive Behavior

- Significant limitations in a child's effectiveness in meeting the standards of maturation, learning, personal independence or social responsibility, and especially school performance that is expected of the individual's age-level and cultural group, as determined by clinical judgment [34 C.F.R § 300.8(c)(6)]

Significant Limitations in Adaptive Behavior

Significant limitations in adaptive behavior are operationally defined as performance that is approximately two standard deviations below the mean of either

(a) one of the following three types of adaptive behavior: conceptual, social, or practical

or

(b) an overall score on a standardized measure of conceptual, social, and practical skills.

Adaptive Behavior Assessments

- Assessment of adaptive behavior is an assessment of the individual's ability to function across various situations and environments.
- The assessments measure functional behaviors that students will need in their everyday life.

Adaptive Behavior Tools

- Instruments designed to assess adaptive behavior are often questionnaires or rating scales
- These instruments may be completed by the Special Education teacher, parent, or other members of the IEP team
- Commonly used measures: Diagnostic Adaptive Behavior Scale (DABS), Adaptive Behavior Assessment System-II, Adaptive Behavior Evaluation Scale, Adaptive Behavior Inventory of Children (ABIC), Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scale, Checklist of Adaptive Living Skills

Adaptive Behavior Overview

- Developmental and increases in complexity with age
- Composed of conceptual, social, and practical skills
- Related to the expectations of age and demands of contexts
- Assessed based on the individual's typical performance at home, school, work, and leisure, not their maximum performance
- Assessed in reference to the community settings that are typical for same aged peers

Examples of Significant Limitations: Conceptual Skills

- Impaired independent planning, problem solving, or thinking abstractly
- Difficulty in choosing a good solution when confronted with a problem or situation
- Difficulty effectively using ideas or symbols such as time and mathematical functions
- Difficulty effectively communicating thoughts or ideas

Examples of Significant Limitations: Conceptual Skills

- Difficulty in self-direction and/or arranging or planning future life activities
- Difficulty anticipating the consequences of his or her behavior
- Difficulty with academics (reading, writing, arithmetic)
- Difficulty with money/financial concepts

Examples of Significant Limitations: Social Skills

- Impaired social/interpersonal skills and learning from experiences
- Difficulty in working effectively with other towards group problem solving
- Concrete thinking during complex social situations
- Increase vulnerability in victimization

Examples of Significant Limitations: Social Skills

- Inadequate social responding and social judgment
- Tendency to deny or minimize the disability to their disadvantage
- Strong desire to please authority figures based on limited understanding of the situation
- Gullibility and suggestibility in interactions with others

Examples of Significant Limitations: Practical Skills

- Limitations in self-care and domestic skills
- Limitations in use of money and property
- Limitations in maintaining a safe environment

Examples of Age-Appropriate Adaptive Behavior Skills

Example: Chores

- 2-4 year olds: Helps dust, puts napkins on table, puts laundry in hamper, helps feed pet
- 4-7 year olds: Sets (or helps set) the table, puts away toys, helps make bed, helps put dishes in dishwasher, helps clear table, helps put away groceries, waters (or helps water) plants

Age-Appropriate Adaptive Behavior Skills

Example: Chores

- 8-10 year olds: Makes bed, sets and clears table, dusts, vacuums, helps wash car, helps washes dishes, takes out the trash
- 11 year olds and older: All chores listed above, cleans room, mows lawn, feeds pets, starts doing own laundry, makes small meals, shovels snow, helps with yard work, empties and loads dishwasher, etc.

Elements of Support

- Choice and personal autonomy
- Generic supports
- Inclusive environments
- Specialized supports
- Communication

Additional Questions

Barbara Ross, Program Specialist
Results-Driven Accountability
678-444-0571
Barbara.ross@doe.k12.ga.us

Anne Myers, Program Specialist
Results Driven Accountability
404-548-9790
anne.myers@doe.k12.ga.us

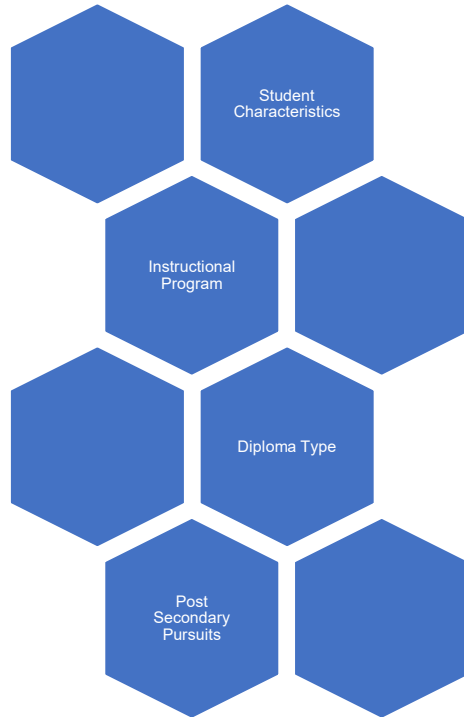
Paula Gumpman, Program Specialist
Instruction and Systemic Improvement
678-340-8118
pgumpman@doe.k12.ga.us

Georgia Alternate Assessment Eligibility

Mary Nesbit-McBride
Assessment Specialist,
ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, GAA 2.0



Assessment Placement Decision



Warren Smith:
Sixth Grade
SRC: Visual Impairment



Warren does not use augmentative communication.

Expressive

Communicates meaning

Initiates questions

Describes things

Receptive

Follows directions independently

Does not need cues

Does not need gestures

Warren reads very well and occasionally struggles with mathematics.

Reading

Differentiates between fact and opinion

Understands reason and emotion

Mathematics

Solves non-routine problems

Explains relationships

Warren independently performs daily activities in school and at home.

Health Issues

Vision is corrected with glasses

Hearing is normal

Engagement

Initiates conversations

Participates appropriately

Decision Check Directions

- Click on the QR Code.
- Answer each question.
- Consider the types of data you want to answer each question.
- <https://forms.office.com/r/krEdz1cxng>

Assessment Placement Decision



Additional Questions

Mary Nesbit-McBride

Assessment Specialist,

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, GAA 2.0

470-579-6345, mmcbride@doe.k12.ga.us

Impact

Elise James

Program Specialist, Transition Postschool
Outcomes

Barbara Ross

Program Specialist, Pre-School



Impact of Instruction with Extended Standard and GAA 2.0 Assessment on Transition Postschool Outcome



Offering a holistic education to **each and every child** in our state.

Transition Process to Adulthood



Adapted from "Your Complete Guide to Transition Planning and Services" (Morningstar and Clavenna-Deane, 2018)



Purpose of Transition

- IDEA 2004 (Section 601(d)) states that one purpose of the law is:
 - (1A) “to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services **designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living;...**”

Postsecondary Outcome Goals Measured by Indicator 14 (State Performance Plan)

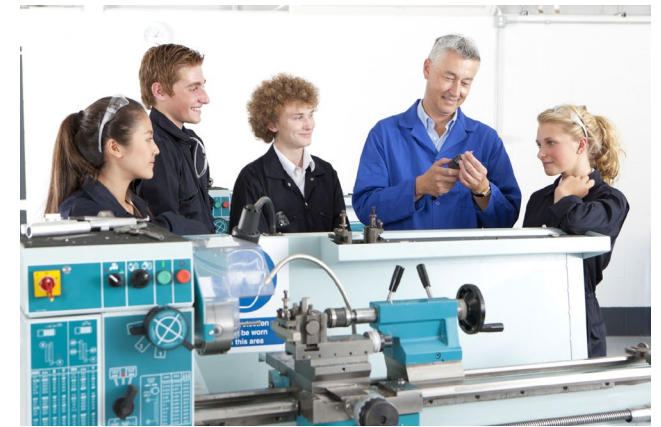
Education and Training (14A)

- Enrolled in Higher Education:
 - Pursuing a college degree or certification...on a full or part time basis
 - Includes public and private four-year colleges and universities, two-year community colleges, and technical colleges that meet the definition of Institution of Higher Education in the Higher Education Act (HEA).

Employment (14B)

- Competitive Employment:
 - Performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting in the competitive labor market; **and**
 - Compensated at or above the minimum wage,
 - Level of benefits paid for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled.
 - Appropriate opportunities for advancement

Begin with the End in Mind



Decision-Making in Preschool

Impact for a Lifetime

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) requirements apply to preschool children with disabilities.
- The Team must consider whether supplementary aids and services could enable the child to be educated in a general education environment.
- FAPE must be provided regardless of whether the Local Education Agency (LEA) operates public preschool programs for children without disabilities.
- States and districts should ensure that a full continuum of placements are available for preschool children with disabilities.

[OSERS Dear Colleague Letter: Preschool LRE](#)

Inclusive Environments for Preschool Children

The Research Says...

- Children with disabilities have similar levels of engagement as their peers.
- Children with disabilities are more likely to practice newly acquired skills.
- Desired outcomes achieved only noted when included several days per week in social and learning opportunities.
- High quality inclusion that begins early and continues into school likely produces the strongest outcomes.



[OSEP Policy Statement September, 2015](#)

Inclusive Environments for Preschool Children More Research...



- Evidence based strategies can be implemented successfully in inclusive childhood programs.
- Children with disabilities can make significant developmental and learning progress in inclusive settings.
- Children with disabilities in inclusive settings experience greater cognitive and communication development.

[OSEP Policy Statement September 2015](#)

Preschool Children in Inclusive Environments

When compared to their peers in separate special education settings...

- Children with disabilities demonstrated stronger interpersonal skills.
- Children with disabilities demonstrated more social interaction.
- Children with disabilities had larger networks of friends.
- Children with disabilities were more socially competent.
- Children with disabilities were absent fewer days.
- Children with disabilities had higher test scores in reading and math.

[OSEP Policy Statement September 2015](#)

FAPE for Preschool Students with Disabilities

LEA may provide FAPE for preschool children with disabilities in a variety of settings including:

- 1) Regular kindergarten class
- 2) Public or private preschool program
- 3) Community-based childcare facility
- 4) Home

*If the LEA determines that placement in a private preschool is necessary for a child to receive FAPE, the LEA must make that program available at no cost to the parent.

[Dear Colleague Letter: Preschool LRE](#)

Office of Special Education Policy (OSEP) Recommendations for Inclusive Services

- Set an expectation for high-quality inclusion in early childhood programs.
- Increase public understanding of the science that supports meaningful inclusion of children with disabilities, from the earliest ages, in early childhood programs.
- Increase inclusive early learning opportunities for all children.
- Highlight the legal foundations supporting inclusion in high-quality early childhood programs.

Prior to the Placement Decision for Preschool Children

- Be intentional in your process
- Discuss the impact that the decision has on the future of the child
- Consider LRE – Inclusion should be the default
- Plan for appropriate supplementary aids and services
- Create collective efficacy for the team, school, and district
- Prepare staff – professional development
- Movement into inclusion may need to be gradual – think "transition plan"



Learning Knows No Bounds

Evaluating Reasons for Postschool Outcomes

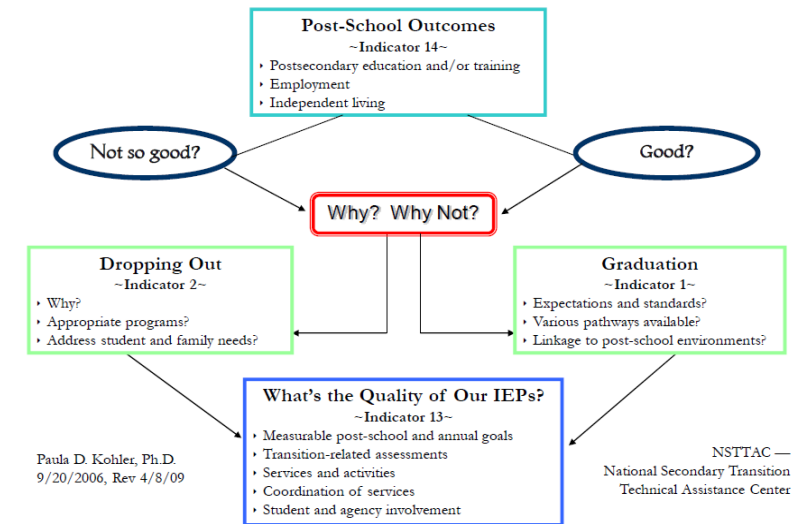
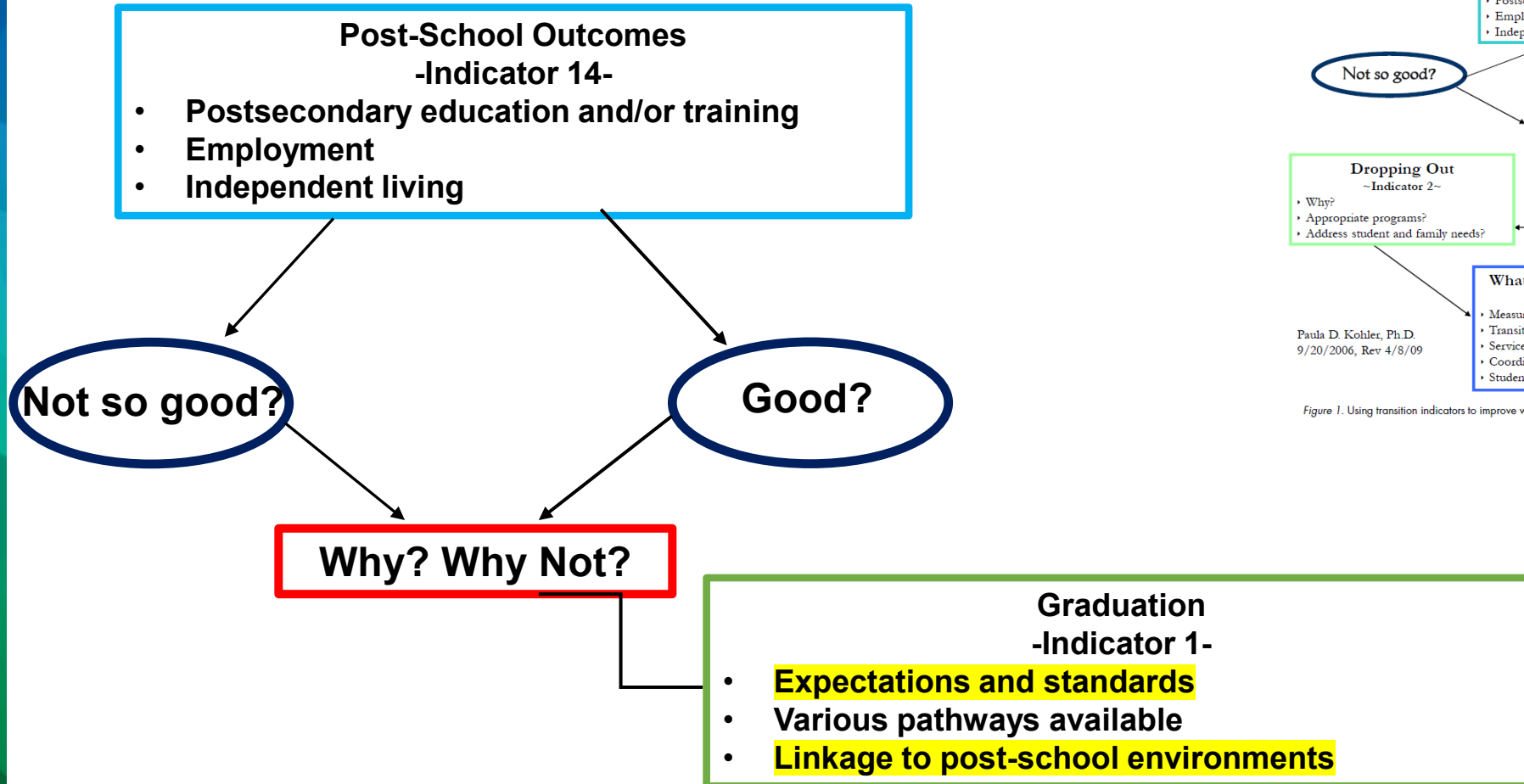


Figure 1. Using transition indicators to improve what we do.

Georgia High School Diploma Options

- High School Diploma (All students):
 - Instructed using the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE)
 - Meet course completion requirements
 - Milestones and EOC Assessment
- State-defined Alternate Diploma (SWD):
 - Instructed using Extended Standards (ES)
 - Meet course completion requirements
 - GAA 2.0 Assessment

Postsecondary Outcome Goals Measured by Indicator 14 (State Performance Plan)

Education and Training (14A)

- Enrolled in Higher Education:
 - Pursuing a college degree or certification...on a full or part time basis
 - Includes public and private four-year colleges and universities, two-year community colleges, and technical colleges that meet the definition of Institution of Higher Education in the Higher Education Act (HEA).

Employment (14B)

- Competitive Employment:
 - Performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting in the competitive labor market; **and**
 - Compensated at or above the minimum wage,
 - Level of benefits paid for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled.
 - Appropriate opportunities for advancement

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Georgia High School Diploma Options

- Special Education Diploma (SWD):
 - Instruction using GSE or ES
 - Did not meet criteria for either diplomas
- High School Certificate (All students)
 - Have not met requirements of a diploma

Postsecondary Outcome Goals Measured by Indicator 14 (State Performance Plan)

Education and Training (14A)

- Enrolled in Higher Education:
 - Pursuing a college degree or certification...on a full or part time basis
 - Includes public and private four-year colleges and universities, two-year community colleges, and technical colleges that meet the definition of Institution of Higher Education in the Higher Education Act (HEA).

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- Briefly describe the negative impact of placement in a separate class for preschool students with disabilities.
- What is the impact on postschool outcomes?

Padlet Activity



The State-defined Alternate Diploma

- The State-defined Alternate Diploma and the High School Diploma are **not** equivalent credentials.
- Receiving the alternate diploma is tied to completing instruction aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence...
 - Not the same standards
- The special education diploma is still in State Board Rules but is **not** a regular diploma...
- Does not terminate a free appropriate public education (FAPE) requirement.

Possible Postsecondary Outcomes

- Education and Training
 - Extended Standards Aligned to General Standards
 - Not college and probably not technical school
 - Must meet entry requirements
 - Must score appropriately on Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)
 - Must score appropriately on American College Test (ACT)

Possible Postsecondary Outcomes

- Employment
 - Employment at minimum wage (hopefully),
 - Employment at subminimum wage (more likely)
- Military Service (possibly not)
 - Must have standard high school diploma
 - Must pass the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)

Can Students Access...?

- General education curriculum completely
- Dual-enrollment
 - Academic
 - Vocational
- Pathways completion
 - Completers graduate at higher rates (97.1% in 2022)

Can Students Access...?

- Work-based learning
- Paid employment
 - Internships
 - Apprenticeships

STRONG FOUNDATION

Collective
Efficacy

High
Expectations

Presumed
Competency

Dignity of
Risk

Self-
Determination

Additional Questions

Barbara Ross

Program Specialists

Preschool/619 Coordinator

Barbara.ross@doe.k12.ga.us

Elise James

Program Specialist

Transition Postschool
Outcomes

ejames@doe.k12.ga.us