

***Georgia Department of Education  
Division for Special Education Services and Supports***

Georgia Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Manual



***Revised July 2012***

## ***FOREWORD***

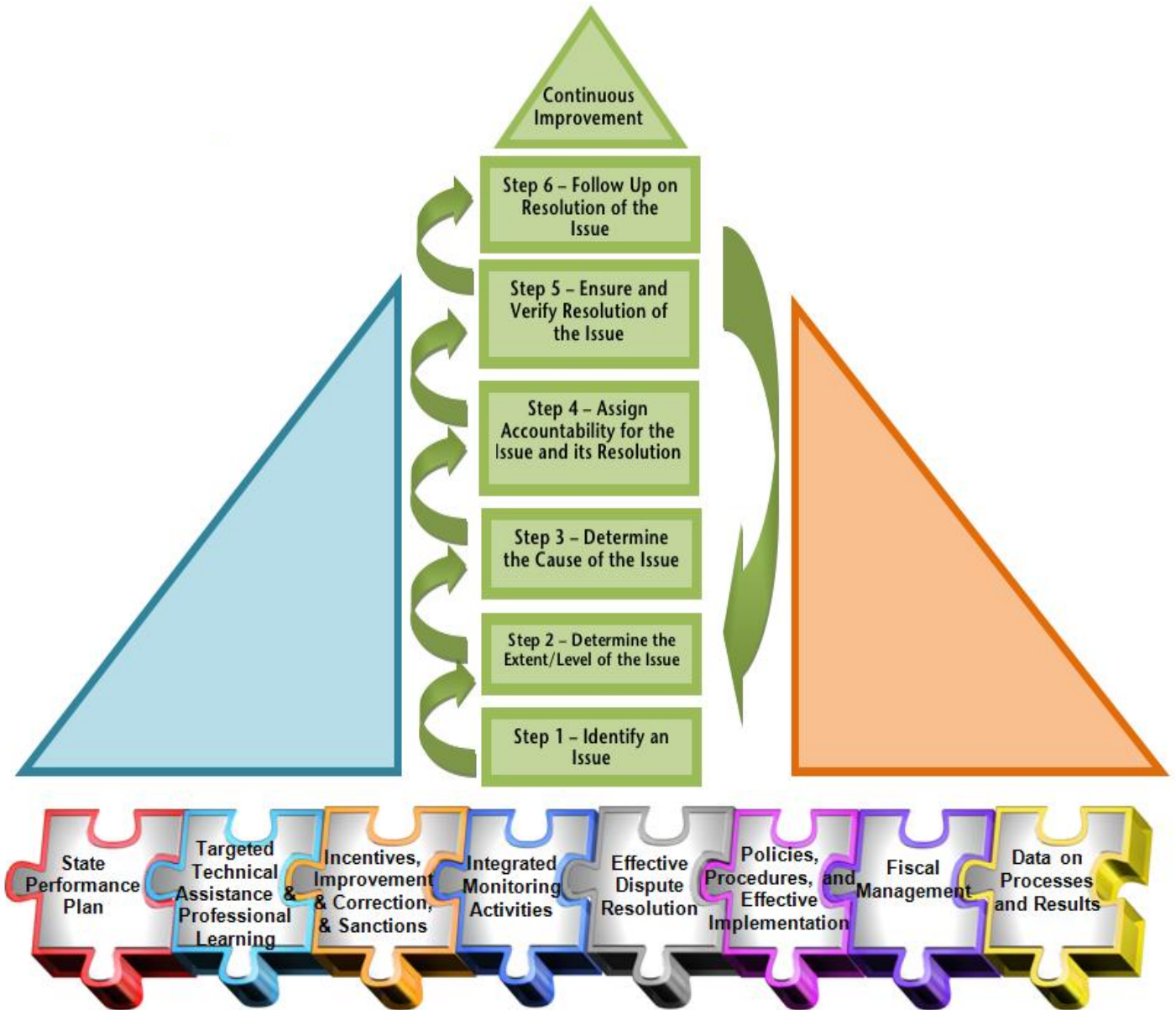
The state must have in effect policies or procedures to ensure that it complies with the monitoring and enforcement requirements in IDEA regulations CFR §§ 300.600-602 and CFR §§ 300.606-608. During the 2011-2012 school year, the [Georgia Department of Education \(GaDOE\)](#) conducted a comprehensive review of state-level policies, procedures and practices necessary to enforce compliant implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004. The [Southeast Regional Resource Center \(SERRC\)](#) provided technical assistance for the GaDOE to implement a framework of continuous improvement steps as outlined in [Figure 1](#).

After completing a rigorous review process of the state's general supervision system, GaDOE revised its Georgia's Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (GCIMP) Manual to reflect these changes. The revised manual is organized into five sections: (1) State General Supervision System; (2) District General Supervision System; (3) Guidance for Development of Procedures; (4) Annual Active Engagement Plan; and (5) Collaborative Communities. Additionally, a glossary of terms is included. Sections 1 and 2 provide general guidance about state and local processes. Section 3 provides guidance regarding compliant written procedures. Section 4 outlines the State's annual plan for "active engagement" with local districts to implement general supervision. Georgia's definition for active engagement is, "A collaborative process between two mutually committed parties utilizing ongoing interactive discussions and technical assistance to resolve issues." Section 5 utilizes the concept of collaborative communities within each GLRS region to focus on common goals. What better way to make education work for all Georgians?

*Disclaimer* - This manual is not intended to create new law or supplant any federal or state laws, regulations, or requirements. This manual includes web links, forms, and procedures that may be updated regularly by the Georgia Department of Education. For additional information or assistance, contact:

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*Figure 1. Continuous Improvement Steps*



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## STATE GENERAL SUPERVISION SYSTEM

The GaDOE has the responsibility, under federal law, to have a system of general supervision that monitors implementation of the IDEA by local school districts. The general supervision system should be accountable for enforcing the requirements and for ensuring continuous improvement. As stated in section 616 of the 2004 amendments to the IDEA, “The primary focus of Federal and State monitoring activities described in paragraph (1) shall be on: (A) improving educational results and functional outcomes for all children with disabilities; and (B) ensuring that States meet the program requirements under this part, with particular emphasis on those requirements that are most closely related to improving educational results for children with disabilities.

The Office of Special Education Programs’ (OSEP) definition of monitoring is, “A continuous review procedure designed to compare present functioning against specific standards, and to yield a profile showing areas of conformance as well as those in which new procedures, training, or other methods of improvement may be needed in order to comply with specific standards.” This is accomplished through the GCIMP. Since 2002, stakeholders have met to provide guidance and input to assist the State in moving from a model of procedural monitoring to one of continuous improvement with a focus on student results. Using the concepts of continuous improvement and focused monitoring adopted by OSEP, Georgia has designed the GCIMP to promote continuous, equitable educational improvement for students with disabilities (SWD) while ensuring continued procedural compliance.

[Figure 2](#) displays a commonly seen graphic representing state general supervision components, which are standard for all SEAs. However, each SEA may implement different state-level procedures, thus forming a unique general supervision system. The system for general supervision includes eight components that must align together in a comprehensive, integrated system: (1) State Performance Plan, (2) Policies, Procedures, and Effective Implementation, (3) Integrated Monitoring Activities, (4) Fiscal Management, (5) Data on Processes and Results, (6) Improvement, Correction, Incentives and Sanctions, (7) Effective Dispute Resolution, and (8) Targeted Technical Assistance and Professional Development.

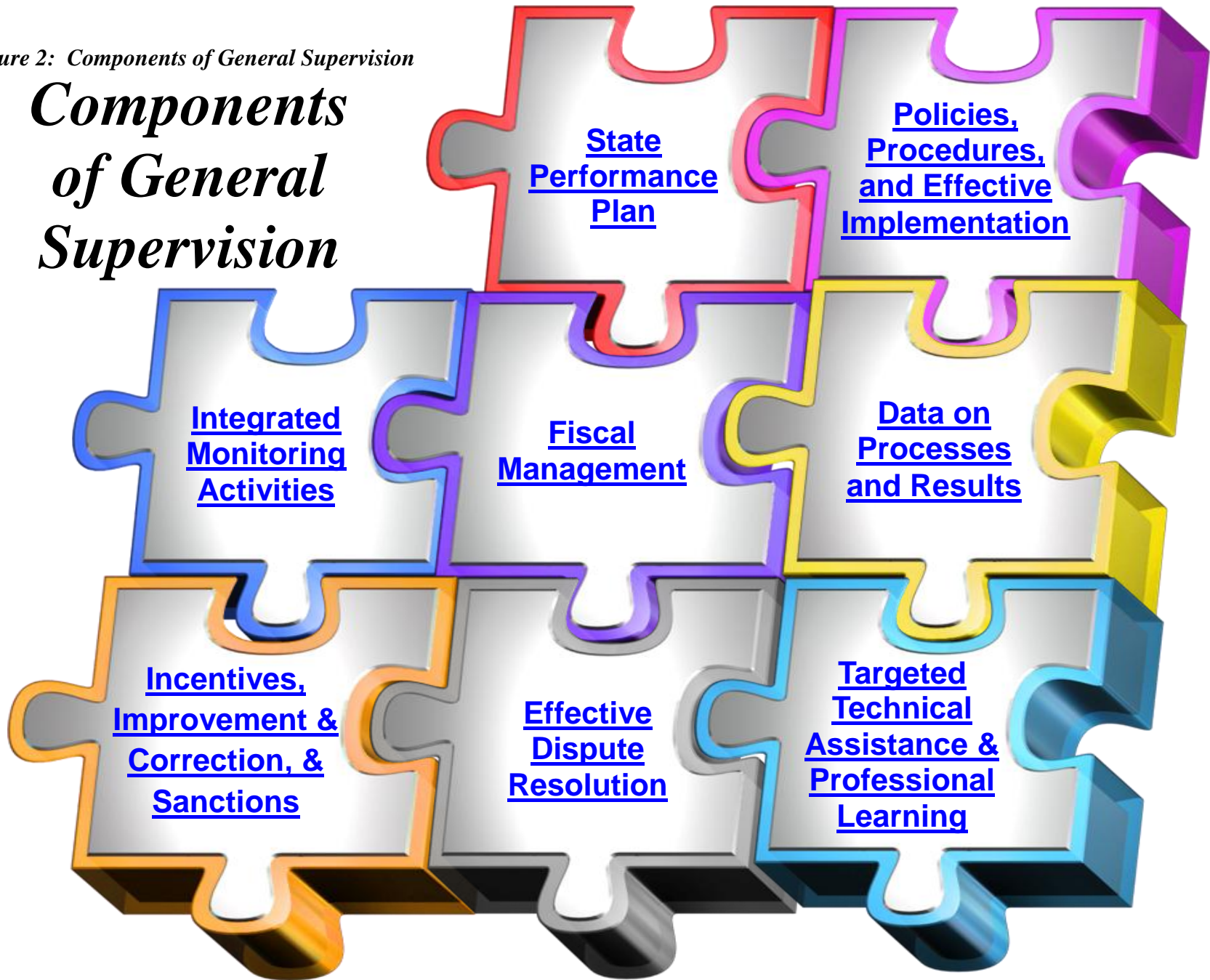
The GaDOE implements an effective system of general supervision to: (1) support practices that improve educational results and functional outcomes; (2) use multiple methods to identify and correct noncompliance within one year; and (3) use mechanisms to encourage and support improvement and to enforce compliance. In order to enforce implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004, state educational agencies and local educational agencies must provide a comprehensive general supervision system and continuously improve the monitoring processes.

### *Checkpoints for Understanding*

- Why are states required to provide general supervision for local school districts?
- What are the overarching tasks for a General Supervision system?
- What are the minimum components for General Supervision?

Figure 2: Components of General Supervision

# Components of General Supervision





## **State Performance Plan (SPP)**

Each state must use the targets established in the State Performance Plan (SPP) under [34 CFR § 300.601](#) and the priority areas described in [34 CFR § 300.600\(d\)](#) to analyze the performance of each district. The State must report annually to the Secretary of Education on its performance on the SPP targets. Georgia's [State Performance Plan \(SPP\) and Annual Performance Report \(APR\)](#) are available on the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) webpage. Using the [SPP Indicators](#), established by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), a data collection system has been established to measure improvement on each indicator in order to make comparisons nationally and within the state. Annual targets (benchmarks) for state improvement have been set by the statewide stakeholders and the State Advisory Panel and are detailed in the SPP.

Each local school district must develop improvement plans to address the SPP indicators and improve overall district performance. Districts are expected to meet the target for every indicator. Annually, districts submit their plans for meeting the targets for each indicator on the SPP Summary Report and submit it with their budget. The GaDOE organized the SPP indicators around five overarching analysis questions as presented in [Figure 3](#). The State believes that this analysis of data is critical for special education monitoring and program improvement. All too often, districts and states focus on achieving isolated targets and/or goals; however, a comprehensive approach will yield better results for children.

Figure 3 is a conceptual framework to support compliant implementation of the IDEA; however, federal regulations and state rules are not explicitly represented in this graphic. Local school districts must review Georgia's [Special Education Rules](#) to obtain an inclusive list of all IDEA requirements. The State Advisory Panel (SAP) for Special Education, in its capacity as the statewide stakeholder committee, reviews statewide data annually. When statewide data reflect a significant need for improvement, or when federal continuous improvement monitoring so indicates, the stakeholders may recommend that all districts be required to address a specific indicator.

OSEP posts its response to the state's SPP and APR on the Ed.gov website after the determination letter is issued ([OSEP's Response to State's SPP and APR](#)).

### ***Checkpoints for Understanding***

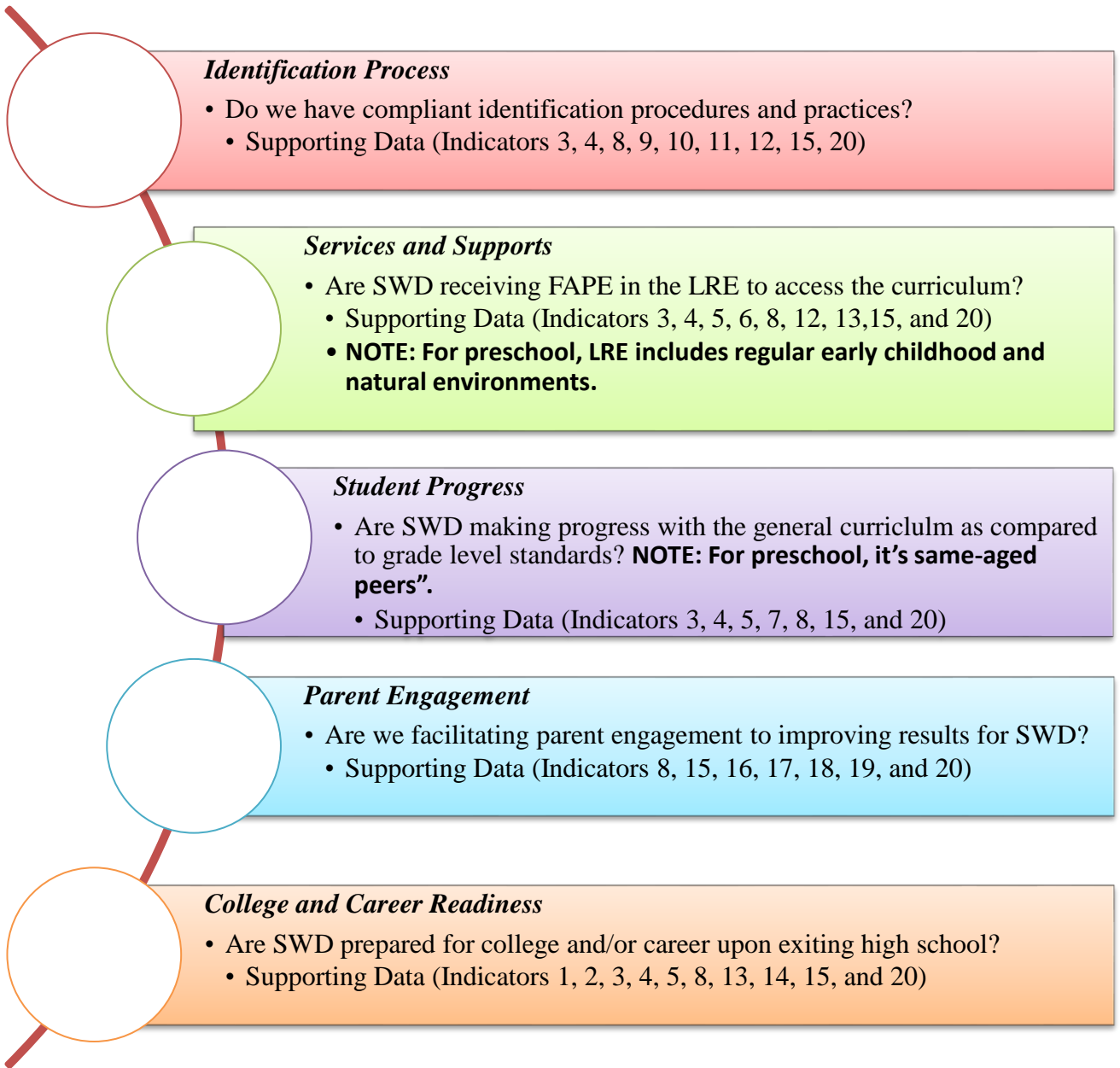
- What is the SPP and APR?
- Why does the State establish targets, and why do districts have to meet them?
- Where can I find Georgia's SPP and APR?
- What is the role of the stakeholders in the development of the SPP?

**Table 1. State Performance Plan Indicators**

<b>INDICATOR</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>
<b>1 GRADUATION RATES</b>	% of students with IEPs graduating from high school with a regular diploma.
<b>2 DROPOUT RATES</b>	% of students with IEPs dropping out of school.
<b>3 ASSESSMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. % of districts with disability subgroup that meets “n” size and make AYP.</li> <li>B. Participation rate for students with IEPs (Math and Reading/Language Arts).</li> <li>C. Proficiency rate for students with IEPs (Math and Reading) against grade level modified and alternate assessments.</li> </ul>
<b>4a SUSPENSION/EXPULSION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. % of districts with a significant discrepancy in the rate of suspensions and expulsions &gt; 10 days for students with IEPs.</li> </ul>
<b>4B SUSPENSION/EXPULSION</b>	% of districts that have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) a significant discrepancy, by race or ethnicity, in the rate of suspensions and expulsions &gt;10 days for students with IEPs, and</li> <li>(b) policies, practices, or procedures that contribute to the significant discrepancy and do not comply with requirements for the development and implementation of IEPs, use of PBIS and procedural safeguards.</li> </ul>
<b>5 LRE</b>	% of students with IEPs (6-21) served: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. in regular class 80% or more of the day.</li> <li>B. in regular class &lt;40% of the day.</li> <li>C. in separate schools, residential facilities, or homebound/hospital placement.</li> </ul>
<b>6 PRESCHOOL LRE (children 3-5 years of age)</b>	% of children aged 3 through 5 with IEPs attending a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program; and</li> <li>B. Separate special education class, separate school or residential facility.</li> </ul>
<b>7 PRESCHOOL OUTCOMES (children 3-5 years of age)</b>	% of preschool children with IEPs who demonstrated improved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. positive social-emotional skills .</li> <li>B. acquisition and use of knowledge and skills.</li> <li>C. use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.</li> </ul>
<b>8 PARENT INVOLVEMENT</b>	% of parents of students with IEPs who report that the school facilitates parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for SWD.
<b>9 DISPRO.- SP. ED.</b>	% of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services due to inappropriate identification.
<b>10 DISPRO.- CATEGORY</b>	% of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories due to inappropriate identification.
<b>11 CHILD FIND</b>	% of students who were evaluated within the 60 days of parent consent. <b>NOTE: Includes children in Indicator #12</b>
<b>12 EARLY CHILDHOOD TRANSITION (BCW Referrals ONLY)</b>	% of children referred by Part C prior to age 3, who are found eligible for Part B, and have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthday. <b>NOTE: Additionally, must be reported in Indicator #11.</b>
<b>13 SECONDARY TRANSITION</b>	% of students with IEPs aged 16 and up with an IEP that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated based upon age appropriate transition assessment;</li> <li>b. transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable student to meet the goals, and</li> <li>c. annual IEP goals related to the student’s transition services needs;</li> <li>d. includes evidence that the student and appropriate representatives from participating agencies were invited with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority.</li> </ul>
<b>14 POSTSCHOOL OUTCOMES</b>	% of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left and were (one year after leaving high school): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. enrolled in higher education (HE).</li> <li>B. enrolled in HE or competitively employed (CE).</li> <li>C. enrolled in HE or other postsecondary education or training program or CE or other employment.</li> </ul>
<b>15 GENERAL SUPERVISION</b>	District identifies and corrects noncompliance ASAP and no later than one year from identification.
<b>16 COMPLAINT TIMELINES</b>	% of signed written complaints with reports issued that were resolved within 60-day timeline or a timeline extended for exceptional circumstances or because the parent and the public agency agree to extend the time to engage in mediation or alternate dispute resolution.
<b>17 HEARING TIMELINES</b>	% of adjudicated due process hearing requests that were adjudicated within the 45-day timeline or a timeline that is properly extended by the hearing officer at the request of either party or for expedited hearing requests, within the required timeline.
<b>18 RESOLUTION SESSION</b>	% of hearing requests that went to resolution sessions that were resolved through resolution session settlement agreements.
<b>19 MEDIATION</b>	% of mediations held that resulted in mediation agreements.
<b>20 TIMELY AND ACCURATE DATA</b>	State reported data (618 and SPP/APR) are timely and accurate.



*Figure 3. Overarching Analysis Questions to Support Local General Supervision*



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## **Policies, Procedures and Effective Implementation**

States are required to have policies and procedures that are aligned with the IDEA [34 CFR § 300.100](#). Georgia's [Special Education Rules](#) support state level implementation of the IDEA. In addition to the state rules, the GaDOE outlines specific strategies in the [Special Education Implementation Manual](#). Part I of the Implementation Manual relates to the processes and best practices for implementing the Georgia Rules for Special Education; Part II focuses on the different eligibility categories.

Local school districts are responsible for developing policies and procedures and ensuring effective implementation. On the public webpage, the GaDOE has provided [Sample Special Education Forms](#), which may be used by local districts to support compliant practices. Additional information about local procedures is included in the section on [District General Supervision](#).

***Stakeholder Participation*** - The [State Advisory Panel](#) (SAP) for Special Education serves as an advisory group to the GaDOE, Division for Special Education Services and Supports, on issues related to special education and related services for students with disabilities (SWD).

***State Stakeholders Responsibilities*** - The SAP was developed to serve as the stakeholder committee for state activities concerning SWD. Members of Georgia's State Advisory Panel may include the following stakeholders: parents of children with disabilities; individuals with disabilities; state and local education officials; state and local agency representatives; general and special education school administrators and teachers; advocacy groups; representatives of institutions of higher education that prepare special education and related services personnel; representatives of private schools and charter schools; representatives of vocational, community, and business organizations concerned with the provision of transition services to youth with disabilities; and representatives of state juvenile and corrections agencies.

The SAP has many duties under the IDEA. One important role is to function as stakeholders for the Georgia's Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (GCIMP) and work in partnership with GaDOE's Division of Special Education Services and Supports to improve results for Georgia's SWD. The SAP participates in the annual review and revision of the [State Performance Plan \(SPP\) and Annual Performance Report \(APR\)](#). This includes participation in the development of state targets, the review of data of improvement activities, and making suggestions for updates to the activities and targets. They also participate in the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process by recommending target areas for upcoming monitoring activities.

Local school districts are also required to assemble a stakeholder committee to participate in the local improvement planning process for special education. Additional information about the local stakeholder committee is included in the section on [District General Supervision](#).

***Interagency Agreements*** – The GaDOE maintains interagency agreements with agencies outside of the Department that are necessary for the ongoing collaboration and commitment that will ultimately improve outcomes for SWD. Interagency agreements serve a critical role specific to

effective transitions for children with disabilities such as with the Department of Public Health/[Babies Can't Wait](#) (IDEA Part C-*birth to three years of age*), [Bright from the Start/Department of Early Care and Learning](#), and [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families](#) (*birth to five years of age*). Also, the transition to post school environments is another critical time for effective collaboration with outside agencies. The State of Georgia Transition Steering Committee (*16 to 22 years of age*) brings together a variety of stakeholders who are supporting youth with disabilities so they can have better post-secondary outcomes and be college and career ready.

### ***Checkpoints for Understanding***

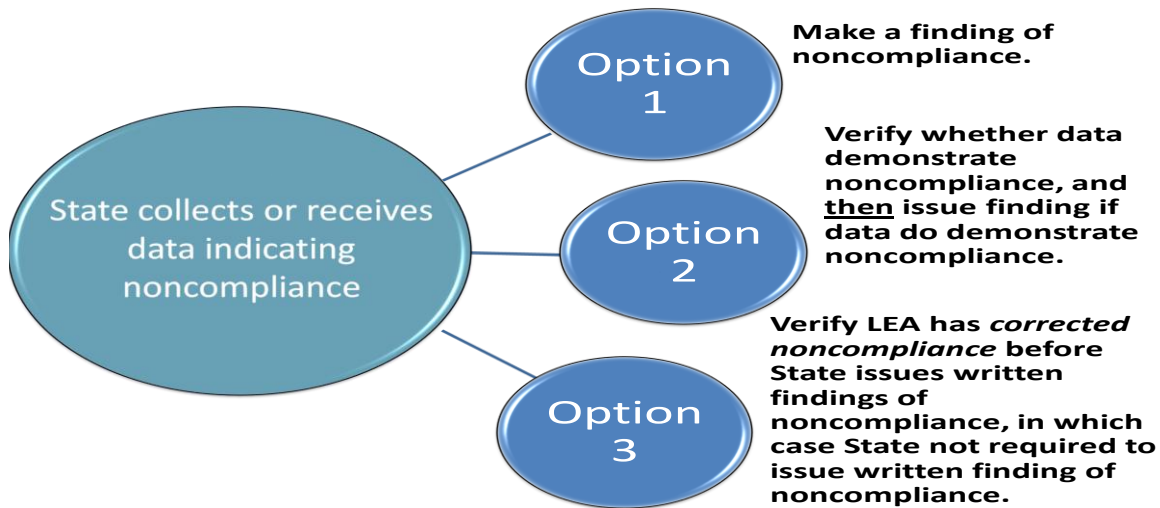
- How do states implement IDEA Regulations?
- What policies and procedures are developed by GaDOE, and where are they found?
- What are the responsibilities of local districts?
- What are the roles of stakeholders in policy and procedure development on both the state and local district level? Who are these stakeholders?
- What agencies are involved in interagency agreements, and what is their purpose?

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## Integrated Monitoring Activities

Georgia has integrated monitoring activities which enable the State to (1) identify noncompliance using a variety of sources and systemic issues with results, (2) ensure correction of the noncompliance in a timely manner, (3) verify valid and reliable data, and (4) ensure consistency with the requirements set forth in [OSEP Memorandum 09-02](#). Figure 4 outlines the specific options used by SEAs to make a finding for a local school district. Some integrated monitoring activities are conducted onsite in the local school district while other activities may involve a desk audit or review data by the Department.

**Figure 4. Findings of Noncompliance**



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Fidelity of compliant practices is enforced by using a tiered monitoring system that enables the State to “monitor” all districts every year. Monitoring can be defined as “a continuing function or operation that uses systematic collection and analysis of data on specified indicators to provide management and stakeholders with indications of the extent of progress and achievement of targets and progress in continuous improvement” [National Center for Special Education Accountability Monitoring (NCSEAM), [Issues of General Supervision and the Annual Performance Report](#)].

**Tiered Monitoring System** - Georgia’s tiered system for monitoring district data is depicted in [Figure 5](#). Tier 1 procedures are implemented for all districts in the state to enforce compliance and improve results. Tier 2 procedures are consistently implemented for a targeted group of districts, which are either triggered by Tier 1 data or the State’s monitoring cycle. Tier 3 procedures are implemented for a targeted group of districts and differentiated to meet their compliance and/or performance needs, which are either triggered by the previous tier’s data or the state’s monitoring cycle. In most instances, Tier 3 monitoring activities are conducted onsite. Typically, Tier 4’s monitoring activities are implemented for a limited number of districts that demonstrate a need for intensive supports to timely correct noncompliance and/or improve results. All monitoring activities provide the State with evidence of local policies, procedures, and/or practices. Brief descriptors of these monitoring activities are included in [Table 2](#).

***Student Record Reviews*** – Student record reviews for due process procedural compliance are a component of Georgia’s Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (GCIMP) to meet the state’s general supervision responsibility. Selected districts will be notified in advance of the review. A random selection of student records that represents various disabilities, grade levels, schools, teachers, and related service providers, including the students attending state schools, GNETS, and residential programs, will be included in the review.

This data is needed for Indicator 15 in the State Performance Plan and is reported annually in the Annual Performance Report. The GaDOE reserves the right to request additional records if the findings warrant additional documentation.

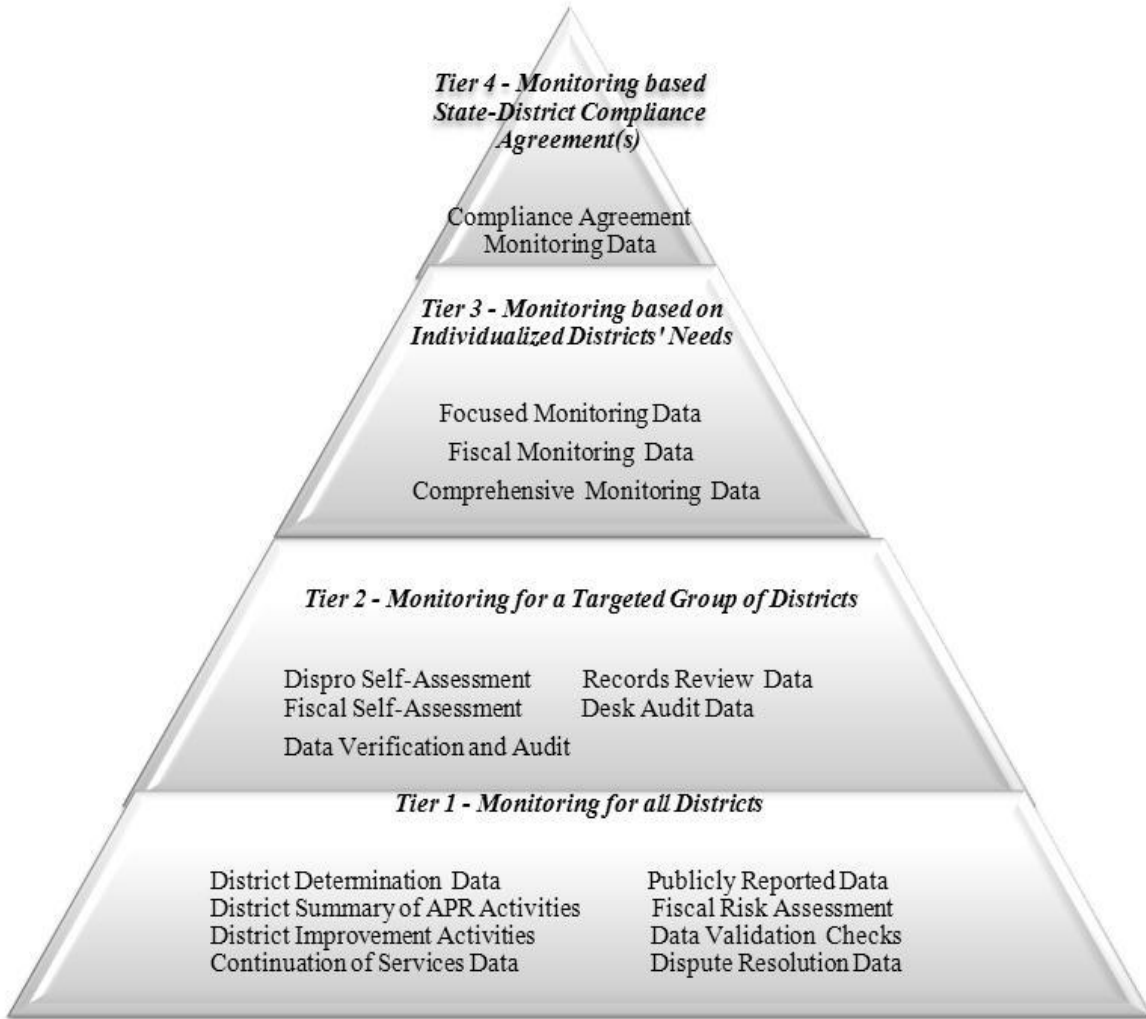
Procedural item(s) found in noncompliance during the record review will be identified as noncompliance. The district will have up to one year to correct the noncompliance. For annual determinations and other data reports, noncompliance for a district is reported in Indicator 15 if a district fails to correct the noncompliance within one year.

Within one year from the on-site record review, the district will submit requested student records to the Division to document that the noncompliant issues have been corrected. Requested records will consist of a two-prong method required by OSEP. In Prong 1 districts correct each individual case of noncompliance and in Prong 2 districts correctly implement the specific regulatory requirements, based on the GaDOE’s review of updated data to ensure systemic changes in all student records.

In some instances, districts may need to review policies, procedures and practices. Districts that fail to meet compliance criteria within one year may be subject to sanctions from the GaDOE.

Student record reviews are also a component of general supervision such as complaint investigations and the Active Engagement process.

**Figure 5. Tiered System for Monitoring Districts for Special Education General Supervision**





**Table 2. Brief Descriptors of Tiered Monitoring Activities**

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Type of Monitoring</b>	<b>Brief Descriptor</b>
<b>Tier 1</b>	Continuation of Services Data	Self-reported data/information that all districts provide to verify that services have been continued for student with disabilities (SWD) who were suspended more than 10 days.
<b>Tier 1</b>	Data Validation Checks	District data must pass data validation checks before formally submitting the data to the State. These data validations are supported by business rules to ensure accuracy.
<b>Tier 1</b>	Dispute Resolution Data	Processes guaranteed to families of SWD under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): (1) Complaints, (2) Mediation and (3) Due Process Hearing.
<b>Tier 1</b>	<a href="#">District Determination</a> Data	The State makes annual Determinations for districts based on the previous year's data. The Determinations are divided into four categories: (1) meets requirement, (2) needs assistance, (3) needs intervention, and (4) needs substantial intervention.
<b>Tier 1</b>	District Improvement Activities	Districts provide information about their improvement activities to support compliant practices and improve results for SWD. This information is submitted via the consolidated application.
<b>Tier 1</b>	District Summary of APR Activities	Districts use a state-generated template to report a summary of its districts performance and improvement activities for each indicator.
<b>Tier 1</b>	Fiscal Risk Assessments	The State completes a risk assessment for each district every year to determine those districts that have high risk and require program and/or fiscal monitoring (i.e., assignment of points to specific elements by the Division for SPED and FBO). 0-25 = low risk; 26-100 = medium risk; greater than 101 = high risk
<b>Tier 1</b>	Publicly Reported Data	Data that are collected and reported on the public webpage for all districts.

<i>Monitoring Tier</i>	<i>Type of Monitoring</i>	<i>Brief Descriptor</i>
<i>Tier 2</i>	Data Verification & Audits	The State identifies a sampling of districts to verify and/or audit data. Various criteria are used to select the sampling such as high risk factors. The sampling of districts must provide appropriate documentation to support valid and accurate data reporting practices.
<i>Tier 2</i>	Desk Audits Data	Any review of data/information from a selected district that a member of the Division for SPED conducts at the office without visiting the district onsite.
<i>Tier 2</i>	<a href="#"><u>Disproportionality Self-Assessment Monitoring Protocol</u></a>	A Protocol administered by the state to specific districts that have been determined to have disproportionality. Information from review of data and other pertinent documentation are used to inform identification of noncompliance.
<i>Tier 2</i>	Records Review Data	Onsite reviews for a sampling of districts to evaluate due process procedural compliance. The State determines which districts will be reviewed in a given year and notifies districts approximately one month prior to the onsite visit.
<i>Tier 2</i>	Fiscal Self-Assessment	Districts that receive a records review must also complete a Fiscal Self-Assessment. The Fiscal Manager reviews this information and requests additional documentation, as needed. Noncompliance could be a result of this review.
<i>Tier 3</i>	Comprehensive Monitoring Data	An onsite monitoring in which there is a multidisciplinary team to address multiple systemic concerns. For example, the Division for SPED may compose a multidisciplinary team of special educators to address multiple compliance and/or performance concerns in one onsite visit. Another example is the collaboration between the Division for SPED and the Division for School Improvement for GAPSS visits. Schools are selected for monitoring based on AYP status and receive visits from multidisciplinary teams.
<i>Tier 3</i>	Focused Monitoring Data	The State conducts onsite monitoring for a sampling of districts determined to have the greatest opportunity for improvement based on a review of data. Districts are compared to other districts within their size groups.

<i>Monitoring Tier</i>	<i>Type of Monitoring</i>	<i>Brief Descriptor</i>
<i>Tier 3</i>	Fiscal Monitoring Data	Monitoring of local districts that the state determines have high risk programs. LEAs with a score greater than 101 points on the risk assessment are determined to be high risk. A Fiscal Monitoring could be conducted for additional districts, as needed.
<i>Tier 4</i>	Compliance Agreement Monitoring Data	Monitoring of a specific district that requires specialized and/or intensive monitoring and technical assistance to correct its noncompliance.

*Checkpoints for Understanding*

- What are Georgia’s four tiers for monitoring district data?
- For what reason does Georgia use an integrated monitoring process?
- What three options does the GaDOE have when there are findings of noncompliance?
- How would a director know which tier his/her district falls in and how they got there?

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## **Fiscal Management**

IDEA funds are provided for the excess cost of special education and related services for students with disabilities. IDEA funds are intended to supplement and not supplant state, local or other federal funds. The [Education Department General Administrative Regulations \(EDGAR\)](#), Parts 76 and 80 and the [Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\) Circulars](#) A-87 and A-133 set forth the funding application and fiscal management requirements for states and subgrantees (LEAs) receiving federal education funds.

Georgia's system of general supervision includes a process to provide oversight in the distribution and use of IDEA funds at the state and local level by using the following processes to ensure requirements are met:

1. Review and approve the annual Special Education Plan and budget within the Consolidated Application.
2. Issue grant awards specifying the purpose of funds, grant award period and general/specific assurances signed by the LEAs after the Special Education Plan is approved.
3. Review and approve of additional items within the Program Information section of the Consolidated Application and required uploads (see [Consolidated Application Guidance](#)).
4. Review and approve budget amendments when required by EDGAR and GaDOE budget procedures.
5. Review online LEA financial data reports extracted from Grants Accounting Online Reporting System (GAORS), located in the GaDOE Portal, periodically.
6. Monitor expenditure of funds and notifications to LEAs prior to the end of the obligation and liquidation period to ensure funds are spent.
7. Require an annual audit in accordance with the Single Audit Act (OMB Circular A-133).

In addition, the following general supervision mechanisms are used:

**Special Education Maintenance of Effort (MOE) for LEAs** - According to the IDEA, Sec.613 (A)(iii), and federal regulation 34 CFR § 300.203, States must ensure that all LEAs expend for the education of children with disabilities in local and state funds, an amount which is at least the same in total or per capita, as the amount spent in the most recent fiscal year for which information is available. This is known as Maintenance of Effort, or MOE. Georgia monitors MOE for all LEAs annually to determine if they are spending the same amount or more of local only or local and state funds on special education services as they did in the previous fiscal year. Any LEA identified as not meeting this requirement must submit a written statement explaining the cause of the discrepancy and describe the corrective action steps to be taken. Georgia continues to monitor these LEAs to ensure that funds are utilized according to federal requirements.

**Fiscal Reviews** – Federal regulations and general supervision administrative procedures require the SEA to monitor high risk programs ([Special Ed Directors Handbook](#)). Georgia utilizes the Fiscal Review process to focus specifically on how LEAs use their special education funds to improve results for children and youth with disabilities. The Fiscal Review is conducted during an IDEA On-Site Review and is completed by personnel from Georgia DOE. The Fiscal Review

addresses the use of federal flow-through funds and/or state funds designated for students disabilities and consists of the following components:

- **Statement of Account Review:** Georgia verifies that the district's financial report matches the Final Expenditure Report data submitted in the Consolidated Application.
- **Payroll Expenditure Review:** Georgia verifies that the district: charges IDEA payroll expenses to a fund source with valid function and object codes and it documents time and effort. Georgia verifies that the district's special education staff is properly licensed to educate students with disabilities.
- **Non-Payroll Expenditure Review:** Georgia verifies that the district charges IDEA non-payroll expenses to valid fund, function and object codes; documents expenditures per district procurement policy (purchase orders, invoices, bids, etc.); and justifies that the service or item purchased will support the education of students with disabilities. Georgia also verifies that the district has expended IDEA funds on behalf of eligible students who attend private schools and has a contract or a memorandum of understanding in place for all students with disabilities placed out of the district by the district.
- **Equipment/Capital Outlay Expenditure Review:** Georgia verifies that the district has in place and follows an equipment/capital outlay procurement policy. Georgia also verifies that the district has expended IDEA funds on behalf of students who attend private/home schools.
- **Child Find for Area: Chartered and Private/Home Schools:** Georgia verifies that the district maintains records of the number of children attending chartered nonpublic schools within the boundaries of the LEA who were evaluated for special education services, number of children attending area nonpublic schools determined to be students with disabilities, and the total number of children attending area private schools (both children with disabilities and those without). Georgia also verifies that the district holds timely consultation with area private and home schools by reviewing data in the Consolidated Application.
- **Public Participation Verification:** Georgia verifies that the state provides parents and other interested persons/organizations with adequate notice of a public hearing to provide comment on how the state plans to spend its IDEA funds at a State Board of Education Meeting.
- **Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS):** Georgia verifies whether the district voluntarily opted to redirect IDEA funds for CEIS and reported on the high risk students served. Required CEIS LEAs maximum 15% amounts are verified as well as students served.
- **Proportionate Share:** Georgia's Consolidated Application has a section to account for the number of students with disabilities who attend private/home schools. Georgia verifies this number as well as visits these schools to verify eligibility and services provided by the LEA.

Georgia issues a report of findings to the LEA as part of the On-Site Fiscal Review process. The report details the areas reviewed, findings of noncompliance and any corrective action that the LEA must complete as soon as possible but within one year of the report's date (including the reimbursement of funds, if warranted).

### *Checkpoints for Understanding*

- How are IDEA funds used?
- What items are monitored in the Fiscal Review?
- What is Maintenance of Effort (MOE)?

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## Data on Processes and Results

As a part of a state's general supervision responsibilities, data are used for decision making about program management and improvement. This process includes:

- (1) Data collection and verification,
- (2) Data examination and analysis,
- (3) Public reporting of data,
- (4) Status determination, and
- (5) Improvement activities.

(1) **Data Collection and Verification** - IDEA requires that data are collected from LEAs through a state-reported data collection system and reported in the Annual Performance Report (APR). To effectively use these data, LEAs must regularly update the data, and the state must routinely examine the collected data. The reporting requirements for state level collections and data element definitions are located on the [Data Collections page](#) of the GaDOE webpage. Additional information about the Special Education Reports and Due Dates are included in the section titled, Annual GaDOE Active Engagement Plan.

The state uses the data, as well as information from other sources; such as other state-collected data, patterns, and trends in dispute resolution data and previous findings, to evaluate the performance of the state and the LEAs on the State Performance Plan (SPP) indicators. These data are also useful in identifying the LEAs in need of monitoring, especially when these data can be compared across SPP/APR indicators.

It is important for states to ensure that the data collected from the LEAs are accurate, as well as submitted in a timely manner. Accuracy has multiple levels, including that the data follow rules of entry or submission and that they reflect actual practice. States must develop multiple methods of verifying data accuracy. Data should be compared over time and disaggregated to levels that identify possible problems in validity and reliability.

- (2) **Data Examination and Analysis** – The state examines data in a variety of ways to identify and determine patterns and trends. Related indicators are clustered to see whether relationships exist. Cross-indicator examinations are critical in determining “connections” among indicators and should always be considered while planning improvement activities e.g., Part B graduation with test performance, dropout rates.
- (3) **Public Reporting of Data** - The State's performance plan, under [34 CFR § 300.601\(a\)](#); annual performance reports, under paragraph (b)(2) of this section; and the State's annual reports on the performance of each LEA located in the State, under paragraph (b)(1)(i)(A) of this section. In doing so, the State must, at a minimum, post the plan and reports on the GaDOE's web site, and distribute the plan and reports to the media and through public agencies [34 CFR § 300.602](#).

Each year, Special Education Due Dates are posted to build capacity for LEAs to report timely and accurate data. Additional information about the Special Education Reports and Due Dates are included in the section titled, [Annual GaDOE Active Engagement Plan](#). GaDOE provides information about state level reporting practices for the SPP indicators in the [About the Special Education Services and Supports Annual Reports](#).

This includes data sources and methods of calculation. In addition to this report, GaDOE has a [public reporting webpage](#). The viewer should select the “Special Education” tab on the left side of the page to view state-level data. The viewer may either select the “District Index” or the “School Index” at the top of the page to view other types of public reports.

**(4) Status Determination** - Based on the information contained in data reports, information obtained through monitoring visits and other public information, OSEP determines if a state Meets Requirements; Needs Assistance, Needs Intervention, or Needs Substantial Intervention. The IDEA (34 CFR § 300.600) requires that states review the data of each local district to evaluate their performance in meeting requirements and purposes of the IDEA. After a review of the data, states are required to make determinations on whether districts: Meet Requirements; Need Assistance; Need Intervention; or Need Substantial Intervention. The GaDOE, Division for Special Education Services and Supports, adopted a new Determination Rubric for FY12 that was based on compliance indicators and a district’s MOE status, both are indicated below.

- Indicator 4 B: Rates of Suspension and Expulsion
- Indicator 9: Disproportionate Representation of Racial and Ethnic Groups in Special Education and Related Services
- Indicator 10: Disproportionate Representation of Racial and Ethnic Groups in Specific Disability Categories
- Indicator 11: Initial Evaluations (Child Find) completed within 60 days
- Indicator 12: Part C to Part B Transitions (Early Childhood Transitions)
- Indicator 13: Measurable Postsecondary Goals for Transition
- Indicator 15: Timely Correction of Noncompliance
- Indicator 20: Timely and Accurate Data
- MOE

**(5) Improvement Activities** – Through the state’s improvement plan activities in the SPP and data from the examination of LEA performance; ongoing state activities are used for program improvement and progress measurement. States also coordinate Elementary and Secondary Education Act school improvement activities with SPP improvement activities. Technical assistance activities, designed to address the needs of each individual LEA, are based on data that are collected.

Evidence that the data on processes and results component is part of a state’s or an LEA’s system of general supervision includes:

- Data are collected as required under the IDEA and by the U.S. Secretary of Education.
- Data are routinely collected throughout the year.
- The LEAs submit data in a timely and accurate manner.
- Data are available from multiple sources and used to examine performance of the LEAs. States make determinations on the status of the LEAs addressing the requirements specified by the OSEP.
- Verification of data is achieved through multiple methods and activities.
- Routine examination of data at the state and local level is current and compared to previous years.

- Data collected through monitoring activities are summarized to examine cross years' patterns and trends.
- State reports are accurate and timely.
- State includes multiple measures of status in their determination decisions.
- Data are used to determine appropriate activities to assist LEAs and the state in meeting targets.
- Data are used to target and maximize technical assistance and professional development, as well as state resources.

### *Checkpoints for Understanding*

- Referencing the 2012 Annual Reports document on the [About the Special Education Services and Supports Annual Reports](#) webpage, describe the calculation methods and data sources for each of the 20 SPP/APR indicators.
- Identify the five steps that should be used to provide evidence that the “Data on Processes and Results” component is part of the System of General Supervision.
- What indicators are used to make district determinations in the new FY12 District Determination Rubric?

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## **District Determinations**

Based on the data in each District profile, information obtained through monitoring visits, and any other public information, the Georgia Department of Education will determine if each local school District: Meets Requirements; Needs Assistance; Needs Intervention; or Needs Substantial Intervention. Determinations will be made annually and superintendents notified. Determination should enable Districts to develop improvement activities and to incorporate those improvement activities into the LEA Implementation Plans. In addition to indicator data, other factors will be considered, including:

- The progress, over time, the District has made toward meeting State targets
- Monitoring status, if applicable
- Activities documented in LEA Implementation Plans
- Fiscal Monitoring
- Areas of identified noncompliance

### **Meets Requirements**

Factors the State will consider in determining whether a District meets the requirements and purposes of IDEA include the following:

- The District demonstrates compliance on the required compliance indicators.
  - Meets state target for the following indicators: 4B, 9, 10, 15, and Maintenance of Effort and
  - Meets substantial compliance for 3 out of the 4 following indicators: 11, 12, 13, and 20

### **Needs Assistance**

If the district doesn't demonstrate both criteria outlined above, then the district is identified as Needs Assistance Year 1.

After the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of not meeting requirements, the district is identified as Needs Assistance Year 2.

When a District is determined to *Need Assistance* for the first year, the State will take the following action:

- The District will be required to review and revise the LEA Implementation Plan to address areas needing improvement.
- Advise the District of available sources of technical assistance to address the areas needing improvement.

When a District is determined to *Need Assistance* for two consecutive years, the State will take one or more of the following actions:

- Require the District to revise the LEA Implementation Plan to include the technical assistance activities to address areas of need.
- Direct the use of District funds to address areas of need.

### **Needs Intervention**

If the district has not met requirements for three consecutive years, then the district would be identified as needs intervention.

When a District is determined to *Need Intervention*, the State will take one or more of the following actions:

- Require the District to use identified sources of technical assistance to address the area(s) needing intervention.
- Require the District to revise the LEA Implementation Plan to include activities to address areas needing intervention and report data on improvement activities.
- Direct the use of District funds to address the problem area(s).
- On-site Compliance monitoring focused on the area needing intervention.
- Require the District to develop a data based specific Compliance Agreement to correct identified areas.
- Delay or withhold, in whole or in part, IDEA funds to District.

### **Needs Substantial Intervention**

After four consecutive years of *not meeting requirements* or at any time the State determines that a District *Needs Substantial Intervention* in implementing the requirements of IDEA, the District will be designated as needing substantial intervention.

If the State determines that a District *Needs Substantial Intervention*, in addition to all previous activities, the following action will be taken:

- Withhold, in whole or in part, IDEA and State funds to District.

**FY12 District Determination: 2010-2011 Data**  
**District Name**

Indicator	Meets Target	Meets Substantial Compliance	Indicator Status
<p align="center"><b>*Indicator 4 B</b>  <b>Rates of suspension and expulsion</b>  <u>Note: District does not meet target if policies, practices and procedures were identified as noncompliant.</u></p>	<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/>            If "No" <u>Indicator Status</u> "No"</p>		<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/>            If "No" Does Not Meet Requirements</p>
<p align="center"><b>*Indicator 9</b>  <b>Disproportionate Representation of Racial and Ethnic Groups in Special Education and Related Services</b>  <u>Note: District does not meet target if policies, practices and procedures were identified as noncompliant.</u></p>	<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/>            If "No" <u>Indicator Status</u> "No"</p>		<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/>            If "No" Does Not Meet Requirements</p>
<p align="center"><b>*Indicator 10</b>  <b>Disproportionate Representation of Racial and Ethnic Groups in Specific Disability Categories</b>  <u>Note: District does not meet target if policies, practices and procedures were identified as noncompliant.</u></p>	<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/>            If "No" <u>Indicator Status</u> "No"</p>		<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/>            If "No" Does Not Meet Requirements</p>
<p align="center"><b>*Indicator 15</b>  <b>General Supervision</b>  <u>Note: District does not meet target if identified noncompliance is not corrected within one year</u></p>	<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/>            If "No" <u>Indicator Status</u> "No"</p>		<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/>            If "No" Does Not Meet Requirements</p>
<p align="center"><b>*Maintenance of Effort (MOE) for FY10</b>  <u>Note: District does not meet target if required to pay the difference in non-federal funds</u></p>	<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/>            If "No" <u>Indicator Status</u> "No"</p>		<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/>            If "No" Does Not Meet Requirements</p>



**FY12 District Determination: 2010-2011 Data**  
**District Name**

<p align="center"><b>Indicator 11</b>  <b>Initial evaluations (Child Find) completed within 60 days</b></p>	<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p align="center">If "Yes" <u>Indicator Status</u> "Yes"          If "No" Move to Meets Substantial Compliance Col          ⇒</p>	<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p align="center"><b>95% Substantial Compliance</b>          If "Yes" <u>Indicator Status</u> "Yes"          If "No" <u>Indicator Status</u> "No"          ⇒</p>	<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p align="center"><b>Indicator 12</b>  <b>Part C to Part B Transitions (Early Childhood Transitions)</b></p>	<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p align="center">If "Yes" <u>Indicator Status</u> "Yes"          If "No" Move to Meets Substantial Compliance Column ⇒</p>	<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p align="center"><b>95% Substantial Compliance</b>          If "Yes" <u>Indicator Status</u> "Yes"          If "No" <u>Indicator Status</u> "No" ⇒</p>	<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p align="center"><b>Indicator 13</b>  <b>Measurable Postsecondary Goals for Transition</b></p>	<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p align="center">If "Yes" <u>Indicator Status</u> "Yes"          If "No" Move to Meets Substantial Compliance Column          ⇒</p>	<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p align="center"><b>75% Substantial Compliance</b>          If "Yes" <u>Indicator Status</u> "Yes"          If "No" <u>Indicator Status</u> "No" ⇒</p>	<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p align="center"><b>Indicator 20</b>  <b>Timely and Accurate Data</b></p>	<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p align="center">If "Yes" <u>Indicator Status</u> "Yes"          If "No" Move to Meets Substantial Compliance Column          ⇒</p>	<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p align="center"><b>85% Substantial Compliance</b>          If "Yes" <u>Indicator Status</u> "Yes"          If "No" <u>Indicator Status</u> "No" ⇒</p>	<p align="center">Yes <input type="checkbox"/>      No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

**\*The district must receive a "Yes" in the required areas to Meets Requirements.**

**FY12 District Determination: 2010-2011 Data**  
**District Name**

<b>Overall District Determination</b>	<b>Total Indicators Met by District:</b> _____ out of 5 Required Areas; Indicators 4b, 9, 10, 15 and MOE	<b>In order to Meet Requirements a District Must:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet ALL 5 of the Required Areas: Indicators 4b, 9, 10, 15 and MOE</li> </ul> <p align="center"><b>AND</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet 3 out of the 4 Additional Areas: Indicators 11, 12, 13, and 20</li> </ul>	<b>FY12 District Determination</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Meet Requirements</b>  <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Did not Meet Requirements (Enter Level)</b> _____
	_____ out of 4 Additional Areas; Indicators 11, 12, 13, and 20		

District Determination Summary			
FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
Meets Requirements <input type="checkbox"/>	Meets Requirements <input type="checkbox"/>	Meets Requirements <input type="checkbox"/>	Meets Requirements <input type="checkbox"/>
Needs Assistance <input type="checkbox"/>	Needs Assistance <input type="checkbox"/>	Needs Assistance <input type="checkbox"/>	Needs Assistance <input type="checkbox"/>
Needs Intervention <input type="checkbox"/>	Needs Intervention <input type="checkbox"/>	Needs Intervention <input type="checkbox"/>	Needs Intervention <input type="checkbox"/>
Needs Substantial Intervention <input type="checkbox"/>	Needs Substantial Intervention <input type="checkbox"/>	Needs Substantial Intervention <input type="checkbox"/>	Needs Substantial Intervention <input type="checkbox"/>

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## **Incentives, Improvement and Corrections, and Sanctions**

**Incentives** - Districts are recognized annually for their performance on state performance goals and indicators. Recognition occurs when the district achieves one of the following goals: (1) meets the state target; (2) exhibits the highest performance on the goal in their enrollment size group; and (3) demonstrates the most improvement for a specific indicator. The district superintendent receives a letter and a certificate recognizing the district's accomplishments. The Pacesetter Award is presented to one district from each size group with the highest performance in the most performance indicators.

**Improvement and Corrections** – If the State issues a finding of noncompliance for the LEA, then the districts must correct the noncompliance, as soon as possible, but no later than one year from the written notification.

The LEA must identify the root cause of the area(s) of noncompliance and develop a Corrective Action Plan (CAP). Georgia implements a universal CAP to address noncompliance related to the federal IDEA requirements, which must include SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound) action steps with specific timelines and evidence of correction. Pending the level and nature of the noncompliance, the GaDOE may allow local school districts to address the corrective actions without developing a CAP.

The district must begin to address corrective actions immediately; however, the CAP is due to the state within 45 days of the written notification. Upon review, the State will either accept the CAP or return the CAP with comments for modifications. A CAP must be resubmitted until it is approved. The LEA must implement the CAP with fidelity and complete the appropriate verification processes to demonstrate timely correction.

**Sanctions** - When districts fail to correct their noncompliance within one year, one or more sanctions may be implemented. An official letter is sent to the district superintendent requesting a technical assistance meeting to outline terms for a Compliance Agreement between the state and LEA. The Compliance Agreement includes more frequent monitoring and reviews of the documentation required to clear compliance. In addition, onsite monitoring may occur. The GaDOE may direct the district to spend funds on specific activities designed to bring the district into compliance. If the LEA has not met compliance after sanctions have been implemented, the GaDOE may elect not to release state or federal funds until compliance is met. In the event that the GaDOE proposes to delay funds, the LEA has the opportunity to request a hearing.

### *Checkpoints for Understanding*

- How are districts recognized?
- When districts are cited for noncompliance, how is the corrective action plan developed?
- In what ways can a district be sanctioned?

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## Effective Dispute Resolution

The GaDOE ensures that SWDs receive specific [dispute resolution](#) processes as required under the IDEA: (1) a formal complaint, (2) mediation, and (3) a due process hearing. The GaDOE provides technical assistance for local school districts and families about the [Parents' Rights](#). When the results of formal complaints and due process hearings result in findings that require actions on the part of the district, it is the responsibility of the GaDOE to ensure that mandated actions have been completed. The follow-up of required actions is a component of continuous improvement monitoring. In addition, districts that have a disproportionate amount of complaints or due process hearings will be reviewed by the GaDOE. [Due Process Hearing Decisions](#) are posted on the Department's public webpage.

***Formal Complaints*** - A formal complaint is a written signed complaint alleging the violation of IDEA procedures or a violation of State Special Education Rules. Any organization or individual may file a signed written complaint. The complaint must include a statement that a public agency has violated a requirement of IDEA, the facts on which the complaint statement is based, and suggested resolutions to the complaint issue.

1. Upon receipt of the written complaint, GaDOE contacts and forwards a copy of the complaint to the LEA.
2. The LEA must submit a written response to the State and send a copy of the response to the person filing the complaint. The State requests that the LEA provide this response within ten days of receiving the official complaint letter from the State.
3. GaDOE conducts an investigation to confirm details and to get clarification of the issues. The investigation may include interviews with the parties, on-site visits, and other activities as indicated by the nature of the allegation. The State gives the complainant the opportunity to submit additional information in writing about the allegations of the complaint once it has reviewed the response from the LEA.
4. The State issues a written decision within 60 days to the district and complainant that addresses each allegation in the complaint, the findings of fact, and the conclusions. If there is a violation of the law or regulations, then a resolution is required that may include technical assistance activities or corrective actions to achieve compliance.

The State investigates complaints as part of the GCIMP. When concerns cannot be resolved through written correspondence, an onsite visit may be scheduled to gather additional information focusing on the complaint issue(s). After the written decision is issued to the district and the complainant, follow-up activities by the GaDOE to verify compliance are conducted. If procedural or compliance issues (unrelated to the complaint) should be identified during the course of the complaint investigation, a correction plan with timelines is required.

***Mediation*** - When the parent(s) and district disagree about the education of a student with a disability, either party may request mediation. The GaDOE has a set of mediators under contract. When mediation is requested, a mediator will be assigned from that list. Additional about Georgia's mediation process can be found on the public webpage.

[Due Process Hearings](#) - An impartial due process hearing is designed to provide an opportunity to resolve differences between concerned parties in the identification, evaluation, placement, or provision of a free and appropriate public education for a student with a disability. A hearing may be requested by either the school district or the family when the parties cannot agree and other means of dispute resolution have not been successful.

1. When a request for a due process hearing is made, the school district is required to schedule an Early Resolution Session, unless both parties agree in writing to waive this requirement.
2. If both parties waive participation in the Early Resolution Session, the option of mediation should be offered to provide an additional opportunity for the parents and the school district to resolve the dispute prior to the hearing.
3. If an Early Resolution Session is held, the meeting must be scheduled within 15 days of the due process hearing request.
4. If an agreement is reached, a written settlement is developed and signed by the system and family. The agreement is binding in state or system court after a 3-day review period.
5. When a due process hearing is conducted, the decision must be issued within 45 days of the request for a hearing. Due process hearings are conducted by the Office of State Administrative Hearings (OSAH). A hearing decision is legally binding to both parties and compliance is mandatory.

Due process hearings are designed to provide all concerned parties an opportunity to resolve differences. Once the hearing decision has been made, the State must review the decision for any noted procedural or other violations of the IDEA. The State will issue a letter to the system when there are findings that mandate required corrective actions whether or not specified by the hearing decision. The State is responsible for verification of the completion of the required corrective action through written correspondence and/or an on-site visit. As with complaint investigations, if any due process procedural or compliance issues (unrelated to the hearing decision) should be identified, a correction plan with timelines is written.

For additional resources, visit the [National Center on Dispute Resolution in Special Education](#)

### *Checkpoints for Understanding*

- Identify different types of dispute resolution processes.
- Describe and tell the difference between the formal complaint, mediation, and due process hearings.
- Explain the district responsibility in the different dispute resolution processes.

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## Targeted Technical Assistance and Professional Learning

GaDOE must establish and maintain qualifications to ensure that personnel necessary to carry out IDEA are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, including that those personnel have the content knowledge and skills to serve children with disabilities [34 CFR § 300.156](#).

GaDOE provides ongoing technical assistance that is linked to the indicators and improvement activities as outlined in the State Performance Plan (SPP). The State's comprehensive approach to technical assistance enables the Department to differentiate the scope of services provided for districts based on local needs. For example, the GaDOE makes available for all districts Technical Assistance (TA), such as professional learning for State Rules, monthly meetings with local districts, webinars to support compliant implementation of the IDEA, weekly updates via email, monthly directors' webinars, the Special Education Implementation Manual, and special education sample forms.

TA provides a framework for LEAs to build their general supervision. Basic TA is a facilitation for change and includes providing documentation of evidence-based practices and disseminating examples of success to assist others in planning, implementation and use of tools to achieve positive outcomes. TA ranges from general levels, such as the state providing an overview/review of best practices and/or general TA to the Targeted Technical Assistance (TTA). TTA would include more focused levels of support such as the state directing root cause analysis and monitoring of CAP development and correction. Successful TTA requires an ongoing negotiated and collaborative relationship. TTA should include a purposeful, planned series of activities that result in changes to policy, program, or operations that support increased capacity at the state/system/school levels. TTA should have a laser focus on purpose and outcomes as well as considerable depth, breadth, coherence and energy [[Fixen et al., State Implementation and Scaling-Up of Evidence-based Practices \(SISEP\), 2009](#)].

Professional Learning (PL) also runs along a continuum at a basic level in providing general information to a more targeted and intensive PL which is job embedded, data driven school improvement in LEAs, schools and classrooms. Successful research based PL involves system commitment to a multi-year process of improvement. [National PL Standards](#) should guide development of evidence based PL practices. Standards include Learning Communities, Leadership, Resources, Data, Learning Designs, Implementation and Outcomes. Research suggests that in order to build capacity using a framework that includes understanding the stages of change process include: Exploration, Installation, Initial Implementation, Full Implementation, and Sustainability and Innovation. TA, TTA and PL are designed to build the capacity of individuals, schools and LEAs to plan, implement and support desired outcomes for their students. These are essential elements of communities of practice (i.e. collaborative communities).

## TA & Dissemination (TA&D) Network Communities

### Communities of Practice

A community of practice (CoP) is a group of people who work together to solve a persistent problem or to improve practice in an area that is important to them and who deepen their knowledge and expertise by interacting on an ongoing basis. CoPs exist in many forms, some large in scale that deal with complex problems, others small in scale that focus on a problem at a very specific level. A CoP is a way of working that invites the groups that have a stake in an issue to be a part of the problem-solving process. The CoP develops its own schedule or “rhythm” for interacting and creates mechanisms to communicate that give access to all the members.

Different TA&D centers funded by OSEP have chosen to use the CoP strategy as a way of working together to meet the needs of their stakeholders. TA&D Centers utilize different platforms (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, Ning) as a way to communicate and to stay connected with their community members. Below is the list of OSEP funded projects that employ the CoP approach and the links to their communities:



**TAcommunities**

**TAcommunities - <http://www.tacommunities.org>**



**TA&D Network on Ning - [www.tadnet.ning.com](http://www.tadnet.ning.com)**



**The IDEA Partnership Communities of Practice - <http://www.sharedwork.org/>**

The State provides targeted technical assistance for select districts based on a review of data. GaDOE uses the components of its general supervision system to identify local districts with compliance and/or issues with results. If a local school district is identified as having noncompliance, then the noncompliance must be corrected, as soon as possible, but no later than one year from the notification. Considering the vast number of local school districts in Georgia, it can become quite complicated to appropriately support all districts identified as having noncompliance to ensure timely correction. The Department has clearly outlined procedures to differentiate the technical assistance based on the level and nature of the noncompliance. [Table 3](#) outlines Georgia’s state procedures for aligning technical assistance resources with local districts based on the level and nature of the noncompliance. Using this model, the State can ensure that the districts demonstrating the greatest needs receive the technical assistance necessary for local improvement.

Another state-level procedure involves an intensive “data digging” process that enables the GaDOE to identify districts with compliance and/or results issues that are systemic and pervasive. Consequently, these districts become the State’s highest priority for active engagement to improve their local special education programs. Georgia’s procedures to identify these districts are listed in the section on Active Engagement.



TTA, PL and CoP are support for LEAs that are linked to data (SPP) and correction of noncompliance. Successful TTA and PL involve evidence of change of practice which schools and LEAs build resulting in improved outcomes and compliance as well as building sustainability for successful outcomes over time. This often includes collaboration with GLRS, RESA, colleges and universities to provide these supports to help LEAs develop their framework for change.

Based on [Georgia Rule 160-4-7-.16](#), the [Georgia Learning Resources System \(GLRS\)](#) provides ongoing, effective professional learning to assist local school districts in meeting the federal requirements of IDEA and No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The network has 17 centers throughout Georgia that provide ongoing professional learning (training) to teachers and administrators to assist them in implementing effective instructional strategies. See [Figure 6](#) to view the geographical map for the 17 GLRS regions.

GLRS provides training to educators and parents so that:

- children who are at risk of failure can learn to read;
- children exhibit responsible behavior;
- SWD stay in school and transition to employment or college; and
- SWD can participate in general education classes with their non-disabled peers.

New special education teachers learn effective instructional strategies from mentor teachers. Annually, GaDOE provides a Special Education Spring Leadership Meeting for local special education directors as a comprehensive technical assistance approach. The Special Education Spring Leadership Meeting for special education directors supports the implementation of general supervision at the local level. Special education directors receive resources to assist them in evaluating general supervision of their LEAs and improving their local oversight.

[Georgia Rule 160-4-7-.15](#) establishes the [Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support \(GNETS\)](#) that is comprised of 24 programs which support the local school districts' continuum of services for students with disabilities, ages 3-21. The programs provide comprehensive educational and therapeutic support services to students who might otherwise require residential or other more restrictive placements due to the severity of one or more of the characteristics of the disability category of emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD). In 2011, a [GNETS Operations Manual](#) and [Strategic Plan](#) were developed.

The [Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership](#) is a statewide initiative of the GaDOE. The mission of the Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership is to build effective family, school, and community partnerships that lead to greater achievement for students, especially those with disabilities. Parent mentors continuously provide technical assistance for local districts.





**Table 3. Targeted Technical Assistance Model for Districts that have Noncompliance**

<b>Compliance Status</b>	<b>Factor (Based on Nature and Level of Noncompliance)</b>	<b>District Required Actions Prong 1 and 2 Data (Revise policies, practices, and procedures, as needed)</b>	<b>State Targeted Technical Assistance</b>
1 child / few instances of noncompliance (≥95%)	Districts that have isolated instances of noncompliance and will require minimal technical assistance from the State to timely correct	Correct each instance and submit updated data for verification @ 100%  Development of a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) may not be necessary; however, the district must consider the root cause of the noncompliance.	The State provides minimal support and/or technical assistance, as needed. Districts may also access pre-developed toolkits to assist in correction.
Compliance Level 75% - 94%	Districts that are not repeat offenders and have few findings (<3) of noncompliance	Correct each instance & submit updated data for verification  AND Use root cause analysis and select CAP activities	The State provides support for the district to conduct a root cause analysis and select CAP activities. Targeted technical assistance is provided, as needed. Districts may also access pre-developed toolkits to assist in correction.
	Districts that are repeat offenders and/or have multiple findings (≥3) of Noncompliance	Correct each instance & submit updated data for verification  AND Use root cause analysis and select CAP activities	The State directs the root cause analysis and CAP development process. Targeted technical assistance and monitoring of correction are provided.
Compliance Level <75%	Districts that have substantially low level of compliance—even for one finding	Correct each instance & submit updated data for verification  AND Use root cause analysis and select CAP activities	The State directs the root cause analysis and CAP development process. Targeted technical assistance and monitoring of correction are provided.

### *Checkpoints for Understanding*

- What are the differences among technical assistance, targeted technical assistance, professional learning, and Communities of Practice?
- What are the conditions to receive targeted technical assistance?
- What supports does GLRS provide?
- What is the mission of the Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership?

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# DISTRICT GENERAL SUPERVISION SYSTEM

## Responsible Personnel

[Georgia State Rule 160.-5-1-.22](#) Personnel Required - GaDOE must establish and maintain qualifications to ensure that personnel necessary to carry out the purposes of this part are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, including that those personnel have the content knowledge and skills to serve children with disabilities [34 CFR § 300.156](#). In addition to the state-level requirements, local school districts must ensure that personnel responsible for the general supervision of students with disabilities (SWD) receive appropriate training as well. [Figure 7](#) shows the typical flow of general supervision in a local school district.

District general supervision is the ultimate responsibility of the local school superintendent. Each local school district shall employ a *full-time superintendent* to serve as chief administrator of the school district and executive secretary of the local board of education.

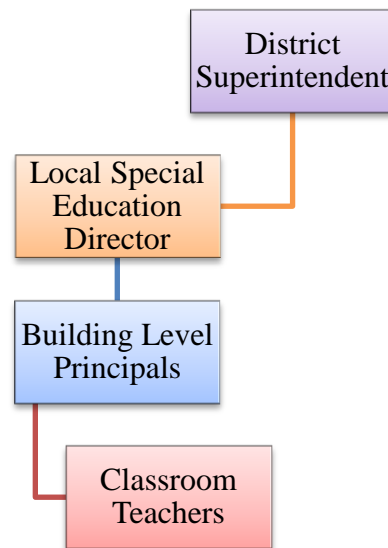
In addition to the local school superintendent, each local school district with 200 special education full time equivalent (FTE) shall employ a *full-time special education director* to provide services for the special education student population that will satisfy federal and state rules and legal obligations. School districts with fewer than 50 special education FTE shall designate a staff member to coordinate the special education program. One fourth of a position shall be added for each 50 FTE up to 200 FTE.

Each local school district shall employ a *full-time principal* for each school. The principal shall supervise all personnel, programs, and services available at the assigned school. A school district shall employ the appropriate number of *highly qualified special education teachers*. Local school districts must take measurable steps to recruit, hire, train, and retain highly qualified personnel to provide special education and related services to children with disabilities. [34 CFR § 300.156 Personnel qualifications](#)

Based on the required personnel necessary to provide a compliant special education program, each local school district must have in effect policies, procedures, and practices that are consistent with the State policies and procedures established under [Sec. 613 LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY ELIGIBILITY](#). All policies, procedures and practices must be written. If the district opts not to develop local policies, then the [State Special Education Rules](#) become local policy. Note that local policies are not a substitute for written procedures.

- *Policies* are “Board Approved” written mandates that align with rules and regulations.
- *Procedures* are written steps for implementing policies, rules, and regulations.
- *Practices* are the implementation of procedures, which are documented using evidence such as interviews, observations, student records, etc.

*Figure 7. Flow of General Supervision for Local School Districts*



Efficient communication is necessary to ensure that local school districts implement a comprehensive general supervision system. The following probing questions will help to initiate important discussion that will improve compliant practices and results for SWD.

#### *Checkpoints for Understanding*

- What are measurable steps to recruit, hire, train, etc?
- Who is responsible for ensuring appropriate and adequately trained personnel are in place?
- How is compliance with this rule determined?
- Who is determining and monitoring compliance?
- Must policies and procedures be written?

#### *Probing Questions*

1. What data and documentation do you use to analyze district implementation of compliant practices?
2. What are your procedures to “monitor” (review data) every school in your district every year?
3. What data do you review from all schools?
4. How do you differentiate among the schools that have individualized needs such as intensive monitoring strategies?
5. How do you align your fiscal resources to support the district’s needs?

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## Local Stakeholders

The selection and involvement of a local stakeholder committee is a requirement for the local improvement planning process. Stakeholders represent all parties with an interest in improving results for students with disabilities (SWD). Local stakeholder committees typically include nine to fifteen members and reflect the ethnic and cultural makeup of the local community. At least one-third of the membership should be parents of students with disabilities, advocates, and/or students with disabilities. The stakeholder membership may be appointed based on the local system's needs. Recommended members may include the following people:

- Parents (of students with and without disabilities)
- Students with disabilities
- Principals/teachers (general education and special education)
- Babies Can't Wait/Early Intervention representative
- Vocational Rehabilitation representative
- Related service providers
- School counselor/social worker
- Curriculum specialist
- School psychologist
- Title I representative or School Improvement Specialist
- Advocacy group representative
- Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) representative
- College/university representative
- Georgia Learning Resources System (GLRS) representative/Child Care/Pre-K representative
- Local board of education representative
- State operated program representative (hospitals, state schools, Department of Juvenile Justice)

The responsibility of the stakeholder committee is to assist in the development of the district's improvement activities. The stakeholder committee determines the school district's current status by reviewing the district data profile, selecting improvement priorities, developing improvement activities, and then ensuring the implementation of the activities. The stakeholder committee meets as needed to complete the following tasks:

1. Review improvement activity progress by assessing the effectiveness of the interventions implemented.
2. Review the updated district data profile and additional data the system has collected for analysis.
3. Revise their improvement activities as necessary.
4. Expand their improvement activities to include additional Georgia Performance Indicators.

The stakeholder committee works on an ongoing basis to assist the district, in improving outcomes for SWD. The superintendent or special education director facilitates the planning meetings. Stakeholder committees are paramount to the continuous review of local policies, procedures and implementation of practices.

### *Checkpoints for Understanding*

- Why must LEA have a local stakeholders committee?
- What are the overarching responsibilities of the stakeholders committee?
- How does the GaDOE monitor the activities of the local stakeholders committee?
- What are the primary tasks that the stakeholders are charged with completing?
- Who are some of the recommended members of the stakeholders committee?

### *Probing Questions*

1. Are your stakeholders representative of your community?
2. Do your stakeholders hold a variety of roles in your community?

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## **Analysis and Use of Data**

Each year, local school districts should view their Profile Reports on the GaDOE website and/or portal. The profile contains data for the SPP Indicators and historical data, when available, to evaluate trends. The data profile also reports the state level data so districts can compare their performance to the overall state performance and the state targets.

The information in the data profile is reported by the districts through the GaDOE data collection processes which include the Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) count reports, the Student Record, and the Student Information System. Additional federally required information is collected by the LEAs and directly submitted to the Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports. Districts are responsible for submitting timely and accurate data to the GaDOE. Edit checks are built into the GaDOE data collection system to verify the accuracy of the data and alert the district to selected potential errors or discrepancies. Most required data are included in the Georgia State Student Information System (GSSIS); therefore, fewer program specific data submissions are required. Districts use their data profiles to identify progress toward meeting the state's targets for the Performance indicators. The local district stakeholder committee analyzes the data to determine performance trends and progress.

Stakeholder committees and districts will often need to “drill down” into the data for their district once they review the annual report. Information may be reviewed by individual schools, by school levels such as elementary, middle or high, by gender, by disability category, or other subgroups. District special education administrators should work with other system personnel to develop mechanisms for processing, gathering, accessing, understanding and using this data. The GaDOE provides technical assistance as needed or requested. In addition to data for individual indicators, the local district must review its annual District Determinations to ensure adequate improvement.

***Consolidated Application*** - The improvement activities for each district are submitted annually as part of the District's Consolidated Application.

### ***What are the overarching “ideas” that IDEA provide for SWD?***

Local school districts must implement the IDEA. However, with many federal regulations and state rules, this local responsibility can begin to feel like a daunting task. The responsibility will become much easier to manage if the local school districts use a comprehensive framework to implement compliant practices such as the overarching analysis questions in [Figure 3](#).

### ***Check Points for Understanding***

- How are building level professionals provided TA?
- How is the Special Education data embedded into the Consolidated Application?
- How does data align with state performance targets?
- How do you use data to determine improvement activities?



### *Probing Questions*

1. What results are local districts working to achieve?
2. What kinds of data /sources of evidence might you examine to measure local progress?
3. How will you use the data and evidence to inform relevant changes?
4. Are you able to distinguish between the various reports and how they apply to SWD?
5. When you produce data driven reports, are you able to site data sources and identify any trend lines?
6. What system do you have in place to remind you that timelines are due?
7. When multiple data reports are received are you able to drill down into the data for meaningful information?
8. How does the District determine and provide Technical Assistant in and around data analysis?

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## **Fiscal Responsibility**

Local school districts have a fiscal responsibility for IDEA federal funds, which is outlined in [Statute](#). It is paramount that districts use data to target specific priorities for local IDEA budgets.

IDEA requires each state educational agency (SEA) to provide general supervision and monitoring of the implementation of IDEA programs. Monitoring federal programs at the local level to ensure compliance with the regulations as well as providing for positive educational outcomes for students with disabilities is accomplished by Georgia's CIMP.

The Division's new fiscal monitoring process for LEAs is an outgrowth of GCIMP. It is designed to provide LEAs the support and guidance needed to maintain ongoing high standards for fiscal management and compliance as well as program delivery. Specifically, the Single Audit Act "requires the monitoring of the sub-grantee's use of Federal awards through reporting, site visits, regular contact, or other means to provide reasonable assurance that the sub-recipient administers Federal awards in compliance with laws, regulations, and the provisions of contracts or grant agreements to ensure that performance goals are achieved".

Previously, the only fiscal monitoring completed by the Division's Budget Program Manager was the review and approval of all special education CLIPs, fiscal data and budgets as well as all expenditures and drawdown of federal and state funds. In addition, the Finance Review Section of Finance and Business Operations (FBO) had the responsibility to follow-up and close any state audit reports that had findings and improper or questioned costs. The Division's Budget Program Manager received and reviewed all of the single audit reports with findings regarding the special education cluster (IDEA and Preschool grants) which became a desk audit process to review and clear these findings and send a closure email to the Finance Review Section.

Recently, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) set out expectations for SEAs to not only conduct audits but to take steps beyond standard practices to initiate additional oversight of federal grants. In addition, OSEP has focused on fiscal risk and accountability at the SEA and LEA level with desk audits and onsite visits. Thus, the Department and Division began to develop a means to assess and determine the fiscal risk of LEA special education programs to provide technical assistance and onsite visits to potential high risk agencies.

### **LEA Fiscal Risk Assessment**

A local educational agency annual financial risk assessment is conducted by the Financial Review Section in FBO. A point value for each of the following is calculated for the LEAs: number of financial statement findings, number of federal award findings, auditor's opinion, general fund deficit, capital fund deficit, school nutrition deficit, long term debt, new superintendent, new business personnel, changes in FTE, new accounting software, timely reporting, and material deficiencies. Primarily, this information is gathered from the DE46 financial report and the Single Audit Report. The point values range from 0 to 30 points with the majority of the items being 0, 5 or 10 points.

The Division developed a Fiscal Self-Monitoring Instrument in the [Special Ed Directors' Handbook](#) to establish a baseline of the district fiscal knowledge in special education. Special Education Fiscal High Risk Elements were developed. The latter table provides a point value

from 0 to 20 points for each of the following items: new special education personnel, attendance at training sessions, being in the top 25% of LEAs receiving funds, state audit findings, maintenance of effort, corrective action plans, and timely reporting.

The two financial risk assessments are combined for each LEA to determine a risk score and the need for an onsite fiscal monitoring visit and technical assistance. A high fiscal risk assessment score does not necessarily mean an LEA is not performing the requirements of the program, federal regulations or administrative procedures. It does mean that an LEA may be at a higher risk of having program fiscal elements that could lend themselves to causing an LEA not to perform the activities associated with the federal rules, regulations and administrative procedures in a manner that keeps the LEA in compliance.

### Special Education Fiscal High Risk Elements

Elements	Point Values
*New Superintendent (12 months or less in LEA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 5 points = New Superintendent</li> <li>● 0 points = No New Superintendent</li> </ul>
New Director (2 years or less experience as a Special Education Director)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 10 points = New Director</li> <li>● 0 points = No New Director</li> </ul>
*LEAs with a new financial officer (12 months or less in LEA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 5 points = New Financial Officer</li> <li>● 0 points = No New Financial Officer</li> </ul>
Director attends Division sponsored workshops and technical assistance on program and compliance requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 10 points = Attending 0 sessions</li> <li>● 5 points = Attending less than 50% of the sessions</li> <li>● 3 points = Attending more than 50% of the sessions</li> <li>● 0 points = Attending all sessions</li> </ul> <p>Training and Technical Assistance include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● New Director’s Workshop if applicable</li> <li>● Spring Special Education Meeting</li> <li>● IDEA, Part B Consolidated Application Training</li> <li>● IDEA, Part B Monitoring Training Sessions</li> </ul>
LEAs in the top 25 percent of LEAs receiving the greatest portion of IDEA funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 10 points = LEAs in top 25 percent (Groups A and B)</li> <li>● 0 points = Groups C, D and E of LEA funding</li> </ul>
LEA having one or more audit irregularities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 10 points = 3 or more findings</li> <li>● 5 points = 1 or 2 findings</li> <li>● 0 points = No audit findings</li> </ul>
LEAs having more than one audit finding in the special education cluster.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 20 points = 1 or more findings with the return of funds</li> <li>● 10 points = 3 or more findings</li> <li>● 5 points = 1 or 2 findings</li> <li>● 0 points = No findings</li> </ul>

LEA Fiscal Self-Assessment completed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 points = Not completed</li> <li>• 5 points = Corrective action needed on an item</li> <li>• 0 points = In compliance with all items</li> </ul>
LEAs meeting the MOE requirement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 points = MOE requirement not met</li> <li>• 0 points = MOE requirement met</li> </ul>
LEA is identified for Corrective Action in GCIMP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 points = Yes</li> <li>• 0 points = No corrective action</li> </ul>
Special education plan and budgets timelines are met.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 points = Timelines are not met</li> <li>• 0 points = Timelines are met</li> </ul>

\*Item scored by Financial Review Section in Finance and Budget Office

### Determining LEA Final Risk Rating

An LEA’s final fiscal risk rating is determined by adding the Financial Review Section and Division risk rating scores. Financial Review’s risk rating is determined by the Georgia Department of Education’s Financial Review Section and is submitted to the Division. Final calculations are based on a combination of the Division’s risk rating and Financial Review’s risk rating. Those LEAs with a final risk score between 0 to 25 points would be determined to be a low risk. Those LEAs with a final risk score between 26 to 100 points would be determined to be a medium risk. Those LEAs with a final risk score greater than 100 would be determined to be a high risk. LEAs with the following high risk elements are automatically monitored regardless of the LEA’s final risk score:

- Department decision to monitor the LEA.
- LEAs with fiscal irregularities resulting in a return of special education funds.
- LEAs with the same special education cluster findings two years in a row.
- LEAs with completion reports with a variance over 125% two years in a row.

### Risk Intervention Strategies

Once an LEA’s fiscal risk is assessed, the Division will monitor the LEA based on the risk intervention strategies in the chart below:

Risk Group	Intervention(s)
High Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Program Manager will conduct an on-site fiscal compliance and accountability monitoring review unless the high risk score is due to FBO scores only, the special education cluster had no audit findings and the Division score is low (25 or less). The LEA must provide documentation as required.</li> </ul>
Medium Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once every six years the Records Review Specialist will conduct a records review and a fiscal self-assessment in collaboration with the Education Program Specialist during an on-site technical assistance visit unless a Focus Monitoring visit occurs. The LEA must provide documentation as required.</li> </ul>
Low Risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Once every six years the Records Review Specialist will conduct a records review and a fiscal self-assessment in collaboration with the Education</li> </ul>

Program Specialist during an on-site technical assistance visit unless a Focus Monitoring visit occurs. The LEA must provide documentation as required.
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## **Federal Audit of State and Local Governments**

### [Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\) Circulars](#)

The Single Audit Act of 1984 (amended in 1996) established requirements for audits of States, local governments, Indian tribal governments and non-profit organizations that expend Federal awards. The Act was passed by Congress to give priority and consistency to the single audit approach (organization wide audit). In general, the new Act was a modification and strengthening of the audit concepts of OMB Circular A-102 Attachment P. The circular replacing A102 Attachment P is A-133 – *Audits of States, Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations*.

Key concepts under the Single Audit Act as they apply to Georgia school districts include:

1. Provision for an exemption from all single audit requirements if less than \$500,000 is received annually from all federal programs combined.
2. The single audit must include compliance testing of transactions of each major federal assistance program. A major federal assistance program is defined as the larger of \$500,000 or 3% of total expenditures of all federal programs.
3. The auditor makes the determination of whether or not a program is a major federal assistance program at the time of audit.
4. The Single Audit Act does not preclude Department staff or federal auditors from conducting program specific reviews or audits.
5. Reimbursement for the audit is limited to the ratio of total Federal assistance expended by the LEA during the year audited to the LEA's total expenditures for that year or through time and effort itemization by the auditor.
6. A single audit is required annually.

### ***Checkpoints for Understanding***

- What is a risk assessment and how is it determined?
- What conditions would place your district at high risk?
- Regardless of high risk assessment scores, who else may be monitored?
- What are the three risk groups that will be monitored?

### ***Probing Questions***

1. How will I monitor my expenditures on a regular basis?
2. How will I determine allowable expenses for federal funds?
3. How do I prepare for an audit?
4. Using the checklist, what can I do as a director to reduce my district's risk?
5. How does an audit effect the special education program in my district?

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## Local Components of General Supervision

Local general supervision has primarily four components in which the aforementioned sections support all areas: (1) Policies and Procedures, (2) Professional Learning and Technical Assistance, (3) Implementation of Compliant Practices, and (4) Supervision and Monitoring Procedures.

Policies and procedures are an integral component of any organization. Policies are written mandates that are ‘Board Approved’ and aligned with the state rules and federal regulations. Policies should be based on the [Special Education State Rules](#) and the [IDEA Federal Code of Regulations](#). Local districts may use the state rules as their policies or write their own policies with the guidance from the state rules and federal regulations.

Procedures are written steps for implementing policies, rules and regulations. The purpose in having written procedures is so that everyone in a district implements the special education rules and regulations in the same manner to ensure compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA). Specific procedures may differ from one district to another depending on the size and other factors of the district. The Georgia Department of Education [Special Education Implementation Manual](#) is designed to serve as a practical guide for implementing the IDEA and its regulations. District special education procedures describe how the district will operate to be in compliance for the areas that will be included in the section, [Guidance for Development of Procedures](#).

Professional Learning and Technical Assistance encompass many important factors including assumptions of adult learners, what model and delivery method the professional learning will follow, and the type of training.

Four assumptions of adult learning are:

- generally self-directed
- based on previous experience
- relevant to their needs
- applicable in their specific situation

Professional learning needs to be based on a ‘who needs to know what’ model at each of these levels - district, administrative, school and specialty area.

Delivery methods may include:

1. **Job-related** training - consists of classes, seminars, or other types of training sessions which maintain or improve skills required for the job based on district data and
2. **Job-embedded** training - consists of the following with outcomes measured using data (district, student, financial, etc.) and monitoring of implementation. Professional learning can be delivered in a variety of ways, including but not limited to:
  - a. Coaching
  - b. Modeling
  - c. Virtual Coaching (Bug-in-ear)
  - d. Self-video Recording

e. Independent Knowledge Acquisition

Implementation of compliant practices includes tangible evidence (IEPs, observations, reports, and investigative findings) and improved student achievement as evidenced in, for example, an increased graduation rate, decreased dropout rate, and successful post-secondary transition.

Supervision includes, but is not limited to, an organizational chart of positions, job descriptions and responsibilities and personnel evaluations and district-wide communication. Monitoring procedures may include record reviews, site visits, and interviews with students, staff and parents.

*Checkpoints for Understanding*

- What are the four components of Local General Supervision?
- How are local policies developed?
- What are two delivery methods for professional learning?

*Probing Questions*

1. What are the most important areas needing written procedures in your district?
2. What is the role of the GLRS in providing professional learning for your district?
3. How do you determine if professional learning is effective in your district?

Figure 8. Local Components to Support General Supervision



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## **GUIDANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF PROCEDURES**

### **Mandate for Compliance**

States are required to have policies and procedures that are aligned with IDEA [34 CFR § 300.100](#). Georgia's Special Education Rules support state level implementation of IDEA. In addition to the state rules, the GA DOE outlines specific strategies and best practices in the Special Education [Implementation Manual](#). Local school districts must then implement policies, procedures, and effective practices.

### **Policy, Procedure, and Practice**

A policy is a written mandate that is Board Approved and aligned with state rules and federal regulations. Procedures are steps written by the Local Education Agency (LEA) that provide for the implementation of policies, rules, and regulations. Written procedures are meant to be directives for LEA staff that inform practices. Practices are the implementation of procedures that are documented using interviews, observations, student records, and other forms of evidence.

### **Process for Developing Written Procedures**

Local school districts are required to have in place written procedures that support the implementation of the IDEA and Georgia's Special Education Rules. The DOE has provided an outline of state rules for special education that include each rule and their components for which districts should have written procedures. Districts should check to be sure that each state rule and its components are described within their procedures documents. These five over-arching areas of general supervision provide an organization for the outline of state rules:

- Identification Processes
- Services and Supports
- Student Progress
- Parent Engagement
- Readiness for College and Career

Districts are required to provide data annually to the state on twenty measurable indicators in order to demonstrate their compliance with the IDEA and State Rules. Measurable indicators also appear in the outline mentioned above in coordination with relevant state rules. In addition to the indicators, a list of probing questions related to each rule is included in the outline. The data collection process for these measurable indicators and the answers to the probing questions could be used to inform the construction of related written procedures.

Following is a protocol provided to assist local districts in the development of or the review of a written product of procedures. This protocol is intended as a tool to be used in the creation of written procedures that will be practical and provide a good fit for the structures in individual districts. It is meant as an aid and a guidance and is not a required format for districts to follow.



## **Stakeholder Participation**

The state recommends that districts gather a group of stakeholders relevant to each state rule for which procedures will be created in order to bring a variety of perspectives, in-depth information, and solid ownership among those who will implement procedures. These stakeholders should include not only special education staff, but also general education administration, classroom teachers, and other affected support staff. *For example, when looking at the Child Find Rule, the stakeholder group might include representatives from psychological services, local school RTI/SST, program specialists, social workers, diagnosticians, and early childhood programs.*

## Protocol for Procedure Development

1. State Rule and Provision(s) to be addressed:  
Rule:  
Provision:
2. Prior to discussion: The facilitator provides in written form the rule and subsequent provision(s) to be addressed by the gathered stakeholders. The facilitator presents a brief explanation of the rule's intent, impact upon the district, and a list of any measurable indicators or other relevant data collected by the district that could inform development of written procedures addressing that rule and provision(s).  
*(Break down language into common, easy-to-understand terms.)*
3. Overarching Questions: The stakeholder group provides answers to the list of probing questions provided with each rule from the outline described above.  
*(Provide for a scribe to capture the essential points of discussion throughout.)*
4. Performance Target(s): The stakeholder group defines the district's performance target(s) in relation to the rule/provisions that will cause the district to be in compliance with the rule.  
*(A performance target could be a threshold to meet in a data outcome or measurable indicator. Data outcomes could describe the meeting of timelines, student performance outcomes, or performance on a rubric.)*
5. Process: The stakeholder group compiles a series of steps to be accomplished that will comprise a procedure that will enable the district to meet the performance target(s). As appropriate, answer these questions:
  - A. What is to be accomplished?
  - B. Who will be responsible and at what level: 1) District Level, 2) School Administration Level, and 3) Classroom Teacher Level.
  - C. How will professional learning occur to instruct the appropriate staff regarding how to comply with this procedure?
6. Monitoring: The stakeholder group specifies how compliance with this procedure will be measured or judged.
7. Create: Compose the written procedure based upon the discussion and decisions of the stakeholder group in all of the above areas.
8. Self-Assessment: Evaluate the operational level for the procedure. The Compliance Rubric for written procedures may be used as both a pre and a post self-evaluation.

## Georgia Special Education Rules Outline

The purpose of this resource is to provide guidance to assist districts in creating compliant written procedures by aligning the Measurable Indicators, Over-Archiving and Probing Questions, and State Rules. Every component of every rule is not listed here. Rules in this document are hyperlinked to the actual State Rules. Read the entire State Rule for a thorough understanding.

### Area of General Supervision I: Identification Processes

#### [Overarching Questions](#)

**Indicators:**

***9: Disproportionality in Special Education***

***10: Disproportionality by Category***

***11: Child Find***

***12: Early Childhood Transition***

**State Rule: [160-4-7-.08](#) - Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information**

✓	<b>Components</b>
	Confidential Information
	Access rights and required procedures
	Amendment of Records at parent request
	Results of hearing
	Parent consent
	Safeguards
	Destruction of confidential information

**State Rule: [160-4-2-.32](#) - Student Support Team**

✓	<b>Components</b>
	Requirement for local school SST
	Student evaluation
	SST members
	Parents/guardian participation
	Steps of SST process
	Documentation of SST Activities
	Exceptions to the use of the SST Process

**State Rule: [160-4-7-.03](#) - Child Find Procedures**

✓	Components
	Annual child find activity is published or announced in newspaper or other media
	Provides for screening and evaluation of all children with suspected disability ages 3-21 including:
	Children birth through age three
	Preschool children, ages 3-5
	Children enrolled in the LEA schools including public charter schools
	Children who are suspected of being children with disabilities
	Highly mobile children, including migrant children
	Children who are detained or incarcerated in jails or correctional facilities
	Children enrolled in home school/study programs
	Parentally-placed private school children, including religious, elementary and secondary schools
	Screening to determine appropriate educational strategies is not to be considered evaluation
	Student referrals must be accompanied by documentation of scientific, research or evidence based academic or behavioral interventions that demonstrate insufficient rate of progress
	Exception allowed only when evaluation and/or placement is required due to a significant disability

**State Rule: [160-4-7-.04](#) - Evaluations and Reevaluations**

✓	Components
	Initial evaluation referral process
	Timeframes for evaluations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 60 calendar days</li> <li>• Exceptions</li> </ul>
	Parental Consent
	Reevaluation consideration
	Comprehensive Evaluations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variety of appropriate evaluation tools</li> <li>• Administered by trained and knowledgeable staff</li> <li>• Existing data reviewed</li> <li>• Identify additional data needed</li> </ul>
	Determination of eligibility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligibility team</li> <li>• Documentation of evaluation results</li> <li>• Exclusionary factors</li> <li>• Determination of the disability and the need for special education (dismissal)</li> </ul>

**State Rule: [160-4-7-.05](#) - Eligibility Determination and Categories of Eligibility**

✓	Components
	Definitions for areas of disability for children aged 3 to 21: (a) Autism spectrum disorder. (b) Deafblind.

	(c) Deaf/hard of hearing. (d) Emotional and behavioral disorder. (e) Intellectual disability (mild, moderate, severe, profound). (f) Orthopedic impairment. (g) Other health impairment. (h) Significant developmental delay. (i) Specific learning disability. (j) Speech-language impairment. (k) Traumatic brain injury. (l) Visual impairment.
	Determination of eligibility by Eligibility Team (qualified professionals and parents)
	Exclusionary factors for eligibility
	Documentation of eligibility/ineligibility: variety of appropriate sources and well documented
	Evaluation Report and Determination provided to parents

**State Rule: [160-4-7-.13](#) - Private Schools**

✓	Components
	LEA privately placed or referred students
	Parental placement in private school and LEA offer of FAPE
	Provision of written notice by parent to place in private school
	Reimbursement and limitations on reimbursement for private school placement
	Home schooled students
	Child Find process and children in private schools
	Part B and Related Services for private school students
	Provision of IEPs and Service Plans to privately placed students
	Consultation with private schools for child count
	Private school representatives at IEPs
	Equitable services determination and limitations of service
	Materials provision: secular, neutral, non-ideological
	Location of services and transportation
	Provision of property, equipment and supplies to private schools

**Area of General Supervision II: Services and Supports**  
*Overarching Questions*

**Indicators:**

***4a & 4: Suspension and Expulsion***

***5: LRE***

**State Rule: 160-4-7-.07 - Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

✓	<b>Components</b>
	LRE Requirements: Written policies and procedures exist
	Annual IEP placement determination
	Full continuum of alternative placements
	Location of services
	Preschool placements and services
	School age placements and services
	Non-academic and extracurricular settings

**State Rule: 160-4-7-.10 - Discipline**

✓	<b>Components</b>
	Relationship of general code of conduct to IEP
	Interim alternative settings and 10-day rule
	Manifestation determination
	Functional behavior assessment
	Behavior intervention plan
	Special Circumstances: weapons, illegal drugs, injury
	Provision of notification of change of placement
	Appeal process
	Placement during appeal
	Protections for children not yet eligible
	Referral to law enforcement and judicial authorities
	Change of placement due to disciplinary removal

**State Rule: 160-4-7-.06 - Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

✓	<b>Components</b>
	Definition of IEP team
	Required sections of the IEP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present level of performance</li> <li>• Assessments and identified needs (academic, functional, developmental)</li> <li>• Effect of the disability</li> <li>• Parental concerns</li> <li>• Consideration of special factors</li> <li>• Measurable annual goals</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benchmarks/short-term objectives for students on alternative assessment</li> <li>• Criteria for measurement of goals/objectives</li> <li>• Progress reporting and schedule</li> <li>• Plan for services (special education, related services, modifications/accommodations, positive behavioral supports) with frequency, location, and duration of services</li> <li>• Consideration of assistive technology</li> <li>• Explanation for exclusion of participation with non-disabled peers</li> <li>• Testing accommodations or modifications</li> <li>• Consideration of ESY</li> </ul>
	<p>Transition Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate post-secondary goals</li> <li>• Transition services required to meet goals</li> <li>• Student involvement: preferences and interests</li> <li>• Representative of participating agency</li> </ul>
	Transfer of rights
	Excusal of IEP team member
	Transition for children birth through 2 – Part C
	Parent participation in IEP: notification and invitation
	<p>IEP/IFSP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted within 30 days of determination</li> <li>• Current within year</li> <li>• Accessed by all service providers</li> </ul>
	Inter and Intra – state transfer of students with IEPs
	FERPA and transmittal of records
	Review and Revision of the IEP

**State Rule: [160-4-7-.14](#) - Personnel, Facilities, and Caseloads**

✓	<b>Components</b>
	Maintenance of credentials for professional employees
	Classroom size and appropriateness
	Maximum class size and caseload by eligibility category

**State Rule: [160-4-7-.15](#) - Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS)**

✓	<b>Components</b>
	Eligibility and placement
	Documentation of ongoing effectiveness and improvement
	Recommended class size by level
	Positive behavioral interventions and supports
	Academic curriculum

**Area of General Supervision III: Student Progress**  
*Overarching Questions*

**Indicators:**

**3: Assessment**

**7: Preschool Outcomes**

**State Rule: 160-4-7-.02 - Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**

✓	Components
	FAPE inclusive for students aged 3 to 21: Full Educational Opportunity
	FAPE for students aged 22
	FAPE provision by 3 <sup>rd</sup> birthday
	FAPE for incarcerated students
	Definition of regular high school diploma
	Delay of services not allowed
	Medicaid payment allowances and limitations
	Notice to parents regarding use of benefits
	Residential placement
	Provision of accessible instructional materials
	Provision of assistive technology
	Assistive technology evaluations
	Home use of assistive technology
	FAPE and Extended School Year
	Extracurricular activities accessibility
	Access to physical education and specially designed physical education
	Services to public charter schools that are not LEAs
	Charter schools that are LEAs
	Programming options and equal access
	Hearing equipment checks
	Prohibition of mandatory medication



**Area of General Supervision IV: Parent Engagement**  
[Overarching Questions](#)

**Indicators:**

**8: Parent Involvement**

**16: Complaint Timelines**

**17: Hearing Timelines**

**18: Resolution Session**

**19: Mediation**

**Rule: 160-4-7-.09 – Procedural Safeguards and Parent Rights**

(The term “Procedural Safeguards Notice” also refers to the document commonly identified as “Parent Rights”)

✓	<b>Components</b>
	When parent rights must be provided to parents
	Content of Parent Rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent educational evaluations</li> <li>• Prior written notice</li> <li>• Parental Consent</li> <li>• Access to education records</li> <li>• Complaint process</li> <li>• Mediation</li> <li>• Student placement during pending due process</li> <li>• Interim placements</li> <li>• Private school placement by parent</li> <li>• Due process hearings</li> <li>• Attorneys’ fees</li> <li>• Provided in language understandable to parents</li> </ul>
	Parental opportunity to review records
	Parental participation in meetings
	Independent Educational Evaluations
	Parental Consent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial Evaluation</li> <li>• Re-evaluation</li> <li>• Consent for initial placement</li> </ul>
	Parent refusal for consent/revocation
	Parent consent not required
	Parent training

**State Rule: [160-4-7-.11](#) - Surrogate Parent**

✓	Components
	Efforts to locate parents <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ward of the state</li><li>• Homeless youth</li></ul>
	Appointment of surrogate <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LEA determines need</li><li>• LEA maintains list</li></ul>
	Criteria for Surrogate parent selection
	Surrogate parent responsibilities

**State Rule: [160-4-7-.12](#) - Dispute Resolution**

✓	Components
	Complaint Process
	Mediation Process
	Impartial Due Process Hearings

**Area of General Supervision V: Readiness for College and Career**  
**Overarching Questions**

**Indicators:**

***1: Graduation Rates***

***2: Dropout Rates***

***13: Secondary Transition***

***14: Post School Outcomes***

**State House Bill 400 - Bridge Law**

✓	<b>Components</b>
	Sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students receive:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counseling</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly scheduled advisement</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career awareness</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career interest inventories</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information to assist students in evaluating their academic skills and career interests</li> </ul>
	Individual Graduation Plan for 8 <sup>th</sup> grade students
	High School students receive:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career counseling</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Career guidance</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regularly scheduled career advisement</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information to enable students to successfully complete their individual graduation plans</li> </ul>

See also *Transition Services* under State Rule: [160-4-7-.06](#) IEP

State Rule: [160-4-7-.21](#) – Definitions (glossary of common terminology)

## Procedure Development Template

**Procedure Area or Title:**

<b>District Level</b>			
<b>Performance Targets</b>	<b>Tasks to be Completed</b>	<b>Professional Learning Required</b>	<b>Method to Monitor for Compliance</b>

<b>Local School Administrative Level</b>			
<b>Performance Targets</b>	<b>Tasks to be Completed</b>	<b>Professional Learning Required</b>	<b>Method to Monitor for Compliance</b>

<b>Classroom/Teacher Level</b>			
<b>Performance Targets</b>	<b>Tasks to be Completed</b>	<b>Professional Learning Required</b>	<b>Method to Monitor for Compliance</b>

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## Compliance Rubric

Element	Not Addressed	Emergent	Operational	Fully Operational
<b>Evidence of Written Procedures</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> No written procedures are developed for implementing IDEA. Available documents are not reviewed for thoroughness and being current.	<input type="checkbox"/> Written procedures are developed for implementing IDEA though they may not be complete.	<input type="checkbox"/> There are written procedures that address all measurable indicators required to be reported to the DOE.	<input type="checkbox"/> There are thorough written procedures that address all measurable indicators and important processes that support the provision of FAPE and the appropriate use of federal, state, and local resources. Stakeholders have participated in developing these written procedures.
<b>Accessibility of Written Procedures</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Written procedures are not easily available to staff at any level: district, local school administration, and classroom teacher.	<input type="checkbox"/> Written procedures are available to staff at district administrative level, but marginally so at the local school level.	<input type="checkbox"/> Written procedures are readily available to district personnel, local school administration, and classroom teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Written procedures are updated as needed and are readily available in multiple formats to district personnel, local school administration, and classroom teachers.
<b>Evidence of Professional Learning</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional learning related to implementation of written procedures is not provided to staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional learning regarding implementation of written procedures to support compliant practices is provided to district administrative staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional learning that supports implementation of compliant practices is provided to staff to include administrators, classroom teachers, and support personnel.	<input type="checkbox"/> Professional learning in order to support implementation of compliant practices is provided to all appropriate staff to include administrators, classroom teachers, and support staff. Provisions are made for newly entering staff to have this same level of professional learning. All staff receive annual updates on any revisions or changes in procedures.

Element	Not Addressed	Emergent	Operational	Fully Operational
<b>Monitoring of Compliance with Procedures</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> No established method exists of monitoring that practices are compliant with written procedures.	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff self-monitor compliance by means of procedural checklists and data collection.	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff self-monitor compliance by means of procedural checklists, data collection, and/or peer review instruments that are then submitted to administrators for review.	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff self-monitor compliance by means of procedural checklists, data collection, and/or peer review instruments that are then submitted to administrators for review. Staff is held accountable for the accuracy and compliance of these submissions through a monitoring process that provides feedback to improve compliance.
<b>Effective Outcomes Related to Procedures and Practices</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> No evidence is collected that demonstrates the impact of written procedures upon effective practices.	<input type="checkbox"/> Data that reports performance on measurable indicators addressed in written procedures is collected and submitted as required by the DOE.	<input type="checkbox"/> Data is collected and reviewed for improved performance on measurable indicators based on state targets. Data meets state targets.	<input type="checkbox"/> Data is collected and reviewed for improved performance on measurable indicators based on state targets. Data meets state targets and is used to inform and improve practices and procedures.

## Major Components of the Special Education Process

Special education for each student has a definite beginning and ending, but the process of special education is an integrated whole. The various pieces of the law combine together to create the provision of FAPE just as the procedures in a district's manual should present a cohesive picture of how practices flow. When creating a procedures or practitioners' manual, each district must order its procedures in a way that makes sense to the users. The following is not meant to be a table of contents for a procedures manual, but does provide an outline for viewing special education as a process.

### I. Child Find

- Pre-referral and SST Process
  - Pyramid of intervention
  - Universal Design
  - Linguistically and culturally responsive instruction
  - Bypassing SST Process
- Services Three to Twenty-one
- Preschool Transition and Birth to Three
- Private, Charter, and Home Schools
- Mobile and Migrant Children
- Incarcerated Youth

#### Provisions that apply to each area of Child Find:

- Procedural safeguards and consents
- Accessibility of notice and information
- Confidentiality of records
- Supports and interventions
  - Positive behavioral supports
  - Vision and hearing screening/testing
  - Resolution of vision & hearing issues
- Timelines
- Parent/guardian participation
- Progress monitoring
- Public notice of Child Find



## II. Evaluation

- Appropriate evaluation tools
  - Observations
  - Accessible presentation in evaluation
- Evaluation team members
- Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)
- Evaluation timelines
  - Initial evaluation: Comprehensive of all areas
  - Redetermination
- Transfers of incoming identified students
- Private school and home school students

### Provisions that apply to each area of Evaluation:

- Procedural safeguards
  - Consents
  - Refusals
  - Failures to comply
- Accessibility of notice and information
- Confidentiality of records
- Parent/guardian participation
- Supports and Interventions
  - Positive behavioral supports
  - Vision and hearing screening/testing
  - Resolution of vision & hearing issues

## III. Eligibility

- Definition of eligibility areas
- Case History
- Initial Eligibility
- Determination of eligibility
  - Exclusionary factors
  - Need for specialized instruction
- Redetermination

- Eligibility Team

Provisions that apply to each area of Eligibility:

- Procedural safeguards
  - Consents
  - Refusals
  - Failures to comply
- Confidentiality of records
- Parent/Guardian participation
- Accessibility of notice and information

#### IV. Individualized Education Program

- IEP team members
- Excusal of team members
- Procedural Safeguards
  - Invitation
  - Notice/prior written notice
  - Refusals and revocation
- Required components of the IEP
  - Present level of performance
  - Assessments and identified needs (academic, functional, developmental)
  - Effect of the disability
  - Parental concerns
  - Consideration of special factors
  - Measurable annual goals
  - Benchmarks/short-term objectives for students on alternative assessment
  - Criteria for measurement of goals/objectives
  - Progress reporting and schedule
  - Plan for services with frequency, location, and duration of services
  - Related services and transportation
  - Accommodations and Modifications
    - Assistive technology
    - Accessible instructional materials

Positive behavioral supports

- Testing accommodations or modifications
  - Classroom Assessment
  - Assessment participation
  - Alternative assessment
- Consideration of ESY
- Education with non-disabled peers
- Full continuum of placements and equal access
- Transition planning
  - Assessment: preferences, interests, & aptitudes
  - Post-secondary goals
  - Course of study
  - Transition services and goals
  - Agency Services
  - Summary of Performance
- Specially designed instruction
- Progress monitoring and reporting
- Extracurricular activities
- Consent for placement

Provisions that apply to each area IEP:

- Procedural safeguards and notice
- Confidentiality of records
- Timelines
- Parent/guardian participation
- Student participation
- Accessibility of notice and information

V. Behavior and Discipline

- Positive behavioral supports
  - Behavior intervention plan
  - Functional behavioral assessment
- Change in placement due to behavior

- 10 day rule
- Manifestation determination
- Alternative placements
- Special circumstances (weapons, drugs, violence)
- Appeals and expedited hearings
  - Placement during appeal
  - Resolution meetings
- Students suspected of having a disability

Provisions that apply to each area of Behavior/Discipline:

- Procedural safeguards and notice
- Confidentiality of records
- Timelines
- Parent/guardian participation
- Accessibility of notice and information

VI. Dispute Resolution

- Complaint process
- Resolution
- Mediation
- Due process hearing

Provisions that apply to each area of Dispute Resolution:

- Procedural safeguards and notice
- Confidentiality of records
- Timelines
- Parent/guardian participation
- Accessibility of notice and information

**Table 4. Overarching Analysis Questions to Support Implementation of IDEA**

<b>Focus Areas for Implementation of IDEA</b>	<b>Sampling of Supporting Data and Evidence</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>IDENTIFICATION PROCESS</b></p> <p><b>Overarching Analysis Question:</b> Does the district implement identification procedures and practices to ensure that ALL students suspected of having a disability receive a special education evaluation and services, if appropriate?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Probing Questions</b></p> <p>How does the district use formative and summative data for information to continuously improve this area?            How does the district align fiscal funds to appropriately meet this need?            How does the district provide equitable access to pre-referral interventions?            What are the procedures to implement child find?            What are the procedures to ensure timely and appropriate evaluations are completed?            What are the procedures to ensure that the eligibility team executes the process with fidelity?            How does the district ensure that appropriate staff members receive professional learning/technical assistance for these procedures?            How does the district provide supervision and monitoring of compliant practices?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Supporting Data</b></p> <p>Student Support Team Data/Tier 2 Data            Indicator 8 (Facilitated Parent Involvement)            Indicator 9 (Disproportionate Representation for All SWD)            Indicator 10 (Disproportionate Representation for Disability Categories)            Indicator 11 (Child Find)            Indicator 12 (Young Children Transition)            Indicator 15 (General Supervision)            Indicator 20 (Timely and Accurate Data)            Maintenance of Efforts (MOE)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Supporting Evidence</b></p> <p>Procedural Manual/Pre-referral Interventions Guidance            Logs for Students Receiving Interventions            Professional Development Plan/Agenda, Sign-in, and Presentation            Public notice for Child Find            MOU between collaborating agencies            Written Plan for Supervision and Monitoring            Sampling of Eligibility Reports/Child Find Logs</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SERVICES AND SUPPORTS</b></p> <p><b>Overarching Analysis Question:</b> Are procedures in place to ensure that students with disabilities receive FAPE in the LRE to access the general curriculum?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Probing Questions</b></p> <p>How does the district use formative and summative data for information to continuously improve this area?            How does the district align fiscal funds to appropriately meet this need?            What are the procedures to ensure appropriate IEP development?            How does the district ensure that the full continuum of services is available?            How does the district ensure that SWD receive specially designed instruction to access the general curriculum?            What are the procedures to ensure that the compliant IEPs are implemented with fidelity?            How does the district ensure that the appropriate staff members receive professional learning/technical assistance?            How does the district ensure that suspensions and expulsions are not impacting the students' ability to receive FAPE in the LRE?            How does the district provide supervision and monitoring of compliant practices?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Supporting Data</b></p> <p>Classroom Observations Data            Indicator 4 (Suspension and Expulsion)            Indicator 5 (LRE)            Indicator 6 (Preschool Educational Environments)            Indicator 8 (Facilitated Parent Involvement)            Indicator 12 (Young Children Transition)            Indicator 15 (General Supervision)            Indicator 20 (Timely and Accurate Data)            Maintenance of Efforts (MOE)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Supporting Evidence</b></p> <p>Procedural Manual            Professional Development Plan            Professional Development Agenda, Sign-in, and Presentation            Written Plan for Supervision and Monitoring            Sampling of Eligibility Reports/IEPs</p>

<b><i>Focus Areas for Implementation of IDEA</i></b>	<b><i>Sampling of Supporting Data and Evidence</i></b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>STUDENT PROGRESS</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Overarching Analysis Question:</i></b> Are students with disabilities making progress with the general curriculum as compared to grade level standards and expectations?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Probing Questions</i></b></p> <p>How does the district use formative and summative data for information to continuously improve this area?  How does the district align fiscal funds to appropriately meet this need?  What are the procedures to ensure that SWD make appropriate progress with the general curriculum?  How does the district ensure that appropriate staff members receive professional learning/technical assistance for these procedures?  How does the district provide supervision and monitoring of compliant practices?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Supporting Data</i></b></p> <p>Classroom Observations Data  Indicator 3 (Statewide Assessment)  Indicator 4 (Suspension and Expulsion)  Indicator 5 (LRE)  Indicator 8 (Facilitated Parent Involvement)  Indicator 7 (Preschool Outcomes)  Indicator 15 (General Supervision)  Indicator 20 (Timely and Accurate Data)  Maintenance of Efforts (MOE)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Supporting Evidence</i></b></p> <p>Procedural Manual  Professional Development Plan  Professional Development Agenda, Sign-in, and Presentation  Written Plan for Supervision and Monitoring  Sampling of Eligibility Reports/IEPs</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>PARENT ENGAGEMENT</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Overarching Analysis Question:</i></b> Does the district provide a continuum of services to facilitate parent engagement as a means of improving results for SWD?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Probing Questions</i></b></p> <p>How does the district use formative and summative data for information to continuously improve this area?  How does the district align fiscal funds to appropriately meet this need?  How do the local procedures ensure that parents are appropriately involved in the educational process?  How does the district enforce appropriate procedures for dispute resolution?  How do the appropriate staff members receive professional learning/technical assistance to support those procedures?  How does the district provide supervision and monitoring of compliant practices?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Supporting Data</i></b></p> <p>IEP Participation Data  Indicator 8 (Facilitated Parent Involvement)  Indicator 15 (General Supervision)  Indicator 16 (Complaint Timelines)  Indicator 17 (Due Process Timelines)  Indicator 18 (Resolution Agreements)  Indicator 19 (Mediation Agreements)  Indicator 20 (Timely and Accurate Data)  Maintenance of Efforts (MOE)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Supporting Evidence</i></b></p> <p>Procedural Manual  Professional Development Plan  Professional Development Agenda, Sign-in, and Presentation  Written Plan for Supervision and Monitoring  Sampling of Eligibility Reports/IEPs  Community Outreach Documentation</p>

<b><i>Focus Areas for Implementation of IDEA</i></b>	<b><i>Sampling of Supporting Data and Evidence</i></b>
<p data-bbox="348 240 869 269" style="text-align: center;"><b><i>READINESS FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER</i></b></p> <p data-bbox="128 302 1026 362"><b><i>Overarching Analysis Question:</i></b> Are students with disabilities prepared for college and/or career upon exiting high school?</p> <p data-bbox="506 394 711 423" style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Probing Questions</i></b></p> <p data-bbox="128 427 1066 483">How does the district use formative and summative data for information to continuously improve this area?</p> <p data-bbox="128 487 894 516">How does the district align fiscal funds to appropriately meet this need?</p> <p data-bbox="128 519 1050 576">What are the procedures to ensure that SWD are college and career ready upon exiting high school?</p> <p data-bbox="128 579 984 636">How does the district ensure that appropriate staff members receive professional learning/technical assistance for these procedures?</p> <p data-bbox="128 639 997 669">How does the district provide supervision and monitoring of compliant practices?</p>	<p data-bbox="1444 240 1633 269" style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Supporting Data</i></b></p> <p data-bbox="1115 272 1583 576">           Indicator 1 (Graduation)            Indicator 2 (Dropout)            Indicator 4 (Suspension/Expulsion)            Indicator 5 (LRE)            Indicator 8 (Facilitated Parent Involvement)            Indicator 13 (Secondary Transition)            Indicator 14 (Postsecondary Outcomes)            Indicator 15 (General Supervision)            Indicator 20 (Timely and Accurate Data)            Maintenance of Efforts (MOE)         </p> <p data-bbox="1423 609 1654 638" style="text-align: center;"><b><i>Supporting Evidence</i></b></p> <p data-bbox="1115 641 1766 820">           Procedural Manual            Professional Development Plan            Professional Development Agenda, Sign-in, and Presentation            MOU between collaborating agencies            Written Plan for Supervision and Monitoring            Sampling of Eligibility Reports/IEPs         </p>

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# ANNUAL GADOE ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT PLAN

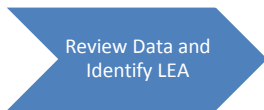
## Introduction

The GaDOE is committed to support LEAs to improve compliant practices and student achievement. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) mandates that every state agency annually monitors and supports all public LEAs under their jurisdiction. Support is provided to LEAs who are found in need of assistance. To accomplish this, the GaDOE implements a tiered approach to examine data of all LEAs operating in the state. LEAs identified as having need of support will participate in the Active Engagement Process. This Active Engagement Process will be tailored to meet each individual LEA's need(s). The 5 Step Active Engagement Process is further defined in this section.



The selected LEAs and the GaDOE then enters into a cooperative agreement and jointly participates in activities to identify the LEAs individual needs and provides guidance and technical assistance which support these needs.

### 1. Review Data and Identify LEAs



The GaDOE uses a systematic approach to identify LEAs that qualify for support(s) through the Active Engagement Process. The Active Engagement Process begins with an examination of LEA determination data for the current and previous two school years. There are 3 Factors that qualify LEAs to participate in the Active Engagement Process ([Table 6](#)). All Factors are based on data in the *Tiered System for Monitoring Districts for General Supervision* ([Figure 5](#)). LEAs that do not meet the current year's District Determinations are identified and further data review is conducted on additional tier level data. These LEAs enter the Active Engagement Process under Factor 1 criteria. LEAs entering the Active Engagement Process under Factor 2 criteria are those who met District Determination for the current year but did not meet District Determinations for the previous two years. Additional tier level data are examined to look for trends, recurring compliance issues and other factors that may indicate a need for additional supports provided through the Active Engagement Process. LEAs identified as Factor 3 may enter the process because of previous year noncompliance findings from the previous school year. These LEAs are required to participate in the Active Engagement Process even though they met District Determinations.



## Active Engagement Process Qualification Factors

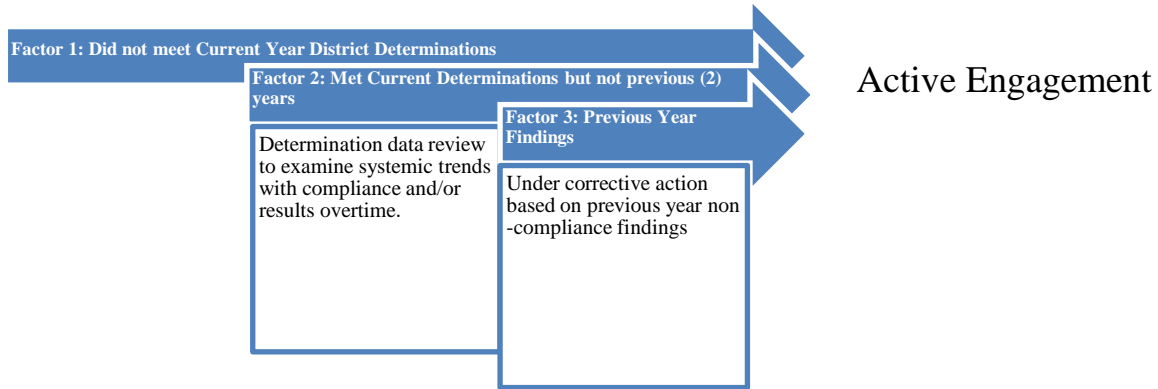


Figure 9

### 2. Conduct Root Cause Analysis



Root Cause Analysis is a structured method to find the right solutions for deficiencies in students’ achievement and LEA compliance. Root cause analyses identify the underlying issue(s) from which a systematic problem arises. The goal of the root cause analysis is to find out what happened, why it happened, and what to do to prevent it from happening again.

### 3. Develop Targeted Improvement Plan



The Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP) must contain very specific actions, responsibilities, timelines, and targets. The GaDOE will support LEAS in development of the Plan which must contain activities to address the needs identified in the Root Cause Analysis. The Plan is designed to improve outcomes for students with disabilities and to implement practices compliant to IDEA.

### 4. Build Engagement Teams



Engagement Teams will be developed according to the need of the LEA. Every Engagement Team will have a team leader who will serve as the point of contact with the LEA’s Special Education Director. Communication will serve to; check on LEA progress of TIP, identify changes, challenges, or concerns,

and realign support if needed. Engagement Teams are designed based on the LEAs needs identified in the root cause analysis. Teams are constructed to support specific subject areas such as those listed in the following Table 5.

<b>Table 5. Examples of Engagement Team Specialty Areas</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Assistive Technology</li> <li>• Behavior/Discipline</li> <li>• IEP Development</li> <li>• Professional Learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Areas</li> <li>• Progress Monitoring</li> <li>• Policy, Procedure, Practice</li> <li>• RTI</li> <li>• Transition</li> </ul>

### 5. Review Evidence for Compliant Practices and Improved Results



At the end of the process LEAs present evidence to demonstrate systemic change of improved outcomes for students with disabilities and implementation of procedures compliant to IDEA. Examples of evidence can include the following:

- Student Records
- Professional Learning Content
- Progress Monitoring Data

If systemic change is not evident in the end product(s) the GaDOE will make additional finding(s) of noncompliance and measures will be taken to ensure timely correction of the finding(s).

### Summary

The five step Active Engagement Process is designed to identify LEAs who need assistance in specific areas. This is done by helping them identify systemic problems, developing individualized remediation plans, supporting their work with specialized teams, and requiring documentation of compliance and improvement of student outcomes. The GaDOE Division for Special Education Services and Supports is committed to partnering with LEAs through the Active Engagement Process described in this training module. We look forward to working together with LEAs in OUR endeavor for “making education work for all students” in Georgia.

**Table 6:**

Identification Factors of the Active Engagement Process	
<b>Factor 1 and 2 Identified LEAs</b>	
<b>Step 1:</b>	<b>Data Source(s):</b>
District Determination 3 Year Review	District Determinations
<b>Step 2:</b>	<b>Data Source(s)</b>
Review additional tiered level data	District Special Education Summary Reports Focus Monitoring Reports Record Reviews Disproportionality Dispute Resolution Fiscal Risk Assessment Continuation of Services Data Current and Prior Monitoring Reports
<b>Step 3:</b>	<b>Data Source(s):</b>
Review local LEA data	Written Procedures Organization Chart Monitoring Procedures Professional Development Plans Records
<b>Factor 3 Identified LEAs</b>	
<b>Step 1:</b>	<b>Data Source(s):</b>
Identify LEAs with previous year noncompliance findings	Noncompliance Findings Student Performance Complaints

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## COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITIES

### **Rationale:**

*“It is the process of building shared knowledge and the collaborative dialogue about that shared knowledge that builds the capacity of staff to function as high-performing teams. Every time leaders remove teams from that process, they lessen the likelihood of building capacity. Leaders enhance the effectiveness of others when they provide clarity regarding what needs to be done and ongoing support to help staff succeed. They do not develop others by doing the work for them.”*

*DuFour, R., and Marzano, R. (2011). Leaders of learning (p. 85). Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.*

The Collaborative Communities approach reflects a technical assistance model of the future in which stakeholders are engaged in solving critical problems and are supported in their efforts, rather than being told what to do by external sources (NASDE, p. 9).

### **Definition:**

A Collaborative Community is a group of people who share common roles, responsibilities, and/or desired outcomes. Participants deepen their knowledge and expertise by sharing information, materials, and resources. These groups utilize focused action and shared leadership in order to work together to accomplish common goals.

### **Purpose:**

Collaborative communities within each GLRS region improve outcomes of students with disabilities, promote shared work among districts, empower LEAs to engage in continuous improvement, and assist LEAs with general supervision. Collaborative communities, a joint effort among GaDOE, GLRS, and LEAs, foster sharing, collaborating, and learning with and from each other. ([Figure 9](#)) All participants are expected to be highly engaged, active participants in the shared leadership of their collaborative communities.

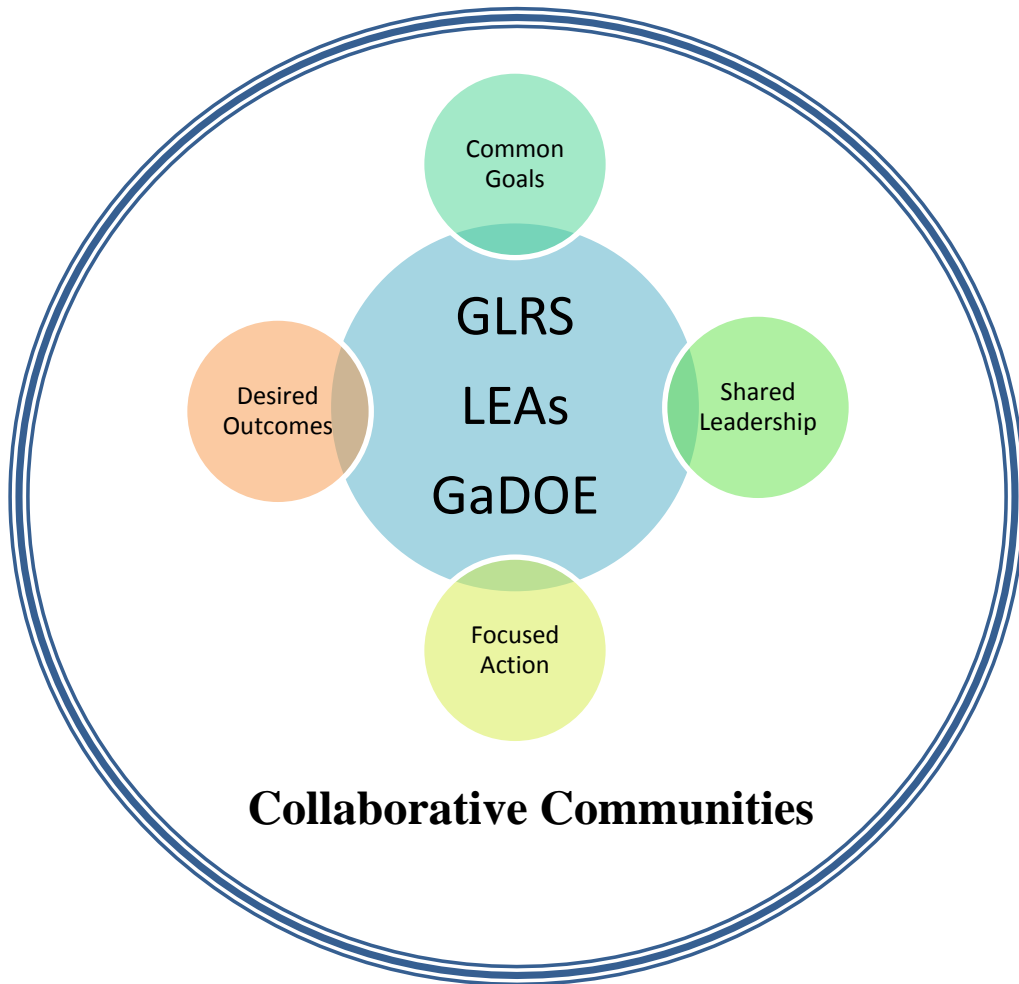


Figure 9:

### The Collaborative Process

Collaborative Communities begin with common goals, utilize shared leadership, and engage in focused actions in order to achieve desired outcomes/products.

No single person has all of the knowledge, skills, expertise and energy to fulfill all of the leadership responsibilities within a collaborative community. However, by combining individual knowledge and expertise and assuming various roles at different times, leadership can be shared and the effectiveness of the group enhanced. As shared leaders, all group members contribute to the group, provide and accept feedback, ask and answer questions, and actively listen.

### Roles:

The GLRS Director serves as the **facilitator** of the Collaborative Community, oversees the group activities, encourages the sharing of divergent ideas, ensures a balance of roles and perspectives

within the collaborative community, helps develop mutual understanding, and guides the work toward a shared vision.

Specific responsibilities may include scheduling meetings, guiding the use of protocols, overseeing the development and sustainability of the framework for electronic communication, and ensuring that tasks are distributed properly to take advantage of unique skills of group members.

GaDOE personnel serve as **coaches** in the Collaborative Communities. They provide feedback on the process, ask critical questions, debrief the process, assist the facilitator in the collaborative process and help build facilitator capacity in order to increase the group's effectiveness. They serve as process advisors to help the group reflect on and evaluate strategies in order to improve the way it identifies and solves problems and makes decisions.

LEA Special Education Directors participate in the collaborative community by sharing their information and expertise. They apply the knowledge, skills, and tools from the collaborative community to facilitate the work of their local teams in the five focus areas for implementation of IDEA [Identification Process, Services and Supports, Student Progress, Parent Engagement, College and Career Readiness].

Responsibilities may include convening a local team to address each focus area, applying processes utilized during collaborative community meetings, ensuring the tasks of the local team are completed, sharing information from the local team both electronically and at each collaborative meeting.

## **References**

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### Special Education Reporting Dates

<u>Date</u>	<u>Report</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Special Notes</u>
<u>July 2012</u>			
31	*Preschool Exit Data (FY12 Data)	Stand-alone application in GaDOE Portal	APR Indicator 7
	*Postsecondary Survey (FY10-11 Exiters)	Stand-alone application in GaDOE Portal	APR Indicator 14
	*Timelines (FY12 Data)	Stand-alone application in GaDOE Portal	APR Indicators 11 and 12
	Consolidated Application and CLIP	Stand-alone application in GaDOE Portal	
<u>August 2012</u>			
31	Continuation of Services Data	Stand-alone application in GaDOE Portal	
<u>September 2012</u>			
4	Transmission for FTE Cycle 1 Begins	Data Collections	
28	Consolidated Application – All Special Education Budgets	Stand-alone application in GaDOE Portal	
	Final Submission of Budget Completion Reports for FY10: All Grants	Stand-alone application in GaDOE Portal	
<u>October 2012</u>			
2	FTE Cycle 1 Count Day	Data Collections	
	Transmission for CPI Cycle 1 Begins	Data Collections	

<u>Date</u>	<u>Report</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Special Notes</u>
9	Last Date for Initial Transmission CPI Cycle 1 Data	Data Collections	
	Last Date for Initial Transmission CPI Cycle 1 Data	Data Collections	
25	*Final Transmission for CPI Cycle 1 – Deadline for Superintendent’s Sign-off	Data Collections	
25	*Final Transmission Date for FTE Cycle 1 Data – Deadline for Superintendent’s Sign-off	Data Collections	APR Indicators 5, 6, 9 and 10
<u>November 2012</u>			
<u>December 2012</u>			
31	*Special Education Budgets FY13 Final Submission	Stand-alone application in GaDOE Portal	MOE
<u>January 2013</u>			
2	Georgia High Cost Fund (GHFC) grant applications accepted	Submitted to Mike Blake	
	Grant for Residential and Reintegration Services (GRRS) grant applications accepted	Submitted to Mike Blake	
<u>February 2013</u>			
15	Deadline for Initial Transmission for Special Education- Student Record	Data Collections	
28	<i>Suggested guideline that 50% of grant funds are drawn down from the GaDOE</i>		



<u>Date</u>	<u>Report</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Special Notes</u>
<u>April 2013</u>			
2	Final Date to Submit Georgia High Cost Fund (GHFC)	Submitted to Mike Blake	
<u>May 2013</u>			
31	Parent Surveys completed		APR Indicator
<u>June 2013</u>			
1	Postsecondary Survey Opens for Data Entry (FY11-12Exiters)	Stand-alone application in GaDOE Portal	
18	*Final Student Record Submission – Including Special Education Record and GNETS Program Record	Data Collections	Indicators 4a & b
30	*Disproportionality Documentation Form/CEIS Student Data	Stand-alone application in GaDOE Portal	
<u>July 2013</u>			
31	*Preschool Exit Data (FY13 Data)	Stand-alone application in GaDOE Portal	APR Indicator 7
	*Postsecondary Survey (FY11-12 Exiters)	Stand-alone application in GaDOE Portal	APR Indicator 14
	*Timelines (FY13 Data)	Stand-alone application in GaDOE Portal	APR Indicators 11 and 12

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## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The central themes identified by OSEP and subsequently established in Georgia's process are:

- **Active Engagement** – A collaborative process between two mutually committed parties utilizing ongoing interactive discussions and technical assistance to resolve issues. (GaDOE DSESS GCIMP Manual – Forward – p2)
- **College and Career Readiness** – SWD prepared for college and/or career upon exiting high school. Supporting data comes from Indicators 1, 2, 3,4,5,8,13,14,15, and 20.
- **Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS)** - LEA's identified as having significant disproportionality must provide comprehensive coordinated early intervening services to children in their LEA, particularly children in those groups that were significantly over identified. [CEIS Plan Narrative Guidelines](#)
- **Consolidated Application** – is an annual plan for improving student achievement which allows LEAs to submit one comprehensive application for funding for several federal and state programs.
- **Continuation of Service Data** – documentation of continuation of services during a change of placement (beginning 11<sup>th</sup> day of OSS) as a result of discipline action.
- **Continuity** - An effective accountability system must be continuous, must link to systemic change, and must integrate self-assessment with ongoing feedback and response.
- **Corrective Action Plan (CAP)** – The district develops the CAP that addresses the cited compliance items from the on-site monitoring team and includes a long range plan to improve the priority indicator.
- **Data-driven process** - School LEAs receive annual System Data Profiles that focus on the system's achievement on each of the Performance Goals and Indicators which are reported on an annual basis. Data are used by the local stakeholders to review and revise current improvement activities and/or develop additional improvement activities. Data are also used by the state stakeholder committee to select priority indicators for the Focused Monitoring reviews conducted by the Division for Special Education Services.
- **Dispute Resolution** - There are several processes guaranteed to come to a resolution in a dispute with a system over the rights and services afforded to students with disabilities and their families under the IDEA. These include formal complaints, mediation and/or a due process hearing. [Dispute Resolution Webpage](#)
- **Due Process** is designed to provide an opportunity to resolve differences between concerned parties in the identification, evaluation, placement or provision of a FAPE for a student with a disability.

- **EDGAR** – [Education Department General Administrative Regulations](#)
- **Fidelity** refers to the provision or delivery of instruction in the manner in which it was designed or prescribed. Other related terms to fidelity are intervention integrity or treatment integrity which often refers to the same principle. [RTI Guidance, Chapter 1 - Glossary](#)
- **Formative Assessment** is an evaluation tool used to guide and monitor the progress of student learning during instruction. Its purpose is to provide continuous feedback to both the student and the teacher concerning learning successes and progress toward mastery. Formative assessments diagnose gaps in skill and knowledge, measure progress, and evaluate and what teaching techniques require modification. Educators use results of these assessments to improve student performance. Formative assessments would not necessarily be used for grading purposes. Examples include, but are not limited to: pre/post tests, curriculum based measures (CBM), portfolios, benchmark assessments, quizzes, teacher observations, teacher/student conferencing, teacher commentary, and feedback. [RTI Guidance, Chapter 1 - Glossary](#)
- **General Assurances /Specific Assurances (in ConAP)** – Each participating LEA agency must ensure that all programs for children will be operated in compliance with all applicable state and federal statutes, rules and regulations.
- **Grant Awards** - The Grants Program Unit of the Georgia Department of Education's Programs Division administers several federal formula and competitive grant programs.
  - **Formula Grants** are awarded to the Department of Education based on a predetermined formula (population, other factors). Formula-driven grants are passed on to local agencies and organizations via subgrants.
  - **Competitive Grants** are awarded to the Department of Education who, in turn, awards grants on a competitive basis, consistent with congressional earmarks, to public and private nonprofit organizations.
- **Highly Qualified Special Ed Teacher** – [Fact Sheet for Georgia Special Education Teachers – Certification and Highly Qualified Teacher Requirements](#), [Special Education Highly Qualified FAQs](#)
- **Highly Qualified Teacher** – To be deemed highly qualified, teachers must have: 1) a bachelor's degree, 2) full state certification or licensure, and 3) prove that they know each subject they teach. ([New No Child Left Behind Flexibility: Highly Qualified Teachers](#))
- **Incentives** – recognitions are highlighted to recognize districts for their performance on Performance Goals and Indicators and those systems making the greatest improvement on any of the Performance Goals and Indicators
- **LEA** – Local Educational Agency

- **Local education accountability** - School LEAs are accountable for identifying local system or school strengths and weaknesses based on data, for planning and implementing strategies to improve student outcomes, and for measuring and reporting the improvement process to their stakeholders and to the state.
- **Maintenance of Effort (MOE)** means that an applicant for funds under Part B may not reduce the level of expenditure for support of special education below the level of expenditures for support of special education for the preceding fiscal year (34 CFR § 300.203(a) ). Reductions in expenditures are allowed, only if they meet the provisions of 34 CFR § 300.204 and/or 34 CFR § 300.205.
- **Mediation** is a voluntary process for the parent, student, and/or school system to express concerns regarding possible IDEA violations to develop a creative solution to resolve issues.
- **Parent Engagement** is an ongoing process that increases active participation, communication, and collaboration between parents, schools and communities with the goal of educating the whole child to ensure student achievement and success. [Parent Engagement webpage](#)
- **Partnership with stakeholders** - At both the state and local level, stakeholder partnerships are established to collaborate with parents, students, teachers, administrators, advocates, and other agencies. The stakeholder group assists the state or school LEAs in developing and implementing a model of continuous improvement. This collaboration among all the stakeholders results in improved outcomes for students with disabilities.
- **Policies** - For the purposes of the Division for Special Education Services and Supports General Supervision System, **Policies** are “Board Approved” written mandates that align with rules and regulations.
- **Practices** - For the purposes of the Division for Special Education Services and Supports General Supervision System, **Practices** are the implementation of procedures, which are documented using evidence such as interviews, observations, student records, etc.
- **Predictable rewards and sanctions** - LEAs meeting the highest level of achievement and LEAs making the greatest improvement on any of the Performance Goals and Indicators will receive recognition. LEAs who fail to show continuous improvement over time will receive graduated sanctions.
- **Procedures** - For the purposes of the Division for Special Education Services and Supports General Supervision System, **Procedures** are written steps for implementing policies, rules, and regulations.
- **Public awareness** - The involvement of stakeholders in the continuous improvement monitoring process is one way the public is engaged and provided knowledge of the system’s program effectiveness. System annual data as well as any Focused Monitoring reviews, formal complaints, mediations, and due process hearing decisions are available

to the public through the GaDOE website.

- **Sanctions** – official letter sent to the district superintendent to document area(s) of noncompliance of state goals and indicators.
- **SEA** – State Educational Agency
- **Self-assessment** - Each school system, in collaboration with stakeholders, are involved in ongoing self-assessment by analyzing the system’s data on the Georgia’s Performance Goals and Indicators for Students with Disabilities, developing improvement activities, implementing the activities, measuring the progress, and updating or revising the activities annually.
- **SIG** - School Improvement Grant
- **Special Ed Determination** - An eligibility team can determine if a child is a child with a disability by adhering to the eligibility criteria in the [Georgia Rules for Special Education Eligibility](#).
- **Special Ed Disproportionate Representation** occurs when students from a racial and/or ethnic group are identified for special education and/or related services or for a specific disability category either at a greater rate (overrepresentation) or lesser rate (underrepresentation) than other students in the schools general population.
- **State District Compliance Agreement** - The agreement made between the state and a district to address areas of noncompliance.
- **Summative Assessment** is an evaluation tool generally used at the end of an assignment, unit, project, or course. In an educational setting, summative assessments tend to be more formal kinds of assessments (e.g., unit tests, final exams, projects, reports, and state assessments) and are typically used to assign students a course grade or to certify student mastery of intended learning outcomes for the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS) and the state adopted curriculum where applicable.
- **Technical assistance** - With the emphasis of the monitoring process on continuous improvement, technical assistance is an essential component. The Division has made technical assistance a priority in order to facilitate program improvement throughout the state. Technical assistance may include assistance with data analysis, improvement planning, and identification of promising practices, training in identified needs, and other requests for resources that would facilitate program improvement.
- **Timely Correction** is when a district corrects noncompliant issues within a specified period of time, but no later than one year from identification.

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