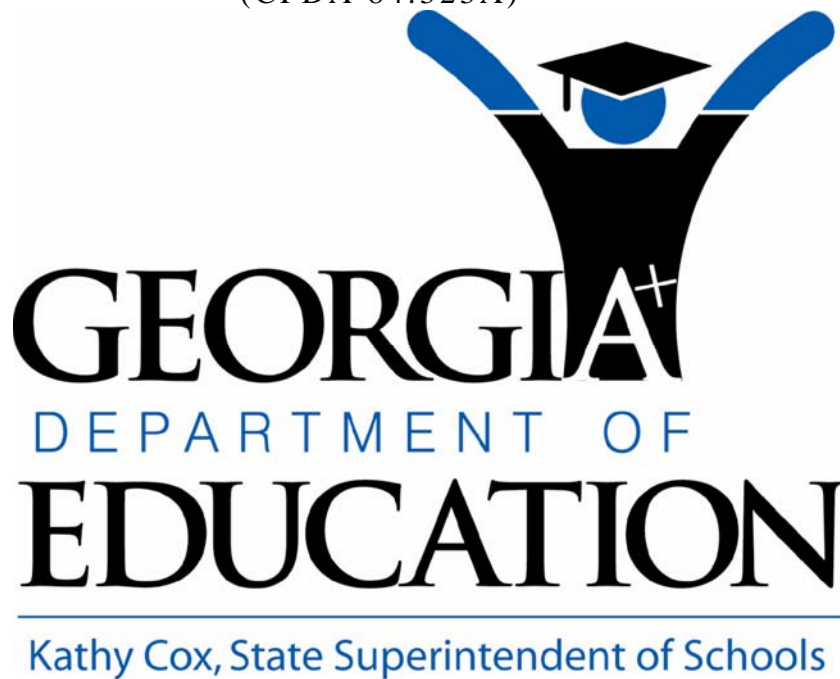


GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
DIVISION FOR EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS

# GEORGIA STATE PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT GRANT

Submitted: March 23, 2007

(CFDA 84.323A)



**We will lead the nation in improving student achievement**

**Table of Contents**

**Part I  
APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE  
(Standard Form 424)**

**Part II - BUDGET INFORMATION**

**GENERAL REQUIREMENTS** iii

**ABSTRACT** iv

**Part III - APPLICATION NARRATIVE**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Section (a) – Purpose, Background, and Need for Project.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Successful School Completion – Graduation Rates.....	2
1.3 Dropouts, Suspensions, and Expulsions.....	3
1.4 LRE.....	6
1.5 Reading/Literacy Successes and Needs.....	8
1.6 Mathematics.....	11
1.7 Teacher Retention.....	15
1.8 Fully Certified Teachers.....	15
1.9 Parent Involvement.....	17
1.10 Summary.....	17
<b>Section (b) – Significance..</b>	<b>18</b>
Parent Involvement/Engagement.....	19
Systems Change..	20
2.1 Goal 1 – Effective Reading Skills.....	20
2.2 Goal 1 – Effective Math Skills.....	22
2.3 Goal 1 – Response to Intervention.....	24
2.4 Goal 2 – Dropout Prevention.....	25
2.5 Goal 3 – Effective Transition Strategies.....	27
2.6 Goal 4 – Sufficient Numbers of Qualified Personnel.....	31
2.7 Goal 5– Parent Support of the Development of Early Literacy Numeracy Skills.....	35
<b>Section (c) – Project Design .....</b>	<b>36</b>
3.1 Overview Mission.....	36
3.2 Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 Participating Schools.....	37
3.3 State, Regional, and Local Resources to Support School Implementation of Goals.....	38
3.4 Framework to Guide School Selection of Two Goal Areas.....	39
3.5 Needs Analysis, Selection of Goals, and Develop of Local Implementation Plans.....	40

3.6 SPDG Goals, Objectives, and Activities.....	42
<b>Section (d) – Key Personnel .....</b>	<b>54</b>
4.1 SPDG Personnel.....	54
4.2 Key Consultants.....	57
4.3 Involvement of Individuals from Traditionally Under-represented Groups....	58
<b>Section (e): Adequacy of Resources.....</b>	<b>59</b>
5.1 Facilities, Equipment, Supplies, and Other Resources.....	59
5.2 Commitments of Partners.....	60
5.3 Adequacy of Budget.....	64
5.4 Sustainability Beyond SPDG Period.....	64
<b>Section (f): Management Plan.....</b>	<b>64</b>
6.1 SPDG Management Team.....	65
6.2 Management Approach and Systems.....	66
6.3 SPDG Advisory Function.....	66
6.4 Assurance of Project Completion.....	67
6.5 Alignment with Federal SPDG Indicators.....	67
6.5 SPDG Staff Consultant/Partner Responsibilities, Milestones, and Project Timelines.....	67
<b>Section (g): Evaluation Plan.....</b>	<b>81</b>
7.1 Qualitative Evaluation.. ..	81
7.2 Logic Model.....	81
7.3 Outcome Evaluation.....	88
7.4 Process Evaluation.....	88
7.5 Analysis.....	89
7.6 Annual Performance Report.....	89
7.7 Process Table.....	90

**Part IV – Assurances and Certification**

**Part V – Appendix**

**APPENDIX A - References**

**APPENDIX B - Tables**

- Georgia Pyramid of Interventions
- Georgia State Performance Plan Indicators
- Map of the Georgia Learning Resources System and  
Regional Education Service Agencies
- Georgia SPDG Organizational Chart

**APPENDIX C - Partnership Agreements**

**APPENDIX D - Vitae**

**APPENDIX E - Instruments**

*General Requirements*

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Page or Section</b>
(a) Positive efforts to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in project activities.	Section 4.3 - Pages 58-59 Section 6.3 Pages 66-67
(b) Budget for a two-day project Directors' meeting in Washington, DC, annually.	Budget – Part II
(c) At least 90% of the funds received on the professional development.	Budget – Part II
(d) Subgrants to IHEs, PTI, and LEAs.	Budget – Part II
(e) Partnership agreements specifying the nature and extent of the partnership the respective roles of each member of the partnership.	Section 5.2 – Pages 60-64 Appendix F
<b>Other:</b>	
✓ Integrated and aligned, to the maximum extent possible, with State plans and activities under the ESEA, Rehab Act of 1973, and Higher Education Act of 1965.	Section 6.1 – Pages 65-66 Goal 4 – Pages 49-53
✓ Partnership agreement with the entity responsible for teacher preparation and certification.	Objectives 4.1-4.3 Pages 49-53 Section 5.2 – Pages 60-64 Appendix F
✓ Coordination with other public resources including Part B and Part C.	Goal 5 – Part C – Pages 53-54 Part B – Leveraging of resources throughout Goals
✓ Aligned with the plans and application submitted under Sections 1111 and 2112 of the ESEA.	Section 6.1 Pages 65-66
✓ The steps to ensure that economically disadvantaged and minority children are not taught at higher rates by teachers who are not highly qualified.	Activity 4.1.3 – Page 50 Activity 4.2.1 Pages 50-51
✓ Regular assessment as to the how the strategies implemented have been effective in meeting the State's performance goals.	Section 1.1 – Page 1 Section 3.1 – Pages 36-37 Section 6.1 Pages 65-66
✓ Indication that the SPDG website meets government-wide standards.	Page 59
✓ Individuals with disabilities or parents of individuals in	Section 6.3

Requirement	Page or Section
planning, implementing, and evaluating the project.	Pages 66-67
✓ Steps to ensure equitable access to, and preparation in, its programs for teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs.	Activity 4.1.3 Page 50 Section 6.3 Pages 66-67
✓ Strategies to sustain the knowledge and skills of personnel who have received SBR training.	Activity 1.2.1 – Page 43 Page 1.2.2 – Page 43 Activity 1.3.1 – Page 44 Activity 1.4.4 – Page 45 Activity 2.1.2 – Page 47 Activity 3.1.5 – Pages 48 Activity 4.1.2 – Page 50
✓ Strategies for the recruitment, hiring, and retention of highly qualified special education teachers.	Section 4.3 – Pages 58-59 Goal 4 – Pages 49-53
✓ Alignment with Federal SPDG Indicators	Section 6.5 – Page 67 Table 3 – Pages 68-80 Activity 4.3.1 – Page 53
✓ \$4,000 for support of SIGNET.	Budget – Part II

State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) CFDA 84.323A, Absolute Priority:  
SEAs improving educational results for children with disabilities

**PROJECT ABSTRACT**

The GaDOE, Exceptional Students Division, has conducted frequent needs assessments as part of ongoing operations and for State Performance Plan development and execution. Findings show that relative to students with disabilities (SWD), Georgia has the need to: improve student reading and mathematics achievement; increase the number of students who graduate with a regular diploma; decrease the number of students that dropout; increase student completion and better postsecondary outcomes; increase employment of fully-certified special education teachers; and increase parent engagement in reading, math and social skills development.

Using SIG/SPDG resources, the GaDOE, Exceptional Students Division, has been successful in raising the percent of special education students receiving instruction in the regular classroom (more than 80 percent of the time) over the last three years from 48 percent to 54 percent. Other SPDG efforts have lowered the ratio of suspensions, expulsions, and unilateral removals over the last five years from 11 to 8 per 1,000 special education students. Work on retention has maintained the 5-year retention rate of first-time special education teachers at about 65 percent.

During the last two years, the percent of dropouts has increased from about 14 percent to 22 percent of the 14 to 21 year old special education population. This increase has caused Georgia to have more dropouts on an annual basis than it has special education students graduating with a regular diploma. Also, in the last two years, the percent of special education teachers with non-renewable certificated has increased from 10 percent to above 35 percent demonstrating that demand now substantially exceeds supply. With increasing numbers of retirees anticipated, this has the potential of being a major problem for a sustained period of time. These needs have led Georgia to propose an overall SPDG mission of successful school completion by SWD with goals to:

- increase reading and math achievement at the middle and high school level;
- reduce dropouts;

- increase the percent of special education students achieving their IEP transition goals;
- increase the percent of employed special education teachers holding full certification;
- increase the percent of children transitioning to preschool with age appropriate skills.

In order to achieve these goals, the SPDG proposes to partner with other agencies, universities, parents and regional/state/national resource centers to provide recruitment and training of special education teachers, scientifically-based intervention strategies within the Georgia Pyramid of Intervention, regionally/locally based coach training and onsite assistance, dropout prevention strategies, transition enhancements, family engagement activities, student achievement monitoring, and fidelity of implementation tracking. Four of the goal efforts will be implemented in 68 systems (High Schools and their feeder Intermediate Schools) divided into two cohorts of 34 systems each with cohort one starting in 2007 and cohort two starting in 2009. Some of them are showing special education dropout rates that are triple that of general education students as well as very large gaps in achievement.

**Georgia has been successful in lowering suspension and expulsion rates and increasing the percent of students in the regular classroom. Through the implementation of SBR interventions, achievement in math and reading will be enhanced and more students will graduate with regular diplomas. Intensive efforts in training and recruitment will reverse the trend toward using more special education teachers with non-renewable certificates. The use of effective dropout prevention strategies will also reduce the ratio of dropouts enhancing the outcomes for special education students in Georgia.**

## Part III – Application Narrative

### SECTION 1: NEEDS

**1.1 Background.** With a population of 8.5 million people, the State of Georgia is the 9<sup>th</sup> largest state in the nation. It has 159 counties and 183 school districts serving 1,598,461 students (2006). The 2,003 public schools in Georgia serve a diverse population composed of 781,196 females and 817,265 males with the following racial/ethnic distribution: White, 48.0%; Black, 38.3%; Hispanic, 8.4%; Asian, .7%; Multi-Racial, 2.4%; and American Indian, .1%.

To serve this diverse population of students, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) developed a goal: “To lead the nation in improving student achievement” (Cox, 2003). This goal applies to **all** Georgia students, including those with disabilities and those at risk of school failure. In order to achieve this goal, **each school** must have high expectations for **all** students, provide scientifically-based research (SBR) instruction that educates students to be analytical thinkers, have a positive school climate where students are proactively taught responsible behavior and provided regular reinforcement, provide layers of support and tailored instruction for students experiencing difficulty, provide SBR reading and math instruction to students experiencing difficulty with learning, and provide appropriate supports and accommodations for students with disabilities (SWD) so they can participate in general education settings and fully engage in the school to graduate from high school equipped to become contributing citizens.

To determine how well this overall goal is being met, the GaDOE, Exceptional Students Division, has conducted frequent need assessments as part of its State Performance Plan (SPP) and annual performance reporting (APR) to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) using a number of outcome indicators to measure progress toward meeting this goal. These indicators have been followed annually and provide time-series data on effective program

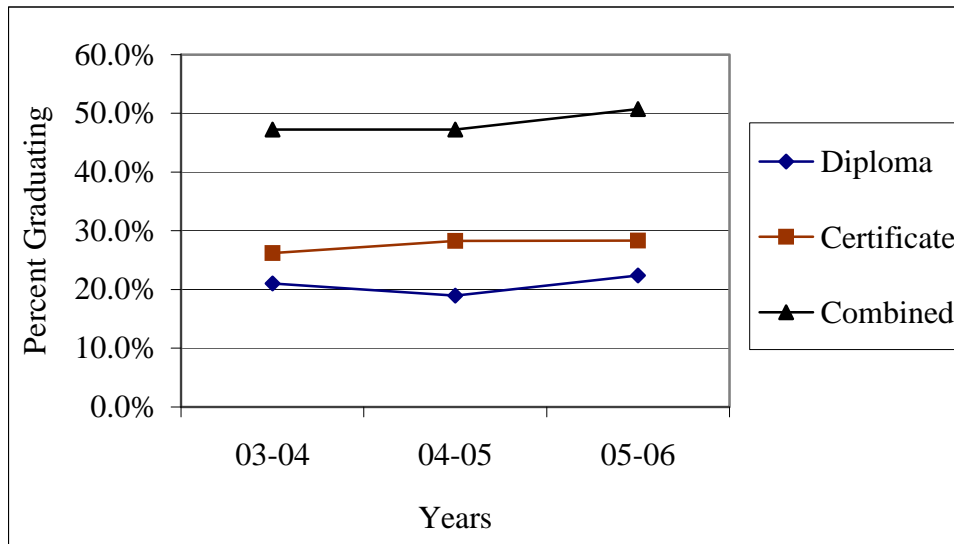


implementation to achieve the best possible academic success by SWD. These need areas also served as the basis for the State's Improvement Planning, and drove the design of the State Improvement Grant/State Personnel Development Grant.

**1.2 Successful School Completion-Graduation Rates.** The main mission of the Exceptional Students Division is to assist as many special education students as possible to successfully complete school. In Georgia, students must graduate and following the course of study in either a college preparatory or career/technology path to earn a general education diploma. Both of those paths include earning Carnegie Units for required coursework and passing a high-stakes test, the Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT), in five academic disciplines (English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science and Writing). Students with and without disabilities have multiple opportunities to pass each section of the GHSGT. According to State law, an IEP team cannot override the graduation requirements; however, the IEP team can determine the requirements necessary for the student to earn a special education diploma. The percentage of SWD earning a general education diploma has remained constant since 2003 (Figure 1)—approximately 20%, compared to about 67 percent of non-disabled students graduating with a regular diploma.

A further analysis was conducted on the rate of graduation and the discrepancy between special and general education students. A group of systems was identified that would benefit from enhanced achievement intervention. Table 1 below shows the school systems with the highest discrepancy based on averages from 2003-2004 to 2005-2006.

**Figure 1. The percentage of SWD graduating with regular diplomas or certificates.**



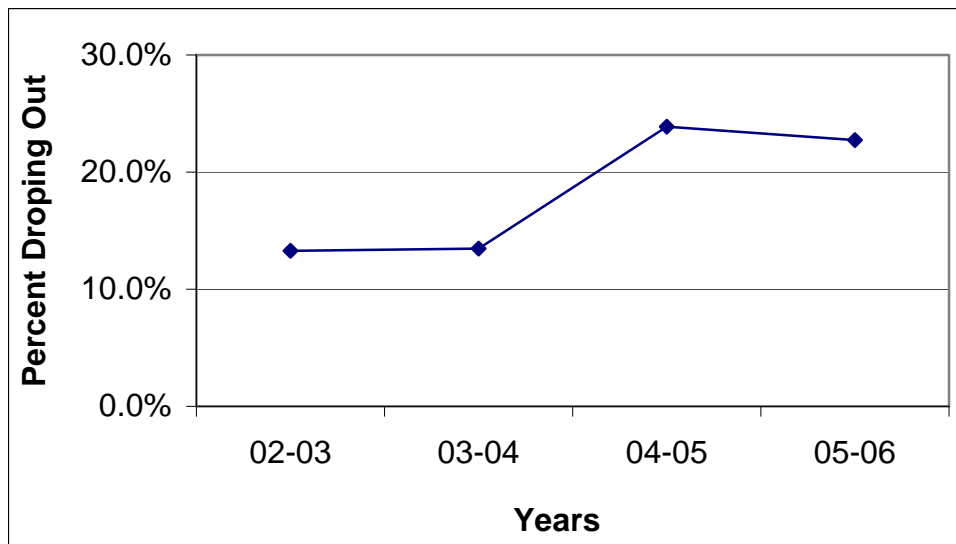
**Table 1. School systems having the greatest discrepancy in graduation rates between special education students and general education students—Averages from 2004-05-2005-06.**

School Systems	Sp Ed Graduation Percentage	GenEd Graduation Percentage	Discrepancy in Percentage Points
Morgan County	17.7	87.0	69.3
Cook County	9.6	75.2	65.6
Dade County	16.4	80.9	64.5
Butts County	17.4	78.6	61.2
Laurens County	13.0	73.9	60.8
Decatur County	13.1	73.7	60.6

**1.3 Dropouts, Suspensions, Expulsions.** Dropping-out postpones, if not eliminates, the

successful completion of school. The dropout rate from 2002 through 2005 has increased from 13.2 percent to 22.7 percent. This dropout rate calculation is based upon the number of special education students 14 years through 21 years of age. Figure 2 shows the increasing dropout rate. This increase has caused the State to have more dropouts each year than it has special education students graduating with a regular diploma.

**Figure 2. The percent of 14 to 21 year old special education students who are dropping out of school each year from 2002-03 to 2005-06.**



In order to facilitate program planning and the reduction of dropouts, the rate of dropouts for special education students by system were calculated. In addition, an analysis was made of the school system differences in dropout rates for special and general education students. The 10 districts with the largest discrepancies between special and general education students dropping out are provided below in Table 2. The calculations for the 10 districts with the greatest discrepancy are based upon averages for the last three years (2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06). As can be observed, a few of these systems have dropout rates for special education students that are double or more than that of general education students.

An analysis has also been conducted of systems with the highest dropout rate for special education students. Many of the systems appearing in Table 2 also have a very high special education dropout rate. They are good candidates for effective dropout prevention programs.

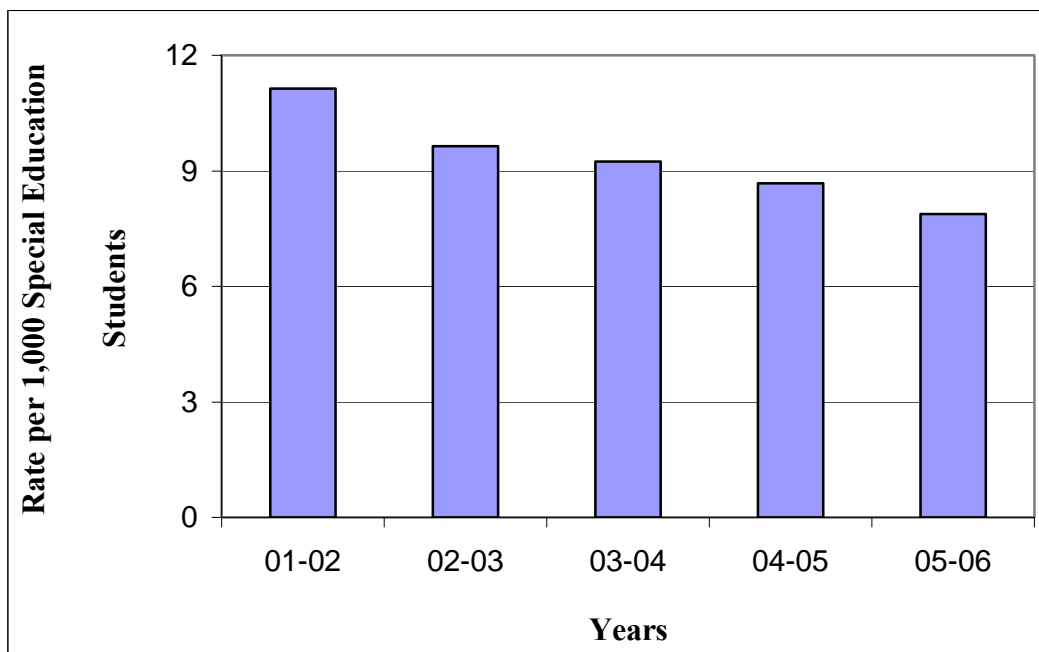
**Table 2. The ten school systems having the largest dropout discrepancies between special and general education students—Averages from 2003-04 to 2005-06**

School Systems	Special Education Dropout Percentage	General Education Dropout Percentage	Discrepancy in Percentage Points
Miller County	9.23	2.43	6.8
Bacon County	9.20	4.13	5.07
Taylor County	8.62	4.06	4.56
Chickamauga City	5.85	1.29	4.55
Mitchell County	8.99	4.79	4.21
Macon County	8.22	4.39	3.83
Pickens County	6.27	2.72	3.55
Cook County	7.48	3.93	3.55
Jasper County	6.13	2.76	3.36
Stephens County	6.99	3.81	3.18

During the first years of the previous SIG/SPDG, Georgia worked on establishing school sites that would reduce office discipline referrals (ODR), suspensions, expulsions, and unilateral removals of special education students. Figure 3 provides a review of statewide removals and suspensions for the last five years. It shows a continuing decline for the five years. SIG work can take credit for some of the decline. Because of this decline and the alarming increases in SWD dropouts, the GaDOE will

resume continued work related to suspensions/expulsions with other initiatives, and the proposed SPDG will focus its efforts on dropout prevention.

**Figure 3. Suspension and expulsions rates for SWD from 2001-02 to 2005-06.**

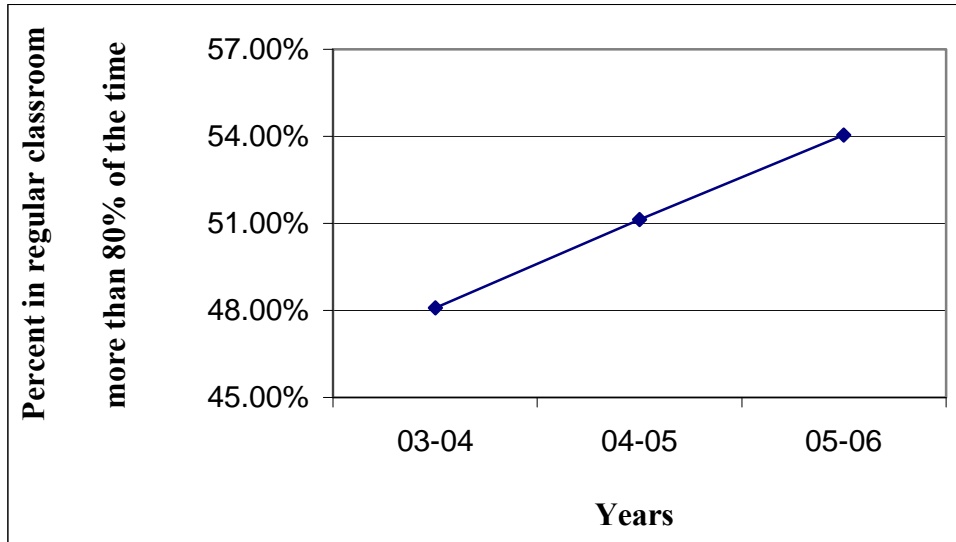


**1.4 LRE.** Georgia has been working to include increased access to the general education curriculum by SWD. Figure 4 provides a statewide overview of Georgia's success in increasing the percent of SWD in the general education classroom for more than 80 percent of the time. Figure 4 shows that statewide progress has been made in the last three years, with the percent in the general classroom more than 80 percent of the time rising from 48 percent to 54 percent.

While more SWD are included in the general education classroom, the achievement of this goal is not true for all Georgia schools. Table 3 shows some schools that have placed 100 percent of their special education students in regular classes for over 80 percent of the time and another group of schools that had less than 17 percent of their special education students in such an instructional environment during 2005. Schools achieving a high percent in the general classroom environment could act as models, examples, and mentors for those who have a poor

record in this area.

**Figure 4. Growth in the percent of SWD placed in their general education classroom more than 80 percent of the time from 2003-04 to 2005-06.**



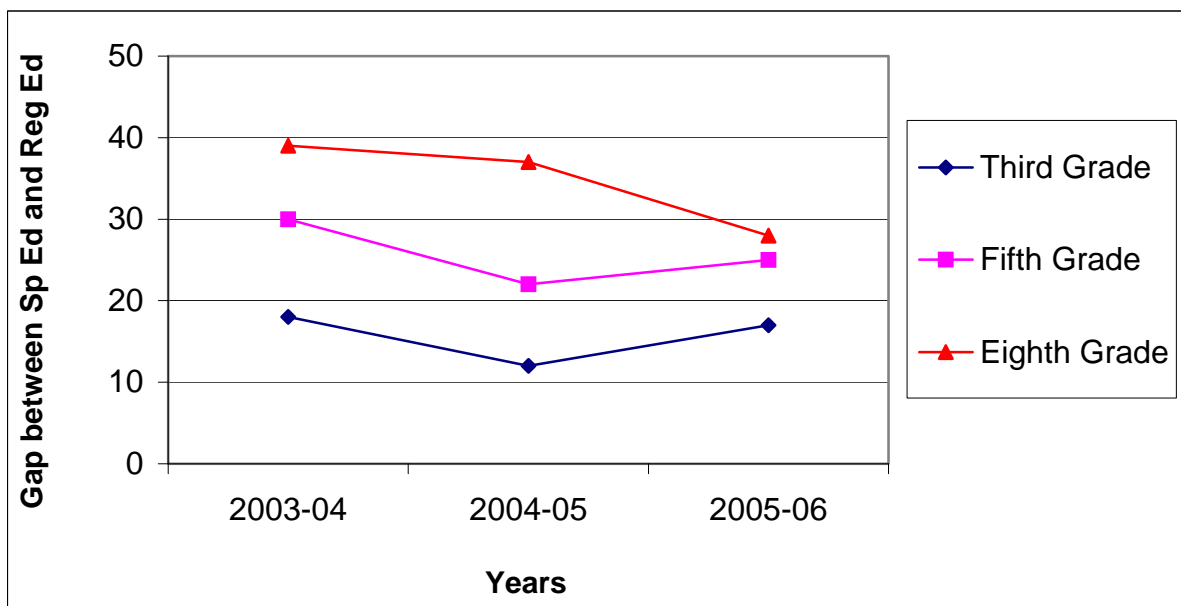
**Table 3. Percent of SWD students placed in the general education class for more than 80 percent of the time in selected schools – 2003-2004 to 2005-2006.**

School	Time in regular class > 80 percent.		
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Benning Hills Elementary School	55.0%	66.7%	100.0%
Cary Reynolds Elementary School	42.4%	43.3%	100.0%
Centralhatchee Elementary School	70.0%	77.3%	100.0%
Dawson Elementary School	56.9%	48.1%	100.0%
Edward L. Bouie, Sr. Elementary School	78.6%	90.9%	100.0%
Spencer High School	21.5%	30.5%	13.5%
Brooks County High School	28.7%	19.8%	13.3%

School	Time in regular class > 80 percent.		
	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Albany High School	20.6%	12.4%	13.1%
Blanchard Elementary School	63.6%	64.2%	11.1%
Midway Middle School	22.3%	0.0%	10.6%

**1.5 Reading/Literacy Successes and Needs.** The achievement levels of SWD are, in part, assessed by the percent of SWD who meet or exceed standards (established by the Georgia Board of Education), in comparison to the percentage of students without disabilities doing the same. Achievement levels in reading are shown in Figure 5. This Figure provides a review of the gap in performance for third, fifth, and eighth grade students over the last three school years.

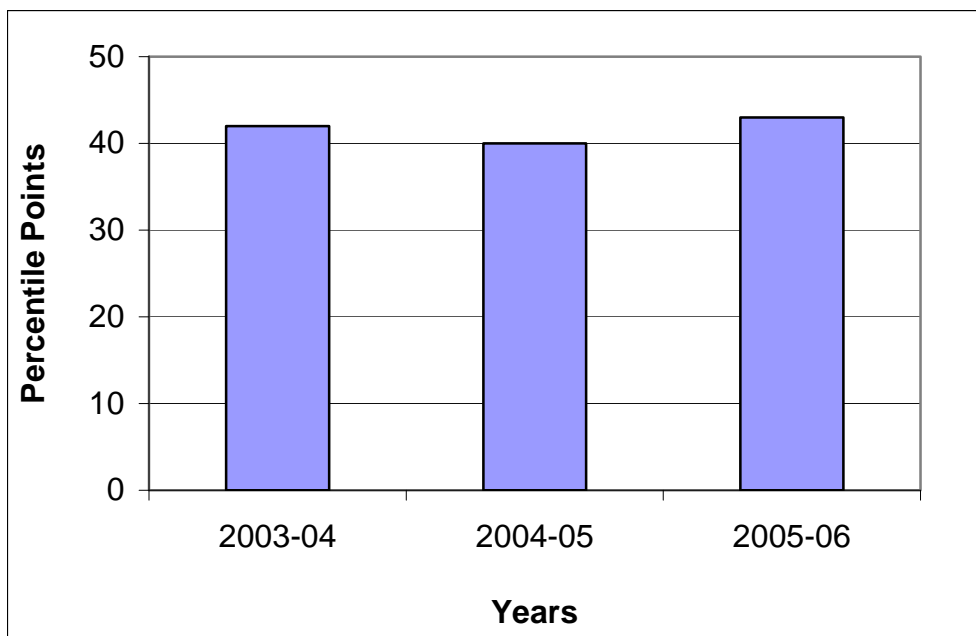
**Figure 5. The statewide reading performance GAP between special and general education 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students passing the criterion-referenced competencies test--2003-04 to 1005-06.**



As can be observed in Figure 6, as SWD progress through school and reach higher grades,

the gap in performance widens. Older SWD are having more difficulty performing at a passing level on the criterion-referenced competencies test than their non-disabled peers. This becomes more evident as middle school and high school test results are reviewed. Figure 6 shows a statewide gap of over 40 percent for SWD in the ninth grade who take an end of the course literature and composition test. There is a wide gap in performance.

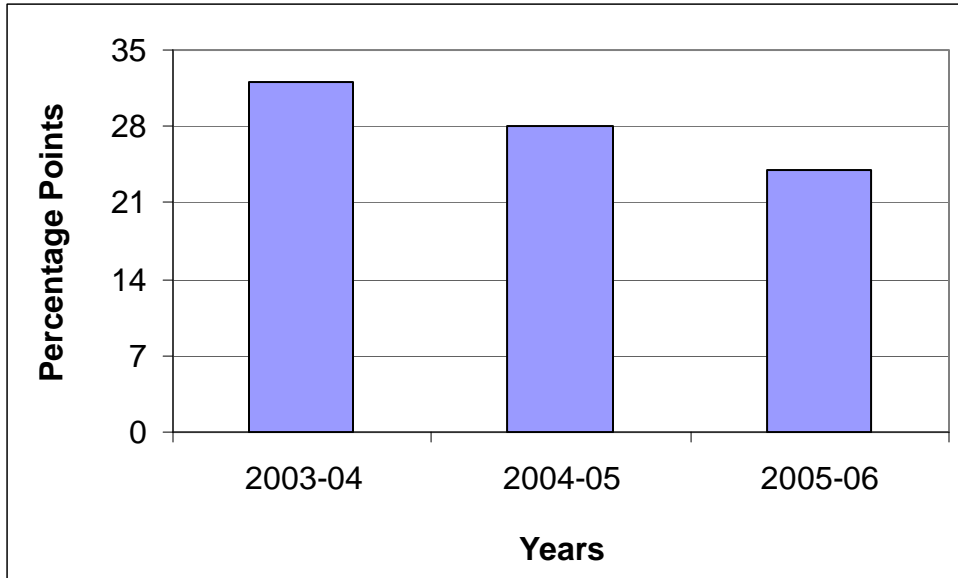
**Figure 6. Ninth grade end of course literature and composition testing gap (percentage passing) between special education and general education students—2003-04 to 2005-06.**



Georgia also gives a high school exit examination that can be taken in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Figure 7 provides an overview of first exit examination results for 11th grade students taking the English/Language Arts test. It again shows the gap between special education and general education students for those passing the examination. The gap has closed somewhat over the last three years; however, it is still large (24 percentage points in 2005-2006). This analysis indicated that special education students have a big disadvantage as they enter the upper grades.



**Figure 7. Performance gap on first exit examination for 11 grade special education and general education students on the English/language arts test—2003-04 to 2005-06.**



**Table 4. The largest average performance gaps by systems for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading examination using the percentage of students passing--averages from 2003-04 to 2005-06.**

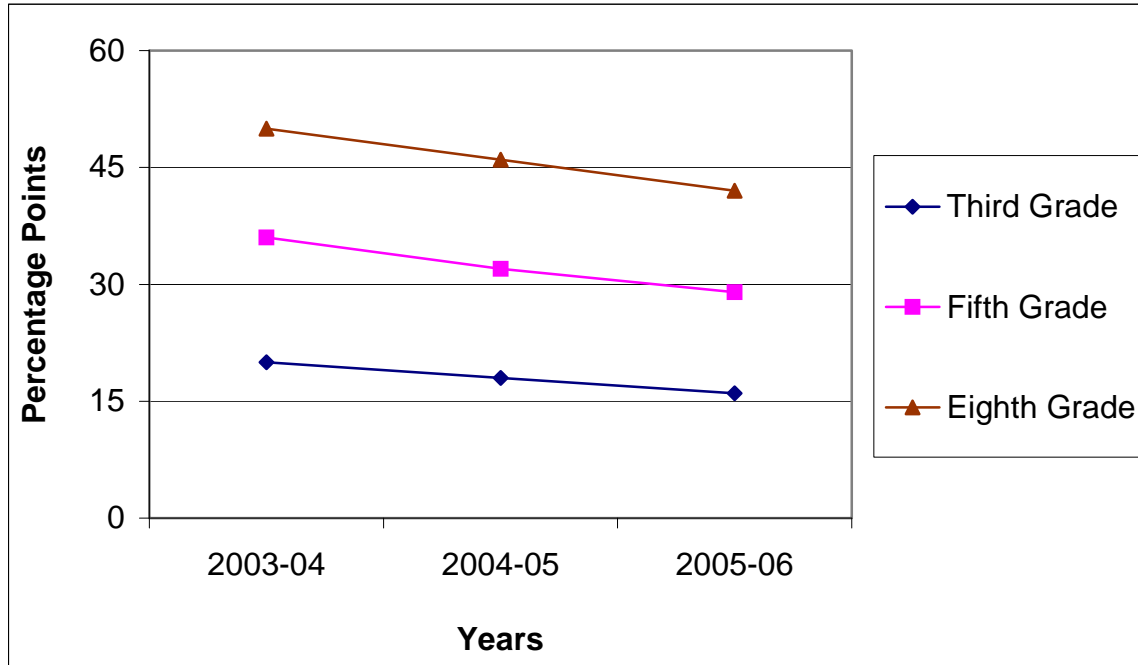
<b>System</b>	<b>Special Education Students</b>	<b>General Education Students</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Atkinson County	25.5	85.4	59.9
Vidalia City	34.8	93.7	59.0
Seminole County	34.1	91.6	57.4
Berrien County	38.4	93.2	54.8
Colquitt County	32.9	86.7	53.8
Dalton City	28.8	82.6	53.8
Pelham City	36.8	89.1	52.3
Sumter County	30.7	82.2	51.5

Dougherty County	37.2	88.4	51.2
Clinch County	40.4	91.4	51.0
Bibb County	34.1	85.1	51.0

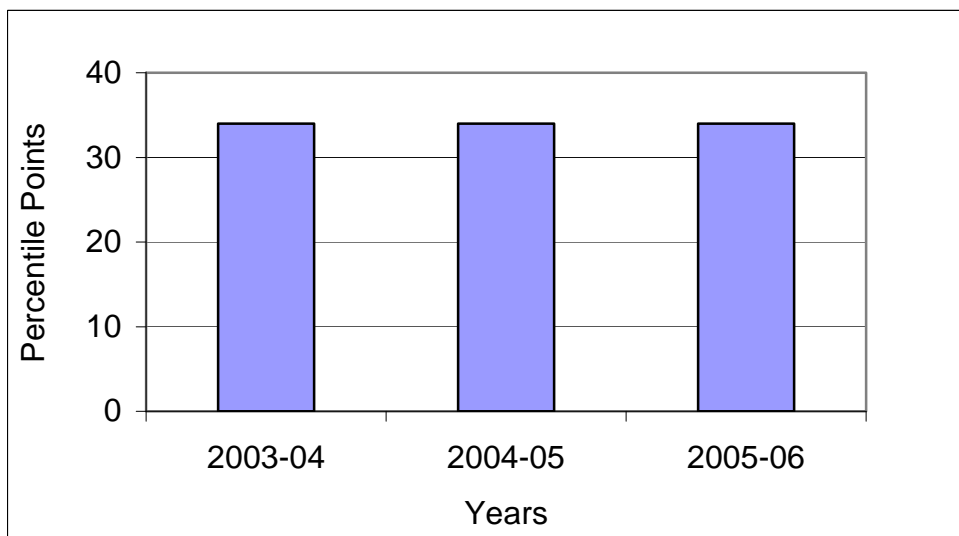
Table 4 shows the 10 school systems with the largest gaps in reading performance on the eighth grade examination, based on averages from 2003-04 to 2005-06. The average statewide difference is 36.1 percentage points. Consequently, the systems shown in Table 4 have a very wide gap in performance as compared to the statewide gap. School systems within this group are good candidates for implementing interventions to close the gap.

**1.6 Mathematics.** The mathematical achievement levels of SWD is also measured by the percent of SWD who meet or exceed standards (established by the Georgia State Board of Education), in comparison with the percentage of students without disabilities who meet or exceed the standards. Achievement levels in mathematics are shown below in Figure 8 that provides a review of the gap in performance for third, fifth, and eighth grade students over the last three school years. Again, as students reach higher grades, the gap between students with and without disabilities widens. Older SWD are having more difficulty passing the criterion-referenced competencies test than their non-disabled peers. This becomes more evident as middle and high school test results are reviewed.

**Figure 8. The statewide mathematics performance gap between special education and general education third, fifth and eighth grade students passing the criterion-referenced competencies test—2003-04 to 2005-06.**



**Figure 9. Ninth grade end of course Algebra 1 testing gap between special education and general education students from 2003-04 to 2005-06.**



Math achievement for students at the eighth grade level is available for school systems. To

help identify systems with wide gaps between regular and special education student performance, an analysis was conducted using the last three years of math test results (2004, 2005, and 2006) for eighth grade students. Figure 9 above shows a statewide gap of about 35 percent for special education students in the ninth grade taking an end of the course Algebra test. A wide gap in performance is also evident. Georgia's 11<sup>th</sup> grade exit examination results for mathematics are presented in Figure 10. A discrepancy is again shown between special education and general education students for those passing the examination. The gap has remained more or less constant over the last three years. Mathematics achievement for students at the eighth grade level is also available for local school systems. The gaps between special and general education student performance were analyzed using the last three years of mathematics test results (2004, 2005 and 2006) for eighth grade students. This data shows that special education students have a big disadvantage as they enter the upper grades.

**Figure 10. Performance gap on first exit examination for 11th grade special education and general education students on the mathematics test from 2003-04 to 2005-06.**

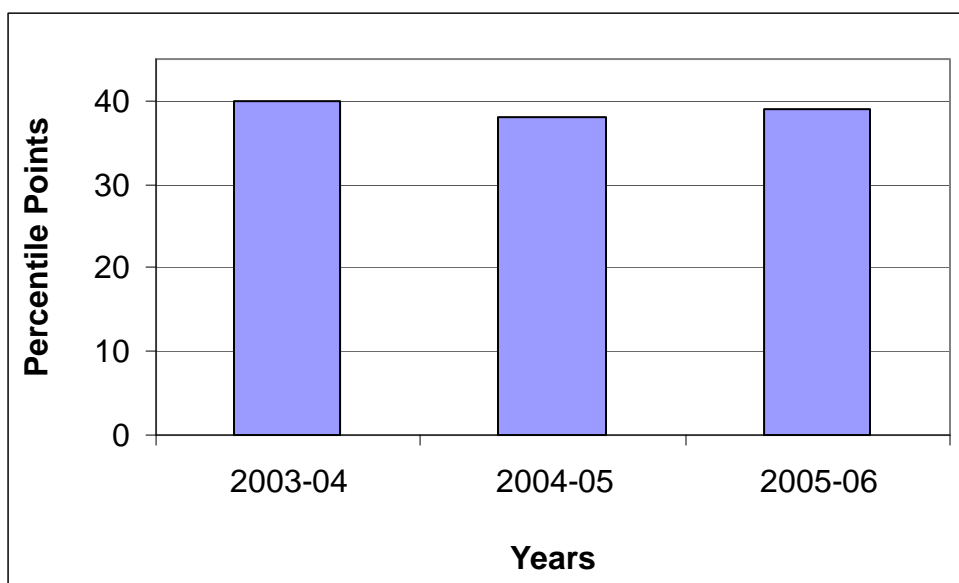


Table 5 shows the five systems with the largest gaps in mathematics performance on the

eighth grade examination. The average statewide difference is 48.3. Consequently, these systems shown have a very wide gap in performance, as compared to the statewide gap. Just as with reading, these school systems are good candidates for implementing effective interventions.

**Table 5. The largest average performance gaps by systems for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics examination using the percentage of students passing—averages from 2003-04 to 2005-06.**

School System	Special Education Students	General Education Students	Difference
Vidalia City	12.0	89.6	77.6
Seminole County	11.0	83.4	72.4
Berrien County	17.8	87.7	69.9
Toombs County	12.6	81.1	68.5
Polk County	18.2	82.8	64.6

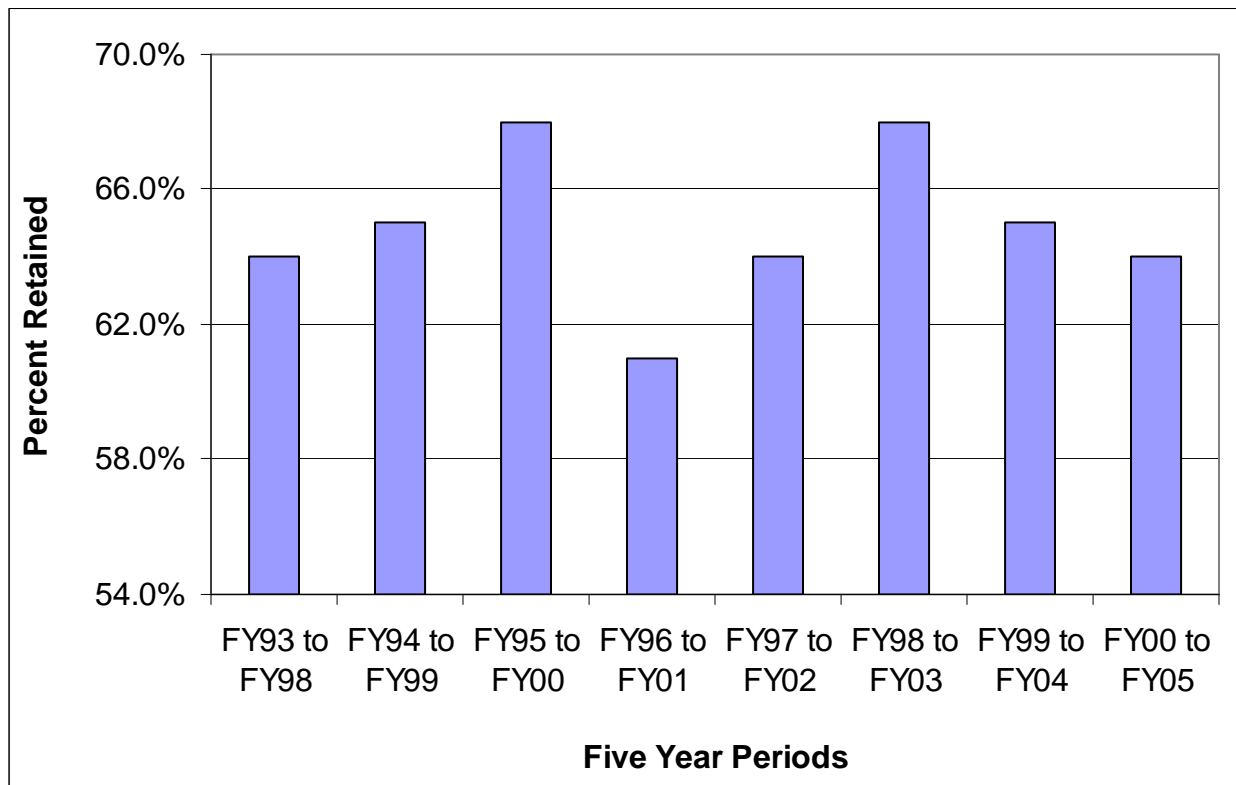
**1.7 Teacher Retention.** Georgia’s enrollment is increasing by two percent per year, while the nation is increasing only .27 percent annually. This growth has increased the special education teacher workforce (in FTE) from 11,698 in 2001 to 14,677 in 2005 and is complicated by the fact that over 50 percent of the new students are Hispanic and have language issues.

An annual document entitled *The Georgia Educator Workforce* is a product of the Educator Workforce Research and Development Division, Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC). It provides **shortages** and **retention** rates for the State at one, three, and five-year intervals for many groups in the workforce, including general and special education teachers. Figure 11 provides an overview of first-time special education teacher retention rates for eight periods of five years each.

As noted earlier in this section, the current Georgia SIG has a goal of increasing the retention

of special education teachers. The statewide retention rate appears to have been stable for the last eight periods as shown in the Figure. This retention rate of about 65 percent compares quite favorably with those experienced in other states of below 45 percent. Five Regional Education Services Agencies (RESAs), however, have attrition rates that exceed their replacement capability: Oconee, Okefenokee, Chattahoochee, Metro, and Southwest Georgia.

**Figure 11. Percent of first-time special education teachers retained over a five-year period.**

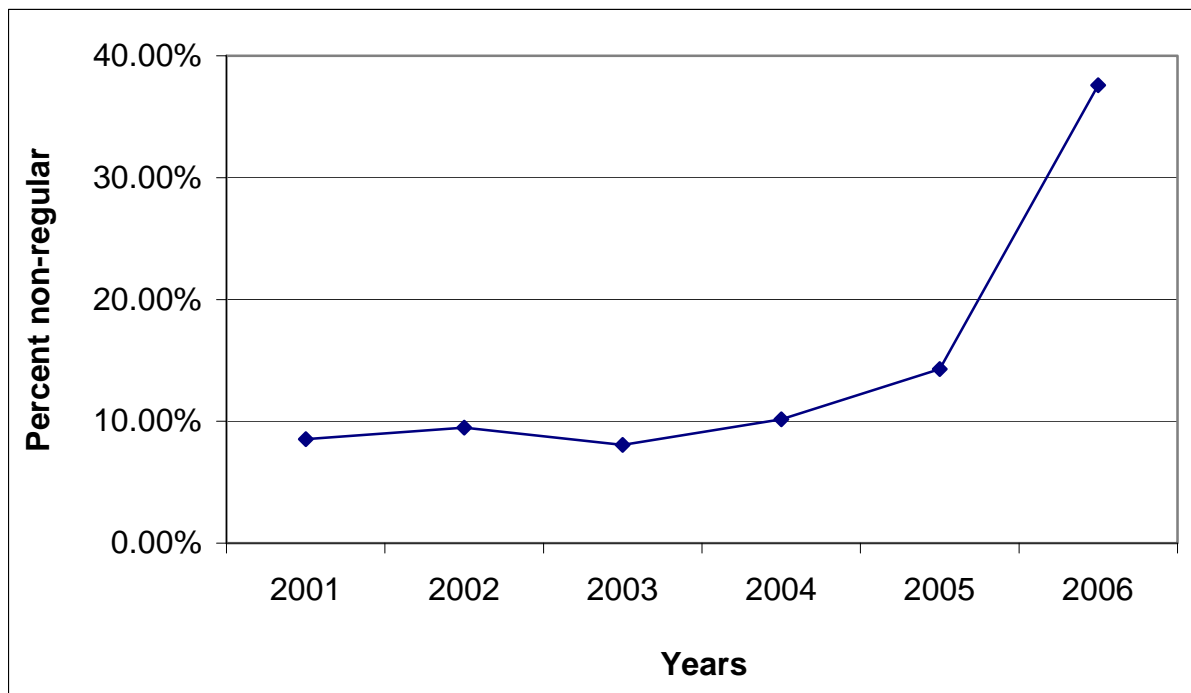


**1.8 Fully-Certified Teachers.** The workforce documents issued for 2001 to 2006 by the PSC determine shortages based upon the number of non-regular certificates issued at the request of school systems to meet staffing needs that could not be filled otherwise. In 2006, there were 5,748 non-regular Special Education General Curriculum certificates issued. These certificates include provisional, intern, probationary, non-renewable, and waiver certificates. Figure 12 below shows the non-regular certificates as a percentage of special education teachers. In 2006,

special education teachers were the highest of any group receiving non-regular certificates, consisting of 47.9 percent of all non-regular certificates issued. The PSC made the following statement regarding that finding:

The large number of non-renewable [non-regular] certificates in special education suggests that either growth demand in the number of special education children is out-stripping production or attrition is faster than production/hiring. A close examination of data indicates that production is especially low (n=259), compared to the 5,748 new Special Education teachers needed in FY 2006.

**Figure 12. The number of non-regular certificates issued as a percent of the special education teacher workforce from 2001-2006.**



Complicating this picture is the enrollment growth of two percent per annum. Using this information, maximum class size, and other relevant variables, the *Georgia Educator Workforce* projects the demand for special education teachers to increase from 13,855 in 2006 to 14,983 by

the end of the decade (Actual 2006 workforce was 15,100 making these earlier projection appear conservative and in need of revision). This growth requires not only replacing teachers leaving through attrition, but filling new positions.

**1.9. Parent Involvement.** As indicated in Section 2, a substantial increase in student achievement occurs when families are engaged in a child's education. Georgia has implemented several efforts to measure parental involvement through surveys. The methods and procedures produced a return rate of a little over seven percent. These methods and procedures will continue to be refined so that an acceptable return rate is obtained. Until that happens, the year over year results will not be comparable. The 2005-2006 survey found 32 percent of parents felt the school kept parents involved in their child's education, causing an increase in achievement.

Parental educational efforts with their young children can help prepare the child for entry into the preschool environment. For special education preschool children entering the program for the first time, GaDOE found that only eight percent entered the preschool program with peer level knowledge and skills; however, 62 percent enter preschool with appropriate behaviors to meet their needs. Data are gathered annually from Georgia's 180 school districts operating special education preschool programs.

**1.10 Summary.** Georgia's current SIG launched efforts in 2004 to increase reading/literacy performance of SWD and other struggling readers. The reading gap between special education students and regular students closed some between 2003-04 and 2005-06 (Figure 5) on the state criterion-referenced competencies test. Other test results for the 11<sup>th</sup> grade students also showed closing of the gap, while 8<sup>th</sup> grade tests failed to show significant differences. Continued efforts in the general classroom environment may reduce the gap further.

A second goal of Georgia's current SIG was to increase academic achievement of SWD by



increasing the percentage of time they are educated in general education settings with appropriate supports and accommodations. Statewide improvement has been shown over the last three years. Some schools, however, are lagging behind and others are losing ground on increasing access to the general education general curriculum.

The third goal was to decrease the amount of time students are removed from instruction for disciplinary reasons. Statewide, there has been a decline in the number of students suspended/expelled during the last three years. Target schools implementing behavioral interventions showed similar declines in office discipline referrals. There was no significant difference found between target and control schools on achievement.

The fourth goal was to increase the retention of effective special education teachers. The 65 percent retention of first-time special education teachers over five-year periods is a good accomplishment. The major problem now seems to be the increasing use of special education teachers with non-renewable certificates. Figure 12 indicates the problem is escalating.

The fact that on an annual basis, more special education students drop out than graduate with a regular diploma demands work that will enhance achievement and lead to successful school completion. As described in this Section, significant work is needed to positively impact the needs in the outcomes shown at the beginning of Section 3: Project Design.

## **SECTION 2: SIGNIFICANCE**

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) is submitting a SPDG in order to support the systemic changes leading toward successful school completion for SWD within 68 middle and high schools (34 in Cohort 1 and 34 in Cohort 2) that have high risk markers (i.e., intervening variables) described in Section 1 and Section 3. Based on a systematic planning process, the 68 schools will participate in at least two SPDG goals: implementation of SBR

reading and math curricula/interventions (Goal 1); effective dropout prevention (Goal 2); strategic transition strategies (Goal 3), recruitment and training strategies (Goal 4); and parental support for their child's literacy and numeracy skills (Goal 5). This Section will demonstrate that efforts to be implemented within the Georgia SPDG are based on practices found in the literature to be proven and effective.

**Parent engagement** is a powerful influence in student educational success and directly linked to student learning and motivation. Therefore, parent and family engagement activities are woven throughout the Georgia SPDG goals. A research review of some 300 studies by Kellaghan, et al., (1994), 49 studies by Edge and Davis (1994), 66 studies by Henderson & Berla (1994), and studies by Henderson and Mapp (2002) demonstrated that the family makes crucial contributions to student achievement. This is true across socioeconomic, racial/ethnic, and educational backgrounds and for students of all ages (Mapp, 2004). These reviews also concluded that the earlier in a child's educational process the parents and family are involved, the better the results. Redding, et al., (2004) showed that a critical mass of comprehensive and focused school-home activities can be generated in a relatively short period of time.

Coleman, et al., (2006) discussed three necessary components for effectively involving parents in the schools: 1. Key information for parents about what their child is learning and how well they are learning; 2. Engagement activities for the parents to provide direct support for their child's learning; and; 3. Advocacy by parents so that their child receives necessary support. Epstein (2001) argued for the following parental roles to improve schools: volunteering, supporting their child's learning at home, having meaningful roles for decision making in the schools, and collaboration with the community.

Parents Educating Parents and Professionals for all Children (PEPPAC), Parent to Parent of

Georgia, the Georgia Parent Mentor Program, and the Georgia PTI will all work together as strategic parent engagement activities are included in Goal 5 and imbedded into the other SPDG goals.

**Systems change** strategies are also integrated throughout the SPDG to guide the implementation of SPDG activities. Between 3-5 years is the minimum amount of time needed for systems change (Freedman, 2000; Johnson and Guy, 1997). The five-year SPDG grant period will provide sufficient time for changes to occur within the 68 schools that impact the high-risk markers. Neither top-down, nor bottom-up strategies alone are effective for systems change (Fullan, 1994). Accordingly, the GaDOE will provide general oversight for the SPDG, but will collaborate with its partners to provide local solutions. For meaningful change to occur, school staff and parents must have opportunities to translate new ideas and concepts obtained through professional development into practice (Hixson & Tinzman, 1990). The SPDG goals are focused on training and follow-up support to ensure effective implementation.

Whole system change is more likely to occur when the schools operate as open systems—encouraging diverse ideas, creativity, and positive outcomes (Hinrichs, et al., 2003). One of the premises of the Georgia SPDG is that the expanded skills, knowledge, and systemic change will sustain efforts beyond the SPDG funding period. As SPDG initiatives are replicated, it is important to know that system change can falter if the change process is not paced comfortably enough to promote ongoing participation and quickly enough to overcome resistance and prevent stagnation—thus, the need to gather and use fidelity data (Werheimer, 2001).

**2.2 GOAL 1 – Effective Reading Skills** - As demonstrated by the data presented in Section 1, students with disabilities in Georgia are scoring below their nondisabled peers on statewide criterion measures in both reading and math. There is a pool of high-risk schools in which

students have particularly low achievement. Goal 1 activities will involve these schools.

**2.2.1 Scientifically-Based Reading Research.** SBR reading strategies to be implemented within Cohort 1 and 2 schools will be based on reliable research regarding reading development, reading instruction, and reading delivery particularly at the middle and high school level. In the past several years, multiple consensus reports have provided a converging body of knowledge about the nature of effective instruction for children at risk for reading problems (Donavoon and Cross, 2002; National Reading Panel, 2000; Rand Reading Study Group, 2002; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The SBR reading content of Goal 1 professional development will incorporate the following five components identified by the National Reading Panel as essential components of an effective reading instruction program: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension. All instructional materials and reading activities must connect to the above five essential components and incorporate various research findings about these components. Effective instructional programs should also:

- Address students' various needs as identified by ongoing assessment.
- Follow coordinated instructional sequences.
- Allow ample practice opportunities and provide aligned student materials.
- Use targeted, evidence based instructional strategies, as appropriate.
- Allow an uninterrupted block of time daily for reading—at least 90 minutes daily.

**2.2.2 Secondary Struggling Readers (SSS) - Strategic Instruction Model (SIM).** Goal 1 proposes to use other SBR interventions to enhance student engagement and learning. Specifically, the Strategic Instruction Model or SIM will be implemented along with SSR. The SIM is an umbrella term that embraces a model of teacher-focused (Content Enhancement) and student-focused interventions (Learning Strategies), and other support pieces. The SIM is

intended to offer students a key to unlocking text and nurturing understanding. Among the essential components of the SIM is a set of routines called the teacher-focused interventions, or Content Enhancement Routines. It contains visual and graphic organizers and other methods to help students extract important information that they need to learn from their content-area texts (Schumaker, et al., 2002). Research, conducted by the University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning has shown academic gains when using several SIM strategies:

- Word Identification Strategy (Lenz & Hughes, 2000; Spargo, et.al., 1980; Woodruff, et all., 2002; and Deshler, et al., 2002).
- Self-questioning Strategy and Paraphrasing Strategy (Beals, 1983; Glaeser, 1998).
- Paraphrasing Strategy (Schumaker & Deshler, 1992).
- Visual Imagery Strategy (Deshler, et al, 2002).
- Vocabulary Learning Strategy, Word Identification Strategy, and the Self-Questioning Strategy (Seybert, 1998).

**2.3 GOAL 1 – Effective Math Skills** - As demonstrated by the data presented in Section I, there is a significant gap in achievement between students with and without disabilities on both statewide criterion measures in math. Several professional development and follow-up activities are being proposed in the Project Design (see Section 3), aimed at narrowing this gap.

**2.3.1 National Mathematics Advisory Panel.** On April 18, 2006, President Bush issued an executive order creating a National Mathematics Advisory Panel, modeled after the National Reading Panel, to identify scientifically-based research on the teaching and learning of math. The work of this Panel will be used by the Georgia SPDG as it becomes available.

**2.3.2 SBR Research and Effective Mathematics Instruction.** In addition to National Panel findings, math curriculum and instructional strategies to be implemented within the Georgia

SPDG will be evidence based. In regional meetings conducted by the U.S. Department of Education in October 2002, researchers called for effective math instruction in the following five areas: (1) Understanding mathematics; (2) Computing fluently; (3) Applying concepts; (4) Reasoning logically; and (5) Engaging with mathematics to see it as sensible, useful and doable.

**2.3.3 Promising Directions in Effective Math Instruction.** Teaching and learning mathematics are complex tasks. Despite the fact that there is limited scientific research in math, the number of research studies conducted in mathematics education over the past three decades has increased, thus, resulting in some promising directions (Baker, et al., 2002). In reviewing studies with more rigorous criteria, Baker, et al. (2002) found that when students, their teachers, and parents get ongoing information every 2-4 weeks about student progress relative to state standards or some framework, student performance is enhanced. Grouws and Cebulla (2000) identified the following as promising directions for effective math instruction:

1. The extent of the students' opportunity to learn mathematics content bears directly and decisively on student mathematic achievement.
2. Focusing instruction on the meaningful development of important mathematical ideas increases the level of student learning.
3. Students can learn both concepts and skills by solving problems. Students, who develop conceptual understanding, perform best on procedural knowledge later. Students with low levels of conceptual understanding need more practice to acquire procedural knowledge.
4. Giving students both an opportunity to discover and invent new knowledge and an opportunity to practice what they have learned improves student achievement.
5. Teaching that incorporates intuitive solution methods can increase student learning, when combined with opportunities for student interaction and discussion.

6. Using small groups of students to work on activities, problems, and assignments can increase student mathematics achievement (e.g., small groups, Davidson, 1985 and cooperative learning, Slavin, 1990)
7. Whole-class discussion following individual and group work.
8. Teaching math with a focus on number sense encourages problem solving in a wide variety of situations and to view math as important for thinking.
9. Long-term use of concrete materials is positively related to increases in student math achievement and improved attitudes towards math.
10. Using calculators in the learning of math.

Other promising practices supported by research include well-designed programs that include intensive and ongoing training for the tutors, well-structured sessions in which the content and delivery of instruction are carefully scripted; and there is careful monitoring and reinforcement of programs, frequent and regular tutoring systems with each session between 10 and 70 minutes daily, use of technology, curriculum-based interventions, and differentiated instruction. In addition, Accelerated Math has also consistently demonstrated to dramatically raise student math achievement (Ysseldyke and Tardrew, 2006).

**2.3 GOAL 1 - Response to Intervention (RtI).** The Georgia Student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions is being utilized within Georgia's Secondary Redesign Initiative as a way to align all efforts and ongoing initiatives within the GaDOE so that there is a common focus and language regarding instructional practices and interventions for all students. The Pyramid of Interventions (see Appendix B for a graphic) is essentially an RtI model. The major premise of the Pyramid of Interventions is that early intervening services can both prevent academic problems for many students and determine which students actually have learning disabilities,

distinct from those who are underachieving. RtI is based on three components: (1) use of multiple tiers of increasingly intense interventions; (2) a problem solving approach to identify and evaluate instructional strategies; and (3) an integrated data collection and assessment system to monitor student progress and guide decisions (NASDSE, 2006).

A comprehensive review of the literature was conducted by Coleman, et.al. (2006) to produce a research synthesis on RtI. A total of 14 studies met the selection criteria on a rating scale measuring the quality of RtI. Synthesis findings indicate that later placement in special education can decrease as a result of using an RtI model starting at least in kindergarten. Positive outcomes for children at risk for learning difficulties were found in the areas of language and literacy, with a particular emphasis on phonological awareness. Less is known about the use of RtI for children experiencing difficulties in math, social-emotional development, behavior, language delays, attention, self-regulation difficulties, and other precursors of learning disabilities. Coleman, et al., (2006) concluded that RtI is a promising approach particularly because of its focus on sound instructional principles, early intervention, use of research-based interventions/instruction, student progress monitoring, and use of data-based decisions.

**2.4 Goal 2 – Dropout Prevention.** Dropout prevention strategies for SWD typically include counseling services, reading remediation, tutoring, attendance monitoring, or after-school clubs (Lehr et al., 2003). Other services could include sustained and supportive monitoring interventions focused on school completion (Scanlon & Mellard, 2002). An early 1990's study of three dropout prevention programs for SWD found that six components were common to all effective programs: persistence, continuity and consistency; monitoring; relationships; affiliation; and problem-solving skills (Lehr et al., 2003).

Other researchers support these component areas, but warn about the efficacy of recent



research. “The extent to which these interventions are systematically targeted for disengaged learners is unclear and closer examination suggests many of these practices are not evidence-based and have not been subjected to rigorous evaluation” (Lehr et al., 2003). They conducted a meta-analysis of dropout research, only to find that of the 300 studies they reviewed, only forty-five studies could be coded, and only nine had some form of randomized design. In the end, only two conducted since 1994 were focused on high school students and had a randomized-control element in the evaluation. The following, however, were identified as promising practices:

- *Personal/affective interventions.* Examples include retreats designed to enhance self-esteem, regularly scheduled classroom-based discussion, individual counseling, and participation in lessons on interpersonal relations.
- *Academic interventions.* Examples include provision of special academic courses, individualized methods of instruction, and tutoring.
- *Family outreach strategies.* Examples include increased feedback to parents or home visits.
- *Interventions addressing school structure.* Examples include creating schools within schools, re-defining of the role of the homeroom teacher, and reducing class size.
- *Work-related interventions.* Examples include vocational training and participation in volunteer or service programs.

Bost and Riccomini (2006) researched effective instruction and school engagement strategies to prevent SWD from dropping out and assist students in an effective planning process. They reported on the following principles of effective instructional and school engagement strategies:

(1) Maximize active engagement (i.e., time on task) or the amount of work that is diagnostically

and instructionally appropriate; (2) Create an instructional environment that encourages successful social and academic experiences; (3) Provide maximum time for students to have opportunity to learn content; (4) Group for instruction to facilitate the teacher's ability to keep students engaged in the classroom; (5) Scaffold instruction with carefully and systematically sequenced series of prompted content, materials, tasks, and teacher support; (6) Address all forms of knowledge (procedural, declarative, and conditional knowledge); (7) Organize information so that the student can build on previously learned knowledge and skills; (8) Provide instruction that teaches students how to learn; (9) Make instruction explicit; and (10) Purposefully design instruction to help students recognize patterns and organize knowledge.

Lehr, et al., (2003) found the Check and Connect Model to be effective in preventing dropout and increasing school engagement. The Check and Connect Model is designed to engage students in school and learning via a mentor/monitor who establishes a long-term relationship and maintains regular contact with the student, family, and teachers. Risk factors are systematically monitored, and interventions are tailored to meet individual student needs (e.g., increased communication with parents, tutoring, problem-solving) (Sinclair, et al., 1998; Cortex, 2004). Ninety-four students were randomly assigned to a treatment or control group (n=47 each). Analysis found that students who received the Check and Connect intervention were more likely to still be enrolled after one year in the program (ninety-one percent vs. seventy percent) and more likely to graduate from high school within four years (46 percent vs. 20 percent).

**2.5 Goal 3—Effective Transition Strategies.** Effective transition and dropout prevention go hand in hand in that they both can keep the student with disabilities engaged within school and planning for his/her future. Without effective school engagement strategies and systematic

transition planning, students are more likely to drop out, face poor job prospects, experience lifelong dependence on social service systems, use illicit drugs, become involved in the juvenile justice system, and become teen parents (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003; American Youth Policy Forum, 1998; Hair, Ling, & Cochran, 2003; Harlow, 2003). Family involvement is one of the most important contributors to school completion and success. As with engagement within the schools success is more likely if the family communicates high, yet reasonable, expectations for the student's education and future career, and becomes involved in his/her education. Middle school and high school students whose parents remain involved tend to: make better transitions; maintain the quality of their work, develop realistic plans for their future, have higher graduation rates, and advance to postsecondary education (Clark, 1993; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Mapp, 2004; Schargel & Smink, 2001; Williams Bost, 2004).

**2.5.1 Transition Programs and Services.** Transition from high school to postsecondary education and the workforce is a critical issue for SWD. Specific language in IDEA 2004 ensures that all students, by age 16 or earlier, have a statement of transition services included in their IEP. IDEA also requires school districts to have measurable postsecondary goals and include students as participants in their transition planning meetings, to the maximum extent possible.

In its study, the GAO (2003) identified the problems reported by various stakeholders in the transition process. Students noted a lack of self-advocacy training, which helps empower them to develop the necessary skills to succeed in a postsecondary environment. Parents found that lack of information and support made it difficult to navigate the transitional period. Teachers and other educators talked about the problems of linking students with postsecondary and workforce opportunities and services. Researchers focused on the lack of work-based experiences for students. And finally, government officials focused on the more tangible issue of

transportation for SWD. All are legitimate barriers to the successful transition of students and need solutions.

In a literature synthesis, Skinner and Lindstrom (2003) identified six critical areas where SWD are at a disadvantage compared to non-disabled students regarding postsecondary attainment: Deficits in study skills such as test preparation, note-taking, and listening comprehension; problems with organizational skills; difficulties with social interaction; deficits in specific academic areas, (with reading and written composition to be the most frequent); low self-esteem; and higher school dropout rates. They urged focusing on these concerns.

The National Council on Disability (2004) identified a taxonomy, developed jointly by Western Michigan University and the Transition Research Institute at the University of Illinois, of transition practices for SWD (ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education, 2000). Based on an exhaustive review of the literature and reviews of model projects and exemplary programs, five program components were found to be important: student-focused planning; student development; interagency and interdisciplinary collaboration; family involvement; and effective program structures.

Skinner and Lindstrom (2003) identified several factors that have shown empirical evidence in influencing success: (1) the extent of student knowledge of the nature of their disability and compensatory strategies; (2) how able a student is to manage a disability in a proactive manner (e.g., self-advocacy, goal setting, knowledge of disability law, selection of an appropriate college, self-identification, and organizing for living and learning); (3) the availability of emotional and academic support; (4) the severity of the disability; (5) strength of the student's motivation; and (6) willingness to persevere under adverse conditions.

Even though there is limited scientific rigor in the transition literature, the National Council

on Disability (2004) reported that there are “pockets” of innovation that are worthy of discussion. For instance, Benz, Lindstrom, and Yovanoff (2000) reviewed the research on transition factors associated with secondary and postsecondary outcomes for SWD. Their search yielded six programmatic factors that resulted in better opportunities for SWD:

- Participation in paid work experience during the last two years of high school;
- Competence in functional academic skills, community living skills, personal-social skills, vocational skills, and self-determination skills (e.g., self-advocacy, goal setting);
- Participation in transition planning;
- Participation in vocational education classes during the last two years of high school, especially classes that offer occupationally-specific instruction;
- Graduation from high school; and
- Absence of continuing instructional needs in functional academic, vocational, and personal-social areas after leaving school. (Benz et al., 2000)

Hart et al., (2001) implemented and evaluated a model approach for creating access to college built around a student's strengths and preferences, involved family members, and used a collaborative interagency team of parents, school personnel, and parents to create innovative strategies that support student access to inclusive college settings. Through monthly meetings, teams identified individual services and supports including academic coaching, transportation, training, career connections to employment, mentoring, technology, and social networks (Hart, et al., 2001). Positive student outcomes included completion of high school, postsecondary education, paid work experiences, expanded social networks, and increased sense of pride.

Research by Hasazi et al. (1999), Kohler (1993), and Benz et al. (2000) identified organizational factors associated with exemplary secondary and transition programs and better

outcomes for students, including the use of written interagency agreements between schools and adult agencies to structure the provision of collaborative transition services.

**2.5.2 Goal 3 - Interagency Service Planning.** Coordinated services planning recognizes that children with disabilities and other special needs often require services from multiple school staff (e.g., teachers, counselors, school psychologists, and other related service personnel) and from multiple agencies. Kagan, Goffin, Slugg, and Pritchard (1995) have identified four approaches to coordinated services planning. These approaches include:

- *Client-Centered* - Focuses on the point of interaction between service providers and clients (e.g., case management, integrated information and referral, and coordinated services planning by interdisciplinary teams and parents).
- *Program-Centered* - Creates linkages among programs or agencies so that services can more efficiently and effectively serve clients (e.g., creation of planning councils, locating programs together, streamlined application/intake, and pooled funding).
- *Policy-Centered* - Refers to governmental efforts to form linkages between strands of the human service system (e.g., creation of advisory bodies and blended funding).
- *Organizationally-Centered* - Refers to governmental efforts to re-configure relationships between government agencies or offices (e.g., restructuring across departments and programs and reconfiguration of lines of accountability).

The Georgia SPDG will initially focus on client and program-centered approaches to assist local IEP teams in accessing the needed interagency resources for SWD. The SPDG will look to work such as that done by Schrag (2000) that reports on effective interagency, coordinated services planning efforts across the country, and their policy and implementation considerations.

**2.6 Goal 4 - Sufficient Numbers of Qualified Personnel.** The *No Child Left Behind Act*

(NCLB) requires all states and school districts to ensure that all students are taught by highly qualified teachers in the core academic subjects to improve achievement and reduce achievement gaps. The demand for teachers will continue to grow as teacher retirements and service industry demands for employees continues to grow. Georgia's current and projected rapid student population growth is compounding the teacher shortage problems. The SPDG will focus not only on ensuring that there are enough special education teachers, but also an ethnically diverse teaching force representing Georgia's diverse population. The Georgia population of Black and Hispanic teachers continues to be less than the proportion of minority students.

#### **2.6.1 Relationship Between Teacher Expertise/Qualifications and Student Achievement,**

Research suggests that teacher quality is the largest single variable in student learning—explaining as much as 40 percent of the difference between students. In fact, several research studies confirm that placing a high-quality teacher in each classroom is one of the most important things schools can do to improve student achievement (Flouri and Buchanan, 2004; Darling-Hammond, 2000; Darling-Hammond, 1999; and Darling-Hammond, 1997), especially for students in low-income communities (Goldhaber and Anthony, 2004; McCaffrey, et. al., 2003; and Rivkin, et. al., 2002; and Hamushek and Kain, 2002).

**2.6.2 Recruitment Efforts.** Within Goal 4, successful recruitment efforts, including stipends and diversity recruitment strategies will be implemented within the proposed 5-year Georgia SPDG. Research findings, including that of the Education Alliance (Torres and Peck, 2004; Vegas et al., 2001; and Ingersoll, 1999) will be utilized relative to successful minority teacher recruitment strategies within higher education training programs (i.e., diagnostic student assessment, tutoring services, peer mentoring, academic advising, study and test-take skills assistance, and monitoring of student progress).

Because of the critical importance of recruiting fully certified and highly qualified special education teachers, the SPDG will support a half-time recruiter to be housed within the PSC to expand PSC recruitment strategies, alternative certification routes, and tuition support for teachers holding non-standard, non-renewable special education certificates. The National Center for Special Education Personnel, RESAs and Georgia Learning Resource Systems (GLRSs) will assist local school systems develop and implement effective recruitment plans.

**2.6.3 Non-Traditional Recruitment.** Non-traditional sources of recruitment will be prioritized such as “grow-your-own” high school programs that encourage interest by juniors and seniors to become special education teachers. Effective strategies are identified in the literature (Spradlin, T.E. and Prendergast, K.A., 2006; Guarino, et al., 2004; Haselkorn, 2000; Clewell and Veillegas, 2001) and through the experience of other states (e.g., Illinois Oregon, and Idaho). Both found implementation of Future Educators of America (FEA) clubs as an effective strategy.

Paraeducators will be another “grow-your-own” source of special education teachers. Darling-Hammond and Berry (1998) noted that paraeducator programs appear to attract highly motivated individuals. Because of this readiness and existing involvement, they are highly likely to enter and stay in teaching. Tuition stipends will be offered to attract paraeducators to teaching.

**2.6.4 Alternative Certification.** Alternative routes for certifying teachers are growing at a rapid rate across the nation. In 2006, 47 states and the District of Columbia reported that they had at least one type of alternate route to teacher certification, with 538 different alternate route programs (Feistritzer, 2006). As more states have implemented alternative routes to teacher certification, an increasing number of Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) have initiated non-traditional alternative programs that include on-the-job training for the preparation of post-baccalaureate candidates to teach, structured help for individuals on emergency permits, and



well-designed alternative certification programs of study. Feistritzer (2005) reported that nearly half (47 percent) who entered teaching through alternate routes indicated that they would not have become a teacher if an alternate route had not been available.

**2.6.5 Staff/Retraining.** Many researchers, as early as Joyce and Showers, (1982), have documented the shortcomings of “one-shot workshop” training. Follow-up coaches and other support are essential to the implementation and sustaining of knowledge and skills learned. This need to customize the training/professional development makes it essential to offer a menu of professional development experiences from which schools and individuals can select. Staff development offerings must include a variety of mechanisms, including traditional workshop and conference training and web-based training (Higgins, et al., 2000); facilitated networks, case discussions, and simulations (Pennel & Firsestone, 1998); demonstration and practice (Hanson & Breken, 1991); tuition, bonuses, and incentives (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1999), job-embedded, collaborative training opportunities sustained throughout the school year (Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1995) provision of mentoring/coaching and follow-up support (Rosenfield and Gravois, 1996); and distance learning, (Winterow and Kimball, 1999; and Spooner, Spooner, and Algozinne, and Jordan, 1998).

**2.6.6 Teacher Attrition.** Georgia has an overall 5-year special education retention rate of 65% for first-time teachers. This is an excellent rate, when compared to other states. It is important, however, to monitor the rate and focus assistance on schools with low rates.

Mentoring programs promise potential benefits in new teacher induction, career enhancement, professional development and program innovation (Ingersoll and Kralik, 2004; NCTAF, 2003; Colbert and Wolf, 1992; Little, 1990). The Georgia SPDG, however, will also look to the work of Johnson and Birkeland (2003) and Garet, et al (2001) that suggests schools

might rely less on one-to-one mentoring and, instead, develop schoolwide structures, including orientations, teacher networks and study groups that promote integrated professional cultures with frequent exchange of information and ideas across experience levels. Findings about one-to-one mentoring suggest that it is infrequently implemented with fidelity (i.e., sufficient time spent with the novice teacher). According to Wong (2004), mentors may be fine for the first few months, but once the survival stage of teaching is over, first-time teachers want to see others teach and have more experienced teachers advise them on their teaching. New teachers want networks—to be part of the learning community of the school where new and veteran teachers are treated with respect and their contributions are valued. The SPDG will use these findings when implementing retention programs in Cohort schools with low rates.

### **2.7 Goal 5 - Parent Support of the Development of Early Literacy Numeracy Skills.**

Research has clearly shown the importance that early language and literacy play in the later achievement of children (Wade and More, 2000; Burns, et al., 1999; Dickinson & Smith, 1994; Fey, Catts, & Larrivee, 1995; Neuman & Roskos, 1993; VanKleek, et al., 1998; Wilcox, 1999). Burns, Griffin, and Snow (1999) have captured early literacy research and the work of the National Research Council (2003) in identifying the following key aspects of language and literacy skill development of preschool/K-3 grade children: Extended vocabulary, language development, phonological awareness, speech discrimination, knowledge of narrative, book and print awareness, functions of print, print concepts, letter/early word recognition, and comprehension. Based on early literacy research, Burns, Griffin, and Snow (1999) have concluded that to prepare children for reading instruction in the early grades, they must be exposed to high-quality language and literacy environments. Parents have a critical role in this early preparation. Although there is limited research regarding their efficacy, there are print

materials that can be provided for parents of children with disabilities to support early literacy/reading skills as well as early numeracy skills.

## SECTION 3: PROJECT DESIGN

Figure 13. Georgia State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) Framework

**Overall SPDG Mission for Students with Disabilities:  
Successful School Completion by Students with Disabilities**

### Outcomes Leading to the Overall SPDG Mission

#### (Dependent Variables)

- Goal 1:**     ▪ Improved Reading and Math Achievement
  - Increased Number Who Graduate with a General Education Diploma (Goals 1 and 2)
  
- Goal 2:**     ▪ Decreased Numbers Who Dropout
  
- Goal 3:**     ▪ Increased High School Completion and Attainment of Better Postsecondary Outcomes
  
- Goal 4**       ▪ Increased Recruitment of Fully Certified Special Education Teachers
  
- Goal 5**       ▪ Increased Parent Support in Preliteracy, Math, and Social Skills Development for Young Children
  
- All Goals:**   ▪ Embedded Parental Engagement

**3.1 Overall Mission.** As discussed in Section 1, Needs, there is a pool of middle and high schools within Georgia that have high risk markers including large reading and math achievement gaps between students with and without disabilities, low graduation rates, high dropout rates, and a high level of special education teachers with non-renewable certificates.

These factors (intervening or independent variables) correspond directly with the lack of or successful school completion for many SWD—See Figure 13.

The SPDG Goals 1-4 will assist GaDOE in implementing the State Performance Plan for Part B. Specifically, SPDG Goals 1-4 will impact Georgia Performance Goal 1: Improve post-school outcomes for SWD and its Indicator 1 (Decrease the percentage of SWD who dropout of school); Indicator 2 (Increase the percentage of SWD who earn a regular high school diploma); Indicator 3 (Increase the percentage of SWD who transition to employment or post-secondary education); and Indicator 4 (Increase the percentage of transition aged SWD who have coordinated and measurable IEP goals and transition services that will lead to attainment of post-secondary goals). SPDG Goal 5 will impact Georgia Performance Goal II – Improve services for young children (ages 3-5) with disabilities. See Appendix C for a full listing of Georgia’s State Performance Goals and Indicators for SWD.

**3.2 Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 Participating Schools.** In order to achieve the overall goal of successful completion for SWD the SPDG staff will carry out five goals focusing on two Cohorts each containing approximately 34 schools (17 high schools and their 17 feeder middle schools). Some high schools may have two feeder schools. In that case, all feeder schools will be included, which would increase the number of middle schools. Participating schools will be identified through data analysis as high-risk in at least two goal areas (68 total schools). Each high school and middle school pair will participate in two of the proposed SPDG goals. Goal 4 is an exception. It is focused on reducing the growing number of special education teachers who have nonrenewable special education certificates and increasing the overall rate of fully certified special education teachers statewide. As a consequence, it will require statewide participation, with priority participation by Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 schools.

The SPDG objectives and activities will be carried out within the context of the GaDOE Secondary Redesign Initiative using the Georgia Student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions (GPI). A diagram for the four tiers of GPI is found in Appendix B. Strategic mechanisms and specific SPDG personnel will be provided to ensure that SWD are effectively included.

Because of the importance of replication and sustainability of successful SPDG components beyond the 5-year funding period, the SPDG goals, objectives, and activities will be carried out in a manner that coordinates and leverages the GaDOE and local administrative structures to institutionalize change. In addition, because of the powerful influence that involvement of the parent and family has on their child's learning and achievement, family engagement is the focus of Goal 5 and is infused into the other SPDG goals.

### **3.3 State, Regional, and Local Resource to support School Implementation of Goals 1-5.**

**3.3.1 State and National Resources.** The high school secondary redesign is in progress, and GaDOE is committed to improving secondary education in all departments. Within GaDOE the Divisions of Curriculum, including Reading First, School Improvement, Safe and Drug Free Schools, Career Technology and Agriculture Education (CTAE) all are focusing on what works and collaborating with Exceptional Students to ensure that the needs of all students (including SWD) are addressed. State Coaches in academic areas (i.e., reading, math, behavior/dropout prevention, transition, recruitment, and family engagement) will be hired and cross-trained in the SPDG goal areas by SPDG staff and partners. To the maximum extent possible, State Coaches will be based regionally to work with the Cohort schools in their selected goal areas. The State Coaches, with assistance from other GaDOE Divisions, and the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities (NDPC-SD), will be responsible for assisting the target schools in data analysis, selection of goal areas, and developing and implementing plans related

to selected SPDG goals. They will also work with other GaDOE initiatives so that a coordinated effort of coaching and technical assistance and resources can be provided to the participating schools.

**3.3.2 Regional Resources.** The SPDG activities will also be carried out in coordination with the GLRS. The GLRS is a statewide network of 17 regional centers focused on providing ongoing professional learning to teachers and administrators assisting them to implement effective instructional strategies that impact the performance of SWD and other struggling students. The GLRS Centers collaborate with a statewide network of 16 RESAs, which have been established to assist school systems in improving educational programs and services. The GLRSs and RESAs will assist in the implementation of the SPDG. See Appendix D.

**3.3.3 Local Resources.** The GaDOE, in partnership with the Cohort schools, will identify school staff who will serve as local level coaches to facilitate successful program planning and implementation of SBR reading and math for SWD. Current coaches under contract at GaDOE in other initiatives will, through collaboration and cross training, maximize efforts in schools they are assigned to support. These coaches include Reading First literacy coaches, Student Support Specialists for Redelivery of the Secondary Struggling Reader Course, Leadership Facilitators, School Improvement Secondary Redesign staff, graduation coaches and GaDOE district liaisons. Systems, resources, and strategies within the GaDOE will be utilized to assist Local Coaches and personnel to meet their school's goals.

**3.4 Framework to Guide School Selection of Two Goal Areas.** In order to determine the focus of participation for each of the Cohort schools within Goals 1-5, a Strategic Planning and Implementation Process will be used with guidance from the NDPC-SD. The steps of this school intervention framework include data analysis, matching of needs to SBR strategies, development

of plans and support for strategy implementation, and monitoring of adult practices and student progress. This model was selected because it uses research-based strategies that align with the Georgia Secondary Redesign and provide effective strategies for SWD. The NDPC-SD, along with other SPDG partners will work with the GaDOE during the 5-year funding period to make strategic and systemic changes leading to improved school completion by SWD.

### **3.5. Needs Analysis, Selection of Goals, and Development of Local Implementation Plans**

**3.5.1 Cohort 1 schools.** During the Summer 2007, all middle and high schools in the 17 GLRS regions that have been identified as having significant risk factors in one or more of the intervening and dependent variables needed for successful school completion will be invited to participate in Level 1 training (an Orientation Meeting) that will share information and national research related to school completion. Also during this meeting, to better equip all schools to begin the process of learning what changes need to happen in their schools, the proposed SPDG staff and the NDPC staff will lead the group through the process of an analysis of school data regarding the outcome markers reported in Section 1: Needs.

In an attempt to impact a broader number of schools, other middle and high schools within the GLRS regions will also be invited to participate in this summer Level 1 training. They will not be provided intense level of follow-up support provided for Cohort schools by Local Coaches. Support will be limited to biannual booster training sessions, webinars, and email.

In the fall of 2007, one high school with its' feeder middle schools from each of the 17 GLRS districts (34 schools) will be selected based upon areas of concern noted in analysis of state and local data. In Level 2 training, the NDPC-SD staff will provide training to school-level teams within Cohort 1 schools in order to leverage resources and establish a foundation to support capacity building for addressing successful school completion. Within Level 2 training,

school-level teams will attend five days of interactive training spread out over a four-month period—September, 2007-February 2008. Day 1 of training will be an overview of research related to school completion. Day 2 will be further data analysis. Days 3 and 4 will be a review of evidence-based interventions for each of the goal areas. And Day 5 will focus on parent/family engagement. The training modules utilized within Level II training are designed to create an awareness and understanding of successful school completion by SWD, identify research based interventions and effective program models, and guide the use of a systematic framework to support effective school based implementation. The needs analysis will be substantially facilitated by the use of school and district profiles encompassing a myriad of information gathered and reported by the state data management system—see Section 1: Needs.

By the end of the fifth day, the Cohort 1 schools will select two of the five SPDG Goal areas, based on their school-level needs analysis. The first goal will be initiated during Year 1 beginning approximately February 2008 (second quarter of Year 1) and continuing throughout the 5-year SPDG funding period. A school plan will be developed for implementation of two selected SPDG goal areas, with the second goal implemented during Year 3, or earlier if possible. Support during the 5 years will include ongoing training and coaching on a graduated scale. It is expected that Cohort 1 schools will need intensive follow-up and support for two years and less for continuation of selected Goals during Years 3-5. Continued support is needed due to personnel turnover in Local Coaches, as well as participating Cohort school staff.

**3.5.2 Cohort 2 Schools.** This same process will be used with Cohort 2 schools during the summer of Year 2 in preparation for data analysis and selection of two SPDG goal areas for participation during Years 3-5 (with the first goal implemented during Year 3 and the second goal implemented in Year 4 or 5). Participating Cohort 2 schools will be provided intensive



assistance during Years 3-4, and less assistance and follow-up during Year 5.

**3.6. SPDG Goals, Objectives, and Activities.** Following is a description of the objectives and activities planned for participating Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 schools within the selected SPDG goal areas. The SPDG activities within the SPDG goals concentrate on those factors that can be manipulated (independent variables), as discussed in Section 2: Significance, to attain the desired changes in the intervening and dependent variables listed on the first page of this Section. The proposed SPDG staff, GaDOE partners, other SPDG partners, including the NDPC-SD, local school district coaches and support personnel will provide the training and ongoing assistance to attain the desired overall outcome of successful school completion.

**Goal 1: Through the use of trained teachers and the implementation of SBR instruction and interventions in reading and math, SWD at the middle school and high school level will increase their access to the general curriculum and make statistically significant literacy/reading (English/Language Arts) and math gains over their baseline (entry level) scores and/or against comparable control groups.**

**Objective 1.1:** The GaDOE will enhance its infrastructure providing coordinated resources for Cohort schools, thereby facilitating planning and implementation in all 68 schools.

1.1.1 Years 1-5 – The SPDG State Coaches, along with the state’s Educational Technology Training Centers (ETTC), NDPC-SD staff, and other SPDG consultants will identify, refine, and/or develop goal specific training modules regarding SBR reading (English/Language Arts) curricula/interventions (e.g., SSR and SIM, with a focus on reading comprehension). Effective math interventions will also be identified for use in training by Local Coaches. Modules will be developed to be used by the State Coaches, NDPC-SD staff, and Local Coaches for the training of special and general education

teachers in the Cohort Schools. Formats for the use of training modules will include workshop presentations, videos, web-based resources, and others.

- 1.1.2 Year 1 (Quarters 1-2) – In coordination with the Georgia Parent Training and Information Center (PTI), Parent to Parent of Georgia, and the Georgia Parent Mentor Program, the SPDG staff and GLRSs will develop guidance for the formation of local Circles of Adults Focusing on Education (C.A.F.E.) and OSEP Dialogue Guides used to facilitate C.A.F.E. discussions.

**Objective 1.2:** The math, reading specialists and other staff within the Cohort schools (see Section 3.3.3 – Local Resources) will increase their awareness and skills in providing SBR math and reading strategies for SWD in the GPI by attending summer training with periodic updates during the year.

- 1.2.1 Year 1 Initially and then Years 2-5 – The SPDG State Coaches, in collaboration with the NDPC-SD, will provide intensive training for Local Coaches in SBR reading (e.g., Secondary Struggling Readers and Strategic Instruction Model or SIM, with a focus on reading comprehension), as well as identified effective math interventions. This training will be coordinated with the rollout of the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) high school integrated math curriculum. Training will consist of five regional summer workshops, four days of training throughout the year, 8 hours of on site TA, Internet, and telephone assistance for each school. Booster sessions will be provided for new coaches during Years 2-5 and to provide additional assistance to all coaches.
- 1.2.2 Years 1-5 – The SPDG staff will work with Georgia’s ETTC to identify and/or develop web-based resources for Cohort school math and reading programs. By Year 5, these resources will be loaded and available on GaDOE’s training website. These web-based

**Objective 1.3:** The reading and math skills of secondary SWD will attain statistical significance above their baseline because of increased implementation and use of SBR reading (English/Language Arts), particularly comprehension, and math, monitoring of student achievement and use of increasingly more intense interventions within the GPI.

1.3.1 Years 1-5 – State SPDG Coaches and the NDPC-SD will provide approximately 10 hours a week initially and 8-10 hours monthly later of coaching, training, and technical assistance for special and general education teachers at the Cohort schools to assist in the implementation of more intense SBR reading (e.g., SSR and SIM), as well as identified effective math interventions) for SWD within the GPI. The Struggling Readers Course for Secondary Teachers will be delivered through collaboration with Reading First. The site license for the materials will be provided by Reading First, and the SPDG will fund consultants and materials for 5 courses annually.

1.3.2 Years 1-5 – Fidelity of implementation data will be gathered by SPDG State Coaches and Cohorts 1, and 2 designated staff to determine the extent to which effective reading and math curricula and strategies are being implemented, the level of coaching and training being provided for special and general education teachers, as well as the extent to which the success is being monitored, attained, and interventions altered based upon feedback.

**Objective 1.4:** Parent/family engagement will increase within all Cohort schools to enhance positive student outcomes for all SWD.

1.4.1 Years 1 (Quarter 1)– Each Cohort 1, (and in Year 3 Cohort 2) schools will form a Circle of Adults Focusing on Education (C.A.F.E.) using the GaDOE C.A.F.E. film and the

guidance developed by the GaDOE and its partners (See Activity 1.1.2).

- 1.4.2 Years 1-5 – The C.A.F.Es, consisting of educators, families and community members, within the Cohort schools, will meet periodically using a Dialogue Guide to identify ways to enhance parent/family engagement aimed at increasing student literacy/reading and math skills. Strategies related to a wider continuum of parent/family engagement within each participating school will be identified and implemented with a special emphasis on Hispanic families and other culturally diverse populations.
- 1.4.3 Years 1-5 – The state Parent Coach and Parent liaisons, including a Hispanic parent liaison, serving the Cohort 1 and 2 schools will provide leadership training for members of the C.A.F.E. team. These team members can then provide leadership in increasing family engagement capacity in activities related to student literacy/reading and math skills. Materials used will be accessible and available in Spanish and other languages as needed. Parent liaisons will have at least two years experience working for a local school system on system change or the equivalent experience, and be a parent of a child with a disabilities or sibling of a person with a disability.
- 1.4.4 Years 1-5 – A C.A.F.E. link on the GaDOE network website will be established and used for on-going communication across C.A.F.E. members for the purpose of sharing family engagement activities being implemented by parents.
- 1.4.5 Years 1-5 – Designated GLRS Parent Liaisons, in coordination with GaDOE and third party evaluators, will gather fidelity of implementation data documenting the extent to which parent/family engagement activities facilitated increased student literacy/reading and math achievement.

**Objective 1.5:** The Georgia IHEs will increase their capacity to train and support special

education and general education teacher candidates in the area of SBR reading interventions (Secondary Struggling Readers and the Strategic Instruction Model or SIM) as well as identified effective math interventions for SWD by including these interventions in their coursework.

1.5.1 Years 1-5 – SPDG partners within six Georgia’s IHEs will receive training through bi-annual university forums sponsored by the SPDG and GLRS staff in the area of SBR reading and math interventions for SWD.

1.5.2 Years 2-5 – Six IHE partners will infuse SBR reading and math intervention strategies for SWD into their teacher and administrator pre-service training.

1.5.3 Years 2-5 With SPDG support, IHE partners within each of the six IHEs will work with SPDG and ETTC staff in the identification and/or development of web-based resources, ongoing training and coaching for first-time special education teacher graduates working in Cohort 1 and 2 schools.

**Goal 2: The percent of students with disabilities dropping out of school will be reduced by 50% through participation in effective dropout prevention programs/strategies, including behavior interventions.**

**Objective 2.1:** Effective dropout prevention programs/strategies will be implemented within participating Cohort schools.

2.1.1 (Year 1) – Cohort schools participating in Goal 2 will receive three days of training in effective dropout prevention programs/strategies identified by the NDPC-SD Center and SPDG State Coaches. Effective dropout prevention programs, including behavior interventions, PBS, Check and Connect, and other proven programs that reflect some of the considerations discussed in Section 2: Significance. In addition, annual regional

training for schools statewide on the above topics will be held in the summer.

2.1.2 (Years 1-5) – Once trained, the Cohort schools will implement effective dropout prevention programs/strategies. GaDOE State Coaches and school-level coaches will provide ongoing follow-up coaching and assistance with guidance from the NDPC-SD. GaDOE coaches will gather fidelity of implementation data and hold quarterly reviews with school and district leadership teams to monitor the dropout levels and supports needed for effective dropout prevention.

2.1.3 (Years 1-5) - The C.A.F.E.s developed within the Cohort schools will support parent/family engagement activities that reduce dropouts—see Objective 1.4.

**Objective 2.2:** The IHEs will increase their capacity to train and support special education teacher graduates in effective dropout prevention programs/strategies for SWD by including information in their courses about research implementation and impact.

2.2.1 (Years 1-5) – University partners within six Georgia colleges and universities will receive training in effective dropout prevention strategies by the SPDG State Coaches and the NDPC-SD Center.

2.2.2 (Years 1-5) – The six IHEs will infuse evidence-based interventions for SWD within their teacher and administrator pre-service training courses.

**Goal 3: Through the implementation of effective transition strategies, there will be an increase in the number of SWD achieving their IEP transition goals.**

**Objective 3.1:** Local Transition Specialists and district or regional Interagency Transition Councils working with Cohort schools will be trained to implement effective transition assessments; develop measurable IEP transition goals, including self determination; and implement interagency service planning for post-high school programs and services.

- 3.1.1 Year 1 (Quarter 1 and 2) – The SPDG and its interagency partners (i.e., Department of Labor, Vocational Rehabilitation and the Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities and the Department of Human Resources, including the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Addictive Diseases) and the PTI will identify, adapt and/or develop training modules. School or district-based Transition Specialists and district and/or regional Interagency Transition Councils will be trained using the modules for conducting effective transition assessments, developing measurable transition goals, including self determination, and carrying out interagency service planning for post-high school programs and services.
- 3.1.2 Year 1-5 – The SPDG, its interagency partners, the PTI, and the GLRSs will provide two days of training in Year 1, Quarters 3-4, using the above modules to train Transition Specialists and Local Transition Councils. Six hours of ongoing training will be provided during Years 2-5. All training and materials will be accessible in English and Spanish and on the web.
- 3.1.3 Year 1 (Quarters 3-4) and Years 2-5 – Local Transition Specialists within the Cohort 1, and 2 schools will provide ongoing technical assistance and training to local IEP teams in the use of effective transition assessments, the development of measurable transition goals, including self-determination, within the student IEPs, the implementation of SBR transition strategies, and the monitoring of student progress.
- 3.1.4 Years 1-5 – Local Interagency Transition Councils will meet quarterly to discuss technical assistance needed to assist IEP teams in the development of measurable transition goals, implementation of transition goal strategies requiring interagency resources, and monitoring of student progress.

3.1.5 Years 2-5 and post SPDG – In order to assure sustainability, on-going training and support for Transition Specialists and Local Interagency Transition Councils, the GaDOE with its interagency partners, the PTI, and the GLRSs will identify and/or develop web-based resources including other professional learning materials and strategies found to be effective.

**Objective 3.2:** Ninety percent of the Cohort schools will use effective transition assessments; develop transition plans with measurable goals, including self-determination, aligned with the student’s course of study in math and English/language arts, and implement student transition goals using proven strategies.

3.2.1 Years 1 – 5 – Local Transition Specialists and/or Local Interagency Transition Councils will review student transition plans developed by each Cohort school assessing the plan’s content and level of implementation to determine fidelity of implementation.

3.2.2 Years 1-5 – Local Transition Specialists, GaDOE, and SPDG evaluators will follow-up graduates to determine if the quantifiable postsecondary goals have been dropped, met, or are in the process of being met.

3.2.3 Years 1-5 – The C.A.F.E.s, developed within the Cohort schools, will use parent/family engagement activities for transition and interagency service planning—see Objective 1.4.

**Goal 4: Teacher competency and skills will be increased by employing only fully certified special education teachers.**

**Objective 4.1:** Special education teachers holding a non-regular certificate will be reduced from 38% to 10%.

4.1.1 Years 1-3 – In collaboration with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC), the Georgia Board of Regents, IHEs, and GaDOE’s Division for Teacher Quality,



and other GaDOE staff, additional routes to certification will be developed, including blended personnel preparation programs and support for additional special education content development within the Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (TAPP) for teachers holding non-regular special education certificates.

4.1.2 (Years 1-5) - A consortia of the above stakeholders, including school districts, and GLRS/RESA Centers, will be formed to develop resources including web-based resources and coaching support to provide additional assistance for special education teachers without preparation in special education and who have a non-regular special education certificate.

4.1.3 Years 1-5 – Stipends of up to \$1,000 for tuition and other professional learning opportunities in the area of need will be provided annually for 17 special education teachers holding non-regular special education certificates and working in Cohort school districts, as well as other LEAs in the GLRS regions. School districts with the highest percentages of special education teachers holding non-regular certificates will be given priority, as will teachers who are minorities and/or who have disabilities and teachers in districts where inequities have been identified through Title II assessments (i.e., disproportionate numbers in districts with disadvantaged and minority students).

4.1.4 (Years 1-5) With SPDG support, selected RESAs will offer expanded courses so that special education teachers can take coursework close to home.

**Objective 4.2:** Aggressive recruitment efforts will be implemented to place fully certified special education teachers within Georgia schools meeting Objective 4.1 targets.

4.2.1 Years 1-2 – The SPDG will collaborate with PSC Educator Workforce Division and OSEP’s National Center for Special Education Personnel and Related Service Providers

(National Personnel Center) to support the implementation of a statewide action plan to recruit special education personnel with diverse backgrounds. A half time special education recruiter/program manager will be hired to perform the following tasks: (a) develop and manage statewide candidates/recruits databases; (b) train community members to recruit and implement strategies in local recruitment plans; (c) review Title II equity data and plans for implementing required recruitment of teachers; (3) coordinate resources at IHEs to connect local district needs with preparation program offerings; and (e) network with community agencies and other recruiting partners including the PSC.

4.2.2 Years 1-5 – The SPDG staff will collaborate with the PSC in the activities of their Transition to Teaching project. One of the collaborative activities will be to assist in the development of Georgia Assessments for Certification of Education (GACE) training modules in the specialized certification areas for specific disabilities. The purpose of these modules is to assist teacher cadets in passing the GACE I and II (Georgia’s Teacher “Praxis-like” exam). The SPDG staff will also assist in the development of content for the training of the teacher cadets who want to become special education teachers and provide oversight in the development of 190-day content/developmental level classroom lesson plans to be certain that content is appropriate for SWD.

4.2.3 Years 3-4 – The collaboration team will identify up to five new districts per year that state data reflect are in critical need of special educators and develop local recruitment plans based on local needs and resources.

4.2.4 Years 1-5 – The SPDG will train GLRSs in local recruitment campaign planning/implementation and transfer candidate and recruiter databases to RESAs to help develop local recruitment plans that use local needs and resources, provide maintenance for all

districts served in Years 1-4, and implement local recruitment campaigns.

- 4.2.5 Years 1-5 – The SPDG staff will coordinate with the PSC on airing media spots and utilizing materials developed by the National Personnel Center for distribution to high schools, community colleges and four year universities. The TeachGeorgia recruitment website will focus on attracting special education teachers, minority special education teachers, and alternative route candidates to teach in Georgia.
- 4.2.6 Years 1-5 - SPDG staff, IHES, and school districts from each of the 17 GLRS districts will partner to establish a “Grow Your Own” program to get potential certified special education teachers in the “pipeline”. This partnership group will provide counseling, mentoring, and help establish Future Educators of America (FEA) chapters. Learning experiences within the FEA will be provided for high school students annually to promote interest and commitment to special education careers. In addition, yearly incentives of \$1,000 will be provided to one graduating high school senior in each of the 17 GLRS areas, who demonstrate interest and commitment to enrolling in a Georgia community college or a 4-year special education teacher preparation program.
- 4.2.7 Years 1-5 – The SPDG will provide tuition stipends of \$2,000 per year to 17 paraeducators currently working in Cohort schools that are committed to pursuing a 4-year special education degree.
- 4.2.8 Years 1-5 – With the assistance of State Coaches, the PSC and GaDOE staff, utilizing the work of the National Personnel Center, will develop and implement district recruitment plans designed to enhance the percent of fully certified special education teachers on staff. Retention activities (4.3.2) will also be addressed in this plan.

**Objective 4.3:** The special education teacher retention rate will continue to be monitored for

maintaining a 65 percent rate over five years for first-time teachers.

4.3.1 Years 1-5 – Related to OSEPS Indicator 3.1 for SPDGs, data will continue to be reviewed annually by PSC and SPDG staff related to the statewide special education retention rate and specifically for Cohort 1 and 2 schools.

4.3.2 Years 1-5 – GaDOE, SPDG staff and the GLRSs will work with Cohort schools having high teacher attrition rates by arranging for visits to other school systems with low attrition rates and provide technical assistance needed for planning (Activity 4.2.4) and implementing effective retention efforts.

**Goal 5: Parents of preschool children within the targeted schools in Cohorts 1 and 2 will increase participation to ensure smooth and effective transitions from home or Part C programs to preschool programs.**

**Objective 5.1** – To enhance preschool children's abilities, parents in participating schools will receive training on SBR strategies for home use to produce an effective transition to preschool. Ninety percent of the parents trained will employ their skills for one year. Fifty percent of entering preschool students will have peer level skills.

5.1.1 Year 1 – The GADOE staff, the Georgia Early Intervention (Babies Can't Wait) staff, the Bright From the Start, Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) staff, Headstart staff, GLRS staff, the Georgia PTI, and the Parent Leadership Coalition will collaborate in the development and/or identification of existing materials related to SBR early reading, math, and PBS strategies for families to use at home. These materials will align with the Georgia Learning and Preschool Standards, as well as the National PTA Family Engagement Standards. In addition, these state partners will collaborate on the development and provision of training modules to increase the skills and use of Georgia's

State's aligned Preschool Standards. Regional training will be provided statewide for providers and technical assistance staff from each of the partner agencies. Web-based resources, along with CD/DVD and print media will provide support and sustainability.

- 5.1.2 Years 2-5 – Navigation Teams (composed of representatives from the above agencies and local families) within Cohort schools will work with a minimum of 15 families of young children per region. The teams facilitated by the Georgia PTI in collaboration with the Parent Leadership Coalition, will carry out 4-6 regional trainings per year, along with local teams offering a series of local workshops. Training content will include SBR early reading, math, and behavior materials identified, revised, and/or developed during Year 1. Ongoing training for families will be provided by the PTI.
- 5.1.3 Years 2-5 – Families will be encouraged to implement intervention strategies within the home using the above training. Parents will report back to the Family Navigation Teams the successes and failures they encounter, when implementing this training.
- 5.1.4 Years 2-5 – Fidelity of implementation data will be gathered with the PTI determining the extent to which parents are successful in implementing and sustaining the strategies in their homes. GaDOE will measure knowledge and skills of young children at entry to special education preschools programs.

## Section 4 – PROJECT PERSONNEL

**4.1 SPDG Personnel.** The Exceptional Students Division, GaDOE is proposing a uniquely qualified, multi-skilled team to carry out the proposed SPDG activities and initiatives. This project will be supported by several key offices within the GaDOE, who were involved in the planning of this SPDG and who are committed to collaborating with the SPDG staff throughout the 5-year grant period. Section 6: Management contains an organizational chart of the proposed

SPDG Management Team, as well as detailed activity responsibilities. This information, combined with the following brief descriptions of the SPDG staff roles and skills, provide the information usually contained in a person loading chart. State Coaches will assume detailed responsibilities for their respective goal, as well as collaborate across SPDG goals. See Appendix G for resumes of SPDG staff, key consultants, and supporting GaDOE staff.

**4.1.1 SPDG Principal Investigator (.15 FTE).** Mrs. Marlene Bryar will serve as SPDG Principal Investigator. She is Director, GaDOE Exceptional Students Division. Prior to becoming the Division Director in 2004, she was the Associate Director and the Georgia SIG Director. As such, she has excellent knowledge and experiences in the GaDOE, which will facilitate integration of the SPDG into Division and Department-wide priorities and initiatives. Ms. Bryar has a masters degree in Special Education, University of Missouri, and has completed post-masters work from the University of South Dakota.

**4.1.2 SPDG Director (1.0 FTE).** Dr. Julia Causey is Program Manager, Professional Learning Unit, GaDOE Exceptional Students Division. She will be the Director of the SPDG. She brings previous experiences as the Director, Alabama State Improvement Grant/SPDG from 1999-2006. Dr. Causey has a masters degree in Special Education, University of Florida and a doctorate in Educational Leadership and Technology, Auburn University.

**4.1.2 State Coach – Goal 1 – Reading (.5 FTE).** Ms. Sandra Jones is currently a reading consultant with the Southwest GLRS and brings excellent knowledge and experience in the use of effective reading instruction for SWD and those who are struggling. She has a masters degree as a Educational Specialist, Valdosta State University.

**4.1.3 State Coach – Goal 1 – Math (.5 FTE).** Dr. Phyllis Martin has a doctorate in math education from Georgia State and has college and high school math teaching experience. She

helped plan the math curriculum/instructional content for the GPS.

**4.1.5 State Coach – Goal 2 – Behavior/Dropout Prevention (.5 FTE).** Paul Baker is currently a Regional Program Director, Mountainbrook Comprehensive Academy. In this role, he is a psychoeducational consultant to seven regional counties within Georgia. He has a masters degree in School Psychology from Copello University, MN.

**4.1.6 State Coach – Goal 3 – Transition (.5 FTE).** Ms. Amy Roark currently is a Transition Coordinator for the Barrow County Schools in Georgia. She has a masters degree in Special Education from the University of West Georgia.

**4.1.7 State Coach – Goal 4 – Professional Standards Commission Recruiter (.5 FTE).** Dr. Martha J. Larkin will serve as a recruiter to assure that Goal 4 activities are carried out in collaboration and integration with the work of the PSC. Dr. Larkin is currently an Associate Professor, Department of Special Education and Speech Language Pathology, University of West Georgia. She has a doctorate in Special Education from the University of Alabama.

**4.1.8 State Coach – Goal 5 – Parent Empowerment (1.0 FTE).** Ms. Patricia Davalos is currently a Bilingual Parent Outreach Specialist at Pioneer RESA, where she helps parents of Hispanic origin to understand and work effectively with the schools. She graduated from the American Junior College, Quito, Ecuador and has a Certificate of Superior Spanish, American Council of Foreign Languages and is a Court Interpreter certified by the Georgia Commission on Interpreters. Her bilingual background will provide an excellent resource to the Georgia SPDG.

**4.1.6 Data Specialist (.25 FTE).** Ms. Bonnie Dye currently serves as data specialist for the GaDOE Exceptional Students Division. As such, she will play an invaluable role as the data manager for the SPDG. Ms. Dye has a masters degree in Learning Disabilities from Georgia State University and completed the education specialist program at the Univ. of West Georgia.

**4.1.7 Project Support.** The administrative support for the Georgia SPDG will be provided by several secretaries within the Exceptional Students Division from in-kind resources. Sufficient clerical support will be provided for project activities, including logistical support for training activities and meetings, maintenance of project financial records, coordination of subcontract documentation, and preparation of reports and other documents.

## **4.2 Key Consultants.**

**4.2.1 National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities (NDPC-SD).** Several staff members of the NDPC-SD will serve as consultants to the Georgia 5-year SPDG. Dr. Lougenaia Williams Bost has been the Director of the Center at Clemson University since it was funded in 2004. She has a doctorate in Special Education from Penn State University. Prior to coming to the NDPC-SD, she was Chief of Professional Development, Technical Assistance, and Training at the Pennsylvania Department of Education.

Along with Dr. Bost, Dr. Paul Riccomini will serve as a consultant to the Georgia SPDG. He is currently Assistant Professor at Clemson University with a doctorate in Special Education from Penn State University. He is a member of the NDPC-SD team.

Dr. Matthew Klare is a Research Associate at the NPDPC-SD with content expertise in science and math. He developed a data analysis framework for states to use in identifying dropout risk factors. He has a doctorate in Polynology and Paleoecology and has coursework for a masters degree in Education Measurement and Standards from the University of Iowa.

Dr. Sandra Covington Smith is also a Research Associate, NDPC-SD. She has a doctorate in Special Education, University of Missouri and is a certified PBS trainer.

**4.2.2 GLRS and RESA Consultants.** As stated earlier, the staff from the 17 Georgia Learning Resources Systems (GLRSs) and 16 Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs)



will partner with the Georgia SPDG. Appendix G shows resumes for several partner staff.

**4.2.3 GaDOE staff.** One of the strengths of the proposed Georgia SPDG is the commitment that have been made by several staff within the Exceptional Students Division and other Divisions within the GaDOE to contribute their time and expertise in carrying out the five SPDG goal activities. Appendix G contains resumes from the following staff members from the Division of Exceptional Students: Dr. Alice Murphy, Director LRE Project; Dr. Lu Nations-Miller, Education Program Specialist for Transition; Martha Smith, Educational Consultant, Behavior; Jan Stevenson, Preschool Consultant; Kimberly Hartsell, Coordinator, Statewide Support Network for Assistive Technology; Patti Solomon, Parent Specialist, Kristina Brooks, Program Manager Elementary Curriculum, Lynn Holland, Program Manager Secondary Curriculum, Lynne Williams, Director of GLRS Centers and Nancy O’Hara, Assistant Director.

**4.2.3 External Evaluators.** Drs. Judy and Howard Schrag, Education and Human Services Group, will conduct the external SPDG evaluation. They have evaluated early childhood intervention programs, Title I programs, alternative dispute resolution, comprehensive program development for preschool children, and SIG/SPDG program evaluations for five states. As such, they have an excellent capability to assume the external evaluation role for the SPDG. Tasks involved in the SPDG evaluation include designing and developing data instruments; implementing, supervising, and completing data gathering strategies; providing quality control and assurance through clean up and edit checks of the survey database; and conducting the analysis and report preparation. They are proficient and users of Microsoft’s Access and SPSS.

**4.3 Involvement of Individuals from Traditionally Underrepresented Groups.** The GaDOE is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate or deny services on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, and or age. The staff and contractors

identified for the project all have a commitment to the meaningful involvement of individuals from underrepresented groups in this project. Several GaDOE staff members and contractors are parents of children with disabilities. In addition, among the project's IHE participants will be, the state's historically black colleges. For any SPDG personnel vacancies throughout the 5-year SPDG period, proactive steps will be taken to recruit qualified individuals with disabilities through advertisement in the offices for Disabled Student Services at Georgia's IHEs and through the Department's existing communication channels within the disability community. These recruitment efforts will be coordinated by a Minority Hiring Subcommittee of the SAP. Participation by qualified individuals with disabilities will also be sought as the project identifies additional content specialists or consultants for its professional development activities.

## Section 5. Adequacy of Resources

The GaDOE has adequate facilities, equipment, and other resources to support and sustain the activities of the SPDG during and beyond the 5-year funding period.

**5.1 Facilities, Equipment, Supplies and Other Resources.** The central office of GaDOE is located in Atlanta with approximately 300 employees. GaDOE will provide the necessary physical resources for the SPDG such as facilities, equipment, and supplies in support of SPDG activities. Office space required by SPDG personnel is currently available within the Exceptional Students Division and the GLRSs in the 17 Regions. The GaDOE and GLRSs have telephones and computers ready for use by the SPDG staff. Fax and copy machines are available for use. The GaDOE maintains a computer network, Internet access, and electronic mail system. The GaDOE maintains an active website, which meets government-wide standards. Within the Office of Curriculum and Instruction, there is a link to Exceptional Students and specifically to the SPDG. Updates regarding SPDG initiatives and progress will be posted on this website link.

The GaDOE ensures it will provide equipment needed by SPDG staff or beneficiaries of project services in accessible formats. Materials, developed by SPDG activities, will be available in alternate formats such as audiotape, large print, and Braille upon request. Services, including interpreters, or other assistance will be provided as needed. Any videotapes/DVDs and web-based resources developed by the SPDG will be captioned and audio-described. All training facilities will be barrier free to insure participation of individuals with disabilities.

**5.2 Commitment of Partners.** One of the strengths of the Georgia SPDG is that it will be supported by a number of Divisions and staff within the GaDOE. Thus, there will be significant in-kind staffing resources. The SPDG is also characterized by many partnerships, including IHEs, school districts, the GLRSs, RESAs, and Parent Coalition, including the PTI. While SPDG funds will be provided to these partners for implementation of various SPDG activities, each partner will commit in-kind personnel resources of their own to ensure that the SPDG activities integrate with that organization's existing activities. Appendix F contains partner agreements documenting collaborative activities to be carried out during the next five years. Brief summaries of the major SPDG partners are provided below. An organizational chart is also included in Appendix E that provides a full listing of GaDOE partners.

**5.2.1 Georgia Learning Resource Centers (GLRSs) and Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs).** The GLRS is a statewide network of 17 regional centers funded by GADOE to provide ongoing professional development for teachers and administrators to assist them in implementing effective instructional strategies to impact the performance of SWD and other struggling students. The GLRS Centers are a part of a statewide network of 16 Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs) that assist school systems to improve educational programs and services. RESAs will also assist in the implementation of the SPDG.

**5.2.2 GaDOE Partners.** The SPDG will be supported by a number of GADOE offices and initiatives including School Improvement, Curriculum and Instruction (CI), which include Reading first, and the Office of Technology. A number of Exceptional Students Division staff will provide in-kind support for goal activities—see discussion in Section 4: Personnel.

This support is critical and consistent with the Department-wide commitment to the high school secondary redesign, which is not yet complete. All units within GaDOE are collaborating with Exceptional Students to ensure that the needs of all students are addressed. A current example is the training being developed for Integrated Math as a part of new GPS content. This statewide training is being developed and implemented using the expertise of special education teachers and other professionals to ensure access for SWD. As GADOE moves forward in other initiatives to raise student achievement Exceptional Students will be an important component and will be able to incorporate strategies and resources to reinforce SPDG goals.

**5.2.3 National Dropout and Prevention Center for SWD (NDPC-SD).** The NDPC-SD, housed at Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina, was funded by the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs, as part of the “Ideas That Work” network. The NDPC-SD has two major responsibilities: (1) to synthesize research and practice into actionable information that can be readily used by states to develop and/or enhance dropout prevention programs for SWD, and (2) to provide effective technical assistance and dissemination activities to "scale up" the use of research validated programs and interventions in dropout prevention. The NDPC-SD will partner with the GaDOE in implementing the SPDG.

**5.2.2 Georgia Parent Training and Information Center (PTI).** Georgia’s PTI is part of a nationwide network of training centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Georgia’s PTI is operated through Parents Educating Parents and Professionals, Inc., (PEPP). PEPP offers

assistance to parents of children with disabilities who have concerns about their children's education. The PEPP will partner with the GaDOE, along with other Parent Coalition members, to carry out parent involvement/engagement activities specified within this application.

**5.2.3 Georgia Parent Mentor Program.** The Parent Mentor Program is a state-initiative designed to encourage school districts to hire a parent of a child with a disability to assist the district in bridging the gap between home and school. In less than three years, 56 mentors are on board in 49 school districts. The parent mentor website provides mentor contact information, a parents' rights guide, links to other parent support websites, and local school district information.

**5.2.4 Georgia Parent Leadership Coalition.** The Parent Leadership Coalition (PLC) consists of ten Georgia organizations in a statewide network working to promote family engagement and encourage Navigation Teams, consisting of families, community members, and educators to serve as conduits of information. The PLC serves all children from birth to seven and children with disabilities from seven to 22. The PLC promotes team building training and provides up-to-date information for navigators so they can assist families in helping their child become successful. Parent Coalition members include: The GA Department of Education, the PTI, PEPPAC (Parents Educating Parents and Professionals for All Children); AADD (Atlanta Alliance on Developmental Disabilities) and Partners in Policymaking; Babies Can't Wait; Division for Early Childcare and Learning; Family Connections; Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities; Parent to Parent of GA; the Institute for Human Developmental Disability; the Office of Developmental Disabilities, and Department of Human Resources.

**5.2.5 Part C - Babies Can't Wait (BCW).** BCW, Georgia's Part C program, is administered by the Department of Health. Information and guidance are provided for families of children under the age of three. BCW educators, who also are parents of a child with a

disability, provide one-on-one support to families with young children.

**5.2.6 Georgia Interagency Partners.** The following interagency partners have committed to work with the SPDG in the implementation of Goal 4 (effective transition from high school): Department of Labor, Vocational Rehabilitation, the Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD), and the Department of Human Resources, including the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Addictive Diseases. Agencies/programs representing young children with disabilities will collaborate in the implementation of Goal 5.

**5.2.7 Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs).** Georgia has 18 IHEs that provide preservice training programs for special education teachers. IHE partners for the Georgia SPDG include Georgia State University, Valdosta State University, University of West Georgia, Mercer University, Georgia Southern and the University of Georgia. These universities will increase their capacity to train teachers and administrators in SBR reading and math as well as dropout prevention strategies (Activities 1.5 and 2.2). The IHE partners will assist the GaDOE and high schools in establishing “grow your own” strategies using FEA activities. Finally, the IHEs will assist in providing training for less than fully certified special education teachers.

**5.2.8 Professional Standards Commission (PSC).** The PSC has the responsibility for the certification, preparation, and conduct of certified, licensed, or permitted personnel employed in the Georgia public schools. The Commission also administers teacher certification testing and handles the investigation, advisement, monitoring, and due process of cases associated with educator discipline. In 1999, the Georgia Teaching Force Center was placed in the Georgia Professional Standards Commission as one component of the Georgia P-16 Council's Title II Plan for having a Qualified Teacher in every Classroom in Georgia by 2006.

**5.2.9 Local Education Agencies (LEAs).** The Georgia LEAs participating within the

proposed 5-year SPDG are those that have high-risk markers or intervention problems preventing successful school completion by SWD. As indicated in Section 3: Project Design, these include LEAS with significant reading and math gaps between students with and without disabilities; high rates of SWD who drop out of school; high rates of special education teachers who are not fully certified and who hold a non-renewable special education certificate, and insufficient parent/family engagement. See Appendix F for Partner Agreements.

**5.3 Adequacy of Budget.** The budget section of this application, including budget justifications provides details regarding the allocation of SPDG resources and other supplemental resources such as Part B contributions, as well as funds supporting the GLRSs and Local Coaches.

The planned costs of carrying out the proposed SPDG are judged to be necessary to complete all proposed goals, objectives, and activities. The costs have been determined by GaDOE's fiscal experience with similar activities and projects. Salaries, benefits, travel and other expenses are determined by the state salary schedules, state travel allowances, and other state policies. In carrying out the SPDG, Georgia is committed to accounting procedures and fiscal accountability.

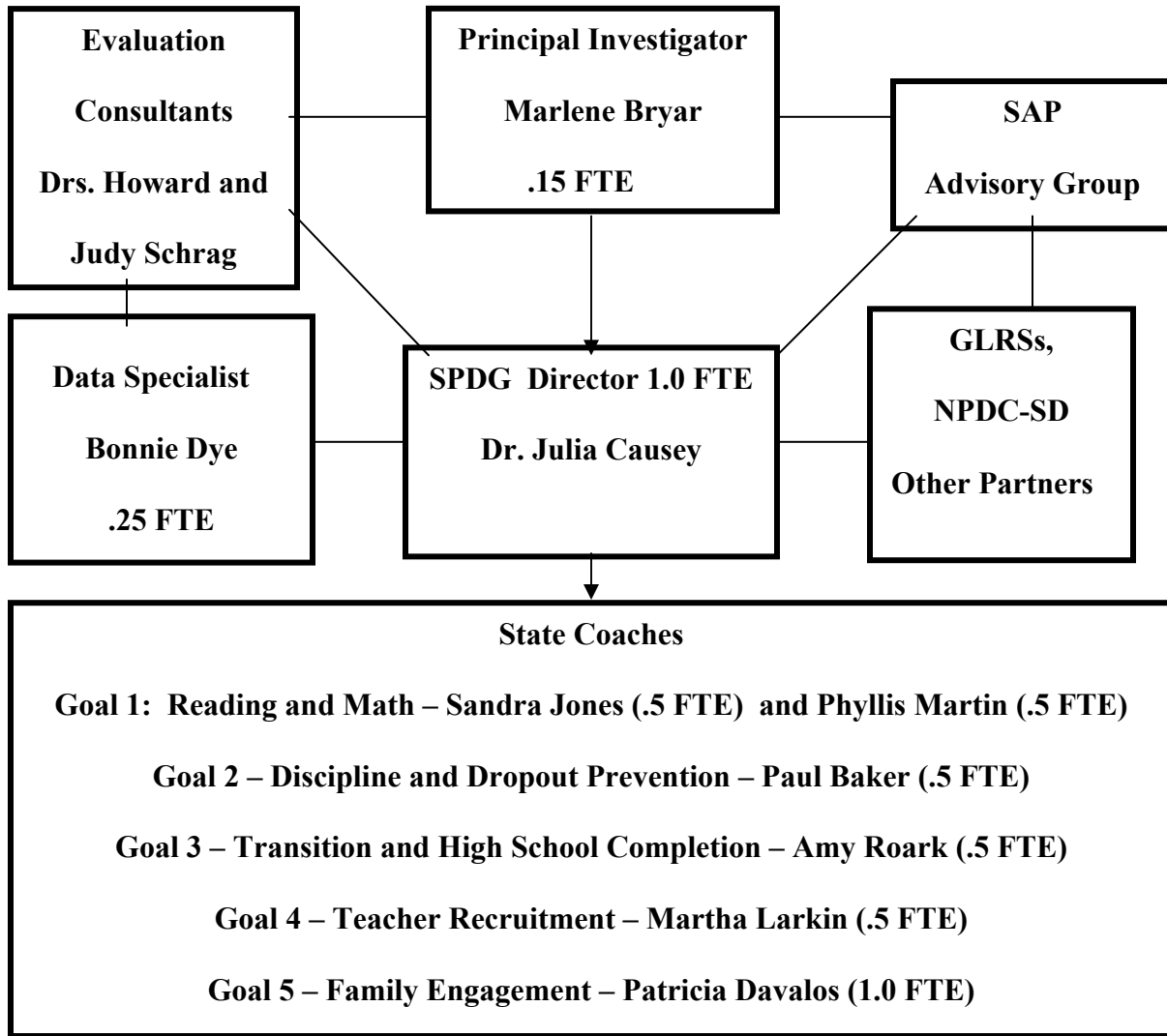
**5.4 Sustainability Beyond SPDG Period.** The SPDG was designed with sustainability in mind. The selection of project activities was based on their potential to increase capacity and remain long after SPDG funding ends. Specifically, effective professional development, SBR reading, math, dropout prevention, transition, and parent/family engagement activities will be carried out by fully certified staff, thus increasing successful completion by SWD.

## SECTION 6: MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Georgia SPDG is organized to insure effective communication among staff, consultants, and partners, as well as accountability for timely implementation of project activities. This

section describes the organization and management of the SPDG, including the person(s) responsible, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing all SPDG activities.

**Figure 14. Georgia SPDG Organizational Chart.**



**6.1 SPDG Management Team.** As depicted in Figure 14, the SPDG Team will be a unified entity, with Mrs. Marlene Bryar, Director, Exceptional Students Division (.15 FTE) having ultimate responsibility for project completion. Dr. Julia Causey will devote full time overseeing the implementation of activities by the SPDG staff, partners, and consultants. She will regularly report on progress to the Principal Investigator. The Management Team will meet at least monthly with Dr. Causey so that there is adequate feedback provided regarding activities, as well



as collaboration with partners carrying out their agreements and coordination with other state plans and activities (e.g., Higher Education Act of 1965, Rehabilitation Act of 1965, and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act). These management meetings will also monitor how SPDG activities are supporting progress toward the Georgia Performance Plan Indicators.

**6.2 Management Approach and Systems.** In designing the plan for this proposal, the SPDG partners were guided by the management principles of strong leadership, clear lines of authority and accountability, flexibility, communication and collaboration across SPDG partners, and management systems and procedures for ensuring activity completion and cost effectiveness. Excel Spreadsheets will be used to create schedules quickly, manage resources and workloads accurately, and continually monitor the status of all SPDG activities. Fiscal management will be the responsibility of the SPDG Director, the Principal Investigator, and the accounting office.

**6.3 SPDG Advisory Function.** As indicated by the organizational chart below, the external advisory function will be provided by the State Special Education Advisory Panel (SAP), a group including representatives of institutions of higher education, school districts, teachers, state and private agency service providers (including Vocational Rehabilitation and Part C), advocacy groups, and parents. The SAP has broad representation, and, therefore, will assure that all of the stakeholders, including SPDG partners, persons with disabilities, and parents of children with disabilities are involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of SPDG activities. SPDG staff and partners will provide progress reports to the SAP on a quarterly basis. The SAP will also advise the SPDG staff on additional strategies than can be used to assure equitable access to, and preparation in, the SPDG activities for teachers and others with special needs, as well as strategies for employing individuals with disabilities. A subcommittee of the SAP will assist the GaDOE in the recruitment of persons with minority backgrounds as well as

those with disabilities when hiring/selecting State and Local Coaches.

**6.4 Assurance of Project Completion.** An important element in our quality control is the critical element of monitoring performance. The SPDG Director will monitor the day-by-day work of the SPDG staff. The Principal Investigator and SPDG Director will be responsible for conducting quality control reviews to ensure that established timetables and milestones are being met. As SPDG Principal Investigator, Mrs. Bryar will draw upon other staff from the Exceptional Students Division should specific activities require additional expertise or personnel. Her position also enables her to draw on other resources throughout the GaDOE offices to meet urgent project requirements. With these strategies in place, the proposed SPDG has a very high probability of successful completion and continuation beyond the funding period.

**6.5 Alignment with Federal SPDG Indicators.** The SPDG workscope was developed to be strategically aligned with the federal SPDG Indicators, including the implementation of SBR programs and strategies, carrying out objectives of the State Performance Plan, and retention of special education teachers. Table 6 below provides the specific alignment to the federal SPDG Indicators in parentheses after each activity.

**6.6 SPDG Staff/Consultants/Partners, Responsibilities, Milestones, and Project Timelines.** Using the above management systems and tools, the SPDG Director will monitor the implementation of the SPDG work scope. Table 6 provides a planned schedule or timeline of SPDG project goals, objectives, and activities. It also shows a summary of responsible parties/partners and identifies milestones with termination dates that are critical predecessors for follow-along activities necessary for successful completion of the proposed SPDG workscope.

**Table 6. Georgia SPDG Management Plan**

SPDG Goals, Objectives & Activities	Staff, Consultant(s) and Partner(s) Responsible	Milestones	Timeline by Quarters				
			Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
<b>GOAL 1: To obtain statistically significant gains in math and reading against controls or baseline.</b>							
<b>Objective 1.1: An enhanced GaDOE infrastructure will provide coordinated resources for Cohort schools.</b>							
1.1.1 NDPC-SD and other modules will be identified, developed, and/or adapted to include SBR reading and math curricula and intervention strategies—and used in training of Local Coaches. (SPDG 1.2)	Julia Causey State Coaches ETTC; NDPS-SD	Modules ready for use	→	→	→	→	→
1.1.2 Guidance will be developed for the formation of local C.A.F.E.s as well as Dialogue Guides. (SPDG 1.2)	Patti Solomon	Guidance Developed	→				
<b>Objective 1.2: The local math, reading specialists and other staff will increase their knowledge and skills in SBR strategies by summer trainings with periodic updates.</b>							
1.2.1 State Coaches and NDPC-SD will provide training for Local Coaches. (SPDG 1.1 and 2.1)	NDPC-SD State Coaches						→
1.2.2 Web-based professional development resources	Julia Causey						

SPDG Goals, Objectives & Activities	Staff, Consultant(s) and Partner(s) Responsible	Milestones	Timeline by Quarters				
			Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
will be developed, loaded, and available on GADOE's training website. (SPDG 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3)	State SPDG Coaches NDPC-SD		→	→	→	→	→
<b>Objective 1.3: The reading and math achievement of secondary SWD will attain statistical significance above baseline because of increased utilization of SBR reading (English/Language Arts), particularly comprehension, and math within the GPI.</b>							
1.3.1 State SPDG Coaches, Local Coaches, and the NDPC-SD will provide 10 hours initially and 8-12 hours later of coaching, training, and TA for Cohort special and general education teachers. (SPDG 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, and 2.2)	NDPC-SD State SPDG Coaches School Coaches						→
1.3.2 Fidelity data will be gathered to determine the level of implementation and impact of SBR reading and math.	State SPDG Coaches School Coaches						→

SPDG Goals, Objectives & Activities	Staff, Consultant(s) and Partner(s) Responsible	Milestones	Timeline by Quarters				
			Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
<b>Objective 1.4 Parent/family engagements will increase within all Cohort schools to enhance positive student outcomes for SWD.</b>							
1.4.1 Each Cohort school will form a C.A.F.E..	Patti Solomon	Dates of 1st	→	→	→	→	
(SPDG 1.2)	Parent Coalition	meetings					
1.4.2 C.A.F.E.s will meet periodically to identify and implement parent engagement activities using the Dialog Guides. (SPDG 1.2)	Patti Solomon Local C.A.F.E.s					→	
1.4.3 Parent Coach/Liaisons will provide leadership training for parents/family members of the C.A.F.E.s in Cohort schools. (SPDG 1.1, 1.2, 2.1 and 1.2)	Patti Solomon Local C.A.F.E.s Parent Liaisons					→	
1.4.4 A C.A.F.E link will be established on the GaDOE. (SPDG 1.2)	Julia Causey Patti Solomon	Data link is working				→	

SPDG Goals, Objectives & Activities	Staff, Consultant(s) and Partner(s) Responsible	Milestones	Timeline by Quarters					
			Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	
1.4.5 GLRS Parent Liaisons will gather implementation fidelity data. (SPDG 1.2)	Julia Causey State SPDG Coaches 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party Evaluators							
<b>Objective 1.5: The Georgia IHE's will increase their capacity to train and support special education and general education teacher candidates in SBR reading and math strategies.</b>								
1.5.1 Partners in six IHEs will receive annual training on SBR reading and math interventions. (SPDG 1.1, 1.2, 2.1 and 2.2)	Julia Causey State SPDG Coaches		→	→	→	→	→	→
1.5.2 Six IHEs will infuse SBR reading and math interventions within their preservice training programs. (SPDG 1.1, 1.2, and 2.1)	Julia Causey State SPDG Coaches			→				→
1.5.3 Six IHEs will provide training and coaching for first-time special education teacher education graduates. (SPDG 1.1, 1.2, and 2.1, and 2.2)	Julia Causey State SPDG Coaches			→				→

SPDG Goals, Objectives & Activities	Staff, Consultant(s) and Partner(s) Responsible	Milestones	Timeline by Quarters				
			Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
<b>Goal 2: The percent of SWD dropping out of school will be reduced by 50% through participation in effective dropout prevention programs/strategies, including behavior interventions.</b>							
<b>Objective 2.1: Effective dropout prevention programs/ strategies will be implemented within Cohort schools.</b>							
2.1.1 Participating Cohort schools will receive 3 days of dropout prevention strategies training by State Coaches and the NDPC-SD. (SPDG 1.1, 1.2, and 2.2)	NDPC-SD						
	State Coaches					→	
	State Coaches						
2.1.2 Cohort schools will implement the SBR dropout prevention strategies. GaDOE and school- level coaches will provide coaching and assistance, gather fidelity data, and hold quarterly reviews with school and district leadership teams. (SPDG 1.1, 1.2, and 2.1, and 2.2)	NDPC-SD						
	State Coaches					→	
	GLRS Local Coaches						
2.1.3 C.A.F.E.s within Cohort schools will support parent/family engagement strategies to support dropout prevention strategies. (SPDG 2.2)	Patti Solomon						
	LEA C.A.F.E.s					→	

SPDG Goals, Objectives & Activities	Staff, Consultant(s) and Partner(s) Responsible	Milestones	Timeline by Quarters				
			Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
<b>Objective 2.2: The IHEs will include in their courses effective dropout prevention information and strategies.</b>							
2.2.1 Six IHEs will receive training in effective dropout prevention strategies by SPDG State Coaches. (SPDG 1.1, 1.2, and 2.1, and 2.2)	State SPDG Coaches NDPC-SD IHEs						
2.2.2 Six IHEs will infuse evidenced-based interventions in their teacher and administrator pre-service training. . (SPDG 1.1, 1.2, and 2.1, and 2.2)	Julia Causey IHEs NDPC-SD						
<b>Goal 3: Through the implementation of effective transition strategies, there will be an increase in the number of SWD achieving their IEP transition goals.</b>							
<b>Objective 3.1: Local Transition Specialists, Interagency Transition Councils and Cohort schools will be trained to implement transition assessments, develop measurable IEP transition goals, and conduct interagency planning.</b>							



SPDG Goals, Objectives & Activities	Staff, Consultant(s) and Partner(s) Responsible	Milestones	Timeline by Quarters					
			Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	
3.1.1 The GaDOE/interagency/PTI partners will identify, adapt and/or develop training modules. (SPDG 1.2)	State SPDG Coaches NDPC-SD, PTI	Modules ready	Qtrs → 1-2 1					
3.1.2 The GADOE, interagency partners, PTI, and GLRS will provide two days of initial and six hours of ongoing training for Transition Specialists/Interagency Transition Councils. (SPDG 1.1, and 2.1, and 2.2)	State SPDG Coaches NDPC-SD Lu Nations-Miller PTI							→
3.1.3 Local Transition Specialists will provide ongoing TA and training for IEP teams in Cohorts schools. (SPDG 1.1, 1.2, and 2.1, and 2.2)	State SPDG Coaches Transition Specialists		Qtrs 3- 4					→
3.1.4 Interagency Transition Councils will have quarterly meetings to assist IEP teams in areas covered by training—see .3.3.1. (SPDG 1.2 and 2.2)	State SPDG Coaches Interagency Transition Councils							→

SPDG Goals, Objectives & Activities	Staff, Consultant(s) and Partner(s) Responsible	Milestones	Timeline by Quarters					
			Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	
3.1.5 Web-based training and other training support will be provided for Transition Specialists/ Interagency Transition Councils. (SPDG 1.1, and 2.1, and 2.2)	State SPDG Coaches Lu Nations Miller PTI							
<b>Objective 3.2: Ninety percent of the participating Cohort schools will use effective transition assessments, measurable goals and implement student transition goals.</b>								
3.2.1 Transition Specialists and/or Local Transition Councils will review Cohort school's IEP plans for content and level of implementation to determine fidelity.	Transition Specialists Interagency							
(SPDG 1.2)	Transition Councils							
3.2.2 Local Transition Specialists, GaDOE, and SPDG evaluators will follow-up graduates to determine status of postsecondary goals (SPDG 1.2).	Transition Specialists							

SPDG Goals, Objectives & Activities	Staff, Consultant(s) and Partner(s) Responsible	Milestones	Timeline by Quarters				
			Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
3.2.3 The C.A.F.E.S. within Cohort schools will use parent/family engagement activities for transition and interagency service planning—see Objective 1.4.	Julia Causey Patti Solomon PTI	Feedback from survey					
<b>Goal 4: Teacher competency and capability will be increased by employing only fully certified special education teachers.</b>							
<b>Objective 4.1: Special education teachers holding a non-regular special education certificate will be reduced from 38% to 10%.</b>							
4.1.1 Alternative routes for special education certification will be provided for non-regular certificate holders. (SPDG 1.1, 1.2 2.1, and 2.3)	Professional Stand. Comm; IHEs; Div. for Tchr Quality	Routes available					→
4.1.2 The IHEs, LEAs, and GLRS/RESA Centers will coordinate to develop resources and coaching supports for special education teachers without special education preparation and those who have non-regular certification. (SPDG 1.1, 1.2 2.1, and 2.3)	IHEs, LEAs, GLRSs, and RESAs						→

SPDG Goals, Objectives & Activities	Staff, Consultant(s) and Partner(s) Responsible	Milestones	Timeline by Quarters							
			Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5			
4.1.3 Tuition/professional learning stipends of \$1,000 will be provided annually for 17 special education teachers holding non-renewable certificates within Cohort schools. (SPDG 1.1, 1.2 2.1, and 2.3)	Julia Causey State SPDG Coaches PSC	Stipends given								
4.1.4 RESAs will offer expanded courses closer to home for special education teachers with non-regular certificates. (SPDG 1.1, 1.2 2.1, and 2.3)	Julia Causey RESAs PSC/IHEs	Courses available								
<b>Objective 4.2:</b> Aggressive recruitment efforts will be implemented to place fully certified special education teachers within Georgia schools meeting Objective 4.1 targets.										
4.2.1 A statewide recruitment plan will be developed and implemented. (SPDG 1.2 and 2.3)	Julia Causey National Pers. Center	Recruiting completed								
4.2.2 SPDG staff will collaborate with the PSC relative to the Transition to Teaching Program. (SPDG 1.2 and 2.3)	Julia Causey; PSC State Coaches									

SPDG Goals, Objectives & Activities	Staff, Consultant(s) and Partner(s) Responsible	Milestones	Timeline by Quarters					
			Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5	
4.2.3 Five new districts annually will develop local recruitment plans. (SPDG 1.2 and 2.3)	Julia Causey; PSC	Five plans						
	National Pers. Center	Developed						→
4.2.4 SPDG staff will train GLRSs in local recruitment planning and implementation. (SPDG 1.1 and 2.1)	Julia Causey; PSC							
	National Pers.Center							→
4.2.5 The SPDG and PSC staff will distribute recruitment materials to high schools, IHEs and air media spots. The TeachGeorgia recruitment website will focus on attracting special education teachers.	Julia Causey; PSC	Recruitment						
	State Coach National Pers. Center	activities completed						→
4.2.6 Future Educators of America chapters will be developed and annual stipends provided to one student in each of the 17 GLRS regions. (\$1,000).	Julia Causey; PSC	FEAs in						
	FEA Coordinator	place						→
4.2.7 The SPDG will provide tuition stipends of \$2,000 per year for 17 paraeducators working in Cohort schools.	PSC; IHEs	Stipends	→	→	→	→	→	→
	Commun. Colleges	given						

SPDG Goals, Objectives & Activities	Staff, Consultant(s) and Partner(s) Responsible	Milestones	Timeline by Quarters				
			Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
4.2.8 Cohort schools with low full-certified special education teacher rates will develop and implement district recruitment plans. (SPDG 1.2)	National Pers. Center PSC School districts	Recruitment plans in action					
<b>Objective 4.3: The special education teacher retention rate will continue to be monitored for maintaining a 65 percent rate over five years for first-time teachers.</b>							
4.3.1 Special education retention rate for Cohorts 1 and 2 and statewide will be annually reviewed. (SPDG 2.3)	Julia Causey; PSC State Coaches						
4.3.2 Cohort schools will receive TA to implement/sustain retention efforts. (SPDG 1.2 and 2.3)	State SPDG Coaches Local Coaches; PSC						
<b>Goal 5: Parents of preschool children within the cohort feeder schools will increase participation to ensure smooth and effective transitions from home or Part C Infant and Toddler programs to preschool programs.</b>							

SPDG Goals, Objectives & Activities	Staff, Consultant(s) and Partner(s) Responsible	Milestones	Timeline by Quarters				
			Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3	Yr 4	Yr 5
<p><b>Objective 5.1: To enhance preschool children abilities, parents in participating schools will receive training on SBR strategies for home use to produce an effective transition to preschool. Ninety percent of the parents trained will employ their skills for one year. Fifty percent of entering preschool students will have peer level skills.</b></p>							
5.1.1 SBR materials on early reading, math, and numeracy skills will be developed for family use in the home. (SPDG 1.1 and 1.2)	Jan Stevenson Patti Solomon; Part C Parent Coalition; PTI	Materials available	→				
5.1.2 Navigation Teams will provide training for parents in materials developed. (SPDG 1.1, 1.2, and 2.1, and 2.2)	Patti Solomon/PTI Navigation Teams		→				
5.1.3 Families will be encouraged to implement interventions in the home and report back to Family Navigation Teams. (SPDG 1.1 and 2.2)	Patti Solomon: Part C Navigation Teams Jan Stevenson			→			→
5.1.4 Implementation fidelity data will be gathered by the PTI and the knowledge and skills acquired measured.	Patti Solomon PTI						→

## SECTION 7: EVALUATION PLAN

The purpose of the evaluation plan is to provide an objective, efficient means of measuring progress toward activity completion, implementation fidelity and attaining desired outcomes. Evaluation activities have been built into each phase of the project using quantitative process and outcomes measures combined with qualitative information. To provide an overview of the evaluation, Tables 7 through 11 below show a Logic Model depiction of the proposed project.

- ***Process Evaluation:*** Process evaluation will be used to track the implementation of activities to meet project goals and objectives. It will focus on the implementation and execution of training, technical assistance, project intervention fidelity, ratings of training content and presentation, and counts of increased training capability. Note: Strategies/Activities, Measures, Methods and Sources in Table 12.
- ***Outcome Evaluation:*** Outcome evaluation will measure declines in the percent of special education teachers who are not fully certified, increases in reading/math achievement, decreases in dropouts, increased transition goals, and young children prepared for preschool. Note: Direct/ Intermediate Outcomes in Logic Model Tables below.

**7.1 Qualitative Evaluation.** Components of qualitative evaluation include project development, organization, and management. Project issues and decision-making will be documented and reported throughout the five-year project. Other issues will include evaluation feedback mechanisms and dissemination of project products and information.

**7.2 Logic model.** Tables 7-11 below provide an overview of the proposed project goals and objectives using a logic model table correspond to each goal and its objectives.



**Table 7. Logic Model for improving reading and math - Goal 1.**

<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>Systems Targeted</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Strategies Activities</b>
<p><b>Goal 1: Through the use of trained SBR instruction and interventions in reading and math, SWD at the middle school and high school level will increase their access to the general curriculum and make statistically significant literacy/reading and math gains over their baseline scores and/or against comparable control groups.</b></p>	<p>1. Infrastructure of GaDOE. 2. Instructional strategies of special education teachers in Cohort districts. 3. IHEs pre-service training.</p>	<p>1. Cohort Schools 2. IHEs 3. GPS 4. NDPC-SD 5. GaDOE Georgia Learning Resource Centers 6. PTI 7. Reading First</p>	<p>1. The GaDOE will enhance its infrastructure providing more resources for project schools. 2. The staff will increase their skills through summer training and updates during the year. 3. There will be increased utilization of SBR reading and math, monitoring of achievement and use of more intense interventions. 4. Family engagement will enhance student outcomes and will increase their capacity to train and mentor in the area of SBR reading and math interventions.</p>

<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Customers</b>	<b>Direct/Intermediate Outcomes</b>	<b>Long Term Outcomes</b>
<p>1. The reading and math skills of secondary SWD will increase.</p> <p>2. Teachers will monitor student achievement and use more intense interventions within the Georgia Pyramid of Interventions.</p>	<p>1. Special education teachers.</p> <p>2. Special education students.</p>	<p>1 The reading and math skills of secondary SWD will attain statistical significance above baseline scores.</p> <p>2. Secondary SWD will attain statistical significance scores above their baseline reading and math.</p>	<p>1. Student achievement will increase causing fewer students to dropout and have office discipline referrals.</p> <p>2. More special education students will graduate with regular diplomas and go on for post secondary education.</p>

**Table 8. Logic Model for decreasing dropouts. – Goal 2.**

<b>Goal 2</b>	<b>Systems Targeted</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Strategies Activities</b>
<p><b>GOAL 2: The percent of SWD dropping out of school will be reduced by 50% through participation in effective dropout prevention</b></p>	<p>1. Instructional systems change to implement effective dropout prevention strategies.</p> <p>2. IHE pre-service</p>	<p>1. Cohort schools with high dropout rates.</p> <p>2. NDPC-SD.</p> <p>3. IHEs</p>	<p>1. Reduce dropouts for SWD through the implementation of proven interventions.</p> <p>2. The IHEs will increase their capacity to train and support special education</p>

<b>programs/strategies.</b>	training and content.		teacher graduates in SBR dropout prevention strategies.
-----------------------------	-----------------------	--	---

**Table 8. Continued.**

<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Customers</b>	<b>Direct/Intermediate Outcomes</b>	<b>Long Term Outcomes</b>
1. The dropout rates within the Cohort schools will decline.  2. IHEs will be training more teachers in dropout prevention strategies.	1. Teachers  2. Parents  3. Students  4. High need LEAs	1. The dropout rate for SWD in the Cohort schools will be reduced by 50% in 5 years.  2. IHEs will have dropout prevention strategies in their pre-service training.	Students will have improved academic participation -- graduate with regular diplomas and seek advanced education.

**Table 9. Logic Model for improving postsecondary outcomes. - Goal 3.**

<b>Goal 3</b>	<b>Systems Targeted</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Strategies Activities</b>
<b>Goal 3: Through the implementation of effective transition strategies, there will be an increase in the number of SWD that achieve</b>	1. Strategies of Local Transition Specialists and Interagency Transition Councils within school	1. Cohort schools 2. Transition Councils 3. Dept. of Labor 4. Vocational Rehab. 5. DD Council	1. Local Transition Specialists and Interagency Transition Councils will be trained to implement effective transition.  2. Schools will be trained to use effective transition assessments, develop transition

<p><b>the goals within their IEP transition plans to attain better postsecondary outcomes.</b></p>	<p>systems.</p>	<p>6. PTI 7. GLRSs 8. Transition Specialists</p>	<p>plans with measurable goals aligned with the student’s course of study, and implement student transition goals using proven strategies.</p>
--	-----------------	--	--

**Table 9. Continued.**

<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Customers</b>	<b>Direct/Intermediate Outcomes</b>	<b>Long Term Outcomes</b>
<p>1. Within 90 percent of the schools Transition Specialists and district or regional Interagency Transition Councils will be using effective transition assessments, develop measurable IEP transition goals including self determination, and implement SBR strategies.</p>	<p>1. Secondary special education students. 2. Special education teachers</p>	<p>1. More special education students will be meeting measurable outcome goals. 2. More special education students will be graduating with regular diplomas.</p>	<p>1 More SWD will be going on for advanced education. 2. More special education students will become self-supporting and contributing members of society.</p>

<b>Goal 4</b>	<b>Systems Targeted</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Strategies Activities</b>
<b>Goal 4: Teacher competency and skills will be increased by employing only fully certified special education teachers.</b>	1. Districts with highest % of non-regular certificated teachers  2. Certification system.	1. Division of Teacher Quality 2. IHEs 3. PSC 4. PSC Educator Workforce Division 5. National Personnel Ctr	1. Aggressive recruitment efforts will be implemented to place fully certified special education teachers.  2. Alternative routes to certification.  3. Cohort 1 and 2 schools having a retention rate below 65% will implement SBR strategies to increase the rate.

**Table 10. Logic Model for improved certification. - Goal 4.**

<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Customers</b>	<b>Direct/Intermediate Outcomes</b>	<b>Long Term Outcomes</b>
1. Fewer special education teachers will hold a non-regular certificate.  2. Aggressive recruitment efforts will find sufficient fully certified special education teachers to fill vacant positions.	1. Teachers holding non-regular certification.  2. School districts with high % of non-regular certificated teachers.	1. Employed special education teachers holding non-regular special education certificate will decline from 38% to 10%.  2. The special education teacher	1. Special Education students will receive quality instruction increasing their achievement.

3. The special education retention rate will be about 65 percent over 5 years.		retention rate within the Cohort schools will be at 65%.	2. More students will earn regular diplomas.
--	--	--	--

**Table 11. Logic Model for improving parent participation. - Goal 5.**

<b>Goal 5</b>	<b>Systems Targeted</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Strategies Activities</b>
<b>Goal 5: Parents of preschool children within the feeder schools to the schools will increase participation to ensure smooth and effective transitions from home or Part C programs to special education preschool programs.</b>	1. Home educational environments 2. Early preschool training strategies	1. Georgia Early Intervention 2. Department of Early Care and Learning 3. GLRS 4. PTI and PTA 5. Parent Coalitions	1. Parents of preschool child will increase their awareness, skills, and use of SBR strategies at home.

**Table 11. Continued.**

<b>Outputs</b>	<b>Customers</b>	<b>Direct/Intermediate Outcomes</b>	<b>Long Term Outcomes</b>
1. Ninety percent of the parents trained will employ their skills for a minimum of one year at home with their preschool child.	1. Special education students 2. Parents of preschool special education students 3. Special education preschool teachers	1. The percent of preschool students having peer level knowledge and skills, when entering preschool, will have increased from 8% to 50 %.	1. Good early entry skills will enable special education students to have better achievement throughout school.

**7.3 Outcome Evaluation.** The outcome evaluation described in the tables above will determine project effectiveness. It will be based upon the measures shown in the Tables and determine:

- Were the goals and objectives achieved?
- Did the activities carried out impact the project goals and objectives?
- Did the teachers, administrators, parents, and other participants receiving training use their new knowledge and skills to impact the skills of students?
- Were there observable benefits over the five years a result of project activities?

The variables for each measure will be gathered regularly to provide feedback regarding successful advances toward accomplishment of the goals including increased numbers of students demonstrating academic gains. To determine the outcomes of the SPDG project, information will be collected from baseline sources and measured against intervention data. This quasi research design will give pre and post intervention measures. The design also includes matching and appropriate measurements to use control sites (e.g., LEAs and schools).

**7.4 Process Evaluation:** The purpose of the process evaluation is to provide the GaDOE and OSEP a quantitative and qualitative description of the SPDG project, documenting its progress from inception through implementation and completion. The process evaluation will provide information on what did happen in the project:

- Were the project activities carried out (implementation and fidelity)?
- What barriers existed and how did we deal with them?
- How did the project interact with subcontractors as well as the diverse stakeholders?
- What resources were available, needed, and used?

It will be the role of the evaluators to ensure that the project creates and maintains an evaluation feedback system whereby progress can be assessed regarding project implementation

and execution. The evaluators regularly use an online service (surveymonkey) to gather project information. They will gather the data elements listed in Table 12 below using hardcopy and online instruments, placing the data elements in a Microsoft Access database to facilitate analysis by SPDG personnel and partners as well as report writing. Feedback will be provided to project staff as soon as possible and at a minimum of a quarterly basis.

**7.5 Analysis:** Much of the analysis of the variables of the process will be a mixture of qualitative and quantitative measures. Events, decisions, and processes will either have occurred or not occurred. Much of the data will be nominal and under some circumstances, nonparametric statistical tests will be applied to determine if significant differences are present.

Some of the outcome data analysis will be interval, and as a consequence, parametric tests will be applied, where appropriate, to determine if a significant difference is evident. It is possible that the distributions may be such that nonparametric tests will be applied to avoid violation of underlying parametric assumptions. Qualitative information will be provided along with the statistical analyses because it is essential when interpreting project findings.

**7.6 Annual Performance Report:** Each year, a SPDG Annual Performance Report will be prepared and submitted to OSEP. Feedback from OSEP will assist SPDG personnel in planning and implementing the next year's activities. The Annual Performance Report will include information required by OSEP and will enable the GaDOE to determine the extent to which project goals and objectives are being met and needs addressed. Table 12 which follows provides the process activities with their associated measures and methods of data acquisition.



**Table 12. Evaluation goals, objectives, and activities and accompanying evaluation measures, sources, and method**

Goals, Objectives and Activities	Measure	Source and Methods
<b>GOAL 1. Obtain statistically significant gains in math and reading against controls or baseline.</b>		
<b>Objective 1.1: Enhanced GaDOE infrastructure to provide coordinated resources for Cohort schools.</b>		
1.1.1 Year 1 (Quarters 1-2) – NDPC-SD and other modules will be identified, developed, and/or adapted to include SBR reading and math curricula and intervention strategies—and used in training of Local Coaches	List of modules and types of enhancements made. Dates, locations, and contents of training.	SPDG staff will record module development and those made available for training uses
1.1.2 Year 1 (Quarters 1-2) – Guidance will be developed for the formation of local C.A.F.E.s as well as Dialogue Guides.	List and type of guidance and dates available.	State Coach will gather and report to evaluators.
<b>Objective 1.2: The local math, reading specialists and other staff will increase their knowledge and skills in SBR strategies by summer trainings with periodic updates.</b>		
1.2.1 Year 1-5 – The State Coaches and NDPC-SD will provide training for Local Coaches.	Date, location, content ratings, number attending.	Presenters will administer post workshop evaluation forms.
1.2.2 Years 1-5 – Web-based professional development resources will be developed, loaded, and available on GADOE’s	Dates loaded and available.	Project Director will log information.

website.		
<p><b>Objective 1.3: The reading and math achievement of secondary SWD will attain statistical significance above baseline because of increased utilization of SBR reading (English/Language Arts), particularly comprehension, and math within the GPI.</b></p>		
1.3.1 Years 1-5 – State SPDG Coaches, Local Coaches, and the NDPC-SD will provide 10 hours initially and 8-12 hours later of coaching, training, and TA for Cohort teachers.	Date, location, content ratings, and number attending.	Presenters will administer post workshop evaluation forms.
1.3.2 Years 1-5 – Fidelity of implementation data will be gathered by State Coaches and designated staff from Cohort schools.	Dates, locations, time involved, content, and fidelity ratings	All coaches will use TA online log. Form and hard copy rating form.
<p><b>Objective 1.4: Parent/family engagement will increase within all Cohort schools to enhance positive student outcomes for all SWD.</b></p>		
1.4.1 Years 1 (Quarter 1)– Each Cohort school will form a Circle of Adults Focusing on Education (C.A.F.E.) using the GaDOE C.A.F.E. film and the guidance (Activity1.1.5).	Date of first C.A.F.E. meetings and attendance in each participating school.	Data collected and recorded by the goal coordinator. Online reporting may be used.
1.4.2 Years 1-5 – C.A.F.Es will meet periodically to identify	Dates of C.A.F.E. meetings	Data collected and recorded by

and implement parent engagement activities using the Dialog Guides.	and attendance by school.	the State Coach.
1.4.3 Years 1-5 – Parent Liaisons will provide leadership training for parents/family members of the C.A.F.E.s in Cohort schools.	Dates of meetings, content, and attendance.	Parent Liaison will report using website form.
1.4.4 Years 1-5 – GaDOE will have a C.A.F.E linked website.	Date link is working	SPDG Director.
1.4.5 Years 1-5 – Parent Liaisons will gather implementation fidelity data.	Strategies used and not used.	Fidelity forms will be completed by Liaisons.
<b>Objective 1.5: The Georgia IHE’s will increase their capacity to train and support special education and general education teacher candidates in SBR reading and math strategies.</b>		
1.5.1 Years 1-5 – Partners in six IHEs will receive annual training on SBR reading and math interventions.	Date, location, content ratings, number attending.	Presenters will administer post workshop evaluation forms.
1.5.2 Years 2-5 – Six IHEs will infuse SBR reading and math interventions into their preservice training programs.	Content included and courses involved.	SPDG Director will collect data.
1.5.3 Years 2-5 – Six IHEs will provide training and coaching for first-time special education teacher education graduates.	Names of mentor, mentee, date, content of mentoring.	IHE mentors will report on website.

<b>Goal 2: The percent of SWD dropping out of school will be reduced by 50% through participation in effective dropout prevention programs/strategies, including behavior interventions.</b>		
<b>Objective 2.1: Effective dropout prevention programs/strategies will be implemented within Cohort schools.</b>		
2.1.1 Year 1 – Cohort schools will receive three days of dropout prevention strategies by State Coaches and the NDPC-SD.	Date, location, content ratings, number attending.	Presenters will administer post workshop evaluation forms.
2.1.2 Years 1-5 - Cohort schools will implement the SBR dropout prevention strategies. GaDOE and school-level coaches will provide coaching, assistance and gather fidelity data.	Dates, locations, time involved, content, and number attending.	SPDG State Coaches and Cohort school staffs will use TA online log.
2.1.3 Years 1-5 - The C.A.F.E.s developed within the Cohort schools will support parent/family engagement activities that promote dropout prevention strategies—see Objective 1.4.	Dates of C.A.F.E. meetings and attendance by school.	Data collected and recorded by the State Coach
<b>Objective 2.2: The IHEs will include in their courses effective dropout prevention information and strategies.</b>		
2.2.1 Years 1-5 – Six IHEs will receive initial and self-assessment training by the NDPC-SD.	Date, location, content ratings, number attending.	Presenters will administer post workshop evaluation forms.
2.2.2 Years 1-5 –Six IHEs will infuse evidence-based interventions in their teacher/administrator pre-service training.	Content included and courses involved.	SPDG Director will collect data.

<b>Goal 3: Through the implementation of effective transition strategies, there will be an increase in the number of SWD achieving their IEP transition goals.</b>		
<b>Objective 3.1: Local Transition Specialists, Interagency Transition Councils, and Cohort schools will be trained to implement transition assessments, develop measurable IEP transition goals and conduct interagency planning.</b>		
3.1.1 Year 1 (Quarter 1 and 2) – The GaDOE/interagency/PTI partners will identify, adapt and/or develop training modules.	List of modules and types of enhancements made.	SPDG staff will record development and date of use.
3.1.2 Year 1-5 – The GADOE, interagency partners, PTI, and GLRS will provide two days of initial and 6 hours of ongoing training for Transition Specialists and Interagency Transition Councils.	Date, location, content ratings number attending. TA will report using dates, locations, time involved, and content.	Presenters will administer post workshop evaluation forms. Trainers will use TA online log to report activities.
3.1.3 Year 1 Local Transition Specialists will provide ongoing TA and training for IEP teams in participating Cohorts schools.	Dates, locations, time involved, content and number attending.	SPDG State Coaches and school staffs will use TA online log to report activities.
3.1.4 Years 2-5 Interagency Transition Councils will meet quarterly to assist IEP teams in areas covered by training.	Dates, number attending and content covered.	Transition Councils will report using website form.
3.1.5 Years 1-5 Web-based training and other professional	Dates loaded and available.	SPDG Director will log

learning support will be provided for Transition Specialists and Interagency Transition Councils.		information.
<b>Objective 3.2 – Ninety percent of the participating Cohort schools will use effective transition assessments, measurable goals and implement student transition goals.</b>		
3.2.1 Years 1 – 5 – Transition Specialists and/or Local Transition Councils will review Cohort school’s IEP plans for content and level of implementation to determine fidelity.	Level of implementation for each IEP goal.	Specialists/Councils will gather information using an IEP implementation form.
3.2.2 Years 1-5 – Local Transition Specialists, GaDOE and SPDG evaluators will follow-up graduates to determine if postsecondary goals were dropped, met, or are being met.	Status of post secondary goals - dropped, met, or are being met.	Gathered and reported by GADOE survey specialist.
3.2.3 Years 1-5 3.2.3 The C.A.F.E.S. within Cohort schools will use parent/family engagement activities for transition and interagency service planning—see Objective 1.4.	Dates of C.A.F.E. meetings and attendance by school.	Data collected and recorded by the State Coach
<b>Goal 4: Teacher competency and skills will be increased by employing only fully certified special education teachers.</b>		
<b>Objective 4.1 Special education teachers holding a non-regular certificate will be reduced from 38% to 10%.</b>		
4.1.1 Years 1 to 3 – Alternative routes for special education	List of routes available.	PSC will provide list.

certification will be provided for non-regular certificate holders.		
4.1.2 Years 1-5 - The IHEs, LEAs, and GLRS/RESA Centers will coordinate to develop resources and coaching supports for special education teachers without special education preparation and those who have non-regular certification.	Dates consortia formed, number of members, and content of activities.	GLRS/RESA coordinators will report web-based and coaching supports.
4.1.3 Years 1-5 – Stipends of \$1,000 will be provided annually for 17 teachers with non-renewable certificates in Cohort schools.	Number of stipends provided	Reported by GaDOE Finance Division, IHEs, and LEAs.
4.1.4 Years 1-5 - RESAs will offer expanded courses closer to home for special education teachers with non-regular certificates.	Course(s), dates provided, and number enrolled.	RESA will report to SPDG director.
<b>Objective 4.2: Aggressive recruitment efforts will be implemented to place fully certified special education teachers within schools meeting Objective 4.1 targets.</b>		
4.2.1 Years 1-2 – 4.2.1 A statewide recruitment plan will be developed and implemented.	List of strategies, dates used, and number involved.	State Coach will compile list.
4.2.2 Years 1-5 – SPDG staff will collaborate with the PSC	Number of modules	SPDG staff will report data.

relative to the Transition to Teaching Program.	developed/dates completed.	
4.2.3 Years 3-4 – Five new districts annually will develop local recruitment plans	List of five districts.	Reported by State Coaches.
4.2.4 Year 1-5 – SPDG staff will train GLRSs in local recruitment planning and implementation.	Dates, contents, and number attending.	State Coach will use post workshop evaluation form.
4.2.5 Years 1-5 The SPDG and PSC will air media spots and distribute recruitment materials to schools, IHEs. TeachGeorgia recruitment website will focus on special education.	Number distributed, number of airings, and number of hits on recruitment website.	State Coach will gather data and report using website form.
4.2.6 Years 1-5 - SPDG staff will train GLRSs in local recruitment planning and implementation. Future Educators of America chapters will be developed and annual stipends provided to one student in each of the 17 GLRS regions. (\$1,000).	Number of FEAs established, number of members, and stipends awarded.	Goal Coach will gather counts.
4.2.7 Years 1-5 – Tuition stipends of \$2,000 per year for 17 paraeducators working in cohort schools will be given.	Number of stipends provided.	Reported by GaDOE Finance division, IHEs, and LEAs.
4.2.8 Years 1-5 – Cohort schools with low full-certified teacher	Number of plans written and	Goal coordinator will gather data.



rates will develop and implement district recruitment plans.	implemented.	
<b>Objective 4.3: The special education teacher retention rate will continue to be monitored for maintaining a 65 percent rate over five years for first-time teachers.</b>		
4.3.1 Years 1-5 – Special education retention rate for Cohorts 1 and 2 and statewide will be annually reviewed.	Retention rates.	PSC will provide rates.
4.3.2 Years 1-5 – Cohort schools will receive TA to implement/sustain retention efforts.	Dates, content, and attendees at technical assistance.	Goal coordinator will gather data.
<b>Goal 5: Parents of preschool children within the cohort feeder schools will increase participation to ensure smooth and effective transitions from home or Part C Infant and Toddler programs to preschool programs.</b>		
<b>Objective 5.1 –To enhance preschool preschool abilities, parents in participating schools will receive training on SBR strategies for home use to produce an effective transition to preschool. Ninety percent of the parents trained will employ their skills for one year. Fifty percent of entering preschool students will have peer level skills.</b>		
5.1.1 Year 1 – SBR materials on early reading, math, and numeracy skills will be developed for family use.	List of material developed, and date available.	SPDG staff will log information.
5.1.2 Years 2-5 – Navigation Teams will provide training for parents in materials developed (5.1.1).	Dates, content, and attendance.	Navigation teams will report on website.

5.1.3 Years 2-5 – Families will be encouraged to implement interventions and report back to Family Navigation Teams.	Cases will be reported and written up.	Family Navigation Teams will report to goal manager.
5.1.4 Years 2-5 – Implementation data will be gathered by the PTI and the knowledge/skills measured upon preschool entry.	Skills trained, used by parents and sustainability.	PTI will gather data using fidelity forms.