



U.S. Department of Education
Grant Performance Report (ED 524B)
Executive Summary

OMB No. 1890 - 0004
Expiration: 10-31-2007

PR/Award #: (Please Enter)

(See Instructions.)



Georgia State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG)

OMB No. 1890-0004
Exp. 10-31-2007

Executive Summary PR#H323A070012

The GaDOE, Division of Special Education Services and Supports, 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, 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.

To address these needs, the GaDOE, submitted an application for a State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) to the Office of Special Education Programs and received funding for five years. The SPDG has five goals:

- 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 is partnering with other agencies, universities, parents and regional/state/national resource centers to provide recruitment and training for special education teachers, scientifically based literacy/reading and math intervention strategies within the Georgia Student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions, regionally/locally based coach training and onsite assistance, dropout prevention strategies, transition enhancements, family engagement activities, student achievement monitoring, and fidelity of implementation tracking.

The first steps of program formation at the Cohort schools include strategic planning, developing an action plan, and implementation of the action plan process. The National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities (NDPC-SD) uses this process to develop and implement dropout prevention programs. 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 Initiative and provides effective strategies for students with disabilities. Using this process each Cohort school will determine their program needs and implement effective intervention strategies.

Goal 1: SPDG Staff within GaDOE has met with other Divisions to ensure that GaDOE training in math and reading is accessible for all personnel who work with Students with Disabilities. General Education and Special Education SPDG staff will co-present and share resources to assist in achieving in-

creased reading and math skills twenty-six parents have been recruited as members of the Cohort I middle and high school teams and have receiving training to facilitate their team participation. To increase the effectiveness of the teams. Collaboration Coaches have focused, in part, on meeting the needs of Latino parents who constitute an ever-growing portion of the parent population. They have learned welcoming strategies for Latino parents as well as ways to engage with these parents. Latino parents are important influences on increasing achievement and preventing dropping out by countering the influences of peers and gangs.

To promote additional parent participation, Circle of Adults Focusing on Education (C.A.F.E.), will be formed at participating school sites. A link on the Georgia SPDG website will be used to report on and document C.A.F.E. discussions and activities during the coming years.

Goal 2: During fall, 2007, all middle and high schools within the 17 Georgia Learning Resource System (GLRS) regions that were identified as having significant risk factors in one or more of the intervening and dependent variables needed for successful school completion were invited to participate in an Orientation Session for the purpose of sharing information and national research related to school completion. These risk factors included dropout prevention, reading and math achievement, suspensions and expulsions, graduation rates, parental engagement, and use of fully certified special education teachers.

An application and selection process was held, and 15 high schools and their 18 feeder middle schools (34 total schools, including Coffee County High School Freshman Campus) were selected for participation in Cohort I across the GLRS regions. These 34 schools were selected based upon areas of concern in the analysis of state and local data. The schools have now gathered their needs data and are in the process of determining the Improvement Priority Areas that they will address and the interventions that will be effective in their local school environment.

Goal 3: To have effective transition services, Georgia's SPDG is training Local Transition Specialists and district or regional Interagency Transition Councils to work with Cohort schools to implement effective transition assessments; develop a measurable IEP transition goal, including self determination; and implement interagency service planning for post-high school programs and services.

Part of the training included professional development during the regional March 2008 training sessions for Cohort I teams, with an emphasis on guiding all students through the career development process. The participants were provided an overview of various tools to use in career development activities with students. "The Teachers as Advisors Model" was presented and on-site training made available to schools/systems that are incorporating this model into their plans. Transition training was also provided through the taxonomy for transition planning covering the areas of family involvement, program structure, interagency collaboration, student development, and student focused planning.

Additional Lunch and Learn trainings were hosted by GaDOE's Transition Consultant. These lunch sessions were for identified transition contacts/specialists from each Cohort I middle and high school. Thirty-two out of the 36 school teams identified a Transition Specialist to participate.

In addition, a Transition Survey is being completed by the Cohort schools to gather information regarding current and needed transition strategies. This information will help Cohort I schools prioritize their transition needs and help GaDOE structure needed transition support.

Goal 4: A full-time joint recruitment and retention position was created and approved by the GaDOE to work with SPDG staff and the Division of Teacher Quality. This position has been advertised, and applicants have been interviewed. Applicant selection was pending as of the writing of this Annual Report.

During Year 1, the SPDG staff worked with the National Personnel Center and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) to identify school districts with the lowest special education teacher retention rates so that retention plans can be developed and implemented during Years 2-5 of the SPDG. In addition, the SPDG staff met in February 2008 with the National Personnel Center and the Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (TAPP) staff at

the PSC to determine needs and plan activities to address the need for additional fully certified teachers.

The GLRS directors also met to develop guidelines for the selection of a stipend recipient in each of the GLRS regions. Given the uncertain nature of funding for the SPDG during next year, this activity has been put on hold.

Goal 5: The focus of Goal 5 during Year 1 of the SPDG has been to enhance interagency collaboration regarding supports for parents of young children with disabilities and other special needs. A SPDG Preschool Stakeholders Group has been meeting to identify existing programs and services for parents of young children that will be a valuable resource to Cohort I schools. The Preschool Stakeholders Group includes representatives from Georgia Heat Start, the Department of Early Learning, the GaDOE, and Babies Can't Wait (Georgia's Part C intervention system).

In the four-day trainings for SPDG school teams, a Parent Mentoring session was included, focused on effective strategies to involve and communicate with parents within in their school teams and within the educational process for their child. Parents who had dropped out of school and came back to school were presenters and discussed supports that would have been helpful to keep them in school and that helped them to re-engage with the school.

A Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership Annual Kick Off Conference is planned for October 14-15, 2008. The SPDG Cohort I school teams selecting preschool as one of their Improvement Priority Areas will attend this conference.

An important mission of the GaDOE Division of Special Education Services and Supports is to assist as many special education students as possible in successfully completing school and transition to meaningful postsecondary positions. The percentage of students with disabilities earning a general education diploma has remained relatively constant since 2003. About 67 percent of non-disabled students graduate with a regular diploma while a little over 30 percent of those with disabilities graduate with a regular diploma. This low rate probably is a cause, in part, for the dropout rate of special education students which is about four percent annually for 14 to 21 year old special education students.

In addition, academic success continues to be a problem for special education students who have a gap of about 22 percentage points below regular students on the English/Language Arts examination and 40 percent below on the Mathematics examination when making the first attempt at passing the exit examination.

Helping special education students pass examinations and graduate involves well-qualified teachers. While Georgia retains their special education teachers (about 61.4 percent in special education over the last five-year), the Georgia Professional Standards Commission has recent evidence (the last two years) indicating that shortages exist and positions are difficult to fill.

The new SPDG targets these problem areas and will attempt to reduce them in two selected cohorts over the next four years. With effective implementation in the Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 schools, improvement should be documented and available for others to observe and modify for use in their schools.



**U.S. Department of Education
Grant Performance Report (ED 524B)
Project Status Chart**

OMB No. 1890-0004
Exp. 10-31-2007

PR/Award # (11 characters): _____

SECTION A - Performance Objectives Information and Related Performance Measures Data (See Instructions. Use as many pages as necessary.)

1. Project Objective Check if this is a status update for the previous budget period.

Provide personnel with the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of, and improve the performance and achievement of infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and children with disabilities.

1.a. Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
<u>Indicator 1.1:</u> The percent of personnel receiving professional development through the SPDG based on scientific-or evidence-based instructional practices.	GPRA Program	Target			Actual Performance Data		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
			/			2,776	2,763/2,776

1.b. Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
<u>Indicator 1.2:</u> The percentage of SPDG projects that have implemented personnel development/training activities that are aligned with improvement strategies identified in their State Performance Plan (SPP).	GPRA Program	Target			Actual Performance Data		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
			/			47	47/47

Explanation of Progress (Include Qualitative Data and Data Collection Information)

SPDG Indicator 1.1: The percent of personnel receiving professional development through the SPDG based on scientific-or evidenced-based instructional practices

The professional development within the Georgia SPDG goals, objectives, and activities was selected from evidenced-based practices in the literature. Some professional development is based on more rigorous research such as meta-analyses of high quality evidence, and experiments with

controls, as well as quasi-experimental designs. Other professional development content and process reflects expert opinion supported by conceptual models and generalizations from high quality research on related topics, simple correlational studies, case studies, and/or best practices. Following is a summary of the rationale for the Goal 1 and 2 professional development during the Year 1 reporting period.

Goal 1 – Increased access to the general curriculum and increased literacy/reading (English/Language Arts) and math gains.

Rationale for Scientific or Evidence-based Instructional/Behavioral Practices:

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, and Griffin, 1998). The SBR reading content of Goal 1 professional development incorporates 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. Goal 1 proposes to use other SBR interventions to enhance student engagement and learning such as the Strategic Instruction Model or SIM, which is an umbrella term that embraces a model of teacher-focused (Content Enhancement) and student-focused interventions (Learning Strategies), and other support pieces. The University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning has shown academic gains when using several SIM strategies—see for example: Woodruff, S., Schumaker, J.B., and Deshler, D.D. (2002); Desler, D.D., Schumaker, J.B., Lenz, K.B. Bulgren, J.A., Hock, M.F., Knight, J., and Ehren, B.J. (2002).

Goal 1 professional development activities in mathematics are also based on scientific research or evidence-based instructional practices. Despite the fact that there is not a lot of rigorous scientific research in math, the number of research studies conducted in mathematics education over the past three decades has increased resulting in some promising directions. In reviewing studies with more rigorous criteria, Baker, et al., 2002 found that fairly good studies show when students, their teachers, and parents get ongoing information (usually on the computer), about every two weeks, as to where they are in math relative to state standards or some framework, student performance is invariably enhanced. The following are other promising directions for effective math instruction, identified by Grouws and Ceulla (2000) that can increase student learning and have a positive effect on student achievement:

1. Increasing the extent of the students' opportunity to learn (OTL) mathematics content.
2. Focusing instruction on the meaningful development of important mathematical ideas.
3. Providing learning opportunities for both concepts and skills by solving problems.
4. Giving students both an opportunity to discover and invent new knowledge and an opportunity to practice what they have learned.
5. Incorporating intuitive solution methods, especially when combined with opportunities for student interaction and discussion.
6. Using small groups of students to work on activities, problems, and assignments (e.g., small groups, Davidson, 1985; cooperative learning, Slavin, 1990; peer assisted learning and tutoring, Baker, et al., 2002).
7. Whole-class discussion following individual and group work.
8. Teaching math with a focus on number sense that encourages students to become problem solvers in a wide variety of situations and to view math as important for thinking.

9. Use of concrete materials on a long-term basis to increase achievement and improve attitudes toward math.
10. Using calculators in the learning of math.

The Georgia professional development in math is incorporating other promising practices supported by research that include well-designed tutoring programs with intensive and ongoing training for the tutors, well-structured tutoring sessions in which both the content and delivery of instruction is carefully scripted, careful progress monitoring and reinforcement of programs, frequent and regular tutoring systems with each session between 10 and 70 minutes daily, the use of technology, curriculum-based interventions, and differentiated instruction. In addition, Accelerated Math has also consistently demonstrated a dramatic raise in student math achievement (Ysseldyke and Tardrew, 2006; Spicuzza, et al., 1999).

The Georgia Student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions professional development is being developed 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. They have used a comprehensive review of the literature to produce a research synthesis on RTI (Coleman, et al., 2006). Coleman reported that a total of 14 studies met the selection criteria on a rating scale measuring the quality of RTI. Research synthesis findings indicated that there is an emerging body of empirical evidence to support RTI as an effective method for identifying children at-risk for learning difficulties particularly at the elementary level.

Selected References:

- Baker, S., Gersten, R., and Lee, D. (2002). A synthesis of empirical research on teaching mathematics to low achieving students. *The Elementary School Journal* 103(1), 51-73.
- Burns, M.S., Griffin, P., and Snow, C.E. (1999). *Starting out right: A guide to promote children's reading success*. Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children, National Research Council, Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.
- Coleman, M.R., Buysee, V., and Neitzel, J. (2006). Recognition and response; *An early intervening system for young children at-risk for learning disabilities*. Chapel Hill, NC: Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute.
- Davison, N. (1985). Small group cooperative learning in mathematics: A selective view of the research. In R. Slavin (Ed.), *Learning to cooperate: Cooperating to learn*. (211-30). NY; Plenum.
- Desler, D.D., Schumaker, J.B., Lenz, K.B. Bulgren, J.A., Hock, M.F., Knight, J., and Ehren, B.J. (2002). *The strategic intervention model*. Lawrence, KS: The University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning.
- Donovan, M.S. and Cross, C.T. (2002). *Minority students in special and gifted education*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Grouws, D. A. and Cebulla, K.J. (December 2002, Updated June 2003) *Improving student achievement in mathematics. Part 1: Research findings and Part 2: Recommendations for the classroom*. ERIC Digest, Clearinghouse for Science, Mathematics, and Environmental Education.
- Rand Reading Study Group. (2002). *Reading for understanding*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND.
- National Reading Panel (2000). *Report of the national reading panel: Teaching students to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction*. Reports of the subgroups. Bethesda, MD: National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health.
- Slavin, R.E. (1990). Student team learning in mathematics. In N. Davidson (Ed.), *Cooperative learning in math: A handbook for teachers*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, (69-102).

- Spicuzza, R. and Ysseldyke, J. (1999). Using accelerated math to enhance instruction in a mandated summer school program. Minn, MN: National Center on Educational Outcomes. Available at; <http://education.umn.edu/nceo/onlinepubs/amreport.pd>.
- VanKleek, A., Gillam, R., and McFadden, T. (1998). "A study of classroom-based phonological awareness training for preschoolers with speech and/or language disorders." *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 7, 65-76.
- Wilcox, M. (1999). "Considerations in promoting language-based learning readiness for children enrolled in Head Start." In J. Heller (Ed.). *Head Start University Partnerships: Issues in Child Development Research*.
- Woodruff, S., Schumaker, J.B., and Deshler, D.D. (2002). *The effects of an intensive reading intervention on the decoding skills of high school students with reading deficits*. (Research Report No. 15). Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning.
- Ysseldyke, J. and Tandreuw, S. (2006). *Use of a program monitoring system to enable teachers to differentiate math instruction*. Minn, MN: National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Goal 2 – Reduction of students with disabilities dropping out of school through participation in effective dropout prevention programs/strategies, including behavioral interventions.

Rationale for Scientific or Evidence-based Instructional/Behavioral Practices:

Professional development within Goal 2 is incorporating findings from the dropout prevention literature. For example, an early 1990's study of three dropout prevention programs for students with disabilities found that six components were common to all effective programs: persistence, continuity and consistency; monitoring; relationships; affiliation; and problem-solving skills (Lehr et al., 2004). Lehr et al (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of dropout research, only to find that of the 300 studies they reviewed, forty-five studies could be coded, and only nine had some form of randomized design. Two were conducted since 1994 and were focused on high school students and had a randomized-control element in the evaluation. The following, however, were identified as promising practices and are being incorporated within the Georgia SPDG:

- *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 students with disabilities from dropping out and to 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; and Lehr, et al., 2005). 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).

Number of Total Persons Trained (Goals 1 and 2): 1,482

Number and Percent of Participants Receiving Scientifically Based Instructional Practices: 1,482 – 100%

Selected References:

- Bost, L. and Riccomini, P.J. (September-October, 2006). Effective instruction: An inconspicuous strategy for dropout prevention. *Remedial and Special Education*, 27(5), 301-311.
- Sinclair, M. F., Christenson, S. L., and Thurlow, M. L. (2005). Promoting school completion of urban secondary youth with emotional or behavioral disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 71(4), 465-482.
- Lehr, C.A., Sinclair, M.F., and Christenson, S.L. (2004). Addressing school engagement and truancy prevention in the elementary school: A replication study of the check and connect. Model. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, 9(3), 279-301.
- Lehr, C. A., Hansen, A., Sinclair, M. F., and Christenson, S. L. (2003). Moving beyond dropout prevention to school completion: An integrative review of data-based interventions, *School Psychology Review*, 32(3), 342–364.
- Sinclair, M.F., Christenson, S.L., Lehr, C.A., and Anderson, A.R. (2003). Facilitated student engagement: Lessons learned from check and connect longitudinal studies. *The California School Psychology*, 8, 29-42.

Goal 3 – Increase in the number of students with disabilities achieving their IEP transition goals through the implementation of effective transition strategies.

Rationale for Scientific or Evidence-based Instructional/Behavioral Practices:

Goal 3 professional development activities being planned and implemented within Goal 3 are based on the scientific or evidenced-based instructional practices within the transition literature. 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 students with disabilities. Their

search yielded six programmatic factors that resulted in better opportunities for students with disabilities:

- 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).

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 students with disabilities (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 influencing success: (1) the extent of student knowledge, 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.

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.

Number of Total Persons Trained: 605

Number and Percent of Participants Receiving Scientifically Based Instructional Practices: 605 – 100%

Selected References:

Benz, M. R., Lindstrom, L., and Yovanoff, P. (2000). Improving graduation and employment outcomes of students with disabilities: predictive factors and student perspectives. *Exceptional Children*, 66(4), 509-529.

ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education. (2000). *New ideas for planning transitions to the adult world*. Arlington, VA: ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education

Hasazi, S. B., Furney, K. S., and DeStefano, L. (1999). Implementing the IDEA transition mandates. *Exceptional Children*, 65(4), 555-566.

Kohler, P. D. (1993). *Best practices in transition: Substantiated or implied? Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 16, 107-121.

National Council on Disability (2004). *Improving educational outcomes for students with disabilities*. Washington DC: Author.

Skinner, M. E., and Lindstrom, B. D. (2003). Bridging the gap between high school and college: strategies for the successful transition of students with learning disabilities. *Preventing School Failure*, 47(3).

Goal 4 – Increased teacher competency and skills by employing only fully certified special education teachers.

Rationale for Scientific or Evidence-based Instructional/Behavioral Practices:

Goal 4 is focused on the development of alternative routes to certification, stipends and other support for special education teachers with a non-regular special education certificate, and expanded courses so that less-than fully certified teachers can take coursework close to home. Goal 4 activities also involve aggressive recruitment efforts to place fully certified special education teachers within Georgia schools. Although not based on scientific research rigor, the Georgia SPDG is collaborating with their Professional Standards Commission Educator Workforce Division and the federally funded National Center for Special Education Personnel and Related Services Providers (National Personnel Center) to develop and implement a statewide recruitment plan and local school district recruitment plans. Training is also being planned to assist teacher cadets in passing the Georgia Assessments for Certification of Education (GACE) I and II (Georgia’s Teacher “Praxis-like” exam). Other recruitment strategies that are being planned and implemented within Goal 4 include stipends for educators currently working in the Cohort schools that are committed to completing special education certification.

While the above special education recruitment strategies within Goal 4 are not based on scientifically based research, they are based on effective practices reported in the literature and reported by other State Departments of Education across the country. For example, research findings, including that of the Education Alliance (Torres and Peck, 2004; Vegas et al., 2001; and Ingersoll, 2001) 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).

Non-traditional sources of recruitment are being planned, including “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 an effective strategy.

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.

Number of Total Persons Trained: 8 persons participated in a planning session
Number and Percent of Participants Receiving Scientifically Based Instructional Practices: NA for Year 1

Selected References:

- Clewell, B.C. and Villeges, A.M. (1998). Diversifying the teaching force to improve urban schools; Meeting the challenges. *Education and Urban Society*, 31(1), 3-17.
- Feistritzer, C.Emily (2006). *Profiles of Alternate Route Teachers*. Washington DC, U.S. Department of Education: Office of Innovation and Improvement.
- Guarino, G., Santibanez, L., Dailey, G., and Brewer, D. (May 2004). *A review of the research literature on teacher recruitment and retention*. Rand Education, Prepared for the Education Commission of the States.
- Ingersoll, R.M. (2001). Teacher turnover and teacher shortages: An organizational analysis. *American Educational Research Journal*, 38(3), 499-534.
- Spradlin, T.E. and Prendergast, K.A. (2006). Emerging trends in teacher recruitment and retention in the No Child Left Behind Era, *Education Policy Brief*, 4(12). Center for Evaluation and Education Policy.
- Torres, J. and Peck, N.L. (2004). *Minority teacher recruitment, development, and retention*. Northeast and Islands Regional Educational Laboratory: The Education Alliance at Brown University.
- Vegas, E., Murnane, R.J., and Willet, J.B. (2001). From high school to teaching: Many steps, who makes it? *Teachers College Record*, 103(3), 427-449.

Goal 5 – Increased participation of parents of preschool children within Cohort I and 2 schools to ensure smooth and effective transitions from home or Part C programs to preschool programs.

Rationale for Scientific or Evidence-based Instructional/Behavioral Practices:

The training being planned and implemented within Goal 4 is based on clear findings from the research literature showing the importance of early language and literacy play in the later achievement of children (See for example - Wade and More, 2000; Burns, et al., 1999; and Dickinson and Smith, 1994). 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, the Georgia SPDG staff are developing print materials for training and support for parents of children with disabilities to support early literacy/reading skills as well as early numeracy skills.

Goal 2 SPDG activities are based on research that has clearly shown the importance that early language and literacy plays in the later achievement of children (Wilcox, 1999; VanKleek, Gillam and McFadden, 1998; and Dickinson and Smith, 1994). Burns, Griffin, and Snow (1999) identified 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 and concepts of print, letters, early word recognition, and comprehension. The SPDG activities focused on preschool are also based on the research synthesis of the National Early Literacy Panel and a secondary research synthesis conducted by Dunst, Trivett, and Hamby (2007) of the work of the National Early Literacy Council, in which 234 studies were identified as scientifically based and having a predictive relation between a skill measured during preschool and a convention literacy outcome measured at some later point.

Goal 5 of the Georgia SPDG is based on the literature that concludes parental involvement/engagement is a strong predictor of their child's achievement. For example, a research review of some 300 studies by Kallaghan, Sloan, Alvarez, and Bloom (1993); 49 studies by Edge and Davis (1994); 66 studies by Henderson and Berla (1994); and studies by Henderson and Mapp (2002) on parental involvement/parent engagement all demonstrated that the family makes powerful contributions to student achievement. This is true across socioeconomic, racial/ethnic, and educational backgrounds and for students of all ages (Mapp, 2004). In addition, the earlier in a child's educational process that parent involvement begins, the more powerful the results.

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.

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Number of Total Persons Trained: 681

Number and Percent of Participants Receiving Scientifically Based Instruction: 676 – 99.3%

SPDG Indicator 1.2: Number and Percentage of SPDG projects that have implemented personnel development/training activities that are aligned with improvement strategies identified in the Georgia State Performance Plan (SPP)

The SPDG Goals 1-4 are assisting the 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 students with disabilities and its Indicator 1 (Decrease the percentage of students with disabilities who dropout of school); Indicator 2 (Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who earn a regular high school diploma); Indicator 3 (Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who transition to employment or post-secondary education); and Indicator 4 (Increase the percentage of transition aged students with disabilities 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. Following is a summary of the Georgia State Performance Indicators for Part B, as well as selected examples of SPDG alignment within the Georgia APR:

Indicator 1: Percent of youth with IEPs graduating from high school with a regular diploma.

Indicator 2: Percent of youth with IEPs dropping out of high school.

Indicator 3: Participation and performance of children with disabilities on statewide assessments:

Indicator 4: Rates of suspension and expulsion: a significant discrepancy in the rates of suspensions and expulsions of children with disabilities for greater than 10 days in a school year.

Indicator 5: Percent of children with IEPs aged 6 through 21:

- A. Removed from regular class less than 21% of the day;
- B. Removed from regular class greater than 60% of the day; or
- C. Served in public or private separate schools, residential placements, or homebound or hospital placements.

Indicator 8: Percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities.

Indicator 9: Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in special education and related services that is the result of inappropriate identification.

Indicator 10: Percent of districts with disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific disability categories that is the result of inappropriate identification.

Indicator 11: Percent of children with parental consent to evaluate, who were evaluated within 60 days (or State established timeline).

Indicator 12: Percent of children referred by Part C prior at age 3, who are found eligible for Part B, and who have an IEP developed and implemented by their third birthdays.

Indicator 13: Percent of youth aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet the postsecondary goals.

Indicator 15: General supervision system (including monitoring, complaints, hearings, etc.) identifies and corrects noncompliance as soon as possible but in no case later than one year from identification.

Indicator 16: Percent of signed written complaints with reports issued that were resolved within 60-day timeline or a timeline extended for exceptional circumstances with respect to a particular complaint.

Indicator 17: Percent of fully adjudicated due process hearing requests that were adjudicated within the 45-day timeline or a timeline that is properly extended by the hearing officer at the request of either party.

Indicator 18: Percent of hearing requests that went to resolution sessions that were resolved through settlement agreements.

Indicator 19: Percent of mediations held that resulted in mediation agreements.

Indicator 20: State reported data (618 and State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report) are timely and accurate.

SPP Indicators	SPDG Goal 1	SPDG Goal 2	SPDG Goal 3	SPDG Goal 4	SPDG Goal 5	Comments:
1	X	X	X	X		The APR reports on the development and implementation of a transition plan to help students with disabilities achieve post-secondary goals. Goals 1, 2, and 3 activities will assist in the implementation of effective transition, reduction of dropout rates, and increased students who graduate with a regular diploma. The GaDOE will work directly with the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities (NDPC-SD) to provide in-depth training in proven research based strategies to improve graduation rates and decrease dropout rates. Consistent with activities within the Georgia APR, local graduation coaches at the high and middle school levels will assist in the implementation of research-based dropout prevention strategies by providing in-depth training to school teams within the SPDG Cohort schools.

SPP Indicators	SPDG Goal 1	SPDG Goal 2	SPDG Goal 3	SPDG Goal 4	SPDG Goal 5	Comments:
						<p>The Georgia APR also calls for collaboration by the Division of Special Education Services and Supports and other units within the GaDOE, including School Improvement and Curriculum. The SPDG will collaborate closely with this unit and other units to support the implementation of research-based reading and math strategies to improve student achievement, reduce dropout rates, and increase graduation rates with a regular diploma.</p> <p>SPDG Cohort 1 and later Cohort 2 schools are receiving training by the NDPC-SD and GaDOE staff on research-based strategies that were supported in the first Georgia SPDG to increase access to the general education curriculum, including co-teaching and the variations of teaching styles, resulting in increased access to general education, fewer dropouts, increased achievement, and increased graduation rates with a regular diploma.</p> <p>Consistent with the Georgia APR, the Division for Special Education continues to support research-based positive behavior supports and functional behavior assessments again with the expected outcomes stated above. Behavior strategies have been included within the training provided by the NDPC-SD for participating Cohort schools.</p> <p>The Georgia APR calls on the Georgia Learning Resource System Centers (GLRS) throughout Georgia to lead and support school systems in the above areas. The GLRS is an integral support system within the SPDG for supporting Cohort participating schools who have been receiving training during Year 1 from the NDPC-SD and GaDOE staff and who will be selecting priority areas for improvement related to the SPDG Goals during Year 2.</p>
2	X	X	X			“ “ “ “ “
3	X	X	X			“ “ “ “ “

4	X	X	X			“ “ “ “ “
5	X	X	X			“ “ “ “ “
8	X	X	X	X	X	<p>The Georgia APR calls for the SPDG and other state initiatives to infuse parent engagement as a critical and integral component. As with other schools, the participating Cohort schools are being encouraged to partner with the Parent Leadership Coalition (PLC), a statewide collaboration of organizations aimed at increasing information to families, including Parent to Parent of Georgia (the state’s Parent Training Information Center).</p> <p>The PLC has developed training, and supported Navigation teams in local communities to increase the availability of information on supports and services to families.</p> <p>The Georgia APR supports the use of a “C.A.F.E.” (Circles of Adults Focusing on Education), a state initiative that was launched in 2006 for use by parent mentors and other family engagement leaders. Parent Mentors have C.A.F.E.s surrounding local issues to encourage collaborations between educators, community members, and parents. The SPDG training during Year 1 has encouraged the implementation of local C.A.F.E.s to increase family support and engagement within the SPDG participating Cohort schools.</p>
12					X	<p>During Year I, the SPDG provided training for participating Cohort schools in effective transition strategies from Part C to Part B for children turning three. These strategies will be implemented by SPDG Cohort schools that select preschool as one of their areas for improvement for implementation during Year 2.</p>
13			X			<p>Goal 3 will specifically address Indicator 13 aimed at the development and implementation of research-based transition strategies related to IEP goals.</p>

Goal 1 – Increased access to the general curriculum and increased literacy/reading (English/Language Arts) and math gains.

Goal 2 – Reduction of students with disabilities dropping out of school through participation in effective dropout prevention programs/strategies, including behavioral interventions.

Total SPDG Professional Development Initiatives: 29
Percentage Aligned with Georgia SPP Indicators 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8: 29 –100%

Goal 3 – Increase in the number of students with disabilities achieving their IEP transition goals through the implementation of effective transition strategies.

Total SPDG Professional Development Initiatives: 11
Percentage Aligned with Georgia SPP Indicators 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8: 11 – 100%

Goal 4 – Increased teacher competency and skills by employing only fully certified special education teachers.

Total SPDG Professional Development Initiatives: 1
Percentage Aligned with Georgia SPP Indicators 1 and 8: 1 – 100%

Goal 5 – Increased participation of parents of preschool children within Cohort I and 2 schools to ensure smooth and effective transitions from home or Part C programs to preschool programs.

Total SPDG Professional Development Initiatives: 6
Percentage Aligned with Georgia SPP Indicators 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 8: 6 – 100%



**U.S. Department of Education
Grant Performance Report (ED 524B)
Project Status Chart**

OMB No. 1890-0004
Exp. 10-31-2007

PR/Award # (11 characters): _____

SECTION A - Performance Objectives Information and Related Performance Measures Data (See Instructions. Use as many pages as necessary.)

2. Project Objective Check if this is a status update for the previous budget period.

Improve the quality of professional development available to meet the needs of personnel serving children with disabilities.

2.a. Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
<u>Indicator 2.1:</u> The percentage of professional development/training activities provided through the SPDG based on scientific-or evidence-based instructional/behavioral practices.	GPRA Program	Target			Actual Performance Data		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
			/			45	45/47

2.b. Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
<u>Indicator 2.2:</u> The percentage of professional development/training activities based on scientific-or evidence-based instructional/behavioral practices, provided through the SPDG, that are sustained through on-going and comprehensive practices (e.g., mentoring, coaching, structured guidance, modeling, continuous inquiry, etc.).	GPRA Program	Target			Actual Performance Data		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
			/			30	30/47

Explanation of Progress (Include Qualitative Data and Data Collection Information)

SPDG Indicator 2.1: The percentage of professional development/training activities provided through the SPDG based on scientific-or evidence-based instructional practices – See Rationale for Scientific Base in Indicator 1.1.

Goal 1 – Increased access to the general curriculum and increased literacy/reading (English/Language Arts) and math gains –See Rationale for Scientific Base in Indicator 1.1.

Goal 2 – Reduction of students with disabilities dropping out of school through participation in effective dropout prevention programs/strategies, including behavioral interventions – See Rationale for Scientific Base in Indicator 1.1.

**Total SPDG Professional Development/Training Activities (Goals 1 and 2): 29
Number and Percentage of Professional Development/Training Activities Based on Scientific or Evidence-Based Practices: 29 – 100%**

Goal 3 – Increase in the number of students with disabilities achieving their IEP transition goals through the implementation of effective transition strategies – See Rationale for Scientific Base in Indicator 1.1.

**Total SPDG Professional Development/Training Activities: 11
Number and Percentage of Professional Development/Training Activities Based on Scientific or Evidence-Based Practices: 11 – 100%**

Goal 4 – Increased teacher competency and skills by employing only fully certified special education teachers – See Rationale for Scientific Base in Indicator 1.1.

**Total SPDG Professional Development/Training Activities: 1 (Data/Planning Meeting)
Number and Percentage of Professional Development/Training Activities Based on Scientific or Evidence-Based Practices: NA for Year 1**

Goal 5 – Increased participation of parents of preschool children within Cohort 1 and 2 schools to ensure smooth and effective transitions from home or Part C programs to preschool programs – See Rationale for Scientific Base in Indicator 1.1.

**Total SPDG Professional Development/Training Activities: 6
Number and Percentage of Professional Development/Training Activities Based on Scientific or Evidence-Based Practices: 5 – 83.3%**

SPDG Indicator 2.2: The percentage of professional development/training activities, based on scientific-or evidenced-based instructional/behavioral practices, provided through the SPDG that

are sustained through on-going and comprehensive practices (e.g., mentoring, coaching, structured guidance, modeling, continuous inquiry, etc.)

Goal 1 – Increased access to the general curriculum and increased literacy/reading (English/Language Arts) and math gains.

Goal 2 – Reduction of students with disabilities dropping out of school through participation in effective dropout prevention programs/strategies, including behavioral interventions.

Follow-up for Sustainability:

Each of the Cohort 1 schools had a trained Collaboration Coach to provide ongoing support and assistance. These Collaboration Coaches provided planned, systematic follow-up support to the regional trainings held in November 2007 and January, February, and March, 2008, in collaboration with the National Dropout Prevention Center – Students with Disabilities (NDPC-SD). In addition, support and assistance to Cohort 1 middle and high schools was provided by follow-up support from the SPDG Latino Outreach Parent Specialist, and other SPDG Goal leads.

Seven of the Elluminate, web-based trainings did not have planned, systematic follow-up; however, email and telephone support was available for any Cohort 1 school that might request assistance.

Total SPDG Projects: 29 (Goals 1 and 2)

Number and Percentage with Systematic Follow-up for Sustainability: 22 – 75.9%

Goal 3 – Increase in the number of students with disabilities achieving their IEP transition goals through the implementation of effective transition strategies.

Follow-up for Sustainability:

As in Goal 2, four of the transition trainings provided during Year 1 were followed up with technical assistance and a survey to identify their current and ongoing transition issues, as well as training and technical assistance needs. Seven of the Elluminate, web-based trainings did not have planned, systematic follow-up; however, email and telephone support was available for any Cohort 1 school that might request assistance.

Total SPDG Projects: 11

Number and Percentage With Systematic Follow-up for Sustainability: 4 – 36.4%

Goal 4 – Increased teacher competency and skills by employing only fully certified special education teachers -See Rationale for Scientific Base in Indicator 1.1

A full-time joint recruitment and retention position has been created and approved at the GaDOE to work with the SPDG staff and the Division of Teacher Quality. This position has been advertised, and applicants have been interviewed. As soon as the recruitment and retention position has been filled, partnership activities with the National Personnel Center will be carried out during Years 2-5 relative to aggressive recruitment and retention strategies.

Dr. Phoebe Gilespeie, Director of the National Personnel Center, worked with the SPDG and Professional Standards Commission staff during Year 1 in a planning meeting to help with a review of recruitment and retention data and identify priority initiatives to be carried out. For example, school districts with the highest numbers of non-regular special education teaching certificates are being identified. Activities will be carried out to support these districts so that special education teachers with non-regular certificates can become fully certified.

Total SPDG Projects: 1

Number and Percentage with Systematic Follow-up for Sustainability: 1 – 100.0%

Goal 5 – Increased participation of parents of preschool children within Cohort I and 2 schools to ensure smooth and effective transitions from home or Part C programs to preschool programs.

Follow-up for Year 1 professional development activities within Goal 1 included planned follow-up meetings and trainings (e.g., task force and planning meetings). The SPDG Latino Outreach Specialists provided follow-up training, on-site technical assistance, and telephone support to Cohort I schools to enhance their parent engagement strategies for Latino parents of children with disabilities. Parent engagement was embedded within the regional trainings provided for Cohort I schools; however, specific follow-up was less formal. Email and telephone assistance was available for those schools requesting assistance.

Total SPDG Projects: 6

Number and Percentage with Systematic Follow-up for Sustainability: 3 – 50.0%



**U.S. Department of Education
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SECTION A - Performance Objectives Information and Related Performance Measures Data (See Instructions. Use as many pages as necessary.)

3. Project Objective Check if this is a status update for the previous budget period.

Implement strategies that are effective in meeting the requirements described in section 612(a)(14) of IDEA to take measurable steps to recruit, hire, train and retain highly qualified personnel in areas of greatest need to provide special education and related services.

3.a. Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
Indicator 3.1: In States with SPDG projects that have special education teacher retention as a goal, the Statewide percentage of highly qualified special education teachers in State identified professional disciplines (e.g., teachers of children with emotional disturbance, deafness, etc.) who remain teaching after the first three years of employment. (Georgia data is FIVE YEAR retention rate).	GPRA Program	Target			Actual Performance Data		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
		NA	NA /		440	440/717	61.4

3.b. Performance Measure	Measure Type	Quantitative Data					
		Target			Actual Performance Data		
		Raw Number	Ratio	%	Raw Number	Ratio	%
			/			/	

Explanation of Progress (Include Qualitative Data and Data Collection Information)

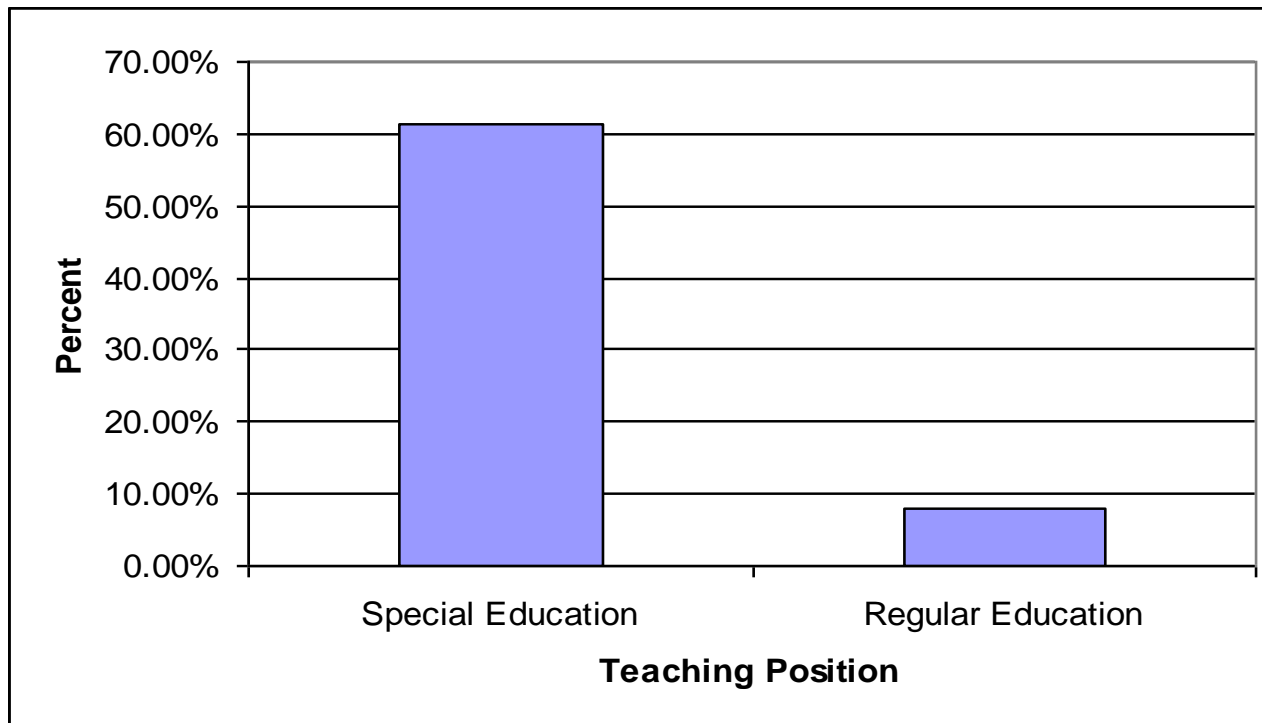
SPDG Indicator 2.2: Retention of highly qualified special education teachers after five years of employment.

Georgia's enrollment is increasing at 2 percent per year while the nation is increasing at 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 significant language issues. Also, potentially increasing demand is legislation passed in 2002 to reduce class sizes, but economic conditions in recent years caused state government to postpone implementation of this legislation.

The current Georgia SPDG has a goal of increasing the retention of effective special education teachers. The statewide retention rate appears to have been stable for the last several years. Figure 1 below shows a retention rate of about 61.4 percent for first-time special education teachers over the last five year period and an additional retention rate of 8.1 percent for those who started as special education teachers and are now teaching in regular education. This retention rate compares quite favorable with those experienced in other states of below 50 percent over the shorter time period of three years.

Figure 1. Percent of first time special education teachers retained over a five-year period (2002 to 2007) in the state.





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SECTION B - Budget Information (See Instructions. Use as many pages as necessary.)

SECTION C - Additional Information (See Instructions. Use as many pages as necessary.)

Year 1 – Annual Performance Report

Georgia State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG)

1. Introduction

Mission, Goals, and Outcomes

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

SPDG 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 Pre-literacy, Math, and Social Skills Development for Young Children
- All Goals:**
- Embedded Parental Engagement

In order to achieve the overall mission of successful completion for students with disabilities, five goals are being carried out through the Georgia SPDG focusing on two Cohorts

each containing approximately 34 schools (17 high schools and their 17 feeder middle schools).

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

SPDG Goals 1-5 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 students with disabilities and its Indicator 1 (Decrease the percentage of students with disabilities who dropout of school); Indicator 2 (Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who earn a regular high school diploma); Indicator 3 (Increase the percentage of students with disabilities who transition to employment or post-secondary education); and Indicator 4 (Increase the percentage of transition aged students with disabilities who have coordinated and measurable IEP goals and transition services that will lead to attainment of post-secondary goals). SPDG Goal 5 will also impact Georgia Performance Goal II – Improve services for young children (ages 3-5) with disabilities.

The SPDG objectives and activities are being carried out within the context of the GaDOE Secondary Redesign Initiative using the Georgia Student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions (GPI)—see Appendix A. Strategic mechanisms and specific SPDG personnel are being provided to ensure that students with disabilities are effectively included. The high school secondary redesign is in progress, and GaDOE is committed to improving secondary education in all of its departments. Within the GaDOE, the Divisions of Curriculum (including Reading First), School Improvement, Safe and Drug Free Schools, Career Technology, and Agriculture Education (CTAE) are all focusing on what works and collaborating with the Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports to ensure that the needs of all students (including students with disabilities) are addressed.

The SPDG activities are also being carried out in coordination with the Georgia Learning Resource System (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 students with disabilities and other struggling students. The GLRS Centers collaborate with a statewide network of 16 Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs), which have been established to assist school systems in improving educational programs and services for all children.

The GaDOE, GLRS, and the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities (NDPC-SD) will provide training for both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 schools in scientifically based dropout prevention strategies, including math, reading, behavior,

transition, and early childhood. The NDPC-SD will also collaborate with the GaDOE and the GLRS in providing assistance to the Cohort target schools in data analysis, selection of Improvement Priority Areas within the five SPDG goals. The Cohort schools will develop and implement plans related to selected Improvement Priority Areas. Throughout the five years of the SPDG, the SPDG will also work with other GaDOE initiatives so that coordinated efforts of coaching, technical assistance, and other resources can be provided to participating schools.

Evaluation Strategies and Purpose of this Document

Evaluation activities have been built into each phase of the Georgia State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) using a quantitative process and outcomes conceptual model combined with qualitative information. Process evaluation strategies are tracking the implementation of activities to meet the SIG/SPDG goals and objectives (i.e., adaptation of training modules; training by the NDPC-SD, implementation of scientifically based dropout prevention strategies; transition; behavior support; early childhood interventions; and recruitment and retention of fully certified and highly qualified special education teachers; and effective parent engagement activities). The SPDG outcomes outlined above are being monitored annually during the 5-year SPDG.

This Year 1 Annual Performance Report is intended to supplement the reporting of the federal SPDG indicators, as required by the federal government, and to detail progress made toward meeting the original goals, objectives, and activities within the approved SPDG application to the office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), U.S. Department of Education.

2. Status of Goals, Objectives and Activities

Goal 1: Through the use of trained teachers and the implementation of scientifically-based instruction and interventions in reading and math, students with disabilities 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 34 schools.

Planned Activities

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 GLRS center staff 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.

Year 1 Activities and Accomplishments as of April 1, 2008:

Training modules from the NDPC-SD have been reviewed and adapted for use in the State of Georgia. The Pioneer RESA assisted in the review of materials used in their pilot project with the NDPC-SD. Using their lessons learned, materials were revised for use in Year 1 of the SPDG. In addition to the NDPC-SD training modules, additional training modules/content developed by the GaDOE related to the SPDG goal areas were used within the Year 1 training for Cohort 1 schools (e.g., dropout prevention, parent engagement, positive behavior support, transition, and early childhood). These NDPC-SD and GaDOE training modules were used in the Orientation Day in fall 2007 and the additional four days of SPDG training provided in four Georgia regions by the NDPC-SD, GaDOE, and GLRS staff between November 2007 and March 2008.

The SPDG Collaboration Coaches are a critical component of the support infrastructure for each of the middle and high schools participating in the SPDG-supported dropout prevention program. Thus, a Collaboration Coach has been assigned to each of the Cohort 1 schools, as will be the case of Cohort 2 schools during Year 3 of the SPDG. Collaboration Coaches are receiving training as a member of the participating school teams from the NDPC-SD and SPDG staff. Part of this training has been on effective strategies to meaningfully involve parents in the school-based planning teams (i.e., how to bring parents out in team discussions and how to use parents in identifying priority areas for change).

A Collaboration Coaches' website link has been established within the newly developed SPDG website for reporting their ongoing activities during Year 1. The Georgia SPDG website (www.gaspdg.com) was established in December 2007, at which time the Collaboration Coaches began to log their activities. A review of the website entries from December 2007 to the end of March 2008 show a total of 2,683 hours of coaching, training, mentoring, and other assistance reported by the Collaboration Coaches. There was an average of 3.4 hours spent on each activity—ranging from fifteen minutes to 60 hours.

During this time period, the Collaboration Coaches spent much of their time attending regional meetings with their school teams and assisting them in completing the data probes (to be discussed later). The Collaboration Coaches also reviewed available data, identified other data needed, assisted in the data collection, analyzed data, and shared/discussed the data results with the school teams, administrators, general education teachers, and support personnel. In addition, they provided research-based dropout prevention articles for their school teams and gave booster training sessions following regional trainings provided by the NCDP-SD. The Collaboration Coaches participated in Monthly Elluminate Sessions and other trainings for Coaches focusing on scientifically-based programs and interventions related to the SPDG goals.

Based on their pilot project with the NDPC-SD, the Pioneer RESA has a website that provides valuable information and resources for the local Collaboration Coaches. These resources include PowerPoints and a weekly update of information regarding scientifically based math, reading, behavior, and other strategies.

Related to Activity 1.1.2, the SPDG Parent Liaison, Patti Solomon, has communicated with and distributed materials to the Parent to Parent organization, Georgia's Parent Training and Information Center (PTI) and parent mentors. C.A.F.E. materials, including parent information sheets, information on how to run a C.A.F.E., and DVDs, have also been given to all of the Cohort 1 participating school teams. The C.A.F.E. DVDs were reformatted based on experiences related to previous use in Georgia. The C.A.F.E. materials include guidance from the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Because of the need to meet the needs of Spanish-speaking parents, the DVDs, parent information sheets, and other C.A.F.E. materials will be translated into Spanish by the PTI.

During May 2008, a stakeholder group will begin to meet to develop dialogue guides for use by Cohort 1 school teams selecting parent engagement as a Priority Improvement Area. The work of the national IDEA Partnership Project will be used to help develop the Georgia SPDG dialogue guides. Staff from the IDEA Partnership Project will meet with the SPDG staff in July 2008 to assist in the development of dialogue guidance for use by Cohort 1 schools.

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 students with disabilities in the GPI by attending summer training with periodic updates during the year.

Planned Activities

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 ETTTC and GLRS to identify and/or develop web-based resources for Cohort schools math and reading programs. By Year 5, these resources will be loaded and available on GaDOE’s training website. These web-based resources will provide information and instruction regarding the use of reading and math strategies to supplement and enhance the summer workshop content.

Year 1 Activities and Accomplishments as of April 1, 2008:

As stated earlier, throughout Year 1, local Collaboration Coaches have received training as a member of their Cohort school teams (i.e., 4 days of regional trainings by the NDPC-SD and GaDOE staff). For example, the NDPC-SD staff have provided training on research-based math strategies. The GaDOE staff have met with math specialists within the GaDOE to ensure that the Georgia Performance Standards are a part of any SPDG professional development activity. Additional math training is planned for Cohort 1 school teams in July 2008 using nationally known consultants. Reading assistance is planned for fall 2008 for those teams selecting academics as an Improvement Priority Area.

Activity 1.2.2 calls for the development of web-based resources for Cohort school to support implementation of scientifically based reading and math programs and interventions. Planning for web-based resources has occurred during Year 1. Once action plans are developed by Cohort 1 schools related to their selected Improvement Priority Area(s), these will be posted for review and use by the Cohort schools. Podcasts will be held during Years 2-5. In addition, best practices within selected Improvement Priority Areas will be identified by the Collaboration Coaches and shared across the Cohort schools.

Objective 1.3: The reading and math skills of secondary students with disabilities 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 Georgia Pyramid of Interventions.

Planned Activities

- 1.3.1 Years 1-5 – State SPDG Coaches and the NDPC-SD will provide approximately 20 hours a week 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 students with disabilities 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.

Year 1 Activities and Accomplishments as of April 1, 2008:

As stated earlier, a local Collaboration Coach has been identified for each of the participating 15 GLRS districts to provide support for Cohort 1 middle and high schools within their geographic area. These Coaches collaborate with other school-level support coaches including 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.

The Collaboration Coaches are responsible for facilitating successful program planning and implementation of SBR reading and math for students with disabilities. Collaboration Coaches have met bi-weekly with school teams to assist in training, data analysis, and selection of Improvement Priority Areas. They will provide ongoing assistance during Years 2-5 to Cohort 1 schools selecting reading and/or math (academics) as one of their Improvement Priority Areas. During Years 2-5, the Collaboration Coaches will continue to document their on-going assistance to the Cohort schools on the SPDG website link- www.gaspdg.com.as a fidelity tool to track the extent of support provided to the participating Cohort schools.

In order to assure that participating Cohort middle and high schools will be implementing improvement activities within their two selected areas throughout Years 2-5, EWalk software was selected to evaluate implementation fidelity. The Ewalk software allows the coaches to develop a template with specific SPDG goal indicators that can be used in Cohort school walkthroughs to help monitor implementation fidelity. Data can be recorded on a hand-held Palm and then uploaded to the GaDOE. Graphs and charts can be produced using this software to help portray the status of implementation related to SPDG goals. Individual school and state profiles can be created to help determine local and statewide implementation of change related to selected Improvement Priority Areas. A subcommittee is currently working on indicators in the areas of reading, math, behavior, and other SPDG goal areas.

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

Planned Activities

- 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. DVD 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.

Year 1 Activities and Accomplishments as of April 1, 2008:

Parents have been recruited as members of the Cohort 1 middle school and high school teams and, as such, have received four days of regional training along with their school teams. As of March 1, 2008, 26 parents have been identified and were participating on the school teams—with 10 remaining to be identified and appointed to the Cohort 1 school teams. It has been difficult for parents to get away from work for Cohort 1 school

team meetings and trainings. Consequently, a \$100 stipend for attending training has been provided.

The State Parent Liaison, Ms. Patti Solomon, has facilitated training on parent engagement for each of the Collaborative Coaches working with the Cohort I school teams. In addition, effective parent engagement strategies have been infused within each of the four days of training from the NCDP-SD. In the March regional sessions (Day 3), a three-hour training was provided for the Cohort school teams. Parent stories were incorporated within this training session. All 26 parents on the school teams attended the session.

This same training on effective parent engagement strategies was also used in a conference session at the Principals' Association statewide meeting held during Year 1.

Parent engagement strategies were implemented in Year 1 in some of the Cohort I schools prior to selection of Improvement Priority Areas. For example, the Meriwether School decided to provide additional training for the parents on their dropout prevention SPDG school team. Dropout prevention has also been included within their Consolidated LEA Implementation Plan (CLIP) as a priority.

Rutland High School has brought in the Partnership for Excellence self-determination curriculum, which includes self-awareness for students and parents. Twenty school staff participated in a meeting, in which it was determined that a C.A.F.E. would be implemented in their school.

Throughout Year 1, the Cohort school teams have had access to the SPDG Latino Outreach Parent Specialist, Ms. Patricia Davalos (Activity 1.4.3). She provided training and information for Collaboration Coaches that focused on meeting the needs of Latino parents. Ms. Davalos has also participated in state special education monitorings in which she facilitated a set of questions regarding parent engagement and welcoming strategies for parents.

During Year 1, she also participated in English as a Second Language (ESOL) state monitorings for the same purpose. This was an important effort because family engagement has not been a priority within their state ESOL process.

During Year 1, Ms. Davalos also provided on-site assistance to the Cohort I schools. She developed a PowerPoint on parent/family welcoming strategies. This PowerPoint presentation was used in two sessions that she conducted at the state ESOL Conference held during Year 1 and the state Council for Exceptional Children Conference on February 29, 2008.

Ms. Davalos is also partnering with Parent to Parent's diversity staff person to expand information for Spanish-speaking parents and families on the Parent to Parent website. Plans are being made for the Parent to Parent organization to host a Latino hotline to be

available for a specified number of hours per week (e.g., 15 hours) so that Latino parents can receive more support.

During Year 1, Ms. Davalos met with several of the Latino consulates in Georgia with the purpose of increasing their support for preventing school dropouts among Latino families. Some support efforts are being discussed such as resource libraries that include information about gangs and other issues that are contributing to dropping out of school.

Consistent with Activity 1.4.4, a C.A.F.E. link will be developed on the Georgia SPDG website, which will be used during Years 2—5 to report on and document C.A.F.E. discussions and activities. As the C.A.F.E.s and Dialogue Guides are implemented in Cohort schools, quantitative and qualitative data will be gathered relative to the C.A.F.E. discussions and implementation of parent engagement plans.

Consistent with Activity 1.4.5, discussions have been held during Year 1 regarding tools to be used to gather qualitative information about the work of C.A.F.E.s within the Cohort schools. Prior to the beginning of Year 2, an instrument will also be developed, with the assistance of the SPDG evaluators, which can be used to gather information regarding fidelity of implementation of parent engagement efforts. Essentially, this fidelity instrument will be built around the six national parent engagement standards and the Cohort schools' family engagement action plans. It will help measure whether changes are being made in Cohort schools related to increased parent engagement.

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 students with disabilities by including these interventions in their coursework.

Planned Activities

- 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 students with disabilities.
- 1.5.2 Years 2-5 – Six IHE partners will infuse SBR reading and math intervention strategies for students with disabilities 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.

Year 1 Activities and Accomplishments as of April 1, 2008:

Plans are being made for the Georgia IHEs to access the materials and training modules being used by the NDPC-SD. Georgia IHE staff have been invited to the SPDG supported training provided by the NDPC-SD for Cohort 1 schools.

The SPDG staff have been meeting with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) to identify ways to effectively involve the preservice personnel preparation programs in the SPDG-supported activities.

A University Forum is being planned for Fall 2008 that will cover a number of topics such as the infusion of scientifically based reading, math, PBS, transition, and early childhood programs and interventions within the Georgia preservice training programs for general and special education teachers and administrators.

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.

Planned Activities

- 2.1.1 (Year 1) – Cohort schools participating in Goal 2 will receive four 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.

Year 1 Activities and Accomplishments as of April 1, 2008:

In order to determine the focus of participation for each of the Cohort schools within Goals 1-5, a Strategic Planning, Action Plan, and Implementation Process, designed by the NDPC-SD, is being used for both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 (Year 3) schools. The steps of this school intervention framework include data analysis, matching of needs to scientifically based programs and interventions, 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 Initiative and provides proven strategies for students with disabilities. The NDPC-SD, along with other SPDG partners, will be working with the GaDOE during the 5-year funding period to support strategic and systemic changes related to selected Improvement Priority Areas within participating Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 schools. These changes are aimed at overall improved school completion by students with disabilities.

During fall, 2007, all middle and high schools within the 17 Georgia Learning Resource System (GLRS) regions that were identified as having significant risk factors in one or more of the intervening and dependent variables needed for successful school completion were invited to participate in an Orientation Session for the purpose of sharing information and national research related to school completion. These risk factors included dropout prevention, reading and math achievement, and suspensions and expulsions, graduation rates, parental engagement, and use of fully certified special education teachers.

An application and selection process was held and 15 high schools and their 18 feeder middle schools (34 total schools, including Coffee County High School Freshman Campus) were selected for participation in Cohort 1 across the GLRS regions. These 34 schools were selected based upon areas of concern in the analysis of state and local data. Table 1 below lists these schools.

Table 1. Cohort 1 participating middle and high schools across the GLRS regions.

GLRS Region	School District	High School	Middle School	Middle School
Coastal	Liberty County	Liberty County High School	Midway Middle School	Lewis Frazier Middle School
East Georgia	Richmond County	Laney High School	East Augusta Middle School	
East Central	Baldwin County	Baldwin County High School	Oak Hill Middle School	
Metro East	Gwinnett County	North Gwinnett High School	Lanier Middle School	
Metro West	Atlanta Public Schools	Douglass High School	Harper-Archer Middle School	
Metro South	Henry County	Henry County High School	Henry County Middle School	
Middle Georgia	Bibb County	Rutland High School	Rutland Middle School	

GLRS Region	School District	High School	Middle School	Middle School
North Georgia	Continuing Project from FY 2007			
North Central	Murray County	Murray County High School	Bagley Middle School	Gladden Middle School
Northeast	Madison County	Madison County High School	Madison County Middle School	
Northwest	Walker County	LaFayette High School	LaFayette Middle School	
South Georgia	Cook County	Cook Co. HS	Cook Co. MS	
South Central	Coffee County	Coffee Co. HS	Coffee Co. MS Coffee County HS Freshman Campus	
Southeast Georgia	No Applications Received			
Southwest	Decatur County	Bainbridge County High School	Hutto Middle School	West Bainbridge Middle School
West Central	Meriwether County Schools	Manchester High School	Manchester Middle School	
West Georgia	Muscogee County	Jordan High School	Double Churches Middle School	

Four additional regional training days were provided during Year 1 of the SPDG for 8-member teams from each of the Cohort 1 participating schools, including their local Collaboration Coach. The Day 1 regional trainings in November focused on gathering and analyzing school-specific data for use in the selection of at least two Improvement Priority Areas for implementation during Years 2-5 of the SPDG. Days 2 and 3 included a review of school data as well as evidenced-based interventions for each of the SPDG goal areas—or possible areas for Improvement Priority Area selection. Day 4 (during March 2008) focused on transition, vocational assessment, team action plan development with NDPC-SD coaching, and parent/family engagement. Following is a listing of the four days of regional trainings. A fifth and sixth day of training are planned for summer 2008 that will focus on scientifically based interventions related to student engagement with an emphasis on behavior and math.

Table 2. Year 1 Level 2 training for Cohort 1 schools.

Region	Training Dates	Number of Participants
North Georgia	November 13, 2008	45
	January 9, 2008	43
	February 13, 2008	35
	March 5, 2008	30
Metro Atlanta	November 28, 2007	92
	January 10, 2008	90
	February 27, 2008	85
	March 4, 2008	79
Central Georgia	November 14, 2007	41
	January 15, 2008	39
	February 12, 2008	40
	March 11, 2008	42
South Georgia	November 29, 2007	88
	January 16, 2008	86
	February 28, 2008	87
	March 12, 2008	73
Summer Training for all regions/ teams	July 8-11, 2008	Estimated - 340

In order to assist the participating schools in reviewing local data for Day 1, a spreadsheet was provided to each school with probing questions regarding 17 areas that impact school completion—see Table 3 below. This data is assisting the participating Cohort schools in determining and prioritizing critical local needs and the selection of Improvement Priority Areas.

Table 3. Probe areas and questions for use in local data analysis.

Probe Areas	Number of Probe Questions
Graduation	10
Dropout	9
Academics Curriculum	4
Academics Instruction	8
Academic Course Completion	4
Discipline	4
Behavior Supports	9
Attendance	5
Grade Retention	3
Parental Factors	9
School Climate	6
Extracurricular Activities	2

Probe Areas	Number of Probe Questions
IEPs	5
Transition	10
Professional Development	9
District School Policies and Procedures	23

Based on a school-level analysis of data/information gathered in the above probe areas and other quantitative information regarding critical risk factors mentioned earlier (e.g., dropout prevention, reading and math achievement, suspensions and expulsions, graduation rates, parental engagement, and use of fully certified special education teachers), each Cohort 1 middle and high school will have selected one Improvement Priority Area by the end of the 2007-2008 school year. A second Priority Area for improvement related to increased school completion will be selected in Year 2 for implementation during Years 3-5 of the SPDG, or earlier, if possible. A school plan has been started by each of the Cohort 1 schools and be completed this spring and summer for implementation of the first Priority Area in fall 2008 (Year 2 of the SPDG performance period).

A pre-post test was administered for the Day 1 and 2 trainings. A summary of participant pre-post responses is included for Day 1 (November 2007) within Appendix B.

Follow-up surveys were conducted using SurveyMonkey with school teams participating in training provided by the NDPC-SD and SPDG staff, as well as follow-up support from the Collaboration Coaches. Table 4, below, provides a summary of feedback received by 140 training participants 90 days following the Day 1 regional trainings held in November 2007. A 69.7% response rate was achieved. This analysis is provided to show the positive impact of the regional SPDG trainings communicated by the participants. By the end of Year 1 of the SPDG, a follow-up survey will have been conducted for the Day 2, 3, and 4 trainings. An analysis of this participant feedback will be included in the Year 2 SPDG Annual Performance Report.

Table 4. 90-day follow-up feedback regarding NDPS-SD training and follow-up coach support.

Question 1: As a result of the workshop, we have changed the way we collect data at our school.

Question 2: Since the workshop, we have continued using data as before.

Question 3: Did the workshop provide detailed data analysis that your school has started using?

Question 4: As a result of the workshop, we have changed our policies and/or practices to prevent students from dropping out of school.

Question 5: As a result of the workshop, we have worked more with the dropout indicators than before.

Question 6. How many times has your coach visited your school to provide assistance to your team regarding dropout prevention?

Question 7: The assistance provided at our school was (check all that apply):

Question 8: These contacts were:

Feedback Question	Participant Response	Response Rate	Response Count	Responded to Question	Skipped Question
Question 1	Yes	32%	44	139	1
	No	68%	95		
Question 2	Yes	54%	73	136	4
	No	46%	63		
Question 3	Yes	41%	55	134	6
	No	59%	79		
Question 4	Yes	43%	58	135	5
	No	57%	77		
Question 5	Yes	73%	98	135	5
	No	27%	37		
Question 6	0-5 times	56%	76	135	5
	6-10 times	20%	27		
	11-15 times	12%	16		
	16-20 times	5%	7		
	21-25 times	1%	1		
	N/A (Parents/ Central Office Personnel	6%	8		
Question 7	Coaching/ Mentoring	74%	100	135	5
	Training	73%	99		
	Observation	43%	59		
	Other	20%	27		
Question 8	Very Helpful	42%	45	135	5
	Helpful	39%	45		
	Uncertain	14%	16		
	Not Helpful	3%	4		
	Definitely Not Helpful	2%	3		

As can be seen by the above information, approximately one-third (32.%) of the responding local team members indicated that they had changed the way they collect data at their schools, and 54% indicated that they were continuing to use data as they had in the past. Respondents indicated that the data probes were helpful to clarify what types of data should be collected and tracked. The workshop also helped the teams realize the value of working together as a cohesive unit (i.e. all schools working on policies together) to address the dropout problem. Other respondents indicated that there hasn't been an instant

change, but that they are more aware of the kind of data they need to focus on, refine and isolate. The teams reported that they are trying to devise easy ways to manage data so that whatever data they are looking for can be found with little effort and can be reported in a clear, easy to read format. Other respondents indicated that the training session created more discussion on changes in attendance policies and discipline policies. A sample of the open-ended responses, below, reflects positive outcomes of the November training.

Table 5. Sample of open-ended responses regarding follow-up from the November training regarding how the training has changed the way data is collected at the school.

- We are paying closer attention to our data and using it to be more proactive.
- We are beginning to see data differently. We have always collected data, but we have not always used it. Now we are trying to use the data to develop courses of action.
- We are continually refining the type of data that we gather and the way we use the data to improve student achievement, student attendance and now we are learning how to look for trends that impact dropout rates.
- We are disseminating our data even further to determine how our students with disabilities fit in and how they are affected.
- We are examining it more closely for patterns and looking at our school compared to others in the county.
- We are focused on a different objective and have used the data to address this objective as well as look at true problem and intervention needed.
- We are focusing even more on our "at-risk" students.
- We are using our data to assist classroom teachers in implementing strategies that will address specific student weaknesses.
- We are using this new data to implement comprehensive changes that we hope will make big gains in student achievement. We are using this data to make changes, not using a hunch or feelings.
- We collect data the same way but we are drilling down further and also looking at policies in a more thoughtful way.
- We have been more aware of our students that have been placed as well as retained.
- We have been putting together an action plan as a result of the data.
- We have begun merging the data we have to identify trends.
- We have begun to collect a broader spectrum of data.
- We have realized the importance of the data that is at our fingertips and the importance that utilizing it can have on our student body.

Of the respondents, 41% indicated that the workshop provided detailed data analysis that their school has started to use. Forty-three percent (43%) indicated that policies and/or practices to prevent students from dropping out of school have begun to change. Other

survey responses indicated that dropout prevention practices have begun to change; however, policies have not—although potential changes are being discussed. In addition, approximately three-fourths of the local team members (73%) indicated that their school has worked more with the dropout indicators than before.

Follow-up assistance by local coaches included coaching and mentoring (74%), training (73%), and observation (43%). This follow-up support was viewed as very helpful or helpful by 81% of the Cohort 1 school team members. Fourteen percent of the respondents were uncertain as to how helpful the coaches were, and only 5% indicated ‘not helpful’ or ‘definitely not helpful’. Survey respondents indicated the following benefits of follow-up assistance from their coach:

- Our coach continued to assist us in identifying potential dropouts and to make sure we are concentrating on the appropriate data.
- Our coach helped to keep us on track and focused. Also our coach is helping us to know what information may be available for us to gather and use to analyze.
- Our coach is helpful and accommodating.
- We already know the problem areas; we need concrete but new approaches from our coach than what we are already trying.
- We are anxiously awaiting sessions where we can discuss the results defined in our collections of data and, perhaps, "brainstorm" some imaginative ways in which we can work towards solving some of these problems.
- We are spending too much time on what we already know about dropout prevention and special education.
- We are just beginning this process of working with our coach—in discussions and planning phase.
- We could use more step-by-step guidance.
- Our coach has helped us know what information may be available for us to gather and use to analyze.
- The coach came to discuss intervention strategies. She observed programs and collaborative efforts to design strategies that would be beneficial to us.
- The consistent communication to each team member (via email, phone calls, etc.) to schedule the meeting and ensure that we are on task with collecting the required data. She ensures that each member is aware of all team meetings, training, workshops, etc.
- The on site coach has been very informative. It has been the away trainings that have been a total waste of time. If all we are going to get is a PowerPoint read to us then let us do it from our own schools. We are hoping to obtain more useful, hands on training through the workshops.
- The one-on-one assistance and guidance that I received from our collaboration coach helped me to see that there are other factors that need to be addressed other than looking at state test scores.
- The research presented helps our school to establish a plan of action and implement the strategies that we know work.

- Guidance was provided to us as far as what data we need, how/where to collect it, and how to prepare for future trainings in order to maximize our time and benefits for the grant.
- Our coach is helping us to focus more the data.
- Our coach is more than willing to help with collecting data and she constantly checks on us to see if we understand how to collect our data
- Our coach is still learning too. We are in the early stages of this program and there is yet much ground to cover.
- Our coach is very efficient, personable, and helpful.
- Our coach keeps us focused on the goal and provides moral support. Positively impacting dismal attendance rates is difficult, but she keeps our spirits up and is a true coach in every sense of the word.
- Our coach was able to let us know what our goal was and allowed us time to brainstorm strategies for meeting our goals.
- Our coach was very helpful in guiding our data analysis and providing necessary training.
- Our coach is a very positive, well-informed professional. I feel that these meetings and her leadership we would not be as focused and excited about this team. Many times teams and committees are formed for the sake of showing, on paper, that an issue is being addressed. I do not feel that way about this team and its purpose. Our coach brings a personal touch and respect for all of the team members that is very hard to find.
- Our coach has been very positive and helped focus our data. We were already targeting our special education but now we are emphasizing it even more.
- Our coach seemed to repeat information in our notebooks. We could have read it on our own.
- She assisted us in any way we needed to obtain data and gave great ideas and support.
- She basically didn't provide additional information. She checked to see if we were ready for the dropout meetings.
- She came to observe there was no direct benefit to the school.
- Our coach allowed time and support for the schools and provided an outside perspective regarding data.
- Our coach has given us the tools to use to begin our data collection and knowing what to do with the data.
- Our coach has helped us organize our information to make it much more meaningful to drop out prevention.
- Our coach helps guide our meetings.
- Our coach is always volunteering to assist and providing the necessary tools to continue to improve our school dropout rates.
- Our coach is helping us find reasons for our high drop out rate. So far, we haven't learned any strategies.
- Our coach is listening and open at all times. She has asked us to contact her as

- needed. She is receptive to all members. She shares ideas and lets others contribute without taking over.
- Our coach is very helpful, organized and provides us with useful information as well as keeping our group focused and on track.
 - Our coach was good at answering questions and gave us very good general information about what this program was designed to do and how we were going to go about it.

In anticipation of Cohort 1 schools selecting their priority areas for improvement, additional training, and implementation of scientifically based reading, math, behavior support, transition, parent engagement, and or preschool related to selected Improvement Priority Areas, the SPDG staff contracted with a consultant to develop a Georgia SPDG website, www.gaspdg.com. During Years 2-5, this website will be an invaluable source of support, information, and resources for the Cohort 1 school teams. The website will also be an ongoing tool for reporting implementation activities, as well as coach support and C.A.F.E. activities. As indicated earlier, the local Collaboration Coaches are recording their school visits and activities.

For those Cohort 1 schools selecting reading as their Improvement Priority Area, the Struggling Reader Secondary Course, developed during the first Georgia SIG/SPDG, will be available and used for training by the GLRS staff in scientifically based reading strategies for students with disabilities. Several of the local coaches are also reading specialists and will provide additional resources to target school staff.

The SPDG staff is collaborating with the GaDOE Math Initiative so that training and support for target Cohort schools is coordinated, and not as a separate effort. The GaDOE is providing extensive support to schools in the rollout of the Georgia Math Initiative (e.g., math frameworks are in place and extensive video examples of scientifically based math curricula/interventions related to the math frameworks have been developed). The SPDG is identifying additional training/consultants to assist targeted Cohort schools with students who need additional intervention assistance. The GaDOE math specialists will be providing training for the local Collaboration Coaches in scientifically based math curricula/interventions.

Georgia has a positive behavior support (PBS) units with specialists based in four regions of Georgia. These PBS specialists will provide training and technical support during Years 2-5 for Cohort 1 schools that select behavior as an Improvement Priority Area. The GaDOE is finding that disproportionality is a current issue in the state resulting in students with behavior problems in various cultural groups being referred to special education. Training will be provided for targeted Cohort schools that addresses this issue.

Objective 2.2: The IHEs will increase their capacity to train and support special education teacher graduates in effective dropout prevention programs/strategies for students with disabilities 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 students with disabilities within their teacher and administrator pre-service training courses.

Year 1 Activities and Accomplishments as of April 1, 2008:

As discussed earlier, a University Forum is being planned for Fall 2008 by the SPDG staff and the Georgia PSC. An overview of the 5-year Georgia SPDG will be discussed at this Forum, as well as the GaDOE Secondary Re-design Initiative. Scientifically based strategies in reading, math, PBS, and transition will also be covered. One important purpose of the University Forum is to generate commitment from the Georgia's IHEs to infuse scientifically based strategies into their preservice curriculum.

Goal 3: Through the implementation of effective transition strategies, there will be an increase in the number of students with disabilities 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.

Planned Activities

- 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.

Year 1 Activities and Accomplishments as of April 1, 2008:

Professional development was provided during the regional March 2008 training sessions for Cohort I teams, with an emphasis on guiding all students through the career development process. Participants articulated that it is necessary for each student to develop a career plan so that the students will see the relevance of remaining in school through graduation. The participants were provided the opportunity to show the use of career decision making models and, subsequently, observe the importance of having another person assist in clarifying student career plans and listen as students formulate aspirations. The link was made to the impact of a teacher listening to a student and, thus, becoming a significant presence in the life of the student, and another reason for the student to remain in school. Also, the training made participants aware of the importance of self-determination and self-advocacy for student career development/transition plans.

The participants were provided an overview of various tools to use in career development activities with students. “The Teachers as Advisors Model” was presented, and on-site training made available to schools/systems incorporating this model into their plans. Updates were provided on the changing Georgia graduation requirements and their effect on the student plan of study in the areas of English/language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. Georgia Career Pathways, a tool for the further development of the student plan of study, incorporating an integrated career plan complete with CTAE courses and links to post-secondary education was also presented and explained to the participants. The use of both formal and informal career interest assessments was covered in the presentations. The GaDOE, Division of School Improvement provided the SPDG participants the opportunity for cost free use of the Kuder Career Planning System for one year.

Transition training was provided through the taxonomy for transition planning in the areas of family involvement, program structure, interagency collaboration, student development, and student focused planning. This model is based on valid studies as well as outcomes of the U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS) model demonstration projects. By the end of May 2008, seven elimination web-based sessions will have been held with up to 100 participants per session provided training and information regarding transition issues including the importance of transition planning, accommodations, and student support in higher education.

Additional Lunch and Learn trainings were hosted by Dr. Lu Nations-Miller, the GaDOE Program Specialist for Transition, and Mr. Tom Erdmanczyk, Transition Consultant. These lunch sessions were for identified transition contacts/specialists from each Cohort I middle and high school. Thirty-two out of the 36 school teams identified a Transition Specialist to participate. These sessions focused on the appropriate preparation of students for transition, employment of effective systemic transition practices, and development of adequate data collection methods designed to document the percentage of students with disabilities who satisfactorily complete their IEP transition goals and actually transition to their desired post school outcome. The Transition Specialists were provided a copy of the probes for graduation, dropout prevention, and post secondary outcomes. The probe statements were discussed and their importance in the development of baseline and longitudinal data was emphasized. The transition contacts/specialists were given an assignment that asked them to identify best practices currently in evidence in their schools in the areas of systemic transition strategies, use of personnel in transition planning, and locally developed transition tools. A training disc entitled *Effective Transition Planning*, mini-tools for engaging students in career planning, and a list of available web based training opportunities on transition with access instructions were also made available for the Cohort school contacts/specialists.

A final transition activity carried out during Year 1 was updating the Georgia State Transition Manual. Ms. Lynn Holland, Program Manager, GaDOE, has been responsible for this effort. The revised Manual has been completed and will be available on the DOE website by April 15 for use by SPDG cohort schools and other Georgia schools.

Every other year, a statewide Transition Conference is held. During Year 1, planning for a fall 2008 conference has been carried out by the GaDOE and its collaborator, the Department of Labor, Tools for Life (Assistive Technology Branch). At the conference, Mr. Erdmanczk will hold a session on Interagency Transition Councils with a special invitation to Cohort I schools that have selected transition as an Improvement Priority Area.

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.

Planned Activities

- 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.

Year 1 Activities and Accomplishments as of April 1, 2008:

As stated earlier, Mr. Erdmanczyk has joined the SPDG team to provide leadership and support in Year 2 for the Cohort schools selecting transition as a Improvement Priority Area. This leadership will be specifically in the area of developing and operating local and regional Interagency Transition Councils. He has initiated a Transition Survey being completed by the Cohort schools to gather information regarding current transition strategies. This information will help Cohort 1 schools prioritize their transition needs and to structure needed transition support by the GaDOE.

Goal 4: Teacher competency and skills will be increased by employing only fully certified special education teachers.
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Objective 4.1: Special education teachers holding a non-regular certificate will be reduced from 38% to 10%.

Planned Activities

- 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.

Year 1 Activities and Accomplishments as of April 1, 2008:

The SPDG staff met in February 2008 with the National Personnel Center and the Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (TAPP) staff at the PSC to determine Georgia recruitment and retention issues.

The GLRS directors met to develop guidelines for the selection of one stipend recipient in each of the 17 GLRS regions (Activity 4.1.3). Given the uncertain nature of funding of the SPDG during Year 2 (2008-2009), this activity has been put on hold.

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

Planned Activities

- 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 students with disabilities.
- 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 Teach-Georgia 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.

Year 1 Activities and Accomplishments as of April 1, 2008:

A full-time joint recruitment and retention position has been created and approved at the GaDOE to work with the SPDG staff and the Division of Teacher Quality. This position has been advertised, and applicants have been interviewed. Applicant selection was pending as of the writing of this Annual Report. It is anticipated that a candidate will be selected shortly after the end of the Year 1 SPDG reporting period.

As soon as the recruitment and retention position has been filled, partnership activities with the National Personnel Center will be carried out during Years 2-5 relative to aggressive recruitment and retention strategies. Dr. Phoebe Gillespie, Director of the National Personnel Center, has come to Georgia to help with a review of recruitment and retention data and identify priority initiatives to be carried out. For example, school districts with the highest numbers of non-regular special education teaching certificates are being identified. Activities will be carried out to support these districts so that special education teachers with non-regular certificates can become fully certified.

Other collaborative activities with the National Personnel Center during Year 2 will include identifying support that can be provided for rural school districts in need of certified special education teachers

Activity 4.2.6 calls for effort by the SPDG staff and the GLRS districts to support a “Grow Your Own” program to get potential certified special education teachers in the “pipeline”. This partnership group would include counseling, mentoring, and help establish Future Educators of America (FEA) chapters. Given the uncertain nature of funding of the SPDG during Year 2 (2008-2009) and the pending hiring of a recruitment and retention staff person, this activity has been put on hold.

Activity 4.2.7 included providing tuition support for 17 paraeducators (one per GLRS region) currently working in Cohort schools that are committed to pursuing a 4-year special education degree. The PSC recommended that the SPDG focus on stipends for less than fully certified/qualified special education teachers rather than paraeducators because of the need to reach the goal of having all special education teachers be fully certified. Again, because of the Year 2 funding uncertainty and the need to carry over Year 1 monies into Year 2, issuing these stipends has been postponed. The GLRS staff have, however, met and developed criteria that will be used in the selection of stipend recipients at a future date.

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 OSEP’s 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.

Year 1 Activities and Accomplishments as of April 1, 2008:

The SPDG staff is working with the National Personnel Center and the Georgia PSC to identify school districts with the lowest special education teacher retention rates so that retention plans can be developed and implemented during Years 2-5 of the SPDG. As soon as a recruitment and retention staff member has been hired, support will be provided to schools having high special education teacher attrition rates.

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.

Planned Activities

- 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 work-

shops. 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.

Year 1 Activities and Accomplishments as of April 1, 2008:

The focus of Goal 5 during Year 1 of the SPDG has been to enhance interagency collaboration regarding supports for parents of young children with disabilities and other special needs. A SPDG Preschool Stakeholders Group has been meeting to identify existing programs and services for parents of young children. The Preschool Stakeholders Group has included representatives from Georgia Heart Start, Bright from the Start, the Department of Early Learning, the GaDOE, and Babies Can't Wait (Georgia's Part C intervention system). Dr. Julia Causey, Coordinator of the Georgia SPDG, has served as a member of the interagency Preschool Stakeholders Group to assure collaboration with the Georgia SPDG and future support for Cohort 1 schools selecting preschool as one of their SPDG Improvement Priority Areas.

Each of these agencies within the Preschool Stakeholders Group have staff members or other persons designated to work with parents of young children—employees within Georgia Head Start responsible for working with parents, Resource Coordinators within the Department of Early Learning, Parent Mentors within the GaDOE, and Parent Educators within Babies Can't Wait. The roles of these designated persons were discussed by the Preschool Stakeholders Group. A challenge was identified that each of the state preschool stakeholders have different geographic service units making it more difficult to collaborate/coordinate across agencies.

A second focus was to identify other federal and privately funded resources (i.e., projects and programs) that support parents of young children. Following are examples:

- Smart Start Georgia is funded through the Kellogg Foundation to work with day care centers to enhance support for parents. A representative of this project will be invited to participate in future meetings of the Preschool Stakeholders Committee.

- The State Inclusion Grant for Early Childhood is supported through the Frank Porter Graham Center.
- A State Inclusion Grant funded by the Hilton Foundation, in which a state team with representatives from Head Start, Early Education, and Preschool received training at Chapel Hill, North Carolina in summer 2007. A team of 20 will go to Dallas in spring 2008 as a State Steering Team for further training.

The Preschool Stakeholders Group work that has identified all Georgia resources that support parents of young children will be a valuable resource to Cohort I schools selecting parent engagement as an Improvement Priority Area.

In the Day 3 trainings for SPDG school teams, a Parent Mentoring session was included focusing on effective strategies to involve and communicate with parents within their school teams and within the educational process for their child. Parents who had dropped out of school and came back to school were presenters and discussed supports that would have been helpful to keep them in school and that helped them to re-engage with the school.

Additional Lunch and Learn sessions were conducted by Ms. Solomon during the NCDP-SD regional trainings on effective parent engagement strategies.

A Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership Annual Kick Off Conference is planned for October 14-15. The SPDG Cohort I school teams selecting preschool as one of their Improvement Priority Areas will attend this conference. Participants and presenters will also include interagency representatives described above that work with parents of young children. The conference will focus on best practices for family engagement within the schools. Within this general theme, there will be sessions on self-determination, positive behavior supports, and parental expectations propelling achievement.

3. Georgia SPDG Outcomes as of April 30, 2008

- Goal 1:**
- **Improved Reading and Math Achievement**
 - **Increased Number Who Graduate with a General Education Diploma (Goals 1 and 2)**
 - **Increased Percentage of Time in General Education**

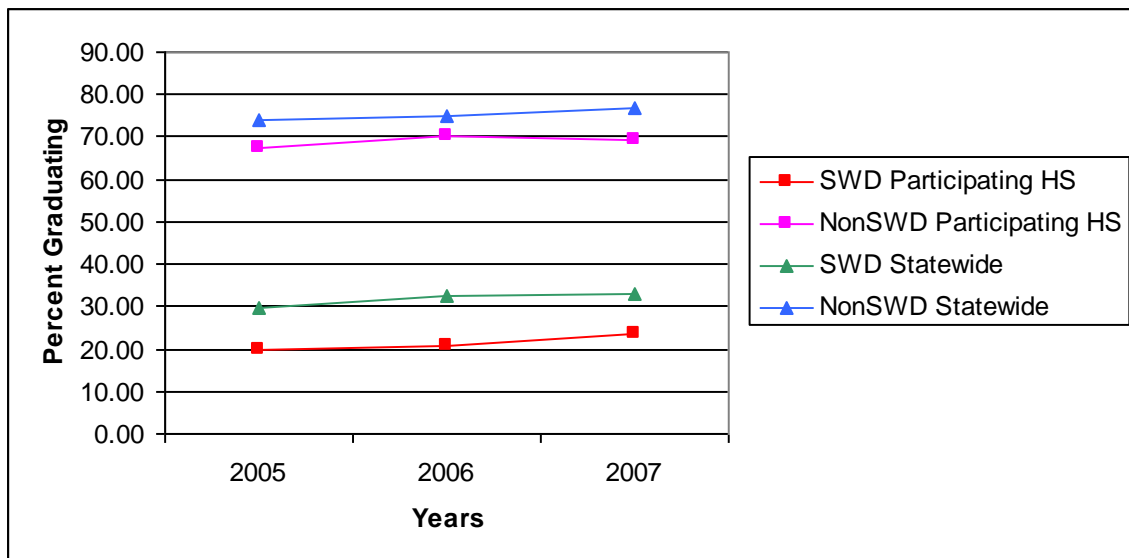
Year 1 Outcomes

An important mission of the GaDOE Division of Special Education Services and Supports is to assist as many special education students as possible to successfully complete school. In Georgia, students must graduate in either a college preparatory or career/technology track to earn a regular education diploma. Both of those tracks include earning Carnegie Units for required coursework and passing a high-stakes test, the Geor-

gia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT), in four academic disciplines (English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science). Students with and without disabilities have multiple opportunities to pass each section of the GHSGT. Consistent with Georgia legislation, a student's 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.

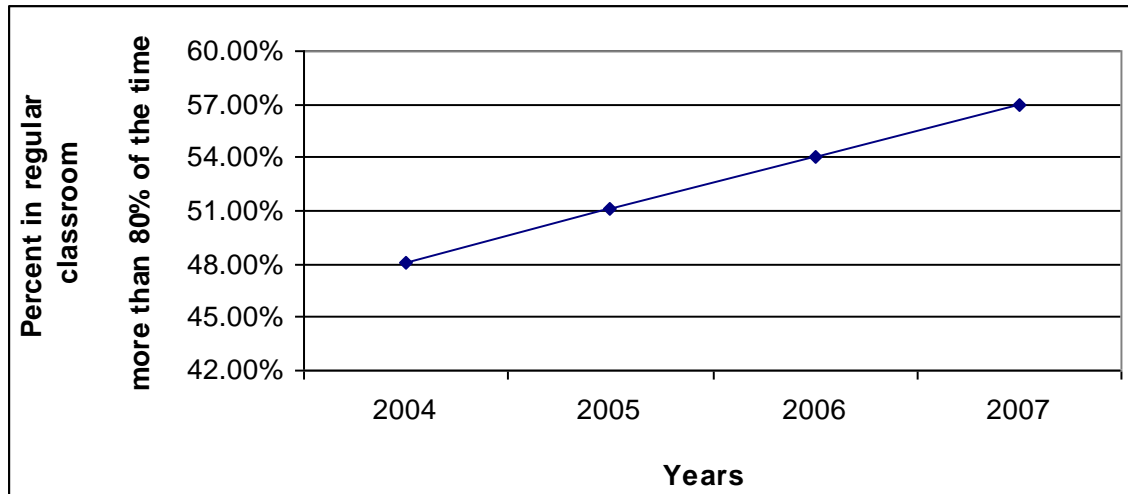
The percentage of students with disabilities earning a general education diploma has remained relatively constant since 2003. About 67 percent of non-disabled students graduate with a regular diploma. Figure 1 shows the graduation gaps between students with disabilities and regular non-disabled students at participating schools and statewide.

Figure 1. The percentage of students with and without disabilities graduating with regular diplomas or certificates statewide and in Cohort 1 participating high schools.



To help reduce this graduation gap, Georgia has been working to include and teach more special education students in the general education classroom. Figure 2 provides a statewide overview of Georgia's success in increasing the percent of special education students in the regular classroom for more than 80 percent of the time. This Figure clearly shows that statewide progress has been made in the last three years with the percent of special education students in the regular classroom more than 80 percent of the time rising from 48 percent to 57 percent.

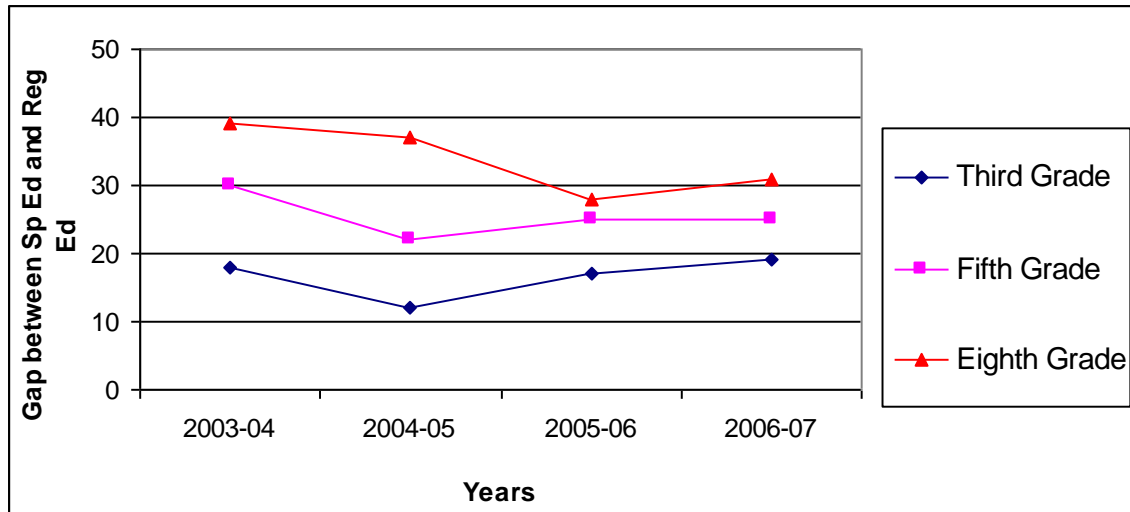
Figure 2. Growth in the percent of students with disabilities placed in their general education classroom more than 80 percent of the time from 2003-04 to 2006-2007.



To measure statewide academic success and progress toward narrowing the achievement and graduation gaps, the achievement levels of students with disabilities are assessed by the percent of students with disabilities who meet or exceed standards (established by the Georgia Board of Education), in comparison to the percentage of students without disabilities who meet or exceed the standards.

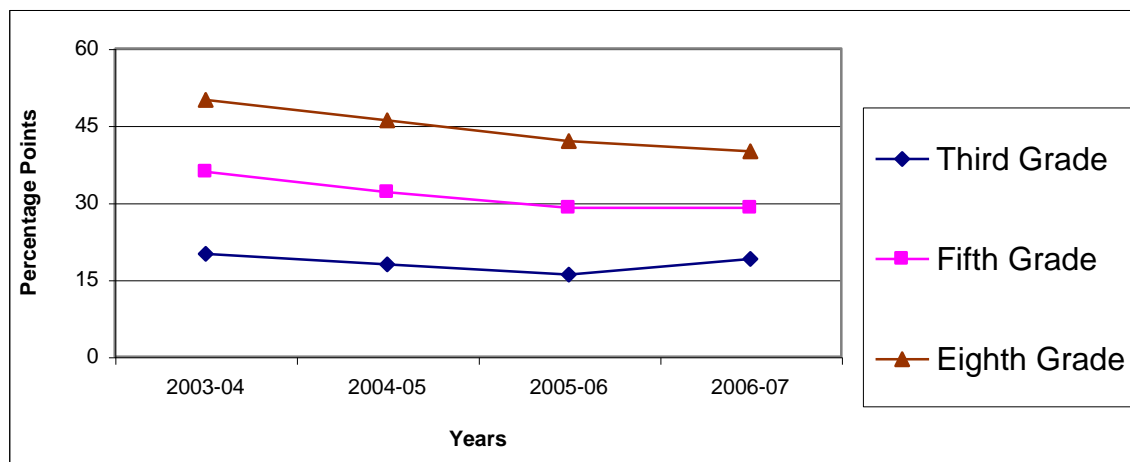
Achievement levels in reading are shown below in Figure 3. This Figure provides a review of the gap in performance for 3rd, 5th, and 8th grade students over the last four school years.

Figure 3. The statewide reading performance gap between special and general education 3rd, 5th, and 8th grade students passing the criterion-referenced competencies test--2003-04 to 2006-07.



The mathematical achievement levels of students with disabilities are also measured by the percent of students with disabilities who meet or exceed standards (established by the Georgia 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 4. This Figure provides a review of the gap in performance for 3rd, 5th, and 8th grade students over the last four school years.

Figure 4. 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 2006-07.

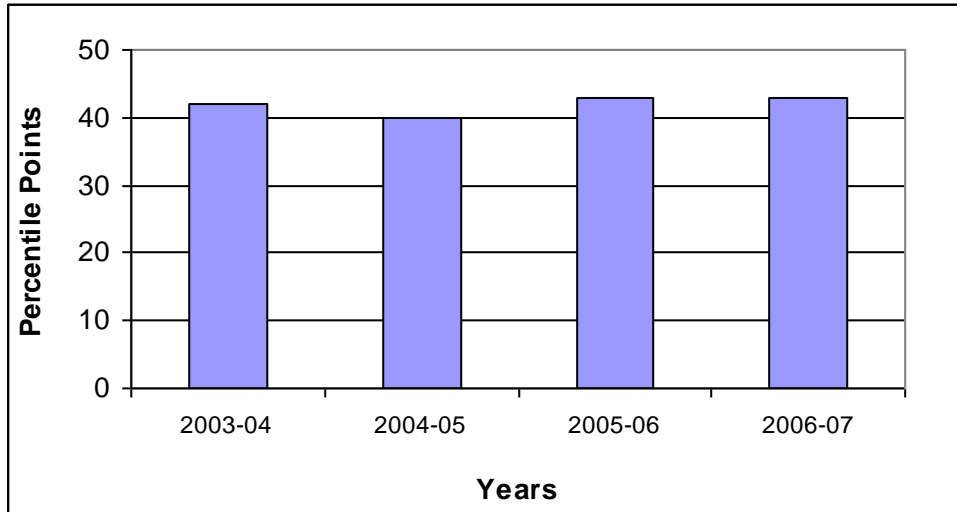


As observed in Figures 3 and 4, as special education students progress through school and reach higher grades, the performance gap widens. Older special education students are having more difficulty performing at a passing level on the criterion-referenced competencies test than their non-disabled peers. This becomes more evident as middle school and high school test results are reviewed.

Figure 5 below shows a statewide gap of over 40 percent for special education students in

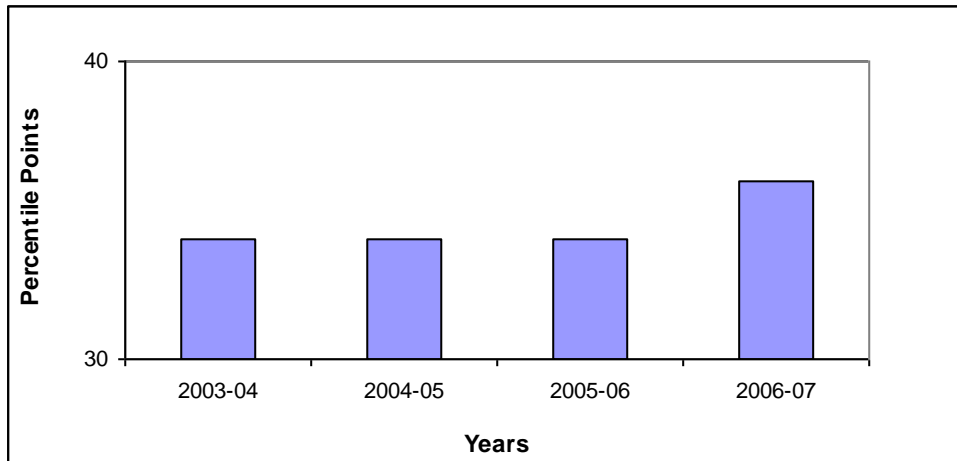
the ninth grade who take an end of the course literature and composition test. This is a wide gap in performance.

Figure 5. Ninth grade end of course literature and composition testing gap (percentage passing) between special education and general education students passing or exceeding —2003-04 to 2006-07.



Again, as shown in Figure 6 below, a statewide gap of about 35 percent for special education students in the ninth grade taking an end of the course Algebra 1 test is evident. This, too, is a wide gap in performance.

Figure 6. Ninth grade end of course Algebra 1 testing gap between special education and general education students Passing or Exceeding from 2003-04 to 2006-07.



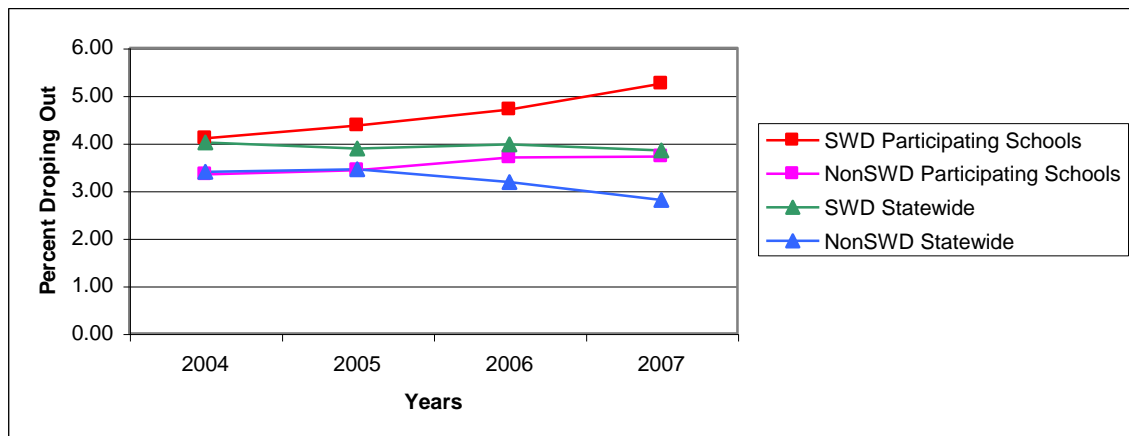
As shown in Figures 1-6, Cohort 1 and 2 participating schools can benefit from the implementation of scientifically based reading and math curricula and interventions in order to improve achievement levels and reduce the performance gaps between students with and without disabilities.

Goal 2: ▪ Decreased Numbers Who Dropout

Year 1 Outcomes

Dropping-out postpones, if not eliminates, the successful completion of high school. The dropout rate from 2003 through 2007 has somewhat increased some. This dropout rate calculation is based upon the number of special education students 14 years through 21 years of age. As can be observed in Figure 7, the rate of dropouts for special education students has remained about four percent statewide for the last four years. Cohort 1 schools are showing higher dropout rates than the state, as a whole and can benefit from participating in the SPDG dropout prevention program.

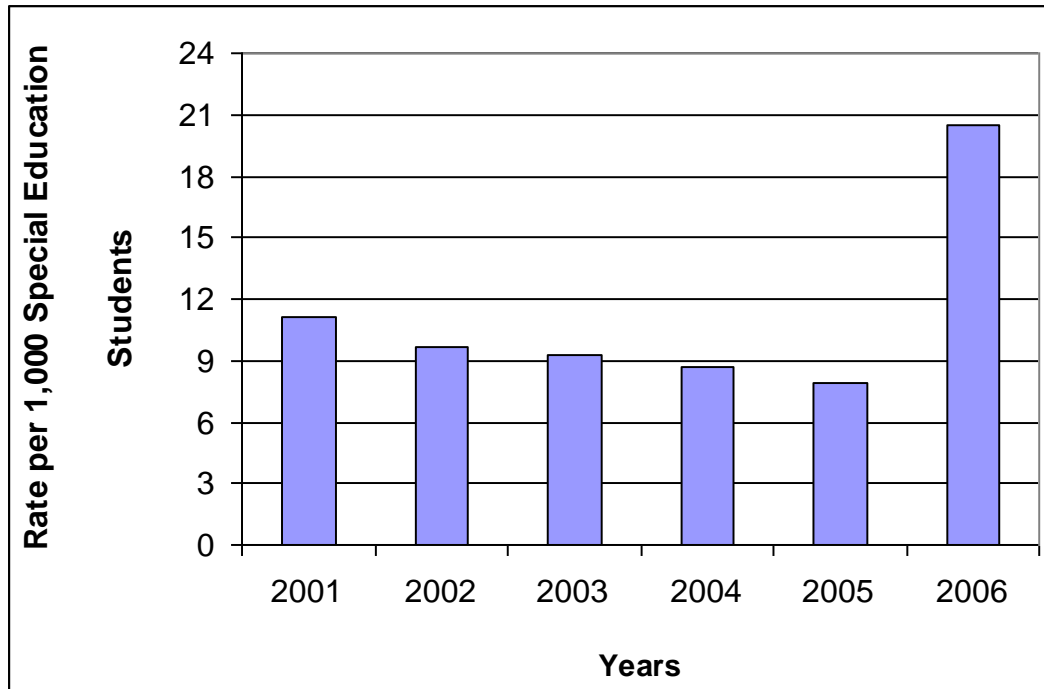
Figure 7. The percent of 14 to 21 year old students with and without disabilities who are dropping out of school each year from 2004 to 2007.



During the first 5-year SIG, Georgia worked on establishing school sites that would reduce office discipline referrals (ODR), suspensions, expulsions, and unilateral removals of special education students. Seventy schools received training, and 54 remained (77 percent) in the project reporting ODRs. Twenty-two percent had increased ODRs, 11 percent had reductions less than 20 percent, and 67 percent had reductions greater than 20 percent. These model school sites could not demonstrate a significantly achievement difference between them and their control sites. This points to the need for a continuing emphasis on behavior and school completion in the new SPDG.

Figure 8 provides a review of statewide removals and suspensions for the last six years. Results show that suspensions/expulsions and removals were dropping through 2005 and suddenly increased in 2006.

Figure 8. Rate by students with disabilities of expulsions and suspensions exceeding 10 days, unilateral removals, and removals to alternative facilities.



Goal 3: ▪ Increased High School Completion and Attainment of Better Postsecondary Outcomes

Year 1 Outcomes

Georgia also gives a high school exit examination that can be taken in the 11th grade. Figure 9 below 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 regular education students for those passing the examination. The gap has closed somewhat over the last four years; however, it is still large.

Georgia's 11th grade exit examination results for mathematics are presented in Figure 10 below. It again shows the discrepancy between special education and regular education students for those passing the examination. The gap has remained more or less constant over the last four years.

Figure 9. Performance gap on first exit examination for 11 grade special education and general education students on the English/language arts test passing or exceeding from 2003-04 to 2006-07.

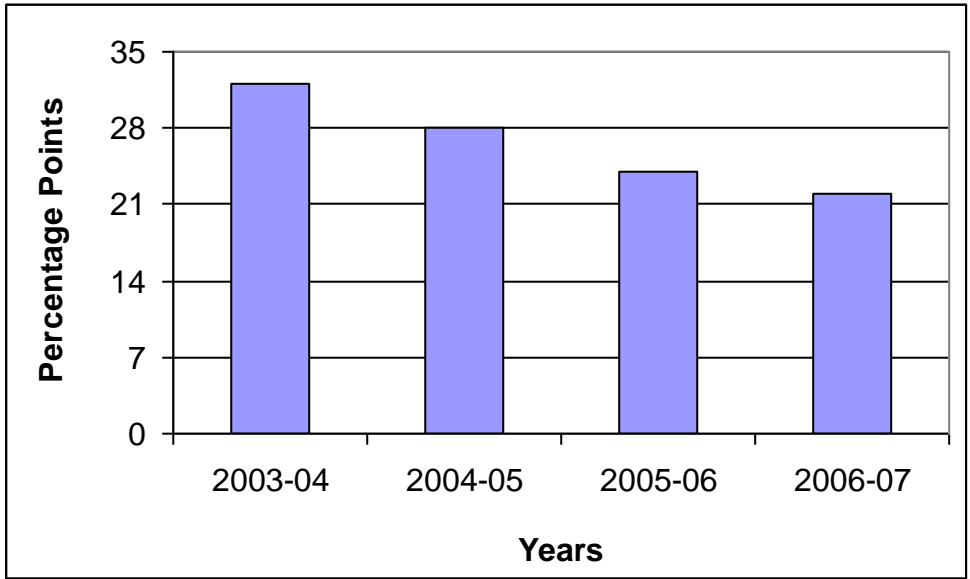
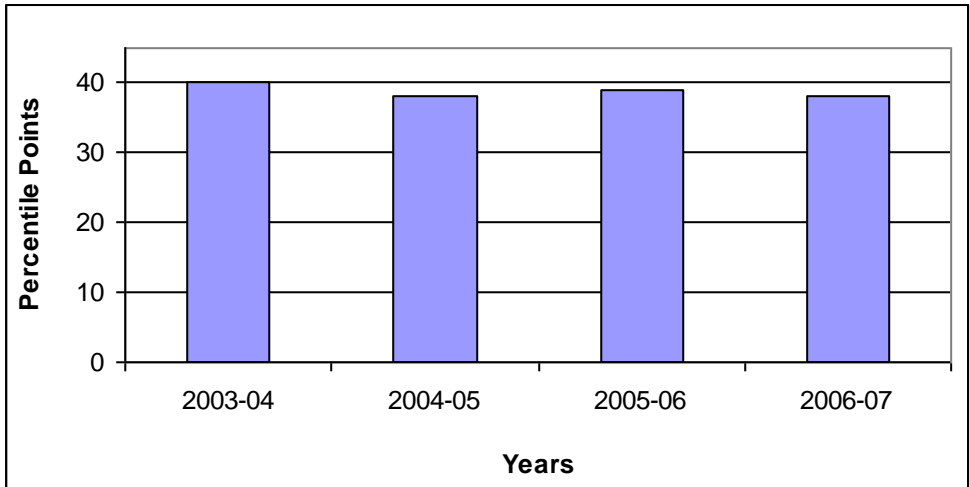


Figure 10. Performance gap on first exit examination for 11th grade special education and general education students on the mathematics test passing or exceeding from 2003-04 to 2006-07.



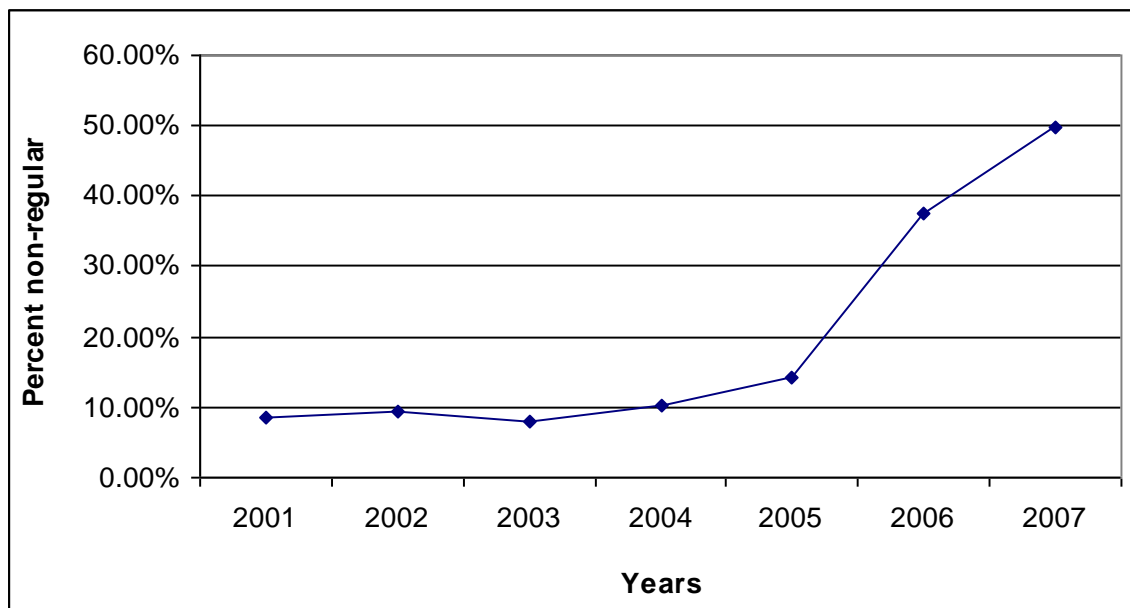
Goal 4 ▪ Increased Recruitment of Fully Certified Special Education Teachers

Year 1 Outcomes:

The workforce documents issued for 2001 to 2007 by the PSC identify 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 2007 there were 7,882 non-regular Special Education General Curriculum certificates issued. These certificates include provisional, intern, probationary, non-renewable and waiver certificates. Figure 11 below shows the non-regular certificates as a percentage of special education teachers (full-time equivalency or FTE). In 2007 non-regular certification of special education teachers was the highest of any group receiving non-regular certificates and continued to show growth over the previous years.

The large number of non-renewable [non-regular] certificates in special education suggests that either growth demand in the number of students in special education is out-stripping production or attrition is faster than production/hiring.

Figure 11. The number of non-regular certificates issued as a percent of the special education teacher workforce from 2001-2007.

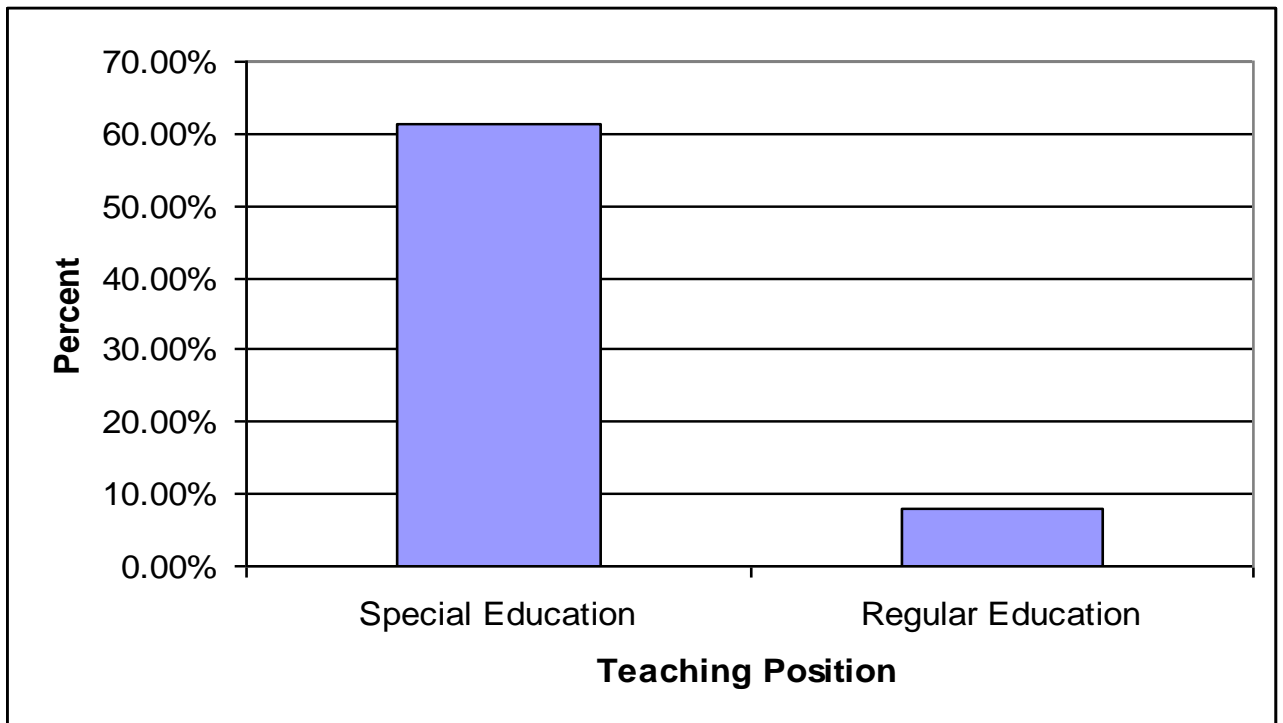


Again, the document entitled “The Georgia Educator Workforce” that has been annually produced by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC), until this year, provides **shortages** and **retention** rates for the state at one, three and five year intervals for many groups in the workforce including regular education teachers. The current Georgia SPDG has a goal of increasing the retention of effective special education teachers. Figure 12 provides an overview of first time special education teacher retention rates for the latest five year period (2002 to 2007).

Other data indicates that the statewide retention rate appears to have been stable for the last several years. Figure 12 shows a retention rate of about 61.4 percent in special education over the

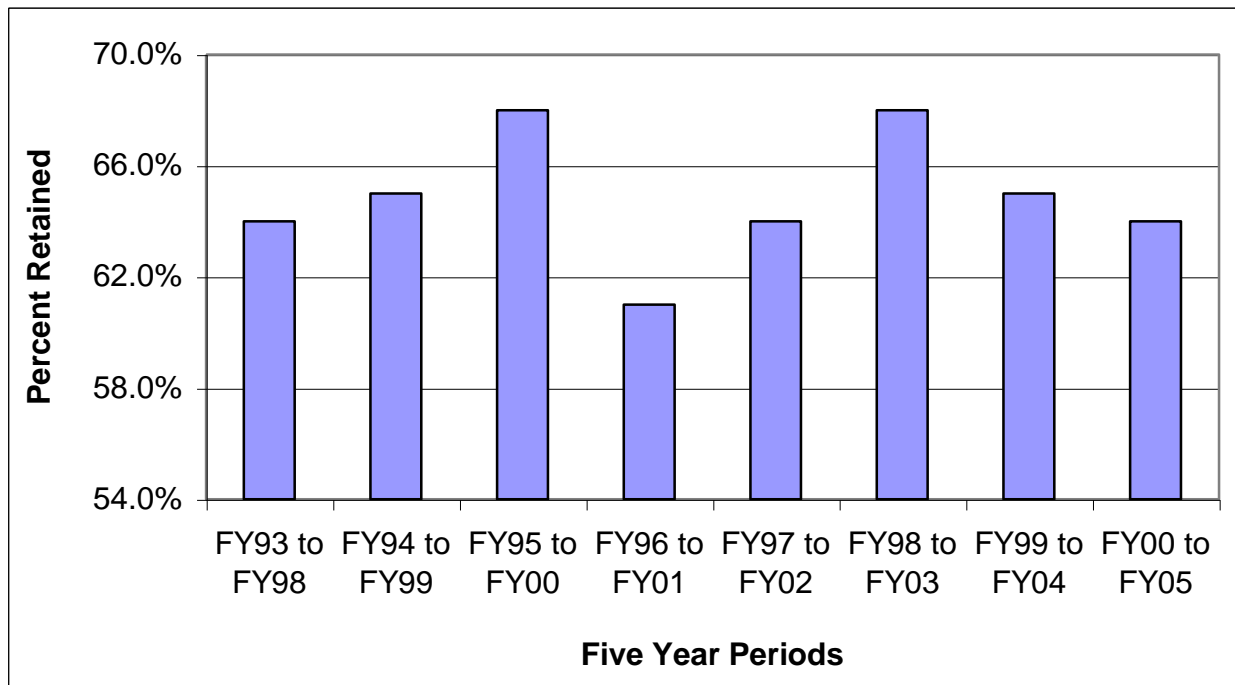
last five-year period and an additional retention of 8.1 percent who started as special education teachers and are now teaching in regular education. This retention rate compares quite favorably with those experienced in other states of below 50 percent over the shorter time period of three years.

Figure 12. Percent of first time special education teachers retained over a five-year period (2002 to 2007) in the state.



For comparison purposes, Figure 13 below provides the retention rate over several five-year periods for all teachers in the Georgia schools. As one can observe, the retention rate is generally above 60 percent and approaches 68 percent at times.

Figure 13. Retention rate for all teachers in Georgia for five-year periods of teaching.



Goal 5 ▪ **Increased Parent Support in Preliteracy, Math, and Social Skills Development for Young Children**

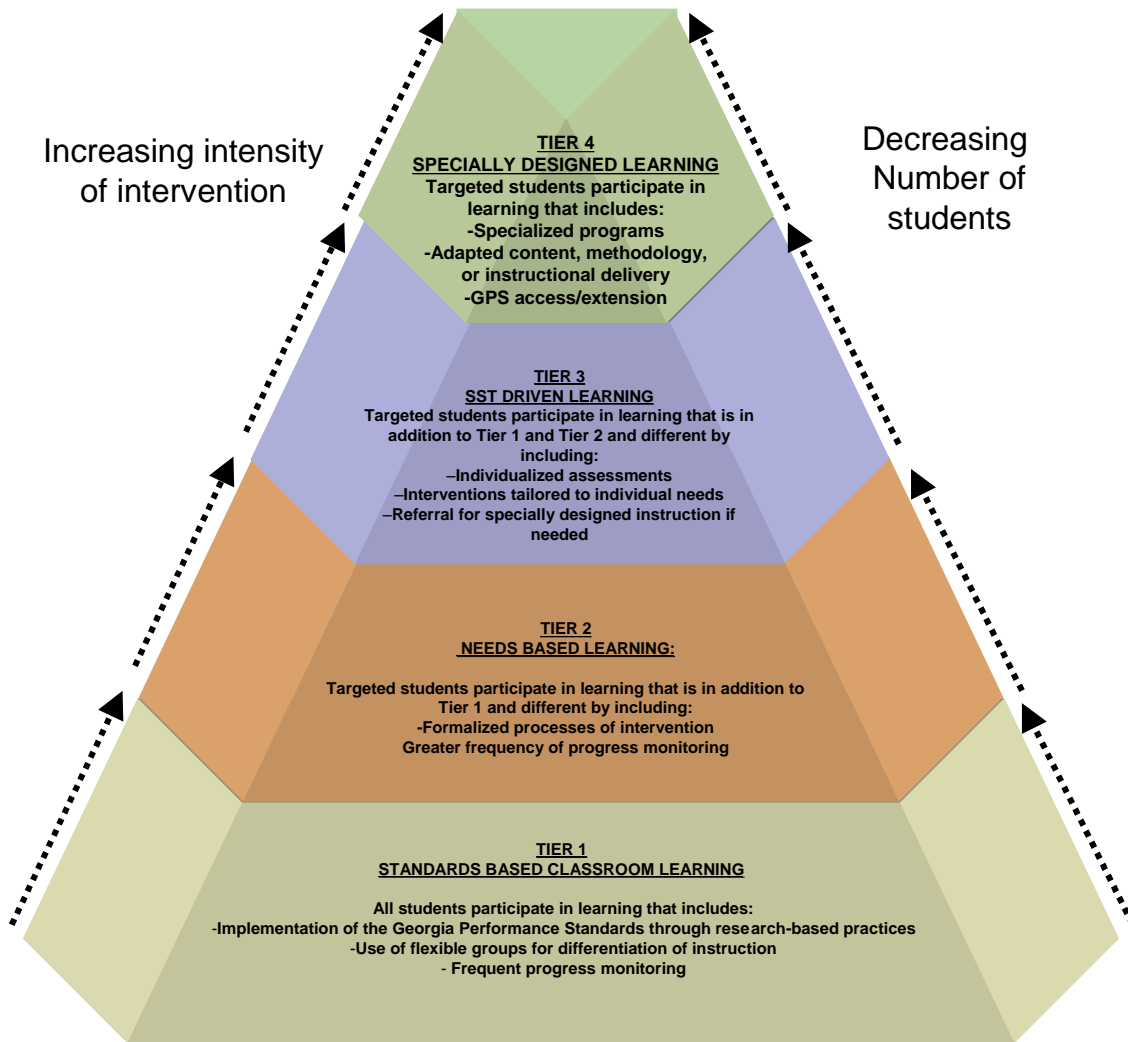
All Goals: ▪ **Embedded Parental Engagement**

No data to report during Year 1.

APPENDIX A

Georgia Student Achievement Pyramid of Interventions

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT PYRAMID OF INTERVENTIONS



APPENDIX B
Pre and Post Tests – Module Trainings

Module One and Two Combined – Pre and Post Test

Pre test: N=197

Post test: N=194

Question 1. Why is dropout a critical issue of national concern?

Responses	Tied to national accountability	High costs to youth	Negative outcomes for youth	High costs to society	None of the above
Pre Test	51.57%	50.31%	72.96%	84.91%	3.14%
Post Test	87.01%	83.77%	88.31%	92.86%	0.65%
Percentage point difference	35.44%	33.45%	15.36%	7.95%	-2.50%

Question 2. Dropouts may be defined as a process of disengagement that begins as early as middle school.

Responses	True
Pre Test	81.13%
Post Test	62.34%
Percentage point difference	-18.79%

Question 3. Each year, approximately 1.2 million students do not graduate from high school.

Responses	True	False: >1.2 million	False: <1.2 million
Pre Test	55.97%	32.70%	10.06%
Post Test	84.42%	6.49%	9.09%
Percentage point difference	28.44%	-26.21%	-0.97%

Question 4. Certain groups of students are at increased risk of dropping out as compared to their counterparts. Circle the correct response below that lists groups of students who drop out at higher rates.

Responses	Females	Students with disabilities	Hispanic students	Gifted students	African American students
Pre Test	10.69%	79.87%	53.46%	3.14%	79.87%
Post Test	5.84%	92.86%	89.61%	4.55%	85.71%
Percentage point difference	-4.85%	12.98%	36.15%	1.40%	5.84%

Question 5. Attendance has been identified as the single most powerful predictor for dropping out.

Responses	True
Pre Test	76.73%
Post Test	53.25%
Percentage point difference	-23.48%

Question 6. Risk factors associated with dropping out as identified by educators, sociologists, and economics may be categorized as:

Responses	Demographic Characteristics	Personal/ Psychological characteristics	School Neighborhood characteristics	Adult responsibilities	Post School performance
Pre Test	71.70%	61.01%	59.12%	49.69%	72.33%
Post Test	83.77%	83.77%	83.12%	79.87%	90.91%
Percentage point difference	12.07%	22.76%	24.00%	30.18%	18.58%

Question 7. The identification of dropouts can be accomplished with reasonable accuracy based on review of school performance (e.g., academic records, behavior reports, and attendance reports) during the elementary years.

Responses	True
Pre Test	84.91%
Post Test	100.00%
Percentage point difference	15.09%

Question 8. Students report dropping out due to the following reasons:

Responses	Courses viewed as irrelevant	Instruction viewed as boring	Negative relationships and interactions with adults	Negative relationships and interactions with peers	None of the above
Pre Test	74.84%	76.10%	83.65%	68.55%	7.55%
Post Test	95.45%	93.51%	93.51%	87.01%	3.25%
Percentage point difference	20.61%	17.41%	9.86%	18.46%	-4.30%

Question 9. Engaging students in school and learning is a key ingredient in preventing dropout and keeping students in school.

Responses	True
Pre Test	98.74%
Post Test	98.05%
Percentage point difference	-0.69%

Question 10. _____ are circumstances or experiences within the school environment that contribute to dropout; whereas, _____ are factors external to the school environment that contribute to dropout.

Responses	Pull effects, push effects	Universal interventions, tertiary interventions	Alterable variables, risk factors	Push effects, pull effects	Status variables, risk factors
Pre Test	7.55%	6.29%	27.67%	47.17%	18.87%
Post Test	12.99%	1.30%	8.44%	83.77%	2.60%
Percentage point difference	5.44%	-4.99%	-19.23%	36.60%	-16.27%

Module Three – Pre and Post Test

Pre test: N=213

Post test: N=213

Question 1. Indicate which factor(s) directly affect(s) school completion rates.

Response	School size	Administrators' salaries	Students' race/ethnicity	District attendance policies	Availability of extracurricular activities
Pre Test	54.46%	2.35%	74.65%	81.22%	72.77%
Post Test	38.50%	3.29%	53.05%	92.49%	69.01%
Percentage point difference	-15.96%	0.94%	-21.60%	11.27%	-3.76%

Question 2. Which of the following measures can be used to identify dropout-related needs?

Response	School climate	Teacher salaries	Number of advanced placement classes offered	Ratio of special education students to regular education students	Percentage of a class that does not attend post-secondary education
Pre Test	77.93%	5.16%	25.82%	62.44%	45.54%
Post Test	92.96%	1.41%	13.62%	50.23%	34.74%
Percentage point difference	15.02%	-3.76%	-12.21%	-12.21%	-10.80%

Question 3. Which of the following is NOT a problem associated with calculating dropout rates?

Response	Obtaining reliable data	Identifying at-risk students	Locating students who have moved	Maintaining accurate student records	Defining what constitutes dropping out
Pre Test	15.02%	23.00%	29.58%	10.80%	29.58%
Post Test	11.27%	34.74%	16.90%	9.39%	34.74%
Percentage point difference	-3.76%	11.74%	-12.68%	-1.41%	5.16%

Question 4. Which of the following is/are considered an alterable characteristic?

Response	Intelligence	Race/ethnicity	Attendance patterns	Parental involvement	Socioeconomic status
Pre Test	9.86%	6.57%	86.38%	78.87%	14.08%
Post Test	7.98%	2.35%	91.55%	86.85%	12.21%
Percentage point difference	-1.88%	-4.23%	5.16%	7.98%	-1.88%

Question 5. Which of the following policies or procedures would have the most beneficial effect on a school's dropout rate?

Response	Suspending students for truancy	Offering students incentives for attendance	Linking "seat time" to graduation requirements	Locking school doors to keep out tardy students	Linking graduation requirements to state assessment
Pre Test	3.76%	87.32%	22.54%	1.41%	23.47%
Post Test	4.23%	91.08%	16.43%	1.41%	19.25%
Percentage point difference	0.47%	3.76%	-6.10%	0.00%	-4.23%

Question 6. Which of the following reasons for leaving schools is/are generally NOT considered dropping out?

Response	Death	Marriage	Incarceration	Entering the military	Obtaining a special education diploma
Pre Test	81.22%	4.23%	7.98%	13.62%	23.47%
Post Test	90.61%	3.76%	3.76%	4.23%	23.94%
Percentage point difference	9.39%	-0.47%	-4.23%	-9.39%	0.47%

Question 7. Which characteristic(s) of an educational database do you think would increase its usefulness in helping schools identify dropout-related needs and issues.

Response	Frequent updates of the data	A menu-driven set of standard reports	Disaggregates data in a variety of ways	Data access is restricted to principal and above	Data fields that are not compatible with those in other data-bases
Pre Test	86.38%	49.77%	74.65%	0.47%	4.69%
Post Test	89.20%	51.64%	76.53%	1.41%	3.76%
Percentage point difference	2.82%	1.88%	1.88%	0.94%	-0.94%

Module Four – Pre and Post Test

Pre Test: N=205

Post Test: N=190

Question 1. What distinguishes absentees from regular attendance?

Response	More likely to perceive school favorably	Feel superior academically	Experience family conflict	Less likely to feel socially competent	None of the above
Pre Test	4.88%	1.95%	52.68%	75.12%	12.68%
Post Test	14.21%	12.63%	72.11%	84.74%	7.89%
Percentage point difference	9.33%	10.68%	19.42%	9.61%	-4.79%

Question 2. Attendance is a strong predictor of dropping out.

Responses	True
Pre Test	98.54%
Post Test	100.00%
Percentage point difference	1.46%

Question 3. Chronic absenteeism impacts the student, family, school, and community.

Response			
Pre Test	0.00%	0.00%	84.88%
Post Test	0.00%	0.00%	91.05%
Percentage point difference	0.00%	0.00%	6.17%

Question 4. Children and youth experiencing severe social, emotional, and behavioral excesses and deficits are at risk for:

Response	Poor academic achievement	School dropout	Retention	Substance abuse	Referral to mental health agencies
Pre Test	84.88%	97.56%	83.41%	78.05%	70.24%
Post Test	91.05%	98.95%	86.84%	73.16%	61.58%
Percentage point difference	6.17%	1.39%	3.43%	-4.89%	-8.66%

Question 5. Academic engagement may be defined as: Strategies to increase time on task, academic engaged time, or credit accrual.

Responses	True
Pre Test	84.88%
Post Test	80.00%
Percentage point difference	-4.88%

Question 6. Which of the following strategies may be utilized to increase academic engagement?

Response	Differentiated instruction	Active listening skills	Note taking skills	Questioning and feedback	None of the above
Pre Test	95.12%	70.73%	69.27%	78.54%	1.95%
Post Test	96.84%	76.84%	77.89%	78.95%	2.11%
Percentage point difference	1.72%	6.11%	8.63%	0.41%	0.15%

Question 7. Engaging students in school and learning is a key ingredient in preventing dropout and keeping students in school.

Responses	True
Pre Test	98.54%
Post Test	97.37%
Percentage point difference	-1.17%

Question 8. Create explicit instruction by:

Response	Making goals, objectives, and expectations explicit	Making instructional content explicit	Making the structure of the lesson explicit	Both A & B	Both A & C
Pre Test	39.02%	32.68%	29.76%	40.00%	25.37%
Post Test	57.37%	52.63%	52.11%	32.63%	11.58%
Percentage point difference	18.34%	19.95%	22.35%	-7.37%	-13.79%