

RACE TO THE TOP

Georgia Report

Year 3: School Year 2012–2013



U.S. Department of Education
Washington, DC 20202

March 19, 2014

Executive Summary

Race to the Top overview

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), historic legislation designed to stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical sectors, including education. ARRA provided \$4.35 billion for the Race to the Top fund, of which approximately \$4 billion was used to fund comprehensive statewide reform grants under the Race to the Top program.¹ In 2010, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) awarded Race to the Top Phase 1 and Phase 2 grants to 11 States and the District of Columbia. The Race to the Top program is a competitive four-year grant program designed to encourage and reward States that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform; achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and improving high school graduation rates; and ensuring students are prepared for success in college and careers. Since the Race to the Top Phase 1 and 2 competitions, the Department has made additional grants under the Race to the Top Phase 3, Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge,² and Race to the Top – District³ competitions.

The Race to the Top program is built on the framework of comprehensive reform in four education reform areas:

- Adopting rigorous standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace;
- Building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practices;
- Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals; and
- Turning around the lowest-performing schools.

Since education is a complex system, sustained and lasting instructional improvement in classrooms, schools, local educational agencies (LEAs), and States will not be achieved through piecemeal change. Race to the Top builds on the local contexts of States and LEAs participating in the State's Race to the Top plan (participating LEAs)⁴ in the design and implementation of the most effective and innovative approaches that meet the needs of their educators, students, and families.

¹ The remaining funds were awarded under the Race to the Top Assessment program. More information about the Race to the Top Assessment program is available at www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment.

² More information on the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/index.html>.

³ More information on Race to the Top – District can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-district/index.html>.

⁴ Participating local educational agencies (LEAs) are those LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plan, as specified in each LEA's Memorandum of Understanding with the State. Each participating LEA that receives funding under Title I, Part A will receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that the State must subgrant to LEAs, based on the LEA's relative share of Title I, Part A allocations in the most recent year, in accordance with section 14006(c) of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

Race to the Top program review

As part of the Department's commitment to supporting States as they implement ambitious reform agendas, the Department established the Implementation and Support Unit (ISU) in the Office of the Deputy Secretary to administer, among others, the Race to the Top program. The goal of the ISU is to provide assistance to States as they implement unprecedented and comprehensive reforms to improve student outcomes. Consistent with this goal, the Department has developed a Race to the Top program review process that not only addresses the Department's responsibilities for fiscal and programmatic oversight, but is also designed to identify areas in which Race to the Top grantees need assistance and support to meet their goals. Specifically, the ISU works with Race to the Top grantees to differentiate support based on individual State needs, and helps States work with each other and with experts to achieve and sustain educational reforms that improve student outcomes. In partnership with the ISU, the Reform Support Network (RSN) offers collective and individualized technical assistance and resources to Race to the Top grantees. The RSN's purpose is to support Race to the Top grantees as they implement reforms in education policy and practice, learn from each other, and build their capacity to sustain these reforms.⁵

Grantees are accountable for the implementation of their approved Race to the Top plans, and the information and data gathered throughout the program review help to inform the Department's management and support of the Race to the Top grantees, as well as provide appropriate and timely updates to the public on their progress. In the event that adjustments are required to an approved plan, the grantee must submit a formal amendment request to the Department for consideration. States may submit for Department approval amendment requests to a plan and budget, provided such changes do not significantly affect the scope or objectives of the approved plans. In the event that the Department determines that a grantee is not meeting its goals, activities, timelines, budget, or annual targets, or is not fulfilling other applicable requirements, the Department will take appropriate enforcement action(s), consistent with 34 CFR section 80.43 in the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR).⁶

State-specific summary report

The Department uses the information gathered during the review process (e.g., through monthly calls, onsite reviews, and Annual Performance Reports (APRs)) to draft State-specific summary reports. The State-specific summary report serves as an assessment of a State's annual Race to the Top implementation. The Year 3 report for Phase 1 and 2 grantees highlights successes and accomplishments, identifies challenges, and provides lessons learned from implementation from approximately September 2012 through September 2013; the Year 2 report for Phase 3 grantees provides similar information from approximately December 2012 through December 2013.

⁵ More information can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/implementation-support-unit/tech-assist/index.html>.

⁶ More information about the Implementation and Support Unit's (ISU's) program review process, State Annual Performance Report (APR) data, and State Scopes of Work can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html>.

Executive Summary

State's education reform agenda

Georgia's education reform agenda, supported with a \$399,952,650 Race to the Top grant, establishes five objectives:

1. Set high standards and rigorous assessments for all students—leading to college and career readiness;
2. Prepare students for college, transition, and success;
3. Provide great teachers and leaders;
4. Provide effective support for all schools, including the lowest-achieving schools; and
5. Lead the way in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

State Years 1 and 2 summary

During Years 1 and 2, Georgia had a range of accomplishments across the Race to the Top education reform areas. For example, Georgia held three rounds of the Innovation Fund competitive grant program, awarding a total of 24 grants in Years 1 and 2. The Innovation Fund is designed to encourage the formation of partnerships between LEAs and colleges and universities, non-profit organizations, or businesses to identify new ways to increase applied learning opportunities, improve teacher and leader effectiveness, expand the pipeline of effective teachers, and promote STEM charter schools. In addition, in Year 1, the State entered several partnerships with organizations and institutions, including Teach for America (TFA), The New Teacher Project (TNTP), UTeach Institute, and the Georgia Institute of Technology's Center for Education Integrating Science, Mathematics, and Computing (CEISMC), in order to increase the quantity and quality of teachers entering low-achieving schools and to enhance professional development opportunities, especially in the STEM areas.

In school year (SY) 2012-2013, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) also provided all LEAs with a variety of resources (e.g., webinars, newsletters, and curriculum frameworks) to support implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), referred to by the State as the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS). These resources included professional development and face-to-face support from English language arts (ELA) and mathematics Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) specialists. GaDOE engaged LEAs and provided training and support to participating LEAs on the development and use of the Instructional Improvement System (IIS) and Instructional Improvement Reports (IIRs).

Despite these accomplishments, Georgia experienced initial implementation delays in Year 1 due to transitions in State and LEA leadership, insufficient project management-level staffing, and changes to its original implementation schedule as proposed in its application. Georgia also experienced significant challenges related to implementation of its educator evaluation system in Year 2 of its Race to the Top grant. The Department was concerned about the overall strategic planning, evaluation, and project management for that system, which included decisions regarding the quality of the tools and measures used during the educator evaluation pilot and the scalability of the supports the State offered to participating LEAs. During Year 2, the State piloted the educator evaluation system in a portion of schools in its participating LEAs and identified significant technical and capacity challenges with implementation. As a result of these concerns, the Department placed the educator evaluation projects in the Great Teachers and Leaders section of Georgia's Race to the Top plan on high-risk status in July 2012.⁷

State Year 3 summary

Accomplishments

During Year 3, Georgia had several key accomplishments across the Race to the Top education reform areas. Georgia launched the Innovation in Teaching Competition, a new initiative under its Innovation Fund, for educators who use innovative and effective strategies in teaching CCGPS ELA and mathematics. The State made awards to five teachers in August 2013, and will run a second round of the competition in fall 2013.

In SY 2012-2013, the State piloted and rolled out an Assessment Literacy Professional Learning Unit (PLU), "Georgia Formative Instructional Practices: The Keys to Student Success," with 400 teachers in several LEAs across the State. The course is designed to provide teachers with instruction on how to use formative assessment to improve instruction and is aligned to the ten standards in the State's new observation protocol that is part of the teacher and leader evaluation systems.

GaDOE also continued to roll out its IIS and IIRs. The State received positive feedback from LEAs on the IIS and reported that approximately 40,000 educators accessed the system each month. In Year 3, GaDOE released the High School Transition Reports, which allows schools to track student performance on End-of-Course tests and the Georgia High School Graduation Test to ensure that students have met requirements for graduation and are on track for college enrollment in Georgia institutions of higher education (IHEs). In addition, Georgia launched the Teacher Resource Link (TRL) to allow teachers to quickly find and access CCGPS resources.

⁷ For more information, see Georgia's July 2, 2012 amendment letter at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/georgia-6.pdf>.

Executive Summary

The State provided all LEAs with a variety of new STEM resources, including Fast Forward, a new original series of video shorts from Georgia Public Broadcasting. The Fast Forward project consists of 16 video segments that explain specific STEM concepts and demonstrate how employees in businesses and organizations across Georgia are applying the STEM subjects in their jobs.

Finally, the State revised its State- and LEA-level monitoring and oversight procedures to focus on the quality of implementation and overall performance towards Race to the Top goals, in addition to progress against the State's approved plan. To support LEAs, the State hired four Education Research and Evaluation Specialists (ERES) to serve as LEA liaisons and provide oversight and targeted technical assistance to participating LEAs on Race to the Top implementation. To increase focus on data analysis, dependent activities, and the quality of implementation at the State-level, Georgia began holding meetings with The Internal Committee for Technical Oversight and Communication (TIC TOC) that includes leadership from GaDOE and the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA).

Challenges

Georgia continued to experience significant challenges related to implementation of its teacher and leader evaluation systems in Year 3 of its Race to the Top grant. For example, the State requested and received approval from the Department to delay full implementation of its educator evaluation system for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects by one year, to SY 2014-2015, due to ongoing implementation and capacity challenges in Georgia, particularly in the implementation of Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) in non-tested grades and subjects. Georgia also struggled to provide sufficient support to LEAs across the State as they implemented the new educator evaluation system. Specifically, the State analyzed user-reported issues with the educator evaluation system electronic platform and concluded that most were related to insufficient training. Moreover, according to the State, many of the issues with implementation of SLOs were the result of insufficient support at the local level.

Additionally, Georgia indicated that it no longer plans to implement the performance-based compensation system described in its approved application within the grant period. This change in scope to the State's plan significantly decreases or eliminates reform in one of the

education reform areas and results in the grantee's failure to comply substantially with the terms related to this portion of its Race to the Top award. Therefore in July 2013, the Department initiated procedures to withhold Race to the Top funds associated with implementation of performance-based compensation.

On July 22, 2013, Georgia announced that it was withdrawing from the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment consortium. Previously, Georgia was a governing member of PARCC and planned to implement PARCC assessments in SY 2014-2015.

Finally, Georgia continues to report that due to budget shortfalls across the State, TFA and TNTP were not able to place as many teachers as planned. The State adjusted the contracts for those vendors in accordance with their final placements.

Looking ahead to Year 4

During Year 4, Georgia plans to scale up its support of LEAs through its new ERES, who provide oversight and targeted technical assistance to participating LEAs on Race to the Top implementation. The State plans to gather additional information from LEAs, principals, and teachers to determine the specific supports they need in order to successfully implement Race to the Top reforms.

The State will complete development of its P-20 longitudinal data system and will continue adding additional features to its IIS and IIRs. To further support implementation of the CCGPS in Georgia, the State will develop virtual courses for teachers that will provide a general overview of the standards, as well as grade-level and content-specific courses.

Georgia must build capacity in the State and LEAs in order to implement and use its educator evaluation system. With the passage of HB 244 in March 2013 that requires the evaluation system to be implemented statewide in SY 2014-2015, the State must scale up its tools, resources, and professional development in order to support nearly all LEAs in the State. GaDOE reports that it will hire over 30 new personnel to work on the ground with LEAs to ensure they have sufficient support and training to implement the educator evaluation system with fidelity.

State Success Factors

Building capacity to support LEAs

Performance management

With a grant of \$399,952,650 and over 25 Race to the Top projects, Georgia has recognized that it needs a strong performance management system. At the State-level, GaDOE revised its oversight of Race to the Top projects to ensure a focus on interdependencies and the quality of implementation, in addition to progress against the State's approved plan. The State has also implemented TIC TOC meetings to discuss projects related to its educator evaluation system. The TIC TOC meetings include staff from GaDOE and GOSA and focus on data analysis, dependent activities, and the quality of implementation at the State level which has improved coordination among the applicable projects. Georgia continues to use SharePoint to serve as the central clearinghouse for all Race to the Top work; the site includes documentation, such as monitoring and fiscal reports, and provides LEAs access to items such as the teacher evaluation handbook, training materials, and curriculum resources.

The Innovation Fund

Georgia launched the Innovation in Teaching Competition, a new initiative under its Innovation Fund focused on educators who use innovative and effective strategies in teaching CCGPS ELA and mathematics. Georgia Public Broadcasting will create a video library available to LEAs across the State of winning educators teaching in their classrooms, and will include a discussion of how the winning educators prepared their lessons. Georgia Public Broadcasting will also make the supplementary materials, such as student worksheets or lesson plans, available to educators, IHEs, and other stakeholders. The State made awards to five educators in August 2013, and is running a second round of the competition in fall 2013.

As part of the previous Innovation Fund awards, eight programs began implementing alternative preparation programs for teachers and leaders in SY 2012-2013. Over 100 teacher candidates and over 50 leader candidates enrolled in the new preparation programs.

Innovations for improving early learning outcomes

The Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) and its contractors continued to provide professional development to pre-kindergarten teachers through My Teaching Partner, Teachstone, and the Understanding Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). In SY 2012-2013, approximately 60 teachers were enrolled in My

Teaching Partner, a coaching program aimed at enhancing pre-kindergarten teachers' interaction with students to improve student achievement, and approximately 70 teachers completed Teachstone, which taught participating teachers to identify and analyze effective teacher-child interactions. Finally, DECAL offered a two-day professional development workshop in CLASS to approximately 200 teachers, significantly less than its target of 700 teachers annually.

DECAL also conducted an evaluation of professional development activities in SY 2011-2012. As a result of that evaluation, it reduced the caseload for coaches, added a "pure" control group, revised sampling methodology to the teacher-level rather than the site-level, and increased the sample size to ensure more accurate evaluation results in future years.

Support and accountability for LEAs

In order to ensure that it has rigorous routines and processes for collecting data on participating LEA progress and the quality of implementation, the State has reorganized its central office and created four new ERES positions. These positions act as LEA liaisons for the State, with monitoring and technical assistance responsibilities. ERES are responsible for analyzing participating LEA progress and their quality of implementation each month to identify successes, challenges, and areas that require support. Based on those needs, the State will develop a common technical assistance plan to support LEAs. ERES also conducted site visits to analyze the quality of each participating LEA's work and progress towards meeting the goals and milestones outlined in their individual Scopes of Work. The State continues to conduct cross-functional monitoring visits with other Federal programs to review fiscal controls and implementation across programs.

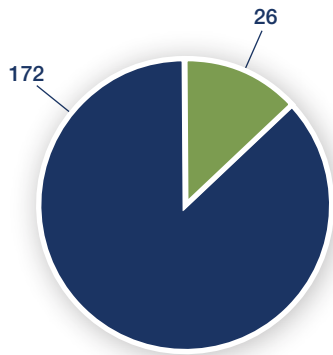
Throughout the year, GaDOE also worked to provide implementation support to LEAs across the education reform areas. For example, to support CCGPS implementation, GaDOE launched the TRL, which provides teachers easy access to CCGPS instructional resources through the State's IIS (see *Standards and Assessments*). To facilitate LEA use and implementation of the IIS, GaDOE assigned instructional technology specialists to all LEAs to provide ongoing support and training (see *Data Systems to Support Instruction*). Additionally, to support LEAs in implementing high-quality induction and mentoring programs, the State induction specialist continued to provide individualized technical assistance to participating LEAs (see *Great Teachers and Leaders*).

State Success Factors

LEA participation

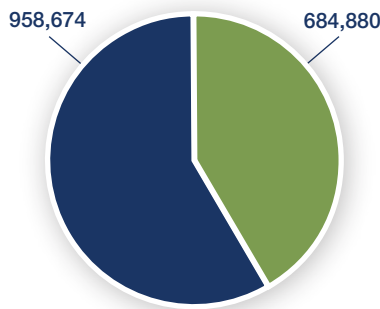
As of September 30, 2013, 26 LEAs were participating in Georgia's Race to the Top initiative. The participating LEAs enroll 40 percent of Georgia's kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) students and 44 percent of the State's K-12 students who live in poverty.

LEAs participating in Georgia's Race to the Top plan



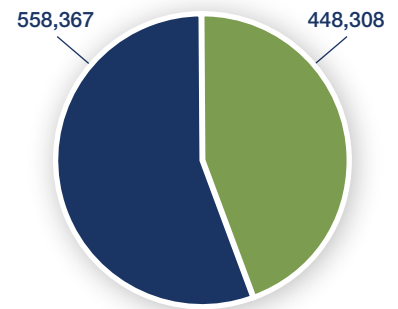
■ Participating LEAs (#)
■ Involved LEAs (#)

K-12 students in LEAs participating in Georgia's Race to the Top plan



■ K-12 students (#) in participating LEAs
■ K-12 students (#) in involved LEAs

Students in poverty in LEAs participating in Georgia's Race to the Top plan



■ Students in poverty (#) in participating LEAs
■ Students in poverty (#) in involved LEAs

The number of K-12 students and number of students in poverty statewide are calculated using pre-release data from the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Common Core of Data (CCD). Students in poverty statewide comes from the CCD measure of the number of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch subsidy (commonly used as a proxy for the number of students who are economically disadvantaged in a school) under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Program. The students in poverty statewide count is an aggregation of school-level counts summed to one State-level count. Statistical procedures were applied systematically by CCD to these data to prevent potential disclosure of information about individual students as well as for data quality assurance; consequently State-level counts may differ from those originally reported by the State. Please note that these data are considered to be preliminary as of August 21, 2013.

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.

State Success Factors

Stakeholder engagement

Georgia contracted with a vendor to develop an improved communications plan that explains the alignment between the educator evaluation system, CCGPS, College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI),⁸ and other Race to the Top reforms. The vendor launched the Georgia Future Now website in November 2012. The State also publishes monthly newsletters that provide updates on the education reform areas and highlights upcoming events and best practices. In addition, GaDOE developed a new engagement strategy for its teacher and leader evaluation work.

The State receives stakeholder feedback on its design and implementation activities via surveys, site visits, interviews, and focus groups. As an example, the State gathered feedback from educators by conducting focus groups across the State mid-way through and at the end of SY 2012-2013 on implementation of CCGPS and the educator evaluation system. The purpose of the focus groups was to ensure that high-quality resources and materials are available to stakeholders and to inform and improve State-level structures, systems, and implementation procedures. The State also works closely with a Technical Advisory Committee on the development of its educator evaluation system, and with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, University System of Georgia, and Technical College System of Georgia on the development of its P-20 longitudinal data system (LDS), tiered certification, and educator preparation program effectiveness measures.

In July 2013, the State held a Race to the Top Summit that focused on informing participating LEAs and non-participating LEAs about the latest developments in the education reform areas, including CCGPS, formative assessments, the educator evaluation system, SLOs, and the educator evaluation system electronic platform. The Race to the Top Summit also highlighted best practices from participating LEAs.

Georgia was a lead State in the Reform Support Network's Social Media work through Year 3. Georgia participated in social media consultations to effectively use social media to promote its work and engage with stakeholders, as well as to develop a social media policy that provides guidance to internal GaDOE staff on establishing and maintaining a social media presence for various program areas. Further, in June 2013, Georgia presented a webinar titled "Social Media: Planning, Policies and Measuring Efforts." The webinar highlighted findings from the report, "Measurable Success, Growing Adoption, Vast Potential: Social Media Use Among State and Local Education Agencies." The presentation provided an overview of States' formal policies and guidelines for using social media, as well as methods States are using for evaluating the success and impact of their social media efforts.

Continuous improvement

In addition to the performance management processes described above, GOSA is responsible for conducting an evaluation of some Race to the Top projects. In December 2012, GOSA completed an evaluation of the Office of School Turnaround (see *Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools*). GOSA also worked with the Georgia Association of Curriculum and Instruction Supervisors to reach every LEA in the State to examine LEAs' preparation and support for CCGPS implementation (see *Standards and Assessments*).

In SY 2012-2013, the State also used Indistar as a project management tool to inform, coach, sustain, track, and report school improvement activities in its lowest-achieving schools. This system allows the State to collect data on its lowest-achieving schools and to monitor the progress and support provided by school improvement specialists and the fidelity of implementation of reform models.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

As part of its efforts to ensure educators in the State have access to high-quality resources and examples of CCGPS implementation, Georgia launched a new competition under its Innovation Fund initiative focusing on highlighting innovative and effective teaching strategies in ELA and mathematics. The State also continues to be optimistic about the previous Innovation Fund winners and believes that the grant has stimulated innovation and partnerships in education in Georgia.

Georgia also revised its monitoring and oversight procedures at both the State- and LEA-levels to ensure a focus on data analysis and the quality of implementation, in addition to progress. The State also launched a new communications strategy, Georgia Future Now that focuses on the alignment of the educator evaluation system, the CCGPS, the CCRPI, and other Race to the Top reforms. The State is optimistic that this new strategy will help address previous challenges and limitations with its comprehensive communication efforts.

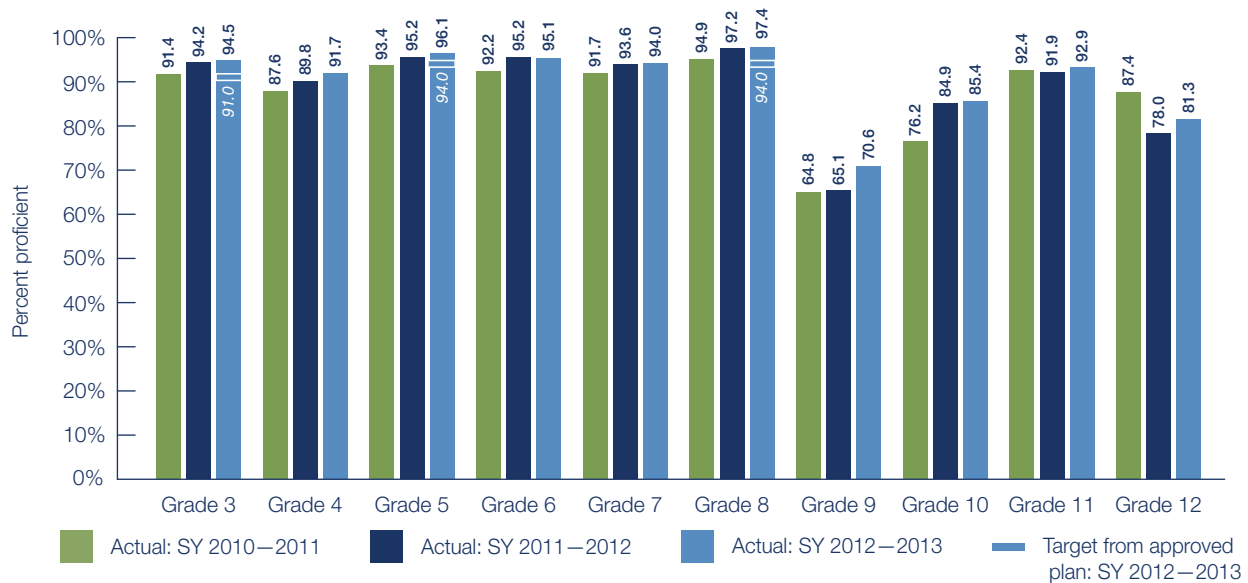
⁸ The CCRPI will serve as Georgia's new accountability system and was approved under Georgia's approved Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) flexibility request. On September 23, 2011, the Department offered each interested State educational agency (SEA) the opportunity to request flexibility ("ESEA flexibility") on behalf of itself, its LEAs, and its schools, regarding specific requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive State-developed plans designed to improve educational outcomes for all students, close achievement gaps, increase equity, and improve the quality of instruction. For more information on ESEA flexibility, see www.ed.gov/esea/flexibility.

State Success Factors

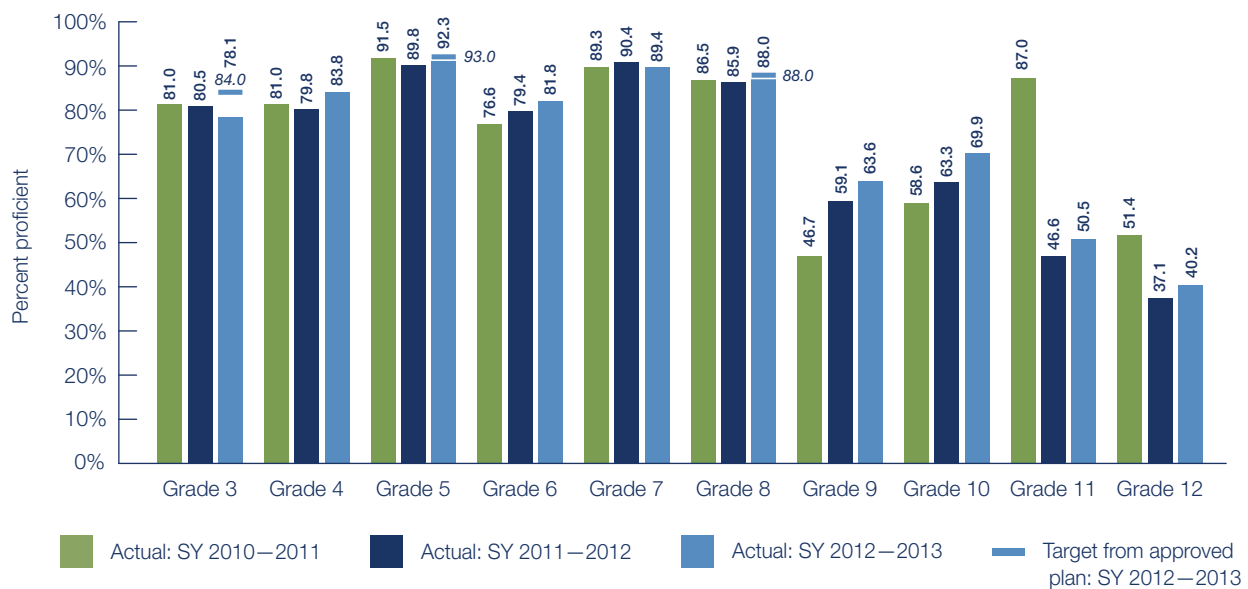
Student outcomes data

The State performed consistently in SY 2012–2013 on the ELA State assessment across grades three, five, and eight, and on the mathematics State assessments in grades five and eight, exceeding its performance targets for SY 2012–2013 in these grades and subjects. However, the State saw slight declines in third grade mathematics performance.

Student proficiency on Georgia's ELA assessment



Student proficiency on Georgia's mathematics assessment



Preliminary SY 2012–2013 data reported as of: December 2, 2013.

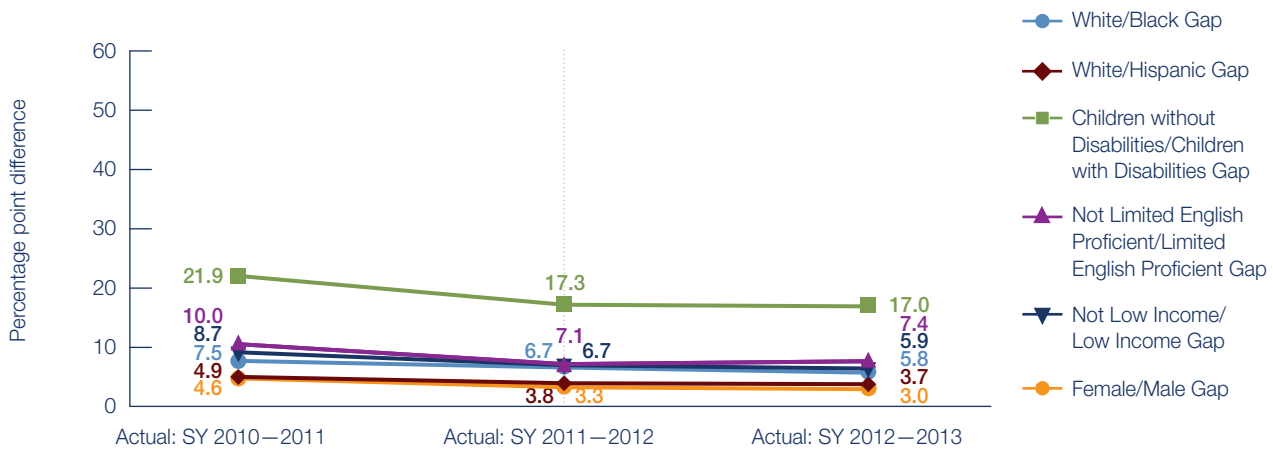
NOTE: Over the last three years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.

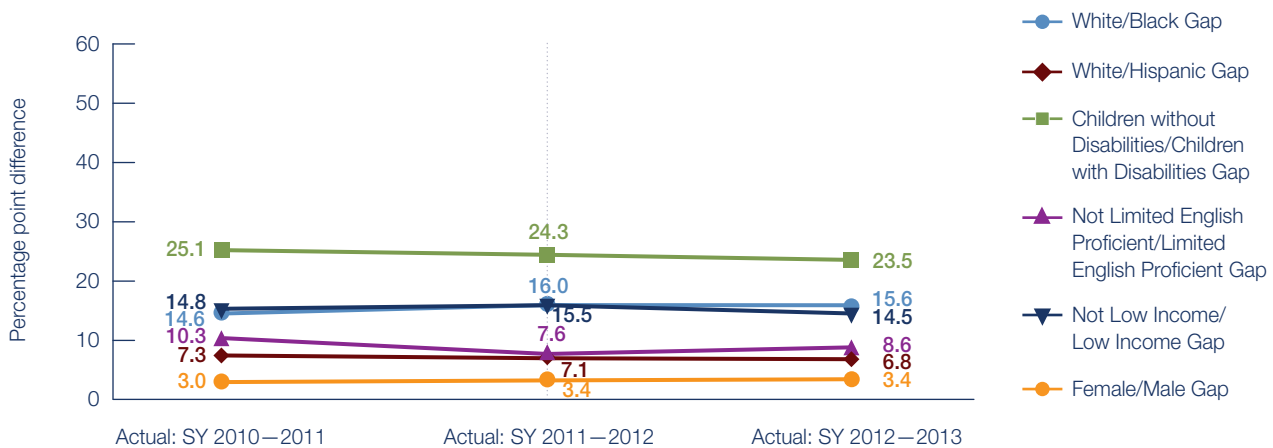
State Success Factors

Results from Georgia's SY 2012-2013 State assessment show that achievement gaps between low-income and not low-income students decreased slightly as compared to SY 2011-2012. In mathematics, the achievement gap between children with disabilities and children without disabilities also decreased slightly.

Achievement gap on Georgia's ELA assessment



Achievement gap on Georgia's mathematics assessment



Preliminary SY 2012-2013 data reported as of: December 2, 2013.

Numbers in the graph represent the gap over three school years between two sub-groups on the State's ELA and mathematics assessments.

Achievement gaps were calculated by subtracting the percent of students scoring proficient in the lower-performing sub-group from the percent of students scoring proficient in the higher-performing sub-group to get the percentage point difference between the proficiency of the two sub-groups.

If the achievement gap narrowed between two sub-groups, the line will slope downward. If the achievement gap increased between two sub-groups, the line will slope upward.

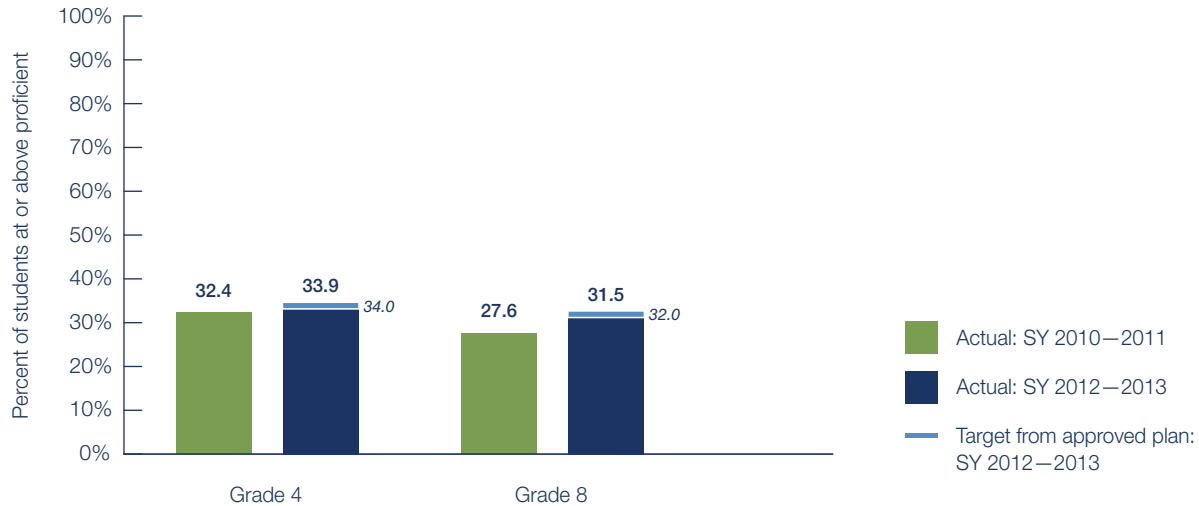
NOTE: Over the last three years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.

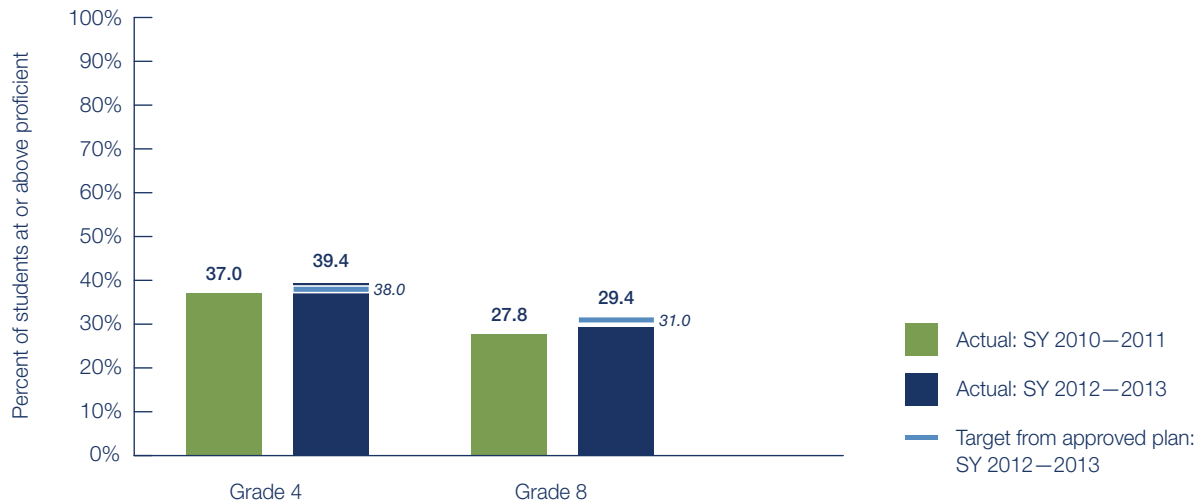
State Success Factors

Results from the 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessments illustrate some improvement in Georgia's results, with the largest gains in grade eight reading, as compared to 2011 NAEP results.

Student proficiency, NAEP reading



Student proficiency, NAEP mathematics



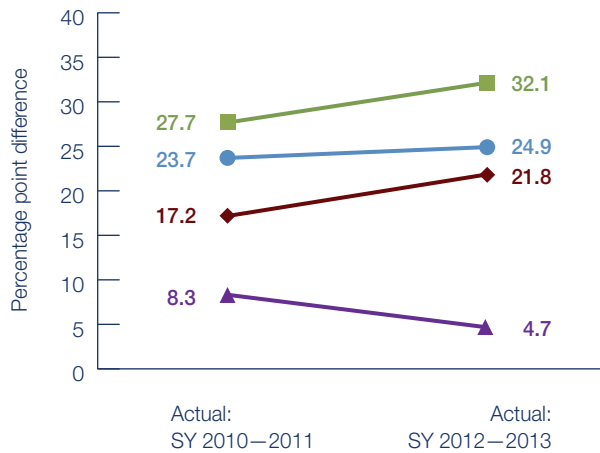
NAEP is administered once every two years. The two most recent years are SY 2010-2011 and SY 2012-2013. NAEP reading and mathematics results are provided by the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. To learn more about the NAEP data, please visit <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>.

Georgia's approved Race to the Top plan included targets for NAEP results based on percentages, not based on students' average scale scores.

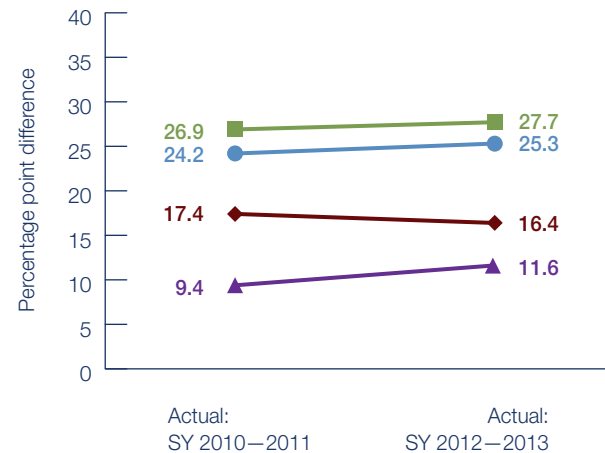
State Success Factors

Between SY 2010-2011 and SY 2012-2013, Georgia's grade four achievement gaps on NAEP reading generally increased. Results for Georgia's grade eight reading achievement gaps were about the same. Results from the 2013 NAEP assessments illustrate that achievement gaps in grade four mathematics were also about the same, but slightly decreased between white and Hispanic students. Grade eight mathematics achievement gaps generally increased.

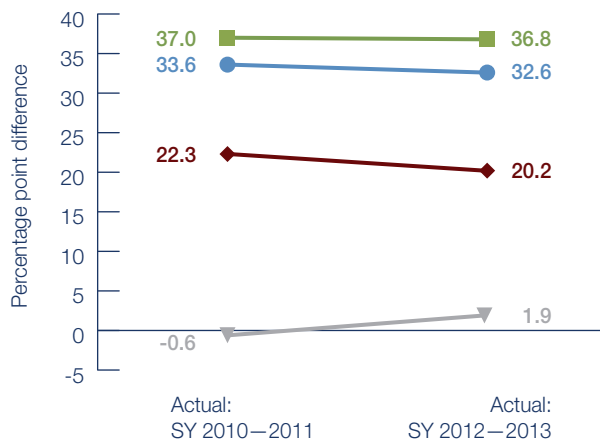
Grade 4 achievement gap on NAEP reading



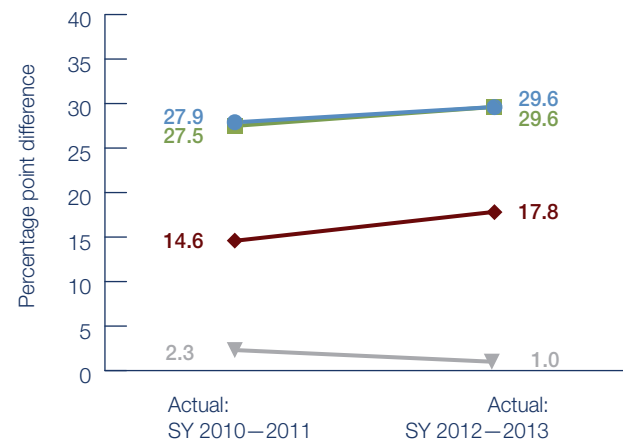
Grade 8 achievement gap on NAEP reading



Grade 4 achievement gap on NAEP mathematics



Grade 8 achievement gap on NAEP mathematics



- White/Black Gap
- ▲ Female/Male Gap
- Not National School Lunch Program Eligible/National School Lunch Program Eligible
- ◆ White/Hispanic Gap
- ▼ Male/Female Gap

NAEP is administered once every two years. The two most recent years are SY 2010-2011 and SY 2012-2013. Georgia's NAEP reading and mathematics results are provided by the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. To learn more about the NAEP data, please visit <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>.

Numbers in the graph represent the gap in a school year between two sub-groups on the NAEP reading and NAEP mathematics.

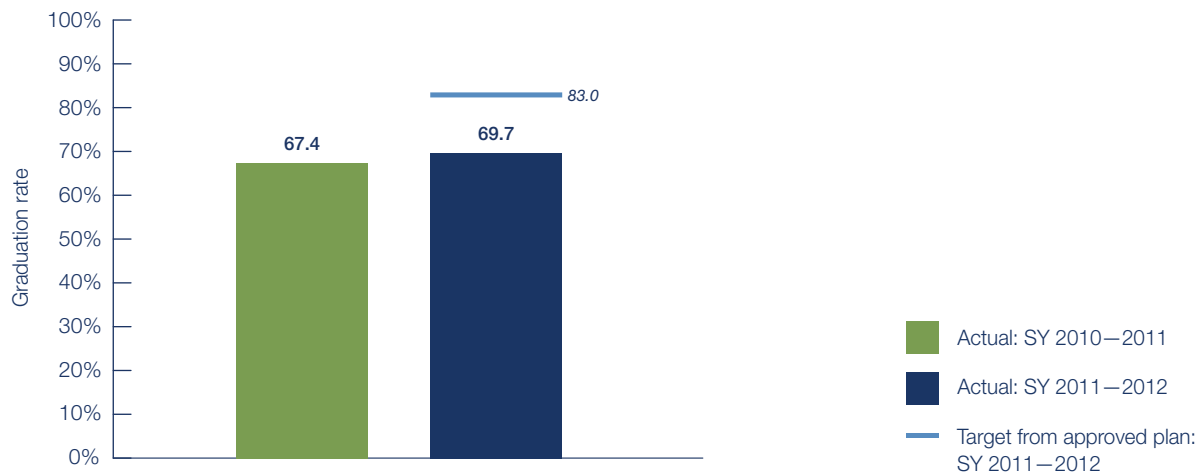
Achievement gaps were calculated by subtracting the percent of students scoring proficient in the lower-performing sub-group from the percent of students scoring proficient in the higher-performing sub-group to get the percentage point difference between the proficiency of the two sub-groups.

If the achievement gap narrowed between two sub-groups, the line will slope downward. If the achievement gap increased between two sub-groups, the line will slope upward.

State Success Factors

Georgia's high school graduation rates increased slightly from SY 2010-2011 to SY 2011-2012. In its SY 2012-2013 APR, Georgia did not report actuals against its college enrollment target and also did not submit data on its college course completion rate.

High school graduation rate



Preliminary SY 2011-2012 data reported as of: August 13, 2013.

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.

Standards and Assessments

Implementing rigorous college- and career-ready standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and career is an integral aspect of education reform in all Race to the Top States.

Supporting the transition to college- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments

In July 2010, the Georgia Board of Education adopted the CCSS in ELA and mathematics for grades K-12; the State reports that full implementation of the CCGPS began in SY 2012-2013.

In SY 2012-2013, the State piloted an Assessment Literacy PLU, "Georgia Formative Instructional Practices: The Keys to Student Success," with 400 teachers in several LEAs across the State. The course is designed to provide teachers with instruction on how to use formative assessment to improve instruction and is aligned to the ten standards in the State's new observation protocol that is part of the teacher and leader evaluation systems. Pilot LEAs explored different approaches for offering the course to teachers. For example, some schools are requiring principals to take the course before

teachers. In other LEAs, teachers took the online modules and then met monthly to discuss the content with their peers. In May 2013, the State made the PLU available to all teachers across the State and provided guidance to all LEAs on possible formats for offering the Assessment Literacy PLU, based on the results of the pilot. As of August 2013, over 3,500 educators in 60 LEAs had enrolled in the Assessment Literacy PLU.

The State released the first half of the formative assessment toolkit to teachers in November 2012 through the Online Assessment System. These formative assessment items focused on CCGPS content that students would have learned under the previous standards. The State also piloted an additional 800 items that will be made available to teachers in fall 2013. These items focus on the skills within the CCGPS that students were introduced to for the first time in SY 2012-2013 as part of the transition to CCGPS. The full formative assessment toolkit will be made available to teachers one year later

Standards and Assessments

than originally anticipated. In August 2012, GaDOE secured a contract to begin development of benchmark assessment items. Because of delays securing the contract and the State's early desire not to duplicate the work of PARCC, the first set of the State's benchmark assessments will not be available until SY 2014-2015.

On July 22, 2013, Georgia announced that it was withdrawing from the PARCC assessment consortium. Previously, Georgia was a governing member of PARCC and planned to implement PARCC assessments in SY 2014-2015. Georgia has stated its plans to develop its own high-quality assessments aligned to its new standards.

Dissemination of resources and professional development

As it began the transition to CCGPS in SY 2011-2012, Georgia focused on introducing teachers, principals, and LEA staff to CCGPS and its relationship to the previous standards, Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). As teachers began implementing the CCGPS in SY 2012-2013, the State shifted its professional learning content and delivery methods to better meet teachers' specific needs. For example, the State is working to provide targeted professional development through its monthly webinars for teachers with specific populations of students, such as English learners and students with disabilities. GaDOE also continues to provide support to teachers via grade-band wikis that provide educators with the opportunity to submit questions to the GaDOE CCGPS team and share resources with educators across the State.

In preparation for SY 2012-2013, the State released curriculum materials, including units and lesson plans, for every subject and grade. These resources are available in the State's LDS so teachers are able to use student performance data to identify instructional materials that can be used to target areas of need in student performance, while remaining in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. To ensure the instructional units are high quality, the State conducts a thorough review by GaDOE staff, as well as a review by Georgia educators. In addition to State-level resources, GaDOE continued working with each of the 16 RESAs to provide support in ELA and mathematics to teachers and principals across the State. In summer 2013, the State held ELA and mathematics summer

academies that focused on grade-level instructional practices and resources to support implementation of CCGPS. Over 750 teachers from across the State attended the ELA academies and over 1,200 teachers attended the mathematics academy.

In March 2013, GaDOE launched the TRL as part of its LDS that allows teachers to quickly find and access CCGPS resources. As of March 2013, the TRL included 18,000 digital resources and the State continues to add resources as they become available. Throughout spring and summer 2013, the State's technology team provided training to LEAs across the State on using the new resource.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Georgia demonstrated a commitment to the transition to the CCGPS by providing educators with a variety of resources, professional development, and individual support to help implement the CCGPS. To assess the quality of the State's resources for CCGPS implementation, GOSA conducted an evaluation that included surveys of educators and LEA administrators on the State's CCGPS resources in November 2012. The survey asked respondents to rate GaDOE's types of supports made available to educators, types of training offered to educators, and a rating of educators' level of understanding and readiness to implement CCGPS. Many respondents found the State's resources helpful. As a result of the surveys, the State revised several of its CCGPS resources; for example, GaDOE modified its ELA materials to ensure they met the needs of educators. As mentioned previously, the State will continue funding the RESA specialists through SY 2013-2014.

As mentioned above, the State is delayed in the roll out of both the formative assessment toolkit and benchmark assessments. However, despite these delays, the State has released the first half of the formative assessment toolkit, and is on track to complete development of both systems for use in SY 2014-2015.

Finally, the State withdrew from the PARCC assessment consortium on July 22, 2013. The Department looks forward to additional conversations with the State regarding its plans for moving forward in SY 2014-2015.

Data Systems to Support Instruction

Statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS) and instructional improvement systems (IIS) enhance the ability of States to effectively manage, use, and analyze education data to support instruction. Race to the Top States are working to ensure that their data systems are accessible to key stakeholders and that the data support educators and decision-makers in their efforts to improve instruction and increase student achievement.

Fully implementing a statewide longitudinal data system

Georgia reported that it had a robust K-12 data system prior to the Race to the Top grant. In Year 2, Georgia's IIS Advisory Committee recognized that many LEAs had already invested in local LDS or IIS systems. Thus, the State decided to use an SLDS "tunnel" to provide all LEAs with single sign-in access to the State IIS to allow LEAs with existing LDS and IIS systems to continue using their systems while also providing access to State resources.

Accessing and using State data

In December 2012, Georgia finished developing its P-20 SLDS, referred to as Georgia's Academic and Workforce Analysis and Research Data System (GA-AWARDS), at the center of which is a data hub that allows for collection of data across State agencies, including educational agencies, non-educational agencies (*e.g.*, Georgia Department of Labor), and non-State agencies (*e.g.*, National Student Clearinghouse). After the basic infrastructure and programming were complete, the six partner agencies began populating the system with two years of data. These data were used to conduct quality-assurance testing to ensure that the system was designed and functioning appropriately. Once this was complete, GA-AWARDS moved from the development stage to the data and reporting stage. For example, GOSA developed dashboards with data from all agencies to publish the Georgia Educational Report Card, which includes annual accountability reports for GaDOE, DECAL, the Technical College

System of Georgia, University System of Georgia, and the Professional Standards Commission.

Using data to improve instruction

In SY 2012-2013, all LEAs across the State were able to access the IIS. On average, over 40,000 teachers access the system each month. In spring 2013, the State launched the TRL which includes resources on the CCGPS and is accessible through the IIS. The TRL allows teachers to assign specific resources and assignments to students based on their individual needs. Teachers are able to rate each resource and leave comments that are visible to other teachers. The State continues to design, pilot, and roll out additional features of the IIS. For example, in March 2013, the State piloted the "Wall," a collaborative space in the IIS where teachers can post and share lesson plans, resources, and other best practices with other teachers across the State.

Throughout SY 2012-2013, GaDOE continued to support LEAs across the State through its instructional technology specialists who provide support and training for LEAs on an ongoing basis, including onsite training for teachers in the use of the IIS tools. Additionally, GaDOE worked closely with superintendents, LEA administrators, principals, and teachers to determine their needs for the new IIRs. Based on the feedback and LEA requirements, GaDOE developed the first generation IIRs and is developing the next set of IIRs. In Year 3, GaDOE released the High School Transition Reports for all LEAs, a new IIR, which allows schools to track students on End-of-Course tests and the Georgia High School Graduation Test to ensure that

Performance measure	Race to the Top plan subcriterion	Actual: SY 2011-2012	Actual: SY 2012-2013	Target from Georgia's approved plan: SY 2012-2013
Percent of all teachers accessing new Instructional Improvement Reports (IIR) through teacher portal	(C)(3)	N/A	39%	25%
Percent of LEAs with instructional improvement systems (IIS)	(C)(3)	100%	100%	100%
Percent of principals accessing new IIR through administrator portal	(C)(3)	N/A	72%	25%
Percent of science teachers accessing new IIR through teacher portal	(C)(3)	N/A	39%	25%
Percent of teachers in high-poverty, high-minority (or both) schools accessing new IIR through teacher portal	(C)(3)	N/A	35%	25%
Percent of math teachers accessing new IIR through teacher portal	(C)(3)	N/A	39%	25%

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at www.rtt-apr.us.

Data Systems to Support Instruction

students have met requirements for graduation and are on track for college enrollment in Georgia IHEs.

The State contracted with a vendor to build the electronic platform for the educator evaluation system. The system rolled out to participating LEAs in SY 2012-2013. GaDOE provided training on the platform as part of its larger teacher and leader evaluation training in July 2012 using a train-the-trainer model. All of the training materials, as well as videos of best practices, are available in the electronic platform. In Year 3, the State analyzed reported issues with the educator evaluation electronic platform and concluded that most were related to insufficient training. As a result, the State hired additional personnel to provide individualized support to participating LEAs and created additional resources for educator use.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Overall, Georgia made substantial progress against its plans in this reform area. The State continued work on its SLDS, and regularly engaged stakeholders to oversee the development of the various components of the GA-AWARDS system, as well as the IIS and IIRs.

In Year 3, the State launched several new features of its IIS and saw increases in the number of educators accessing the system. However, after conducting a survey of usage data from the educator evaluation electronic platform, the State discovered that many of the technical challenges were related to insufficient training. Therefore, the State will hire additional personnel to support LEA implementation of the electronic platform in SY 2013-2014.

Great Teachers and Leaders

Race to the Top States are developing comprehensive systems of educator effectiveness by supporting high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals, ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals, improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs, and providing effective supports to all educators. As part of these efforts, Race to the Top States are designing and implementing rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals; conducting annual evaluations that include timely and constructive feedback; and using evaluation information to inform professional development, compensation, promotion, retention, and tenure decisions.

Providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals

Georgia entered into State-level partnerships with TFA and TNTP to provide alternative certification and recruiting services to increase the number of effective teachers in the lowest-performing schools. In Year 3, TNTP was able to place 101 candidates in Atlanta Public Schools, Gwinnett County Schools, DeKalb County Schools, Fulton County Schools, Muscogee County Schools, Meriwether County Schools, and Richmond County Schools. TFA placed 180 candidates in schools in Atlanta Public Schools, Clayton County Schools, and Fulton County Schools. In addition to placing candidates, TFA received approval from the Professional Standards Commission to become an alternative certification provider in Georgia in July 2012.

Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance

Teacher and leader evaluation system

In SY 2012-2013, Georgia piloted its educator evaluation system with all schools in its participating LEAs. The teacher observation

protocol, Teacher Assessment on Performance Standards (TAPS) is composed of five domains and 10 performance standards. The leader observation protocol, Leader Assessment on Performance Standards (LAPS) is composed of four domains and eight performance standards. These protocols provide evaluators with a qualitative, rubric-based evaluation method by which they can measure teacher and leader performance. TAPS and LAPS include observations and documentation of practice, and use performance rubrics to guide multiple formative assessments and one summative assessment during a school year. Instead of a stand-alone measure as originally planned, Georgia incorporated the survey component of the evaluation system into the observation protocol in SY 2012-2013. The State made significant revisions to the survey prior to implementation in Year 3 due to a number of previously identified technical issues with the tool. After conducting analyses of its SY 2012-2013 data, Georgia found that the revised surveys were highly correlated with the TAPS and LAPS standards.

Georgia chose to use a student growth percentile model based on State assessments to measure student growth for teachers of tested grades and subjects. The State was slated to build the model with the vendor and participating LEAs by October 2011, and roll out the model as part of the overall new evaluation system by March 2012.

Great Teachers and Leaders

However, the State released student growth percentile information to participating LEAs in fall 2013. The State reported that it took longer than anticipated to implement the student growth model for End-of-Course tests. To capture student growth for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects, the State will use LEA-developed SLOs.

In December 2012, the State released its Year 1 pilot report that included an analysis of the TAPS and LAPS observation protocols and feedback from the 23 focus groups that were held during the SY 2011-2012 pilot. The focus groups covered each aspect of the evaluation implementation, including orientation, training, evaluation components, and the impact of the teacher and leader evaluation system. The State continued to hold focus groups with educators in SY 2012-2013 and held regional feedback meetings in January and May 2013. The State used this feedback to update the electronic platform and address areas that require additional training and support. GaDOE also established an SLO Advisory Committee, which includes key State and LEA representatives, to review successes and challenges with SLO implementation and to provide guidance on next steps and the most effective supports for LEAs.

In spring 2013, the State was approved to delay full implementation of its evaluation system for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects by one year, from SY 2013-2014 to SY 2014-2015. The State reported that it reached this decision after conducting analyses of its SLO data from the SY 2011-2012 pilot and the first semester of SY 2012-2013, as well as the educator feedback data from the spring 2012 focus groups and surveys, mid-year 2012-2013 survey, and five regional feedback sessions. This analysis revealed the need for continued training around the development and implementation of SLOs. Although the Department remains concerned about the State's implementation of its teacher and leader evaluation system and acknowledges that the changes are a result of delays and ongoing implementation and capacity challenges at GaDOE, the Department approved the State's request because the proposal reflected a commitment to high-quality implementation, responded to the concerns identified in its pilot data, and maintained a commitment to the goals laid out in Georgia's original Race to the Top plan.

To ensure an emphasis on data analysis and the quality of implementation, Georgia established TIC TOC meetings that include GaDOE, the Governor's Office, and GOSA leadership to focus on implementation of the teacher and leader evaluation system. To date, the State has reported that the meetings are useful in directing results and making timely mid-course corrections.

The State conducted training for LEAs and educators for SY 2012-2013 implementation of the evaluation system in July 2012. In addition to training on the purpose and components of teacher and leader evaluation systems, these sessions included an introduction to the electronic platform that was used to collect and analyze teacher, principal, and evaluator data. The State continued to provide training and individualized technical assistance to participating LEAs through the 20 evaluation trainers/field staff in SY 2012-2013. To facilitate development of SLOs, the State held content specific training weeks for teachers to develop assessment items throughout SY 2012-

2013 and in summer 2013. The items are housed in an electronic warehouse/database that can be used across the State. To support SLO implementation in every Race to the Top participating LEA and other pilot LEAs, GaDOE conducted a three-day training on developing rigorous pre- and post-assessments. In addition, in response to implementation challenges GaDOE conducted training on analyzing pre-assessment data and setting appropriate growth targets when developing SLOs for use in SY 2013-2014.

Georgia participated in a June 2013 RSN convening titled "Don't SLO Down" that built on the work of monthly RSN phone calls to help States develop actionable, sustainable solutions to their most urgent SLO challenges. The Georgia State team: (1) identified strategies for promoting high-quality assessment design and/or selection; (2) identified effective and efficient communication, engagement and professional development strategies and practices for building teacher and principal knowledge and capacity to implement SLOs; (3) identified methods for assessing the quality of SLO implementation and the credibility of the SLO measure; (4) shared and reflected on the latest insights and promising practices from experts and peers to inform SLO policy making and implementation in SY 2013-2014; (5) created a community of practice that lasts beyond the term of the Race to the Top grant program; and (6) created materials for the enhanced SLO Toolkit that will be useful to all States considering or implementing SLOs.

Performance-based pay

The State indicated that it will no longer implement the performance-based compensation system included in its Race to the Top application. In its application, Georgia described a plan to implement several changes in SY 2013-2014: 1) tie step increases for teachers to teachers' performance on the rubrics-based evaluation tool; 2) tie annual salary increases for principals to each principal's Leader Effectiveness Measures (LEM); 3) develop career ladder opportunities for all teachers that allow teachers to take on additional responsibilities for additional pay, while remaining in the classroom; 4) award individual performance bonuses to all teachers on the basis of the Teacher Effectiveness Measure (TEM) and to school leaders on the basis of LEM; and 5) make additional individual bonuses available to core teachers in high-need schools if they reduce the achievement gap, defined as the difference in achievement between any student sub-group in a teacher's classroom and the highest-performing sub-group in the State. Instead of implementing the performance-based compensation system described in its application, in SY 2013-2014, Georgia stated it intends to provide one-time bonuses to teachers and leaders for reducing the achievement gap; and in SY 2014-2015, Georgia intends to provide one-time bonuses to teachers and leaders based on their performance ratings. This change in scope to the State's plan significantly decreases or eliminates reform in one of the reform areas and results in the grantee's failure to comply substantially with the terms related to this portion of its Race to the Top award. Therefore in July 2013, the Department initiated withholding of the State's Race to the Top funds associated with performance-based compensation. In order to terminate the withholding of those funds, the State must provide a plan and evidence, including sufficient legal

Great Teachers and Leaders

authority, if necessary, to implement the full scope of the performance-based compensation system described in its approved application and Scope of Work.⁹

Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals

In April 2012, the State awarded one Relocation Bonus Grant to Thomas County for \$360,000 over two years. The Relocation Bonus Grant is an initiative designed to promote the equitable distribution of teachers and school leaders. With the grant, Thomas County was able to attract a new principal, as well as Latin, mathematics, health care sciences, social studies, English, Advanced Placement biology, Spanish, and special education teachers. Due to low LEA interest, the State has chosen to discontinue this program.¹⁰

Improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs

In Year 3, Georgia convened the Preparation Program Effectiveness Measure (PPEM) task force, made up of representatives from the Governor's office, GaDOE, LEAs, and IHEs, to propose measures to include in the new preparation program report card. The task force carefully reviewed all proposed measures and made recommendations for the teacher and school leader PPEM. One of the recommendations was to improve the content knowledge component of the teacher PPEM by including a content-specific performance assessment that would be administered during a candidate's student teaching. In spring 2013, nine IHEs began piloting a new content assessment.

The Georgia Professional Standards Commission convened a Tiered Certification task force in December 2012 to begin developing an Induction Certificate and held 13 focus group sessions in May and June 2013 to review the work of the task force and provide critical feedback.

The Department notes that the delays in the implementation of the educator evaluation system, described above, have had implications on the State's ability to implement other aspects of its Race to the Top plan, including improving effectiveness of teacher and leader preparation programs and implementation of career ladder and tiered certification guidelines. Specifically, although the State maintains its commitment to implement these initiatives, the PPEM report cards will not be made available until SY 2015-2016 one year later than outlined in its Race to the Top application, and the State reports that it will begin phasing in implementation of the new certification levels and career ladder in SY 2014-2015, with full implementation in SY 2016-2017.

Quality Plus Leadership Academy

The Quality Plus Leadership Academy is a leadership development and induction program developed in Gwinnett County that aims to increase student achievement by identifying, recruiting, and preparing prospective schools leaders and developing, training, and supporting them to become highly effective instructional leaders. The program includes a required curriculum, 60-day residency component and mentoring/coaching for two years. As part of its Race to the Top application, GaDOE committed to expanding the program to four additional LEAs that are large enough to have sufficient internal capacity to implement aspects of the program. During SY 2012-2013, DeKalb County Public Schools held their first New Principal and Aspiring Leader Academies. Henry County Public Schools will launch its Five State G.O.L.D. Academy for leaders in SY 2013-2014.

Providing effective support to teachers and principals

To support participating LEAs in developing and implementing new induction and mentoring programs, Georgia hired a State induction specialist in fall 2011. The induction specialist supports participating LEAs by providing technical assistance, organizing opportunities for collaboration with other LEAs and IHEs, and facilitating program evaluation and revision based on the guidance that was created by the Induction Task Force. The State reports that all participating LEAs have benefitted from the technical support of the induction specialist and have begun to make adjustments for their programs for implementation in SY 2013-2014.

In summer 2012, GaDOE convened a statewide cross-disciplinary design team that included early career and experienced principals, superintendents, university faculty, staff from external education organizations, and leaders from State agencies to create additional resources for principal mentor training that will be provided as a resource for all GaDOE LEAs. The State also made awards under the Innovation Fund program to encourage collaboration between IHEs and LEAs to provide teacher induction support programs.

⁹ For more information, see Georgia's July 30, 2013 amendment letter at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/georgia-10.pdf>.

¹⁰ For more information, see Georgia's August 21, 2012 amendment letter at: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/georgia-7.pdf>.

Great Teachers and Leaders

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

In Year 3, the Department continued to have concerns about Georgia's ability to meet its commitments in the "Great Teachers and Leaders" section of its plan. On July 2, 2012, the Department placed goals 1-4 in Section D of Georgia's approved Scope of Work, related to its teacher and leader evaluation systems, on high-risk status. As stated in the July 2, letter, the Department "is concerned about the overall strategic planning, evaluation, and project management for that system, which includes decisions regarding the quality of the tools and measures used during the educator evaluation pilot and the scalability of the supports the State offered to participating districts." The State's request to delay full, high-stakes implementation of its evaluation system for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects due to its preliminary data analyses and educator feedback is evidence of ongoing implementation and capacity challenges in Georgia. In response to these challenges with implementation, the State is creating

additional guidance documents, conducting additional trainings on setting appropriate growth targets and effective implementation of SLOs, and providing intensive technical assistance to individual LEAs to develop multi-year implementation plans for SLOs in SY 2013-2014. The Department looks forward to learning about the success of these strategies. These delays also have implications on other activities such as the PPEM report cards and tiered certification system. Additionally, as a result of the delays described above, the State did not meet its Year 3 grant targets for improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance or ensuring the equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals.

Georgia made strides in other aspects of this education reform area. The State's partnership with TFA and TNTP provided alternative pathways for teacher certification. The State's induction specialist has continued to provide support to participating LEAs as they implement new teacher and principal induction programs in SY 2013-2014.

Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

Race to the Top States are supporting LEAs' implementation of far-reaching reforms to turn around lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of four school intervention models.¹¹

Support for the lowest-achieving schools

All participating LEAs with lowest-achieving schools signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with the State in October 2011, which contained commitments from LEAs to implement one of the four reform models and the State's non-negotiable programmatic initiatives. The programmatic initiatives include 60 minutes of common planning time for teachers per week, optimization of the use of existing time for all students, increased learning time for those students or student sub-groups that need additional time, and a commitment to hire at least one full-time mathematics coach for each lowest-achieving school. In Year 2, the State continued to work with LEAs that struggled to meet the non-negotiable requirements of the MOU and resolved all outstanding issues.

In SY 2012-2013, Georgia implemented Indistar as a project management tool for its school improvement specialists and educators in the lowest-achieving schools. Indistar allows school-based educators to set quality indicators, assess progress and assign tasks, as well as capture coaching comments and match them to indicators. Schools can create short-term action plans to implement indicators and monitor implementation of the improvement plan. When schools report that something is complete, they must upload documentation, such as meeting minutes, agendas, or assessment data, to prove that they have met that indicator. The 2012 Summer Leadership Academies (see below) included training on Indistar. School improvement specialists continued to support each lowest-achieving school in Year 3. As part of their monitoring, school improvement specialists review tasks in Indistar to ensure schools are implementing their plans and

¹¹ Race to the Top States' plans include supporting their LEAs in turning around the lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models:

- **Turnaround model:** Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50 percent of the staff and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/ time and budgeting) to fully implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.
- **Restart model:** Convert a school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process.
- **School closure:** Close a school and enroll the students who attended that school in other schools in the district that are higher achieving.
- **Transformation model:** Implement each of the following strategies: (1) replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness, (2) institute comprehensive instructional reforms, (3) increase learning time and create community-oriented schools, and (4) provide operational flexibility and sustained support.

Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

provide feedback to schools through coaching comments. To support the school improvement specialists, the State has held several two-day Instructional Coach Academies. In addition, school improvement specialists attended various training events to improve their practice and worked closely with other offices at GaDOE to support schools with implementation of the LDS and CCGPS.

The State opened two Performance Learning Centers (PLCs) in Floyd and Richmond counties in SY 2011-2012 and a third PLC in Carrollton City in SY 2012-2013 to help students recover credits and graduate high school. In SY 2012-2013, the three PLCs graduated a total of 64 students.

Also during Year 3, the State continued the Summer Leadership Academies that provide support and professional development for teachers and principals working in the State's lowest-achieving schools. The theme of the 2013 Summer Leadership Academies was "Collective Commitment to Ensuring College and Career Readiness for Georgia's Students." Participants focused on how to best collaborate to sustain reform efforts with teacher selection, turnaround principal selection, job-embedded professional learning and support, and district planning. The 2013 Summer Leadership Academy included 800 district and school leaders, representing 91 districts.

The State contracted with a vendor to conduct resource allocation analyses for five LEAs—Fulton County Schools, Hall County Schools, Marietta City Public Schools, Treutlen County Schools, and Vidalia City Schools. Although the State experienced delays in signing the contract,

which will ultimately delay the completion of the analyses, the State held a workgroup meeting in December 2012 for the five LEAs participating in the project that included a discussion of school-level resource use and human capital. LEAs participating in the project incorporated the guidance and findings in their SY 2013-2014 budgets, rather than in their SY 2012-2013 budgets as originally planned. The State launched the second phase of the project in October 2012; this phase includes a review of GOSA, GaDOE, and the State Office of Planning and Budget.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

During Year 3, Georgia continued to provide support and professional development to its lowest-achieving schools through the Summer Leadership Academies and the implementation of Indistar. To ensure high-quality support for its lowest-achieving schools, GaDOE has provided additional training and support to school improvement specialists. The lead school improvement specialist and GaDOE staff are able to monitor the work of the school improvement specialists through their coaching comments and interactions with schools in Indistar to ensure they are providing high-quality support.

The three PLCs in Carrollton City, Floyd, and Richmond were successful in graduating 64 students in SY 2012-2013. Despite this success, the State continued to report challenges with the Richmond County PLC, including significantly lower attendance rates than the Floyd and Carrollton City PLCs.

Emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

Race to the Top States are committed to providing a high-quality plan with a rigorous course of study in STEM. In doing so, each State must cooperate with STEM-capable community partners in order to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines, in promoting effective and relevant instruction, and in offering applied learning opportunities for students. A focus on STEM furthers the goal of preparing more students for an advanced study in sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including among underrepresented groups such as female students.

State's STEM initiatives

GaDOE partnered with the Georgia Institute of Technology's CEISMC to provide professional development for teachers in grades 3-12 in STEM content and content delivery skills. The State has six CEISMC STEM projects that: (1) provide online professional development to STEM teachers in STEM best practices; (2) develop

instructional toolkits for administrators and teachers to support the effective use of technology in a standards-based classroom; (3) expand the Georgia Intern-Fellowships for Teachers (GIFT) program; (4) provide a new operations research-based mathematics course as a Math 4 option; (5) use robotics/engineering design to create an integrated STEM course; and (6) offer advanced courses in college-level Calculus II and III through video conferencing.

Emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

During SY 2012-2013, CEISMC released several courses and provided many professional development opportunities for teachers. CEISMC offered three project-based inquiry learning courses and three robotics courses in spring 2013; 13 teachers enrolled in and completed the courses. In fall 2013, the courses will be offered through Georgia Institute of Technology's Division of Professional Education. As of March 2013, two new teacher courses were available in the Technology Toolkit. Ultimately, the State plans to have six courses; four for teachers about integrating technology in the classroom and two for administrators about using and leading technology use in schools.

In summer 2012, 101 teachers participated in the GIFT program, including 23 teachers from participating LEAs, and were placed in internships in mathematics, science, industry, or university placements. Participants in the program created lesson plans, which are shared with GaDOE for wider distribution. Georgia placed 32 teachers from participating LEAs in internships in summer 2013, surpassing its target of 30 teachers. The participating teachers were placed in science museums, industry, and university settings with the intent of bringing real workforce STEM skills and tools back to their classrooms.

The Fast Forward Project

The State provided LEAs with a variety of new STEM resources, including Fast Forward, a new original series of video shorts aimed at high school students from Georgia Public Broadcasting. The Fast Forward project consists of 16 video segments that help teachers translate STEM classroom concepts into real world applications for their students and demonstrate how employees in businesses and organizations across Georgia are applying the STEM subjects in their jobs. The videos feature teachable moments, which can also be used independently of the larger videos in the classroom.

The State identified one school in each of the Atlanta, Rockdale, and Spalding Public Schools as part of the first cohort to implement the nine-week Robotics and Engineering course in fall 2012. CEISMC hosted a summer institute for those schools, as well as the second cohort of schools that will begin implementing the program in SY 2013-2014. In its approved Scope of Work, the State planned to develop the program in SY 2010-2011, and implement in three schools beginning in SY 2011-2012. The State is approximately one year delayed.

In SY 2012-2013, facilitated online courses in Calculus II and III were available for students and offered through the Georgia Virtual School. The State reports that 317 students are enrolled in Calculus II as part of the Distance Calculus program, including 95 students from Race to the Top participating LEAs. Post-Advanced Placement chemistry and physics courses will be offered in fall 2013.

UTeach Institute

The State entered into an agreement with the UTeach Institute to recruit and train undergraduate mathematics and science majors as teachers. The State awarded grants to three geographically diverse universities—Columbus State University, University of West Georgia, and Southern Polytechnic University—to implement the UTeach programs. In Year 3, there were 235 students enrolled in the program across the universities.

Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Georgia has integrated STEM initiatives across education reform areas. The State has entered various partnerships to support its STEM initiatives and made progress in Year 3 to implement some key STEM tasks, such as expansion of the GIFT program, the development of the eighth-grade robotics and engineering course, and the UTeach Institute. Overall, however, CEISMC is still delayed in several of its STEM projects.

Looking Ahead to Year 4

Georgia will continue providing support to all LEAs as they implement CCGPS. The State will offer PLU virtual courses to all educators on CCGPS, including more targeted courses for specific student populations. The RESA specialists will also continue to provide individualized ELA and mathematics support across the State. The State plans to add items to the TRL, ensuring teachers across the State have access to high-quality CCGPS-aligned instructional

resources. In SY 2013-2014, the State will continue to roll out its formative assessment toolkit and will pilot the first phase of its new benchmark assessments before completing the system in SY 2014-2015. The Department also looks forward to additional conversations with the State regarding its plans for implementing new high-quality summative assessments in SY 2014-2015 as a result of its withdrawal from the PARCC assessment consortium.

Looking Ahead to Year 4

During Year 4, the State must make significant strides with its educator evaluation system in order to implement the system with fidelity across the State in SY 2014-2015. Georgia must address the capacity and implementation challenges that resulted in its approved amendment to delay full implementation of its evaluation system for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects by one year, from SY 2013-2014 to SY 2014-2015. In addition, the State must scale up the supports it provides to LEAs implementing the evaluation system to ensure fidelity of implementation and quality feedback and support for educators. To support LEAs, GaDOE will form an educator evaluation team in each of the 16 RESAs that will include evaluation system specialists, SLO specialists, and electronic platform specialists. The State must also continue implementation of its educator engagement plan, and assess the success of that plan in ensuring sufficient communication with all stakeholders. Finally, the State must ensure timely analysis of its educator evaluation data, determine the calculation methodology for final teacher and leader ratings, and address implementation challenges. Overall, the State has not yet demonstrated sufficient progress against

its approved plan, and therefore remains on high-risk status for this section of its Race to the Top plan.

Additionally, during Year 4, Georgia will continue to build upon and refine its existing systems related to its data systems and school intervention initiatives. The State will complete development of its P-20 longitudinal data system and will continue adding additional features to its IIS and IIRs.

During Year 4, Georgia also plans to scale up its support of LEAs through its new ERES that provide oversight and targeted technical assistance to participating LEAs on Race to the Top implementation. The State plans to gather additional information from LEAs, principals, and teachers to determine the specific supports they need in order to successfully implement Race to the Top reforms. GaDOE has also begun working on a sustainability plan to support the Race to the Top reforms once funding is no longer available.

Budget

For the State's expenditures through June 30, 2013, please see the APR Data Display at <http://www.rtt-apr.us>.

For State budget information, see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/state-scope-of-work/index.html>.

For the State's fiscal accountability and oversight report, see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/performance-fiscal-accountability.html>.

Glossary

Alternative routes to certification: Pathways to certification that are authorized under the State's laws or regulations that allow the establishment and operation of teacher and administrator preparation programs in the State, and that have the following characteristics (in addition to standard features such as demonstration of subject-matter mastery, and high-quality instruction in pedagogy and in addressing the needs of all students in the classroom including English learners and students with disabilities): (1) can be provided by various types of qualified providers, including both institutions of higher education (IHEs) and other providers operating independently from institutions of higher education; (2) are selective in accepting candidates; (3) provide supervised, school-based experiences and ongoing support such as effective mentoring and coaching; (4) significantly limit the amount of coursework required or have options to test out of courses; and (5) upon completion, award the same level of certification that traditional preparation programs award upon completion.

Amendment requests: In the event that adjustments are needed to a State's approved Race to the Top plan, the grantee must submit an amendment request to the Department for consideration. Such requests may be prompted by an updated assessment of needs in that area, revised cost estimates, lessons learned from prior implementation efforts, or other circumstances. Grantees may propose revisions to goals, activities, timelines, budget, or annual targets, provided that the following conditions are met: the revisions do not result in the grantee's failure to comply with the terms and conditions of this award and the program's statutory and regulatory provisions; the revisions do not change the overall scope and objectives of the approved proposal; and the Department and the grantee mutually agree in writing to the revisions. The Department has sole discretion to determine whether to approve the revisions or modifications. If approved by the Department, a letter with a description of the amendment and any relevant conditions will be sent notifying the grantee of approval. (For additional information please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/index.html>.)

America COMPETES Act elements: The twelve indicators specified in section 6401(e)(2)(D) of the America COMPETES Act are: (1) a unique statewide student identifier that does not permit a student to be individually identified by users of the system; (2) student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information; (3) student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete P–16 education programs; (4) the capacity to communicate with higher education data systems; (5) a State data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability; (6) yearly test records of individual students with respect to assessments under section 1111(b) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)); (7) information on students not tested by grade and subject; (8) a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students; (9) student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned; (10) student-level college-readiness test scores; (11) information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary

school to postsecondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework; and (12) other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA):

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the ARRA, historic legislation designed to stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical sectors, including education. The Department of Education received a \$97.4 billion appropriation.

Annual Performance Report (APR): Report submitted by each grantee with outcomes to date, performance against the measures established in its application, and other relevant data. The Department uses data included in the APRs to provide Congress and the public with detailed information regarding each State's progress on meeting the goals outlined in its application. The annual State APRs are found at www.rtt-apr.us.

College- and career-ready standards: State-developed standards that build toward college and career readiness by the time students graduate from high school.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS): Kindergarten through twelfth grade (K–12) English language arts and mathematics standards developed in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders including governors, chief State school officers, content experts, teachers, school administrators, and parents. (For additional information, please see <http://www.corestandards.org/>).

The **education reform areas** for Race to the Top: (1) Standards and Assessments: Adopting rigorous college- and career-ready standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and career; (2) Data Systems to Support Instruction: Building data systems that measure student success and support educators and decision-makers in their efforts to improve instruction and increase student achievement; (3) Great Teachers and Great Leaders: Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals; and (4) Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools: Supporting local educational agencies' (LEAs') implementation of far-reaching reforms to turn around lowest-achieving schools by implementing school intervention models.

Effective teacher: A teacher whose students achieve acceptable rates (*e.g.*, at least one grade level in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Supplemental measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance.

High-minority school: A school designation defined by the State in a manner consistent with its Teacher Equity Plan. The State should provide, in its Race to the Top application, the definition used.

Glossary

High-poverty school: Consistent with section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii) of the ESEA, a school in the highest quartile of schools in the State with respect to poverty level, using a measure of poverty determined by the State.

Highly effective teacher: A teacher whose students achieve high rates (*e.g.*, one and one-half grade levels in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Supplemental measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance or evidence of leadership roles (which may include mentoring or leading professional learning communities) that increase the effectiveness of other teachers in the school or LEA.

Instructional improvement systems (IIS): Technology-based tools and other strategies that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with meaningful support and actionable data to systemically manage continuous instructional improvement, including such activities as instructional planning; gathering information (*e.g.*, through formative assessments (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements), interim assessments (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements), summative assessments, and looking at student work and other student data); analyzing information with the support of rapid-time (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements) reporting; using this information to inform decisions on appropriate next instructional steps; and evaluating the effectiveness of the actions taken. Such systems promote collaborative problem-solving and action planning; they may also integrate instructional data with student-level data such as attendance, discipline, grades, credit accumulation, and student survey results to provide early warning indicators of a student's risk of educational failure.

Invitational priorities: Areas of focus that the Department invited States to address in their Race to the Top applications. Applicants did not earn extra points for addressing these focus areas, but many grantees chose to create and fund activities to advance reforms in these areas.

Involved LEAs: LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement those specific portions of the State's plan that necessitate full or nearly-full statewide implementation, such as transitioning to a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Involved LEAs do not receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that it must subgrant to LEAs in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA, but States may provide other funding to involved LEAs under the State's Race to the Top grant in a manner that is consistent with the State's application.

No-Cost Extension Amendment Request: A no-cost extension amendment request provides grantees with additional time to spend their grants (until September 2015) to accomplish the reform goals, deliverables and commitments in its Race to the Top application and approved Scope of Work. A grantee may make a no-cost extension amendment request to extend work beyond the final project year, consistent with the Amendment Principles (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/grant-amendment-submission-process-oct-4-2011.pdf>) as well as the additional elements outlined in the Department Review section of the Amendment Requests with No Cost Extension Guidance and Principles document (<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/no-cost-extension-submission-process.pdf>).

Participating LEAs: LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plan, as specified in each LEA's agreement with the State. Each participating LEA that receives funding under Title I, Part A will receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that the State must subgrant to LEAs, based on the LEA's relative share of Title I, Part A allocations in the most recent year at the time of the award, in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA. Any participating LEA that does not receive funding under Title I, Part A (as well as one that does) may receive funding from the State's other 50 percent of the grant award, in accordance with the State's plan.

The **Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC):** One of two consortia of States awarded grants under the Race to the Top Assessment program to develop next-generation assessment systems that are aligned to common K-12 English language and mathematics standards and that will accurately measure student progress toward college and career readiness. (For additional information please see <http://www.parcconline.org/>.)

Persistently lowest-achieving schools: As determined by the State, (1) any Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that (a) is among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring or the lowest-achieving five Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years; and (2) any secondary school that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I funds that (a) is among the lowest-achieving five percent of secondary schools or the lowest-achieving five secondary schools in the State that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years. To identify the lowest-achieving schools, a State must take into account both (1) the academic achievement of the "all students" group in a school in terms of proficiency on the State's assessments under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA in reading/language arts and mathematics combined; and (2) the school's lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the "all students" group. (For additional information please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>.)

Glossary

Qualifying evaluation systems: Educator evaluation systems that meet the following criteria: rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that: (1) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor, and (2) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement.

Reform Support Network (RSN): In partnership with the Implementation and Support Unit (ISU), the RSN offers collective and individualized technical assistance and resources to grantees of the Race to the Top education reform initiative. The RSN's purpose is to support the Race to the Top grantees as they implement reforms in education policy and practice, learn from each other and build their capacity to sustain these reforms.

The **School Improvement Grants (SIG)** program is authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the ESEA. Funds are awarded to States to help them turn around persistently lowest-achieving schools. (For additional information please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>.)

School intervention models: A State's Race to the Top plan describes how it will support its LEAs in turning around the lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models:

- **Turnaround model:** Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50 percent of the staff and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time and budgeting) to fully implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.
- **Restart model:** Convert a school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process.
- **School closure:** Close a school and enroll the students who attended that school in other schools in the district that are higher achieving.
- **Transformation model:** Implement each of the following strategies: (1) replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness, (2) institute comprehensive instructional reforms, (3) increase learning time and create community-oriented schools, and (4) provide operational flexibility and sustained support.

Single sign-on: A user authentication process that permits a user to enter one name and password in order to access multiple applications.

The **SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced):** One of two consortia of States awarded grants under the Race to the Top Assessment program to develop next-generation assessment systems that are aligned to common K-12 English language and mathematics standards and that will accurately measure student progress toward college and career readiness. (For additional information please see <http://www.k12.wa.us/SMARTER/default.aspx>.)

The **State Scope of Work:** A detailed document for the State's projects that reflects the grantee's approved Race to the Top application. The State Scope of Work includes items such as the State's specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, key personnel, and annual targets for key performance measures. (For additional information please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/state-scope-of-work/index.html>.) Additionally, all participating LEAs are required to submit Scope of Work documents, consistent with State requirements, to the State for its review and approval.

Statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS): Data systems that enhance the ability of States to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, and use education data, including individual student records. The SLDS help States, districts, schools, educators, and other stakeholders to make data-informed decisions to improve student learning and outcomes, as well as to facilitate research to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps. (For additional information please see http://nces.ed.gov/Programs/SLDS/about_SLDS.asp.)

Student achievement: For the purposes of this report, student achievement (1) for tested grades and subjects is (a) a student's score on the State's assessments under the ESEA; and, as appropriate, (b) other measures of student learning, such as those described in number (2) of this definition, provided they are rigorous and comparable across classrooms; and (2) for non-tested grades and subjects, alternative measures of student learning and performance such as student scores on pre-tests and end-of-course tests; student performance on English language proficiency assessments; and other measures of student achievement that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

Student growth: The change in student achievement (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements) for an individual student between two or more points in time. A State may also include other measures that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

Value-added models (VAMs): A specific type of growth model based on changes in test scores over time. VAMs are complex statistical models that generally attempt to take into account student or school background characteristics in order to isolate the amount of learning attributable to a specific teacher or school. Teachers or schools that produce more than typical or expected growth are said to "add value."