

# **Lowndes County School System**

## **FY 22 Federal Programs Policies and Procedures**



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WHERE EVERYONE FINDS THEIR FUTURE.

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### **Purpose of This Handbook**

The purpose of this standard operations procedures handbook is to provide a step-by-step, systematic approach to managing the rules and guidelines of Federal Programs (Title I, Part A, Title II, Part A, Title I, Part C, Title I, Part D, Neglected and Delinquent, Title X, Part C/McKinney-Vento Act, Title III, Part A, Title IV, Part A, School Improvement, all CARES Act and ESSR funds, and IDEA) to ensure consistent compliance. The information provided may be used by staff to ensure that Title programs are being implemented accurately and effectively.

The step-by-step approach contained in this handbook will promote uniformity in operations as employees seek to carry out official Title duties and responsibilities. The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) provides local educational agencies (LEAs) extensive guidance on the overarching requirements for federal programs via the on-site monitoring document that is used to ensure that LEAs are meeting all statutory requirements of Title programs. These specific requirements from the GaDOE document were used to create this handbook. Step-by-step procedures, local and state Board policies, and checklists are all included in this guide. All Principals will be provided a guided review of new/edited policies, procedures, and internal controls at the beginning of each school year. This will take place at one of the early monthly Administrative meetings before October 1 .





This review is directed by the person in charge of revisions to the P&P Handbook (usually the Federal Programs Director).

It is hoped that this guide will be useful to staff as they strive to comply with all federal programs statutory requirements. Throughout this handbook, there may be [blue hyperlinks](#) to specific items of reference.

You may follow the commands to go directly to these where appropriate.

**FY 22 Lowndes County Schools Federal Programs Staff**

Herb Hamilton	Federal Programs Director
LaVerne Rome	District Family & Community Engagement Coordinator
Sandra Wilcher	District Homeless Liaison/Student Support Coordinator
Jackie Hester	Title I Secretary/ Bookkeeper
Jeff Harrell/Lindsey Martin	Directors of Technology
Owen Prince	Director of Student Information
Mindell Downing	Director of Special Education
Randy Cooper	Director of Human Resources
Ken Overman	Assistant Superintendent of Finance
Rodney Green	Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning
Wes Taylor	Superintendent of Lowndes County Schools

Superintendent of Schools Wes Taylor	
Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning Rodney Green	
Assistant Superintendent Of Finance Ken Overman	
Director of Federal Programs & Coordinator of Professional Learning Herb Hamilton	

## **Section 1: LEA Federal Programs Monitoring Procedural Process**

### **Lowndes County School System Federal Monitoring Process**

**Title I, Part A** originated as a part of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965/No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and now resides within the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). This act provides federal funds through the Georgia Department of Education to local educational agencies (LEAs) and public schools with high percentages of poor children to help ensure that all children meet challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards. Title I, Part A provides supplemental instructional services to schools where the resident population has a higher than average concentration of low income students. The goal of Title I /ESSA is to provide **supplemental** instruction in the basic skill areas of reading, language arts, and math to educationally disadvantaged students attending schools that qualify for funding. Educationally disadvantaged students are those who are falling behind their age peers in core academic areas with emphasis on reading, language arts & writing, and/or math.

Title I mandates that the content and performance standards for Title I students reflect the same expectations generally held for all children. School reform is encouraged to support schoolwide projects. Title I programs are monitored by the state to determine the effectiveness of the entire program as well as individual student progress. It is mandated that instruction be individualized; therefore, diagnostic information must be obtained to plan each student's program.

As a part of ESSA, the purpose of the **Title II, Part A** program is to increase academic achievement by improving teacher and principal quality through Evidence-based methods and models. This program may be carried out by: increasing the number of teachers with the professional qualifications in classrooms; providing Academic Coaches to support for teachers and students in the instructional programs at the school level; increasing the number of professionally qualified principals and assistant principals in schools; and increasing the effectiveness of teachers and principals by holding LEAs and schools accountable for improvements in student academic achievement. School systems must work to ensure that all students, especially poor and minority students, have equitable opportunities to be taught by professionally qualified teachers.

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) requires that the Lowndes County School System monitor the implementation of federal programs and the expenditure of all funds associated with the programs. The specific requirements are as follows:

- The Local Education Agency (LEA)/Federal Programs Director/Special Education Director and Student Services (Title III, Immigrant) Director will conduct self-monitoring of schools and programs sufficient to ensure compliance with Title Program requirements, including Title I, Part A, Title II, Part A, Title I, Part D, Neglected and Delinquent, Title X, Part C/McKinney-Vento Act, Title III, Part A, Title IV, Part B, School Improvement and IDEA.
- The Federal Programs Director and other directors will undergo training from GaDOE and other sources to maintain proficiency in federal program compliance requirements.
- The Federal Programs Director will provide technical assistance to local schools and N&D facilities through school visits during the school year, at least once per semester.

- The Federal Programs Director/grant manager will monitor and approve all program expenditures on the requisition form to verify that all program expenditures comply with federal program requirements. This initiates the purchasing approval process and the signed requisition form by the FPD/grant manager is evidence that the expenditure meets the purchasing guidelines. (The Homeless Liaison is responsible for approving purchases specific to the Homeless grant).
- The Federal Programs Director will maintain all documentation the LEA may need for future auditing/monitoring according to the LEA Monitoring Form, which is issued annually by GaDOE. Electronic files and electronic signatures are an acceptable form of documentation for implementing/monitoring processes, procedures, and evidence.
- In years when the LEA does not receive an on-site visit, the Federal Programs Director will complete the Self-Assessment Checklist and submit it to the GaDOE.
- The LEA will undergo monitoring by GaDOE on a four-year cycle. The LEA/Federal Programs Director will participate in training and technical assistance updates as provided by GaDOE prior to the monitoring visit.
- After the on-site monitoring visit, the LEA will receive a comprehensive monitoring report which will contain recommendations, findings, and required actions that together provide an analysis of the implementation of the LEA's federal programs. If a corrective action plan is required, the LEA/Federal Programs Director will respond in a timely manner with a corrective action plan which must be approved by GaDOE. Implementation of the Corrective Action Plan will be monitored by the appropriate Education Program Specialist.

Monitoring is an essential component of ensuring that all facets of federal programs are being implemented as prescribed by ESSA. It is a process of systematically providing technical assistance and collecting data in order to provide information that can guide program implementation.

The Lowndes County School System Federal Programs Department makes use of monitoring as a means of regular observation and recording of activities taking place in the system. Critical to this process is the feedback provided to schools that can assist in improving student academic achievement. District monitoring addresses the following:

- Ensuring that all federal program activities are carried out in accordance to federal compliance guidelines
- Equipment usage monitoring
- Academic monitoring
- Budgetary monitoring
- ESSA requires the State Educational Agency (SEA) to monitor the implementation of program requirements and the expenditure of federal funds. Georgia's monitoring process consists of four major components:

#### 1. Monitoring of Expenditures – Local educational agencies (LEAs) must submit

for approval an annual budget through the Consolidated Application process. Title I, Part A, Title I, Part D, Title II, Part A, Title III, Neglected and Delinquent and McKinney-Vento Education Program Specialists review each application and budget to ensure that expenditures are appropriate for the program area before approving

LEA budgets. Once budgets are approved, program specialists track how well LEAs are requesting funds for expenditures to ensure that LEAs are likely to meet the expenditure requirements. Single Audit – LEAs with single audit findings are flagged for technical assistance (see procedures on audit resolution).

2. On-site Monitoring – An SEA on-site Cross-Functional Monitoring Team visits a LEA to apply the criteria included in the LEA Monitoring Form.
3. Self-Monitoring Checklist – LEAs not receiving an on-site visit complete the Self-Assessment Checklist and submit it to the GaDOE.

The following procedures are followed for the on-site monitoring visit:

- Selection of LEAs to be monitored.
- LEAs are monitored on a four-year cycle. Approximately one-third of the LEAs are monitored each year.
- LEAs are initially randomly selected from each of Georgia's ten service areas.
- LEAs with audit or monitoring findings requiring a return of monies, or receiving a high number of complaints from parents and other stakeholders are monitored within the year of the LEA audit or monitoring report and the written complaint. For example, if an LEA is audited in FY15 for FY14 and the Division receives the report of findings in FY15 before the end of the monitoring cycle, the LEA would be included in the LEAs to receive an on-site monitoring visit. In addition, on-site monitoring outside of the scheduled cycle may be arranged as needed if an LEA evidences serious or chronic compliance problems.

GaDOE Education Program Specialists must follow the Division protocol when conducting an on-site monitoring of an LEA. A copy of all documentation is maintained with the SEA.

## **Communication and Monitoring**

Monitoring of Title I schools is a critical component of ensuring that compliance is taking place at each school. During the summer prior to the beginning of the new school year and after the Annual Title I Conference in June, the district Federal Programs Director convenes a meeting of all Title I principals during an orientation very early in the school year. Principals receive training on policies and procedures and guidance for operating a Title I program throughout the school year during designated monitoring meetings at the school.

Principals are given detailed information of expectations and copies of program guidance. Specific training is provided in all facets of Title I. A copy of the Lowndes County School System Federal Programs Policies and Procedures Handbook is provided for each principal and discussed in detail by the Federal Programs Director. This manual includes timelines, budget forms, inventory information, schoolwide/ targeted assistance implementation, Flexible Learning Plans (FLPs), Intradistrict Transfers, Family & Community Engagement

guidelines, fraud policy, and other areas of federal programs as needed. Monthly meetings are also held with all administrators, including Title I principals. Title I principals are given the opportunity to share best practices during these meetings. Phone calls and emails are a daily occurrence between the federal programs staff and system staff.

In addition to meeting with principals, federal programs staff communicates with bookkeepers and Title I family liaisons throughout the year. These communications are an opportunity to discuss federal programs in detail and also an opportunity to discuss content specific information with each of the above. Family liaisons communicate regularly with the district Family & Community Engagement Coordinator.

For purchasing goods and/or services with allocated Title I, Part A funds at the school level:

1. A LCS Title I Requisition Form will be completed by the Principal/Director/designee (A sample form is in the Appendix)
  - a. The requisition must list the person making the request, vendor information, quantity, price, and each item **MUST BE REFERENCED** to the School Improvement Plan goal for that fiscal year
  - b. Only the FPD may sign the requisition to approve the expenditure of Title I funds
2. The requisition/request is submitted to the Federal Programs Director for approval
3. The requisition is submitted electronically into the budget system for a purchase order to be generated and the order is placed.
4. The FPD/designee will electronically release the PO for processing/payment
5. The Principal/designee will communicate with the FPD/bookkeeper when the goods/services have been received.
6. The final cost/amount of the PO is noted on an electronic budget sheet by the FPD/ designee for the purchasing school and is shared with the Principal.

**All Title I services are supplemental.** This process is monitored through ongoing technical assistance, site visits, and through the budget process.

### **Onsite Monitoring Procedures**

All schools are subjected to ongoing monitoring by the Federal Programs Director throughout the school year. The Federal Programs Director and the Curriculum and Instruction Team conduct on- site monitoring of all schools throughout the year for compliance. Feedback/corrective action is provided to the principals via descriptive information. In addition, emails, staff meetings, and phone conversations take place throughout the year as a means of providing ongoing monitoring/corrective actions verification, and communication with each school.



**Technical assistance will include but not limited to the following topics/related documentation:**

- Budgets
- Ordering
- Compliance Issues
  
- Family & Community Engagement
- Schoolwide/Targeted Assistance
- Monitoring
- Academic Achievement
- Instructional Specialist/Title I Teacher/ Paraprofessional Scheduling
- Ethics/ Fraud/ Compliance
- McKinney-Vento
- Inventory
- Programmatic and Financial Information
- Neglected and Delinquent

**Timeline for Assistance and Monitoring**

- May-June- The Teaching & Learning Team, along with the Chief Human Resources Officer and Principals, compile needs assessment data to be used in the revision of the Title II, Part A Equity Plan. This process culminates during Data Days where System teams and Stakeholder representatives provide input. These results help drive budgetary decisions for the coming school year(s).
- May-July- Revision/Completion of the Consolidated Local Implementation Plan
- May-August- Schools use summative tests results, parent survey results, and other needs assessment data to revise their Schoolwide and System-wide Improvement Plans. Schools involve various stakeholders in the analysis of this data and in the planning for the upcoming year.
- July- The Federal Programs Department staff attends the Principals'/Instructional Specialists' first meeting of the new school year to discuss/reiterate Title I guidelines and requirements for the upcoming school year. The Federal Programs Director, Family & Community Engagement Coordinator, and Homeless Liaison all share information.
- July-June- Completion of time logs by split-funded employees
- July-August- Using CCRPI information determine the schools that will need to offer Flexible Learning Plan (FLPs) services (if applicable) and work with principals to create the required letters and get those mailed in a timely manner. (If applicable)
- July-August- Schools will make the CLIP available for parent/public stakeholder participation and input into the System Improvement Plans/CLIP. Advertised public meetings will be held for community stakeholder input and involvement by the FPD to allow input on the CAN/CLIP in the spring (March/ April) of each year.
- August- Annual Evaluation of Title I, Part D, Subpart 2 (if applicable)
- August- The Homeless Liaison contacts every school to update the system homeless list and to

consult regarding the needs of homeless students in our non-Title I schools. The liaison also makes sure that every school has up-to-date homeless contact information posted.

- August-September- The Title I, Part A Family & Community Engagement Coordinator reviews Title I Schools' Parent Involvement Policies and Compacts. The Family & Community Engagement Checklist is used to provide feedback to principals. The coordinator also files copies of these documents in the Federal Programs Office.
- August-October- Principals' Attestations and Assurances (Title IA & Title IIA)
- August-October- Principals present their Schoolwide plans and their School Improvement Plans to the Federal Programs Director and the Curriculum and Instruction Team. Budgets are reviewed to ensure that funds are being spent according to the plan and the plan has all the necessary components.
- August- May- Schools will provide opportunities for stakeholder input into the CLIP through various event opportunities held at the schools. These may include, but are not limited to: School Council meetings, Open House, Title I PIT meetings, PTO meetings. This notification and evidence of participation may be documented through, but not limited to: notices, flyers, invitations, agendas, sign- in sheets, digital responses (The FPD and/or Title I Director will oversee the effort of providing opportunities for input by stakeholders in the CLIP).
- August – June - Inventory all items purchased by federal programs
- August – June - The Homeless and N&D programs are monitored by the Coordinator of Federal Programs and Homeless Liaison.
- September-November- Annual Surveys of Children in Institutions for Neglected and Delinquent
- September-May- Central Leadership participates in walk-through monitoring in each school in the district. Walk-throughs are announced and unannounced observations to monitor implementation of system initiatives, system and/or Title IA and Title II A funded Evidence- based professional learning implementation and school improvement plan strategies. The Coordinator of Federal Programs is a member of the walk- through team. Federal programs staff members also visit schools and N&D facilities to offer support and monitor implementation of resources.
- November/December- FIRST Title I school on-site monitoring visit by FDP/PIC
- January- Completion of first semester Periodic Certifications (if applicable)
- February-March- Federal Programs Director and staff attend GCEL conference
- January/February- SECOND Title I school onsite monitoring visit by FPD/PIC
- March- Surveys are completed by various stakeholders (parents, teachers, administrators, and community members) to provide needs assessment data for improvement planning. The Federal Programs Office sends the Annual Survey of Family & Community Engagement to parents to provide information as a means of gauging the effectiveness of Family & Community Engagement activities. The Family & Community Engagement Coordinator and liaisons compile data to determine needs for the following year. Advertised public meetings will be held for community stakeholder input and involvement by the FPD to allow input on the CNA in the spring of each year.
- April-May- Homeless Surveys
- May-June- Completion of second semester Periodic Certifications (if applicable)
- May-June- The Title I Family & Community Engagement Coordinator compiles Title I parent surveys and disseminates the results to Title I Schools for consideration in the revision of school Family & Community Engagement Policies and School-Parent Compacts.
- June- Federal Programs Director and staff attend annual state Title Programs Conference
- Ongoing- Review of school improvement data and plans in conjunction with other central office staff
- Ongoing- The Family & Community Engagement Coordinator holds monthly meetings with the Family Liaisons and the Parent Advisory Council.
- Ongoing - Budgets and purchase orders are reviewed monthly by the Federal Programs Director to assist schools in spending the funds as planned.

- Ongoing- The Federal Programs Director and staff provide technical assistance and meet regularly with principals.

School Improvement Plans (SIPs) include data which drives student achievement and are monitored by federal programs and the Curriculum and Instruction Team. Based on continuous data analysis, principals and leadership teams make changes to the school improvement plans and share on the school website. The Lowndes County School System is proud to be an AdvancED accredited district.

Feedback on the schoolwide/targeted assistance plans are sent to each principal via the schoolwide checklist. Corrections to the plans are made as needed by principals and updated copies are sent to the federal programs office.

### **Monitoring of Neglected & Delinquent Facilities**

There are two facilities for neglected students in Lowndes County: Georgia Sheriffs' Boy's Ranch and Raintree Village Children's Home. The Annual Survey of Local Residential Child Care Institutions is completed annually for these facilities. Budget consultations and physical inventories are also completed annually.

### **Monitoring of Private Schools**

Private schools are monitored by the Federal Programs Director if applicable. Invitations for private schools to consult in participation in federal programs the following calendar year are sent in October/November via receipt delivery. A meeting is held in December to present information about the programs available to private schools/students.

### **Data Analysis**

Data review for all schools are compiled and discussed during administrative meetings and at the Board of Education meetings. Schools meet and analyze data with the intent of improving instruction. Principals are required to discuss this information with all staff to ensure that they fully understand the data presented. Principals are required to demonstrate to the Federal Programs Director and Curriculum and Instruction Team that they fully understand the needs of their schools by identifying the root cause of the problems that keep the schools from achieving academically. This information is discussed in detail in the updated schoolwide plans each year and helps to identify high-risk schools, populations, and/or specific content areas in need of additional support.

### **Reporting and Corrective Action Process (Audit and Monitoring Findings)**

Corrective action from previous monitoring is discussed with principals in order to assist them in understanding the critical need for compliance in federal programs. In addition, GaDOE monitoring findings from all districts is shared with principals as a means of understanding the impact of non-compliance.

Technical assistance is provided based on the needs expressed in their Comprehensive Needs Assessments and is used as a preventive measure to ensure that all staff has a clear understanding of all

expectations of every facet of federal programs. The Federal Programs Director, along with district level staff and outside consultants, provide ongoing training as a means of ensuring that all staff are in compliance at all times.

Anticipatory training is conducted throughout the year that ties in directly with all facets of federal programs compliance.

### **Results of Technical Assistance**

The Federal Programs Director maintains files of all training conducted throughout the year. These detailed files contain all staff training, handouts, meeting agendas, meeting notes, etc. Ongoing monitoring of the training is conducted by the Federal Programs Director to ensure compliance.

### **Equipment Inventory**

All schools/facilities are required to maintain an active inventory of all items purchased with Federal Funding for any issuing grant aforementioned in the “Purpose” section of this Handbook. All items have a permanent marking- typically a bar code label. The bar code label is placed on the equipment in a location easy to see/scan. Inventories will contain all required description information as prescribed by the issuing grant, including the FAIN for the fiscal year the item(s) are purchased. The inventory is generated at the County Office/FPD level and shared with Principals for verification. This is a process of updating that occurs throughout the year as items are purchased, but is, ultimately, verified at the end of the school year.

The Federal Programs Director and staff conduct inventory checks/updates annually for all schools/facilities. Inventory purchased/provided for N&D facilities will be documented with the same procedures as for schools and the Site Director will participate at the facility in the role as the Principal of a school.

## **Section 2: Consolidated LEA Improvement Plan (CLIP)**

The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) specifies that LEAs may receive funds under ESSA if the LEA has an approved plan on file with GaDOE. The LEA plan is submitted as part of a Consolidated Application in an on-line application. The CLIP has five (5) major components:

- District Comprehensive Needs Assessment(CNA)
- District Improvement Plan (DIP)
- Migrant Identification & Recruitment Plan
- Family & Community Engagement Plan
- Foster Care Transportation Plan

The following programs are a part of the CLIP: Title I, Part A – Programs for Disadvantaged Children; Title I, Part C – Education of Migratory Children; Title I, Part D – Programs for Neglected and Delinquent Children; Title II, Part A – Teacher Quality; Title II, Part D – Enhancing Education Through Technology; Title III, Part A – Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient (LEP) and Immigrant Students; Title IV, Part A – Safe and

Drug-Free Schools; Title VI, Part B – Rural Education Achievement Programs (REAP); Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) – Programs for Exceptional Students; Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act – Vocational Education Programs; Title X, Part C McKinney-Vento Education of Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) and State Evidence-based professional learning.

## **Lowndes County School System CLIP Review Process**

The LEA Comprehensive Improvement Plan is updated annually.

All central office directors and coordinators are required to participate in the planning, revision, and implementation process. In addition, parents and business leaders in the community are invited to serve on the revision committee. Parents of Title I schools are sent information inviting them to participate via email, flyers, website, and newsletters. Parents are asked to provide written input during this process. The C.L.I.P. is the culminating result of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment process and is included on the agenda at each Title I Family & Community Engagement Team (F&CET) meetings, as well. All schools provide the opportunity for input at other designated school events which may include, but not limited to: Open House, School Advisory Team meetings, School Council meetings, PTO meetings, etc.

The LCSS globally provides an opportunity for input from any concerned citizen relating to any topic at each LCS Board Work Session and each LCSS monthly Board Meeting, as well.

Monthly administrator meetings afford Principals and Directors to discuss relevant issues as they pertain to the ongoing improvement plans of the schools and the system. Each Director brings current and relevant information to the table and Principals are afforded time to discuss concerns, as well, with the Superintendent and the executive staff. Principals are, then, charged with disseminating the information to their respective staff, leadership teams, and PLCs and to get their feedback and input. This process is ongoing and is a component of the CLIP process.

The CLIP is a central piece of data that is reviewed and analyzed at the System's annual data analysis effort (i.e. Data Days). This occurs soon after the conclusion of the school year and is a part of the CNA/DIP process. Stakeholder representatives from each school, the District, and community are encouraged to participate in this specific event. However, all stakeholders are provided the original plans during the period prior to classes beginning the next fall (usually during Open House). Any feedback/changes may still be made to the School/System plans if needed. Initial plans for prioritized funding are determined after the data retreat. However, final budgetary decisions are not made until after the stakeholders have had an opportunity to provide input. The final Federal budgetary decisions occur after the next school year begins.

The district conducts a survey each year that allows parents to provide input on district policies and procedures. The district Director of School Improvement and Assessment oversees this survey, and provides results to the district Federal Programs Director. From the results, the CLIP revisions are made. Parent input is examined and considered from these surveys via input from review meetings.

Documentation includes sign-in sheets, agendas, meeting minutes, emails, and returned plans with comments. Copies of comments are kept on file and put in meeting minutes.

The Federal Programs Director gathers all input and updates the consolidated application. The plan is submitted to the Superintendent for final approval.

The FPD along with other Directors and the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching & Learning will collect, review, analyze, and summarize the data that relates to their specific areas as outlined in determining progress as outlined in the Annual Needs Assessment/System's Effectiveness Plan/Equity Plan. Data-gathering is a continuous process, but (generally) focuses on state-wide testing data that is returned to the System in the spring. This plan is driven by needs determined by achievement data, school-level data, survey results, stakeholder input, and any other qualitative data that may be available. Though this is an on-going, continuous process, the Effectiveness Plan is developed in the spring of the year (as data becomes available- May) and the Plan becomes a part of the Data Days endeavor and helps to drive individual School and System-wide Improvement Plans. The specific data collected will drive the direction or focus and will help identify specific internal stakeholders who may/will be more responsible for the development of the direction of the school/system plans. Ultimately, the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning and the FPD will monitor/execute the final drafts of the District plan and completing requirements/resolving issues for completing the CLIP. This will, also, guide prioritization for funding.

Specific personnel involved are:

- Federal Programs Director- Title I, Title II, Title III, Migrant data and policies and procedures
- Director of (Evidence-based) Professional Learning- PL needs as determined by data and are research founded, evidence based, or demonstrate a rationale
- Director of Human Resources- Identify personnel qualifications and areas of need
- Director of Special Education- Information and data for SWDs
- Director of Technology- Relates System/School-level technology status and plans for growth
- Director of Information- Identifies areas of need as it relates to Student Information System
- Elementary Curriculum Director- Analyzes content needs based on data for PK-5
- Secondary Curriculum Director- Analyzes content needs for 6 -12
- Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning- Overall guidance in the CNA process
- Assistant Superintendent of Finance- Overall guidance for fiscal plan to address needs
- Director of Social Services (Lead Social Worker)- Guidance for the Homeless program and student needs
- Director of Student Support Services- Guidance in student behavior issues and school climate

## **Prioritizing of Needs**

Principals school-level perspectives of student data Internal and external stakeholders are involved in the planning process by assisting with the prioritizing of needs. Prioritizing of needs is accomplished by analyzing the percentage of responses to various questions on the annual needs assessment. In addition, prioritizing is discussed with stakeholders during meetings. Information gathered from various meetings is discussed by the district Administration Teams, consisting of the superintendent, district directors, and principals. The Administrative Team then combines the feedback from various stakeholders and creates a final prioritized list of needs.

Title II, Part A funds can be used for recruitment, retention, professional development, and class size reduction. Title II-A funds must be used to *supplement, and not supplant*, non-Federal funds that would otherwise be used for activities authorized under Title II-A.

It is presumed supplanting has occurred in the following circumstances:

- Title II-A funds for services that are required under other federal, state, or local laws
- Title II-A funds for services provided with non-Title II-A funds in the previous year.

Expenditures of Title II-A funds must be necessary to implement an activity designed to meet one or more of the annual prioritized needs, reasonable in cost and allocable to the Title II-A program.

District administration and the Curriculum and Instruction Team evaluate all funded activities for effectiveness on a regular basis. This is completed through observations/walkthroughs, written evaluations, the Teacher and Leader Keys Effectiveness System, and discussions/ conversations. If activities are not effective, they are abandoned.

## **Equity Action Plan (as part of the CLIP)**

The EAP- originally associated with Title II, Part A, but now recognized across many Federal grants- is a guide for the District in which specific needs or goals are identified. These specific needs are, generally, associated with insuring that all schools, students, and programs receive fair consideration and support from the LEA. The EAP is created and maintained separate- but as a part- within the on-line CLIP in the Statewide Data Longitudinal System (SLDS).

The EAP serves as a "plan within the plan" for specific District goals related the CLIP as a whole, and is provided to stakeholders, community partners, and other interested/concerned entities through:

- electronic means (District/School websites),
- District/School meetings,
- School Council meetings,
- PTO/PTA meetings, or
- specifically-designed focus groups to address specific District/School needs.

As they become available, updates and progress are provided for stakeholders through the District website, School websites, Board meetings, focus group opportunities, PLCs/faculty meetings, and other related group events throughout the year.

The **implementation** and **monitoring** of the Equity Action Plan is detailed and driven within its specific goals identified annually and embedded into the CLIP. The GaDOE guidelines require that a District identify two or more areas where gaps exist in the data to be addressed. Implementation begins once the CLIP (i.e. the EAP) has been approved for the fiscal year. Since these goals are determined from a District perspective, the implementation and monitoring fall on the shoulders of District personnel. Currently, the District Staff who spearhead the implementation of the action steps and monitor the progress are the Superintendent for T&L, the T&L Staff, and the Federal Projects Director.

The **effectiveness** of the EAP is summarized annually as year-end data or initiative-end becomes available. The effectiveness is reported and attached to the following year's CLIP along with the new EAP for the next fiscal year. The effectiveness is determined within the analysis of each action step contained within the EAP for each goal listed.

## **HIGH RISK SCHOOL(S) DESIGNATION**

Though the vast majority of the focus of the analysis centers on teacher progress and student achievement, the unique needs of each school are considered, as well. The Lowndes District analyzes data throughout the school year and culminates in in a "Data Day" event for all schools. Based on specific data, the LCSD will designate schools as "high risk". Consideration is always given to our School-wide Title I schools since poverty has proven to be such an obstacle for education. However, specific data that is considered includes, but is not limited to:

- Standardized achievement scores
- Graduation rates
- Promotion/retention data
- District/School/classroom/teacher/student data
- Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs)
- Response to Intervention data (RTI)
- Teacher Effectiveness Data (TKES)
- Leader Effectiveness Data (LKES)
- Professional Learning data
- Human Resources data



### **Section 3: Family & Community Engagement /Plan Review Procedure**

The Lowndes County School System Board of Education believes that the public schools belong to the people who create them and that student educational goals should reflect the goals of the community. The board affirms and assures the rights of all parents to participate in the development of the goals and objectives of the public schools and encourage involvement in all areas of their children's educational experiences.

Each school has a school council committee that assists in building strategies for effective Family & Community Engagement, promoting Family & Community Engagement activities, and implementing parent recommendations and suggestions. The school council committee collects and compiles parent recommendations and suggestions. The council shares these ideas with school staff, all parents, and other stakeholder groups. All parents play an important role in the decision-making process of the school throughout the year by completing surveys, evaluations after activities, active participation at PTO meetings, parent/teacher conferences, and utilizing a parent suggestion box available at each school.

All parents have access to Family & Community Engagement documents, including the Lowndes County Family & Community Engagement Policy, the individual school Family & Community Engagement Policy and Compacts, and the School Improvement Plan. Parents also make suggestions regarding expenditures of Title I funds. Program review meetings are held throughout the year. At Title I Annual Meetings, parents are informed about the needs of the school and asked to get involved by joining committees and serving as volunteers and mentors.

Several times during the year, parents are invited/reminded to attend planning meetings and school activities via flyers, phone calls, weekly newsletters, websites, local television station, and car rider line conversations. When all information is available for review, parents are invited to provide input in the final review. (The School Council Committee does not make any final decisions.) All Title I Parents are given the opportunity to review and provide input in the 95 percent of the 1 percent set-aside budget expenditures for Family & Community Engagement.

#### **Parent Notification and Communication in an Understandable and Uniform Format**

When parents mark on the enrollment forms that they need correspondence in another language, to the extent practical, efforts are made to provide either written support or support through an

interpreter. The Title III Director supports these efforts as well as school staff who are fluent in multiple languages. Translators are available and can be used to translate documents. Furthermore, all parent communication is written in a format so that the content is easily understandable. This includes providing parent information specifically to parents of EL students. The ESOL supplement (found following the Appendix) assist in this endeavor.

### **Parent Notifications School Designation Status - CSI Schools**

Lowndes County School System does not have any schools designated as CSI Schools. In the future, if a school does have this designation, the following procedures will be followed:

A school identified as a CSI School will receive the support of the School Improvement Division of the GaDOE. This support will be through the assignment of a School Improvement Specialist who will work with the school on a regular basis and will bring in other staff to support identified areas for growth. Support for schools needing comprehensive services will be provided by the GaDOE School Improvement Specialists.

The LEA would sign a three-year Memorandum of Agreement with the GaDOE on behalf of CSI Schools. The Memorandum of Agreement will outline a set of non-negotiable actions and interventions required of each CSI School aligned with the turnaround principles. The MOA will be developed during the spring of the year before it is to be signed in the fall.

Using the U.S. Department of Education's (US ED) definition and methodology for identification, schools identified as CSI Schools will receive school improvement support and intervention for a period of three years. Schools will be exited from Priority School status when the school no longer meets the definition of a CSI School for three consecutive years and has reduced the number of non-proficient students by 25 percent over a period of three years. High schools identified as CSI Schools based on graduation rate must increase their graduation rate by eight percent over a period of three years.

### **School Designation Status - TSI Schools**

Lowndes County School System does not have any schools designated as TSI Schools. In the future, if a school does have this designation, the following procedures will be followed:

The GaDOE will work in collaboration with the LEA to analyze student achievement data to identify the largest gaps between groups of students. Based on the analysis of data, the LEA and the GaDOE will determine the interventions required of each TSI School. LEAs will sign a Memorandum of Agreement with the GaDOE on behalf of TSI Schools. The MOA will outline a set of nonnegotiable actions and interventions required of each Focus School.

Using the U.S. Department of Education's (US ED) definition and methodology for identification, schools identified as TSI Schools will receive school improvement support and intervention for a period of three years. Schools will be exited from TSI School status when the school no longer meets the definition of a TSI School for three consecutive years and demonstrates that the individual subgroup or subgroup that caused the school to be identified as a TSI School has decreased the number of non-proficient students by 25 percent over a period of three years.

High schools identified as TSI Schools due to subgroup graduation rates must achieve a graduation rate that falls at or above the State subgroup graduation rate average for three consecutive years or show an eight percent graduation rate improvement over a period of three years.

## **DISTRICT-WIDE STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT GUIDANCE**

In conjunction with the annual training (i.e. "Building Capacity") for the entire faculty at each school, additional measures will be taken to help ensure that stakeholders are vested in the planning, implementation, and decision-making processes of the schools and of the District. Stakeholder input is a continuing effort that begins with input into the CLIP (District Improvement Plan), Equity Action Plan (EAP), and the School Improvement Plan at each individual school. The Federal Projects Director will request building-level Administrators to solicit stakeholder input in every opportunity possible. This includes, but is not limited to;

- parent involvement opportunities
- parent conferences
- school/grade level events
- PTO/PTA meetings
- School Council meetings
- Community Partners in Education meetings
- Open House
- digital/website input opportunities

This effort is easily provided to our Title I, Part A schools since it is built into the requirements of the parent involvement meetings. The District-wide F&CE Coordinator will share the Title I resources (as a guide) for the non-Title I school Administrators, as well.

The FPD has provided Administrators and district-level Directors a sample introduction that should be shared at the beginning of any meeting where stakeholders are involved. The sample guidance is listed below:

*“Thank you for being here today. As we begin our meeting, it is important to remember that everything we do relates back to the goals stated in our School Improvement Plan. Our plan, along with all of the other schools’ improvement plans, work collectively to address the needs and concerns found in the overall Lowndes County District Improvement plan (called the CLIP). The current goals for our District- simply stated- are focused on:*

- #1- raising student achievement in all content areas, and*
- #2- increasing student attendance.*

*At (insert your school), our specific school improvement plan goals are: (Insert your specific goals).*

*At the end of this meeting, please feel free to provide any input concerning these goals or any other ideas that you may have to help improve our school or our district.”*

The guidance above will be shared with building administrators twice per year

- August Administrator's meeting, and
- January Administrator's meeting

Annually, the District will provide an community-wide opportunity for stakeholder input. This is advertised for the public-at-large and will occur in June. This allows for information to be considered for the upcoming fiscal year's CLIP/EAP.

## PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR STAKEHOLDER INPUT

ACTIVITY	TIMELINE	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
• Administrator Guidance	August & January	Federal Projects Director (FPD)
• Staff Training (Building Capacity)	Twice per semester	District-wide F&CE Cord.
• District-level Input Opportunities	Ongoing during the year	District Directors
• Annual Community Opportunity	June	FPD/ F&CE Coordinator
• Community Participation opportunity to address the School Board	Offered Monthly	Superintendent
• School-level Input Opportunities	Ongoing during the year	Administrators/Staff

At stakeholder input opportunities, School and District Staff will be soliciting information for the immediate needs for the specific meeting. However- as stated earlier- all information will feed back into the overall District (CLIP) and School Improvement Plans.

Typically, each meeting will be directed towards specific concerns, but should serve as an open-ended opportunity for stakeholders to provide their perspectives on any item or area of concern. These perspectives may be provided through, but not limited to:

- Surveys
- questionnaires
- verbal responses
- digital responses
- "drop box" type suggestions

### SAMPLE Stakeholder response form:

*Date:*

*Purpose of Meeting:*

*Role: Teacher Student Parent Advocate Community Partner Other*

*#1. Was today's event helpful to you and the needs of your child? Y N*

*#2. Do you feel that this event addressed the intended purpose of our meeting? Y N*

*#3. Do you feel today's events resolved your issue/concerns? Y N*

*#4. Do you feel our District/School goals are meeting the needs of our students? Y N*

*#5. Please feel free to include any issues you think need to be addressed or considered to help students reach our expectations of higher achievement:*

*OPTIONAL: Please provide contact information if you would like a personal response to this input opportunity:*

*Name:*

*Child's Name:*

*Child's Grade:*

*Specific Information you would like to discuss:*

*Best contact information- Phone:*

*Email:*

In relation to the CLIP/DIP process, specifically, District Directors will identify stakeholders and provide them with an extensive survey and feedback opportunity that will feed directly into the development/ amendment of the CLIP each year. These specific stakeholders will be identified by individual program Directors based on their knowledge and/or participation in the specific program areas and they will be identified and included as participating members of the CLIP Team.

This opportunity will occur after the completion of the regular school year and will provide additional data in the development of the next fiscal's years District goals and needs. This will be sent electronically to the designated stakeholders through a common platform that records and calculates the input data and will be combined with other data sources to provide the LEA with a comprehensive look at the input available from all sources.

### **Annual Title I Meeting**

All Title I schools are required to hold annual meetings at flexible times within the first month of school. It is the responsibility of the principal in coordination with the Family & Community Engagement Coordinator to arrange meeting times and invite all stakeholders to these meetings. Title I meetings cannot be combined with other events. Meetings may be announced via paper copies to parents, websites, call systems, radio announcements, and marquees at each school. The PIC will be responsible for collecting and submitting required documentation of the Title I annual meetings (flyers, sign-in sheets, agendas, evaluations and summaries) to the Federal Programs Director. Attendees will have the opportunity to view and provide CLIP input.

### **ESSA Brochures and Notifications**

ESSA brochures/information are provided to schools. The brochures describe current flexibility waiver status. Principals revise the brochures to meet their school's status and other personalization.

Brochures are distributed to parents and documentation of when and how the brochures are sent to parents is required to be sent to the Federal Programs Director. Each school's flexibility waiver status and CCRPI score can be located on the system/schoolwebsite.

### **School Allocations**

In the LCSS, the process to ensure equitable funding for students at all schools is provided through the application of the Weighted Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) scale. The actual funding amount assigned to each specific group is provided by the GaDOE each year. Each school is awarded funding based on the specific weighted value assigned to each specific student group/ subgroup and according to the FTE count at each school for those groups/subgroups. The FTE count utilized in the distribution of funds is taken from the official FTE count that is conducted in October of the preceding school year.

Title I CSI and TSI Schools- in conjunction with GaDOE support- must must develop written plans that outline how the Title I CSI/TSI Schools will address the identified needs and provide a budgeted plan to spend any funds provided to support the needs of the CSI/TSI school.

## **Teacher and Paraprofessional Qualifications**

Parents are informed of their rights to know the qualifications of their children's teachers. This information will be sent home to every parent at the beginning of the year through student handbooks. The notice will include the specific school contact person and telephone number. This information is also available on the Federal Programs webpage.

### **Professional Qualifications of Teachers**

If a student has been assigned to or has been taught for four or more consecutive weeks by a teacher of a core academic subject who has not met the professional qualifications of Lowndes County Schools, parents will be provided a timely notice.

- All notices and information required must be in a uniform and understandable format, including alternative formats upon request, and, to the extent practicable, in a language that parents understand. Parents may request and receive information regarding:
  - Whether the teacher has met local qualifications for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher teaches.
  - Whether the teacher is teaching under emergency or other provisional status.
  - The baccalaureate degree of the teacher and any other graduate certification or degree held by the teacher and the field or discipline of the certification or degree.
  - Whether the student is provided services by paraprofessionals.

Parent notification is not required for the following:

- For teachers who do not teach core academic subjects.
- For paraprofessionals who are not meeting ESSA/professional qualifications.

Principals are required to provide evidence (typically, a letter) to the parents of those students who are taught four or more weeks by a teacher who does not meet the professional qualifications in a specific content area. This process is generally referred to as the “**20-day Notice**”. This is to support effective parent communication. Principals will ensure that the parents of all students who receive instruction from this teacher are informed through a consistent and relevant source of documentation and will maintain records that indicate the notice was properly provided. A sample of a letter is electronically provided by the FPD for each Principal. The process consists of printing out of rosters of all students who receive direct instruction from the teacher in question. The Parents of each student receives a detailed, written notification and may be accompanied with a brief and general phone notification. All inquiries are directed to the school Principal.

### **Parent Advisory Committee/School Councils**

Schools are required to have parent input. At the beginning of each year, the Title I Family

Liaison(s)/Family & Community Engagement Coordinator gather parent names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses to submit to the District Family & Community Engagement Coordinator, who utilizes them as the system's Title I parent advisors. Their purpose is to review required components of the Title I program (CLIP, AYP/implementation plans, budgets, parent engagement policies and compacts). In many schools, school councils also serve as parent advisors. The school council meetings are open to the public and are announced via the newsletter, hard copy, and/or website. Parents are instrumental in the revision of the school improvement/Family & Community Engagement plans and compacts. School councils and the Parent Advisory Committee review the results of the annual spring survey and help make decisions for yearly Family & Community Engagement activities. All Family & Community Engagement meetings require a flyer, sign-in sheet, agenda, evaluation and summary report.

### **Family & Community Engagement Coordination and Implementation Procedures**

Schools are required to maintain the following documentation that ensures the six requirements of Family & Community Engagement are offered:

- Dated meeting flyers, agendas, sign-in sheets, evaluations, summary reports or minutes
- Newsletter articles
- Letters to parents (multiple languages)
- Parenting class documentation

The Parent Advisory Committee begins work in September of each year. This committee assists with planning school events and activities designed to remove barriers for parents. The committee meets on a regular basis throughout the school year. In the spring, the committee assists with reviewing evaluation materials and makes recommendations for the next school year.

Parents are notified about parent advisory committee meetings via email, phone calls, schools/ district website, and flyers in student weekly folders. Information is also given out about the committee during the annual meetings and parent workshops. Parents' Involvement in Planning, Revision, and Implementation

Parents are informed verbally and by written notification that they have the right to participate and become involved in the decision-making process at Title I schools. Through parent committees, opportunities are established, and all parents are invited to participate and to provide input into deciding on activities, school improvement planning, schoolwide plan revisions, and the comprehensive improvement plan. These processes are in place to ensure parents play an active role in improving student academic achievement.

### **Family & Community Engagement Activities - Planning, Revision, and Implementation Steps:**

**Provide Annual Notification to Parents:** All Title I schools conduct a meeting at the beginning of each year inviting parents to participate in the planning process. Schools distribute information on these meetings to parents via mail, email, telephone, flyers, website, and newsletters.

**Select Parents for Involvement in Committees.** Parents are invited to participate in planning Family & Community Engagement activities. Schools distribute information to parents via mail,

email, telephone, flyers, website, and newsletters.

**Conduct Annual Survey at Each School:** The annual surveys serve as the means for parents to become involved in planning Family & Community Engagement activities. Surveys are conducted in the spring of each year. Schools distribute surveys electronically and through hard copies.

**Evaluate Results of the Survey:** Title I schools use the results of the annual surveys to determine specific needs of the parents.

**Conduct District Annual Survey:** At the end of each year, the district conducts an annual survey that allows for parent input. This information is analyzed by schools and allows for district input from parents.

**Maintenance of Documentation:** All Family & Community Engagement documentation will include dated flyers, sign-in sheets, agendas, evaluations, meeting summary report or minutes, and emails to and from parents.

### **School Improvement Plan Planning, Revision, and Implementation Steps:**

School improvement plans are updated annually. Parents are a vital part in the planning, revision, and implementation process. Parents are sent information inviting them to participate via mail, email, telephone, flyers, website, and newsletters. Once revisions are made, the plans are available at the schools or in the federal programs department at central office.

**Maintain:** Required documentation will include dated flyers, sign-in sheets, agendas, parent comments, meeting minutes, and emails to and from parents. **A copy of this packet will be submitted to the federal programs office when the plan is presented.**

### **LEA Comprehensive Improvement Plan (CLIP)**

The LEA Comprehensive Improvement Plan is updated annually. This incorporates the Comprehensive Needs Assessments from each school. Parents are a vital part of the planning, revision, and implementation process. Parents are sent information inviting them to participate via mail, email, telephone, flyers, website, and newsletters. Family liaisons, PTO committee members, and school council members should also participate in these meetings. (Please see the slide show on the Federal programs webpage)

**Maintain:** Required documentation will include dated flyers, sign-in sheets, agendas, parent comments, meeting minutes, and emails to and from parents.

### **Building Parent Capacity**

Information is provided to school personnel and parents on how to build parent capacity through presentations made during meetings, through response to parent needs on surveys, through information received from the GaDOE Parent Engagement department, and through student handbooks, newsletters/flyers.



The Family & Community Engagement Coordinator and family liaisons are required to consider and plan for capacity by reflecting on the following questions regarding the six types of Family & Community Engagement:

1. What strategies/materials have been offered to parents on understanding academic content standards?
2. What training has been offered to parents related to literacy and the use of technology?
3. How have faculty and staff been encouraged to communicate with and involve parents in their child's education?
4. What efforts have been made to foster Family & Community Engagement in pre-k programs?
5. What attempts have been made to provide Family & Community Engagement information to parents in a language parents can understand?
6. What other support do parents receive for Family & Community Engagement activities?

### **System-Level Title I Family & Community Engagement Policy Overview**

The Lowndes County School System has an ongoing commitment to our Title I parents. Family & Community Engagement is defined as the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities. Our goal is to ensure that our Title I parents and their children receive extraordinary services and assistance that will lead to improved academic achievement. The system recognizes that parents are an integral part of a child's success in school, starting with the concept of being the child's first teacher. As a conduit for children's success, the district will assist parents of all socioeconomic levels in solidifying their ongoing commitment to their child's success. It has become evident that a parent can be the foremost factor in ensuring that their children accomplish and excel in the goals they set. Studies (A New Wave of Evidence: The impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement, 2002) have shown that students with involved parents, no matter their income or background, are more likely to:

- earn high grades and test scores and enroll in higher-level programs;
- pass their classes, earn credits and be promoted;
- attend school regularly; and
- graduate and go on to postsecondary education.

One goal of the Lowndes County School System is that parents of Title I children will be actively involved in the development and review of the Title I Family & Community Engagement Plan. The system provides coordination, technical assistance, and other necessary support in the planning and implementation of Family & Community Engagement activities. The system encourages Family & Community Engagement and supports the partnership between home, school, and community by providing information about curricular expectations, student performance, and providing training and materials for parents to help their children.

### **Family & Community Engagement Policy**

System and school Family & Community Engagement policies are reviewed and revised annually with parents and other stakeholders (teachers, principals, administrators, and other school personnel). The district will hold meetings (Parent Advisory Council) for review of the district Family & Community Engagement Policy at the central office. All Title I parents, teachers, administrators, and other school personnel in the district will be invited to the meetings to

provide input. Parent notices will be sent home from the school. Parents that cannot attend the meetings will be given the opportunity to obtain a copy from central office and submit input before the final revisions are approved. The Family & Community Engagement Coordinator will be responsible for collecting the required information (agenda, meeting notes, and sign-in sheets). The district will hold the meetings in the spring and summer to revise plans for the next school year. The LEA Family & Community Engagement policy checklist will be applied to system and school plans. Revision dates will be clearly marked on each plan. The Family & Community Engagement Coordinator will review plans during on-site monitoring visits. Plans include activities/workshops that have been identified and requested through the previous year's annual Family & Community Engagement survey. School improvement plans and Family & Community Engagement policies are posted on the website and paper copies are available at each school.

Each Title I school in the Lowndes County School System holds an annual Title I meeting. These meetings give parents the opportunity to review and provide feedback on system-wide student data, parent activities, system and school Family & Community Engagement policies, schoolwide Title I plans, and system and school comprehensive improvement plans. Parents are notified about this opportunity through advertisements in local media, school-level flyers, social media websites, calling systems, and the school website. The school system uses the comments provided by parents during the annual review/revision of documents at the parent workshops and parent advisory council. After the school system review/revision process, system and school Family & Community Engagement policies are made available to parents at the Title I schools in Parent Resource Centers and central office. Parents are also given the opportunity to provide feedback about Title I programs by completing annual parent surveys. These comments are used by the system and Title I schools when planning parenting programs.

### **Family & Community Engagement Procedures/ Expectations**

#### **SCHOOL LEVEL FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT POLICY**

Each Title I school will develop a Family & Community Engagement plan that gives additional attention to the area indicated below:

1. Develop jointly with, and distribute to, parents of participating children a written policy describing implementation of the requirements in a language that is simple, concise and jargon-free and updated periodically to meet the changing needs of parents and the school, and such policy is made available to the local community.
2. Convene an annual meeting, at a convenient time, to which all parents of participating children shall be invited and encouraged to attend, to inform parents of their school's participation under Title I and to explain Title I, its requirements, and their right to be involved.
3. Offer meetings using a flexible schedule, such as meetings in the morning or evening, and may provide, with funds provided under Title I, transportation, child care, or home visits as such services relate to Family & Community Engagement to eliminate Family & Community Engagement barriers.
4. Involve parents, in an organized, ongoing, and timely way, in the planning, review, and improvement of programs under Title I, including the school Family & Community Engagement policy and the joint development of the schoolwide program plan under

section 1114(b), except that if a school has in place a process for involving parents in the joint planning and design of its programs, the school may use that process, if such process includes an adequate representation of parents of participating children.

5. Provide parents of participating students timely information concerning:
  - a. Title I programs in the school.
  - b. Results of the annual school review including school performance profiles.
  - c. Individual student assessment results and interpretation of those results.
  - d. A description and explanation of the school curriculum.
  - e. The assessments used to measure student progress and the proficiency levels the students are expected to meet.
  - f. Opportunities for regular meetings to formulate suggestions, share experiences with other parents and participate as appropriate in decisions relating to the education of their children.
  - g. Provide timely responses to parent suggestions.
  - h. Collect all unsatisfactory parent comments regarding the Schoolwide Plan and attach those comments to the School wide Plan when submitted to the LEA.
  
6. Provide assistance to participating parents in such areas as understanding the:
  - a. State's content standards and student performance standards.
  - b. School improvement and corrective action process if applicable.
  - c. Components of a schoolwide program if applicable
  - d. Components of a targeted assistance school program if applicable.
  - e. State and local assessments.
  - f. Requirements of Title I, Part A
  - g. Ways parents can monitor their children's progress and work with educators to improve the performance of their children.
  - h. Ways parents can participate in decisions relating to the education of their children.
  
7. Provide materials and training such as:
  - a. Coordinating necessary literacy training and using technology from other sources to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement.
  - b. Training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement.
  
8. Educate teachers, pupil services personnel, principals and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between home and school.
  
9. Coordinate and integrate Family & Community Engagement programs, activities and strategies with Head Start, Even Start, Reading First, Early Reading First, Title I-B, Migrant, Title I-C, Homeless, Vocational Education, and Home Instruction Programs for Preschool Youngsters, Parents as Teachers Program, Public Preschool Programs and other programs, to the extent feasible and appropriate.
  
10. Develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in Family & Community Engagement activities, including providing information about opportunities for organizations and businesses to work with parents and schools, and encouraging the formation of partnerships between elementary, middle, and secondary schools and local businesses that include a role for parents.

11. Conduct other activities, as appropriate and feasible, such as parent resource centers and opportunities for parents to learn about child development and child rearing issues beginning at the birth of a child, that are designed to help parents become full partners in the education of their children.
12. Involve parents in an ongoing end of year assessment to evaluate the effectiveness of the Family & Community Engagement initiatives as a measure of performance evaluations of the school.
13. To the extent practicable, provide full opportunities for the participation of LEP parents, parents of migratory children, and parents with disabilities including providing school profiles and information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities in a language and format such parents understand.
14. Provide other reasonable support for Family & Community Engagement activities as parents may request.
15. Involve parents in the joint development of the school-parent compact that outlines how parents will be responsible for supporting student learning.
16. Describe the school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment that enables the children to serve under Title I to meet the State's student performance standards.
17. Explain the ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their children's learning, such as monitoring attendance, homework completion, and television watching; volunteering in their child's classroom; and participating, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children and positive use of extracurricular time.
18. Address the importance of communication between teachers and parents on an ongoing basis through, at a minimum-
  - a. Parent-teacher conferences in elementary schools, at least annually, during which the compact shall be discussed as the compact relates to the individual child's achievement.
  - b. Frequent reports to parents on their children's progress.
  - c. Reasonable access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's class, and observation of classroom activities.
19. Distribute a copy of parent-school compact to parent.

### **School-Parent Compacts**

All Title I schools are required to have school-parent compacts. It is the responsibility of the principal in coordination with the Family & Community Engagement Coordinator to make sure that all compacts are reviewed and revised annually. The review and revision should occur in the fall of the year. The revision date will be clearly marked on each compact. An invitation to the review will be sent home to all parents in the school, and meeting dates will be given in school newsletters and through the school's website. The family liaison in each school will assist with setting up the meetings and collecting the required Information (agenda, meeting notes, sign in sheets, parent comments, summary report). Parent compacts will include system goals and school grade level goals for the teachers, parents, and students. Each participant must have a separate signature and date line. Compacts will be distributed to all parties involved in the fall

of the year for signatures. Copies of the signed parent compacts are kept on file at the school and a copy is filed in the federal programs office.

### **Parent Information Resource Centers(PIRC)**

All Title I schools have parent resource centers. A variety of materials and resources are available to parents for use at the school for checkout, or as handouts. Books, tapes, DVDs, and a variety of other materials have been purchased for the parents. Many purchases are based upon parent requests on the Family & Community Engagement surveys (i.e., helping with homework, information regarding bullying).

Schools are required to notify parents of the availability of the resources in the parent resource center. This is typically achieved through a flyer, annual meetings, and/or websites and includes information on the types of resources available in or through the resource center.

### **Required 1% Set Aside for Family & Community Engagement**

Family & Community Engagement : Principals have the option of expending the 1% in Family & Community Engagement funds or submitting them back to the system level. Lowndes County School System invites all parents to participate in the planning of the Family & Community Engagement budget. This is conducted at spring planning meetings. Parents also give input on workshops needed to build capacity.

### **School Improvement Plans**

School improvement plans are reviewed each spring for the following school year. Each school leadership team conducts meetings at which representatives from each grade level, content area, and department, as well as administration and parents meet to develop a plan. School administrators then present the plan to system leaders, and parents to develop a system improvement plan. It is through this process that the LEA oversees the development of school improvement plans. System leaders also support schools in developing, revising, implementing and coordinating school improvement and schoolwide plans. Data is analyzed to identify and develop solutions to challenges related to instructional strategies, parent engagement, Evidence-based strategies/professional learning, and budgets. Parents are involved in the planning and revising phases of the process. Parents are also sent information inviting them to participate in the revision process at annual meetings via mail, email, telephone, flyers, website, and newsletters.

Once revisions are made, the plan is placed on the school website. Hard copies are also available at the schools.

### **Parent Engagement Surveys**

*Process to Collect:* The annual surveys are provided to schools by the Title I Office and The Office of School Improvement and Assessment. The system surveys are completed at the school by computer or at homes electronically. The survey data are compiled and the following year's Family & Community Engagement activities are built from the responses.

*Process to Review:* The results of the surveys are shared among several groups of stakeholders, including, but not limited to, parents, school, and central office administration. School

councils/Title I advisors and those attending the annual Title I meeting review the results of the surveys while reviewing and revising the schoolwide and parent engagement plans and compacts.

*Actions Taken by LEA to Improve the Quality and Effectiveness of Family & Community Engagement Policies and Practices:*

The Title I Family & Community Engagement Coordinator, with assistance from parents will draft a parent survey. Additions/deletions/revisions are discussed and agreed upon during this meeting. The formatting or revisions are made after the meeting. If no further suggestions are made, the surveys are electronically created and distributed.

Parent engagement workshops and activities are planned for the following year from the annual spring survey results. Materials are also purchased for parent resource centers from expressed needs. Many opportunities are provided for building strong parent capacity. The purpose is to ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the schools, parents, and the community to improve student academic achievement through, at a minimum, the following activities:

- Annual meetings and review meetings
- Conferences
- E-mail communications
- Phone calls
- Parent workshops and activities
- Family nights
- Volunteering
- Parent advisory meetings
- Open Houses
- Annual notification of school status (Flexibility Waiver)
- Newsletters/flyers/brochures
- Website information
- Board of Education meetings
- Serving on school committees

## **Section 4: School Improvement (1003a) Interventions for LEAs with CSI/TSI Schools**

### **CSI Schools Interventions**

Lowndes County School System does not have any schools designated as Priority or Focus Schools at this time. In the future, if a school does have this designation, the following procedures will be followed:

A school identified as a Priority School will receive the support of the School Improvement Division of the GaDOE. This support will be through the assignment of a School Improvement Specialist who will work with the school on a regular basis and will bring in other staff to support identified areas for growth. Support for schools needing comprehensive services will be provided by the GaDOE School Improvement Specialists and will be coordinated with other initiatives such as School Improvement Grants 1003(g). All supports and initiatives will be implemented at the beginning of the school year. The LEA would sign a three-year Memorandum of Agreement with the GaDOE on behalf of Priority Schools. The Memorandum of Agreement will outline a set of non-negotiable actions and interventions required of each Priority School

aligned with the turnaround principles. The MOA will be developed during the spring of the year before it is to be signed in the fall.

### **How LEA schools may exit Priority Status**

Using the U.S. Department of Education's (US ED) definition and methodology for identification, schools identified as Priority Schools will receive school improvement support and intervention for a period of three years.

Schools will be exited from Priority School status when the school no longer meets the definition of a Priority School for three consecutive years and has reduced the number of non-proficient students by 25 percent over a period of three years. High schools identified as Priority Schools based on graduation rate must increase their graduation rate by eight percent over a period of three years. The eight-percent mark represents one-half of a deviation above the statewide annual average increase between 2003-2011.

### **Focus Schools Interventions by School Improvement**

Lowndes County School System does not have any schools designated as Focus Schools. In the future, if a school does have this designation, the following procedures will be followed.

The GaDOE will work in collaboration with the LEA to analyze student achievement data to identify the largest gaps between groups of students. Based on the analysis of data, the LEA and the GaDOE will determine the interventions required of each Focus School. LEAs will sign a Memorandum of Agreement with the GaDOE on behalf of Focus Schools. The MOA will outline a set of non-negotiable actions and interventions required of each Focus School.

### **How LEA schools may exit Focus Status**

Using the U.S. Department of Education's (US ED) definition and methodology for identification, schools identified as Focus Schools will receive school improvement support and intervention for a period of three years.

Schools will be exited from Focus School status when the school no longer meets the definition of a Focus School for three consecutive years and demonstrates that the individual subgroup or subgroups that caused the school to be identified as a Focus School has decreased the number of non-proficient students by 25 percent over a period of three years. High schools identified as Focus Schools due to subgroup graduation rates must achieve a graduation rate that falls at or above the State subgroup graduation rate average for three consecutive years or show an eight percent graduation rate improvement over a period of three years. The eight percent mark represents one-half of a deviation above the statewide annual average increase between 2003-2011.

### **Title I Reward Schools Programs**

At this time, there are two Lowndes County schools with a Reward School (Lake Park Elementary School and Clyattville Elementary School) designation. Procedures for Reward schools will be discussed in more detail later in the handbook.

## **Section 5: School Improvement 1003(g) (SIG) Priority Schools**

Interventions by School Improvement 1003(g) (SIG) Lowndes County School System does not have any schools designated as Priority Schools at this time. In the future, if a school does have this designation, the following procedures will be followed.

A school identified as a Priority School will receive the support of the School Improvement Division of the GaDOE. This support will be through the assignment of a school improvement specialist who will work with the school on a regular basis and will bring in other staff to support identified areas for growth. Support for schools needing comprehensive services will be provided by the GaDOE School Improvement Specialists and will be coordinated with other initiatives such as School Improvement Grants 1003(g). All supports and initiatives will be implemented during the identified school year. The LEA would sign a three-year Memorandum of Agreement with the GaDOE on behalf of Priority Schools. The Memorandum of Agreement will outline a set of non-negotiable actions and interventions required of each Priority School aligned with the turnaround principles. The MOA will be developed during the spring of the year before it is to be signed in the fall.

### **Monitoring of School Improvement**

All Title I schools within the Lowndes County School System conduct Schoolwide Programs. This allows all children and all parents an opportunity to have equal access to all related Title I assistance. All schools within an LEA will be involved in school improvement efforts through the work of the LEA and GaDOE.

### **Review and Approval of School Improvement and Schoolwide Plans**

School Improvement and Schoolwide Plans are updated annually for the following school year. Each school leadership team conducts meetings at which representatives from each grade level, content area, and department, school administration, and parents meet to analyze data. During school leadership meetings, instructional strategies, Family & Community Engagement initiatives, and professional development activities are planned after a careful analysis of various data.

Assistance is also provided to schools in their use of school improvement funds (if applicable) to accomplish initiatives in their school improvement and schoolwide plans.

School administrators then present their school plans to the Curriculum and Instruction Team. The plan is monitored throughout the year through school visits, classroom walk-throughs, and attendance at school meetings.

### **Monitoring of Use of Funds**

The Federal Programs Director will meet with each school regularly to review and provide recommendations for budgeting decisions.

## **Section 6: Public School Choice/Intradistrict Transfers**

\*LCSS does not currently have any schools on the CSI/TSI Lists. In the event that schools are identified in the future, the following procedures will be followed for intra-district transfers:



LEAs must notify parents of the availability of the intradistrict transfer option annually. Parent notification should be dated no later than July 1<sup>st</sup> of the upcoming school year.

20-2-2131 states that LEAs must annually notify prior to each school year the parents of each student by letter, electronic means, or by such other reasonable means in a timely manner of the options available to the parent. In addition to the letter required under O.C.G.A. 20-2-2131, Title I CSI/TSI Schools' parent notifications must be made through various forms of communication: information flyers, school/LEA newsletters, community/neighborhood newspaper, school website, school meeting, LEA meeting, teacher/parent conference, LEA website, FLP parent information packet, etc.

The intradistrict transfer option allows a parent/guardian the option to request a transfer from the child's assigned school to a school of the parent's choice within the school zone/district in which the child resides.

- Transfers will be granted to children only if there is available classroom space at the school that the parent chooses to transfer the child.
- Parents will report to the Lowndes County School System Office of Student Assignment at the Administrative Services Center to discuss the transfer and complete paperwork. The Coordinator of Student Assignment must verify classroom space is available at the school requested. The Coordinator of Student Assignment at the system office will send the parent a letter notifying them of the school district's approval or denial of the request.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for the transportation to and from school if the intradistrict transfer is granted.
- Students who transferred under NCLB may stay at the school until the highest grade level.
- Georgia's approved Flexibility Waiver allows, but does not require, Lowndes County School System to pay for NCLB Choice transportation.

### **Procedure for LEA's Process and Timelines for Receiving, Processing, and Implementing Intradistrict Transfers**

\*LCSS does not currently have any schools on the Focus or Priority List. In the event that schools are identified in the future, the following timeline will be followed:

May	Schools will send home intra-district transfer forms.
July 1	Mail letters to parents of students at Priority/Focus schools.
July	Meet with principals to discuss class space availability
July	Send parent notification of acceptance or denial of intra-district transfer request.

## **Section 7: Georgia's Flexibility Waiver and Flexible Learning Programs (FLP)**

Flexible Learning Programs (FLP) will initially be funded through a minimum five (5) percent set-aside requirement for any Title I Priority or Focus school. Additional Title I, Part A funds may be set aside to ensure that a viable FLP program is implemented with fidelity.

### **Required Interventions for CSI/TSI Schools:**

- All Title I CSI/TSI Schools must offer a Flexible Learning Program (FLP).
- All Title I Priority and Focus schools must develop a written plan that outlines how the Title I CSI/TSI Schools will implement an FLP program. The FLP plan must be approved by GaDOE's Title Programs Unit prior to implementation.
- All Title I CSI/TSI Schools are required to send notices to parents describing the school's status, sharing data and information used to support programming decisions, and explaining how parents may become involved in improving the school.
- All Title I Priority Schools are required to set aside 10 percent of their school's Title I allocation for Evidence-based professional learning. Focus Schools are not required to set aside 10 percent of their school's Title I allocation for Evidence-based professional learning. However, Focus Schools may set aside funds for Evidence-based professional learning if the need for research-based professional learning is addressed in the school's Title I targeted assistance or schoolwide plan.
- LEAs are required to set aside a minimum of 5 percent of the LEA's Title I allocation to implement the LEA's FLP program in its Title I CSI/TSI Schools. Set-asides above the minimum 5-percent requirement may come from the LEA's total allocation or the Priority Schools and Focus Schools' allocation and are subject to the equitable services to eligible private school students' requirements.

### **Notification to Parents of Workshop and Eligibility for Services**

All parents will be encouraged to participate in the development of a Flexible Learning Program for any schools designated as Priority or Focus Schools. Parents will be invited using multiple means of communication including newspaper articles, flyers sent home with students, phone calls, and website announcements. In addition, notification will be sent via U.S. mail to parents informing them of their child's eligibility to participate.

### **Description of Services**

For each Title I Focus or Priority school the LEA must submit an FLP plan that addresses the following:

- Using school-level disaggregated data, what are the areas of weakness (content area(s), subgroup(s), and graduation rate(s), if applicable) that will be addressed by the FLP offered at this school?
- How will the LEA implement an FLP plan that will ensure supplemental academic instructional time that is designed to support the students meeting identified goals and outcomes?

- How will the LEA provide Evidence-based professional learning (PL) for the FLP staff/consultant so instruction is engaging, enriching, and tailored to meeting the needs of the students, and is not a regurgitation of the teaching methods utilized with the students during regular instructional time?
- How will the LEA ensure that the instructional goals of the FLP students are aligned with Common Core Georgia Performance Standards?
- How will the LEA maximize the enrollment of the students in the FLP?
- How will the LEA maximize the attendance of participating students in the FLP?
- How will the LEA monitor the implementation of the program and the tracking of all the required data?

### **Submission of the FLP Plan**

As part of the Consolidated Application, districts will need to submit:

- A list of Title I schools that are required to offer a Flexible Learning Program (FLP), their classification as to Priority or Focus by school and LEA, and the school's Title I status.
- A projection of how much the LEA is intending to budget on their Flexible Learning Program (FLP) in the following areas:
  - Administrative Personnel Costs
  - Supplemental Materials / Supplies - LEA office and / or School
  - Evaluation Costs
  - Transportation Costs of FLP Program
  - Instructor Costs – Current Teachers or Contract Instructors
  - Evidence-based professional learning Costs
  - Equitable Services for Eligible Private School Students, where applicable
  - Total Cost of the Public School Choice transportation (parent reimbursement and / or school buses), if applicable
  - Required set-asides
  - Other (as approved by the LEAs GaDOE Flexible Learning Program Specialist)

### **Budgets**

- LEA's must submit, through the Consolidated Application, the Title I, Part A Flexible Learning Program (FLP) budget as a part of the LEA's Title I, Part A budget. The descriptions of all budgeted items must be specific and clearly describe the intent of the expenditure.
- All items budgeted must meet the **allocable, allowable, reasonable, and necessary** requirements described in the OMB Circulars:
  - Are the expenditures allowable Title I expenditures
  - Do the expenditures appear to be necessary in light of the LEAs goals and objectives?
  - Are the costs of the expenditures reasonable?
  - Are the expenditures for core subject areas?

- LEAs will utilize general guidelines for the use of Title I funds and equipment when submitting the budget for the FLP program. The law provides many flexibilities and opportunities for local educational agencies (LEAs) and schools to meet the purposes of Title I. In schoolwide programs, and LEA may use Title I funds for any activities that are part of the schoolwide program plan. CSI/TSI Schools may become schoolwide programs with less than a 40-percent poverty level. However, all schoolwide programs must have an approved schoolwide plan. In targeted assistance schools, however, Title I funds may only be used to meet the needs of participating children, their teachers, and their parents.

- ESSA provides several fiscal requirements that are applicable to Title I, Part A funds. Local educational agencies (LEAs) must maintain the financial effort previously provided with state and local funds to Title I schools. LEAs must provide services to Title I schools that are comparable to those of non-Title I school.

- A local educational agency (LEA) may use Title I funds only to supplement and, to the extent practical, increase the level of funds that would, in the absence of Title I funds, be made available from non-federal sources for the education of students participating in Title I programs. In no case may Title I funds be used to supplant (i.e. take the place of) state or local funds. It is a violation of the supplement, not supplant requirement if an LEA distributes regular state and local funds in a way that discriminates against students in a Title I school. LEAs found to be in violation of the supplement, not supplant requirements in the ESSA law will be required to return all Title I funds used to supplant the LEA's Title I budget. It is important to remember, however, that any determination about supplanting is very case specific; this makes it difficult to provide general guidelines without examining the details of the situation. Because Title I funds are available, the Georgia Department of Education uses a set of presumptions of what the LEA would have provided in the absence of the Title I funds based on its behavior in other situations. These presumptions are outlined in Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular

A-133 Compliance.

Prior to review of any budget submitted for approval, the Title I Education Program Specialist reviews the plans for the LEA's FLP submitted through the Consolidated Application Tab for FLPs. The FLP Plan contains eight questions to which the LEA must respond detailing the LEAs program for those LEAs with CSI/TSI Title I schools that are required to set aside a minimum of five (5) percent of their Title I, Part A allocation for flexible learning academic interventions and supports.

### **Timeline for FLP**

August – Develop list of eligible students based on federal tier guidelines.

September – Mail letters home inviting eligible students.

October – Begin serving students using a Flexible Learning Program. January – Conduct a second enrollment.

April – Conclude program and complete evaluation.

## Complaint Procedures

Any individual, organization, or agency (“complainant”) may file a complaint with the Lowndes County School System (LCSS) if that individual, organization, or agency believes and alleges that LCSS is violating a federal statute or regulation that applies to a federal program of the Evert Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date the complaint is received, unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered systemic or ongoing.

*(COMPLAINT FORM MAY BE FOUND IN THE APPENDIX AT THE END OF THIS HANDBOOK)*

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The LEA must submit the following components of an evaluation plan within its FLP plan in the Consolidated Application for *each* CSI/TSI school served:

- Effectiveness target or overall quantified goal of the program
- Assessment instrument(s) used to measure this target / goal
- Timeline for assessments (rough timelines for administration of pre-test, post-test, etc.)
- LEAs must submit their evaluation plan as a part of their FLP plan.

The Federal Programs Director and the GaDOE will monitor program data and evaluate performance according to the overall goal as stated in Title I, Part A legislation – increasing academic achievement on state assessments and attaining proficiency in meeting state standards. The evaluation will qualify core program components in an effort to highlight factors that contribute to effectiveness.

Each FLP will be evaluated on the following dimensions:

- Participant Feedback
  - Evaluation Question: What was the overall experience of stakeholders with the program?
  - Data Source: Stakeholder surveys
- Service Delivery – Evaluation Question: Is the LEA and its FLP program in compliance with laws and regulations?
  - Data Sources: Annual monitoring data, program documentation, federal reporting, public reporting, technical assistance, etc.
- Effectiveness
  - Evaluation Question: Are programs contributing to increased student academic achievement and performance on state education standards?
  - Data Sources: Student performance on state tests, Pre-Post assessment measures of state standards and academic skills targeting by programs, Performance Flag data, and student growth in schools offering FLP.
  - Evaluation results will be shared with stakeholders and the public and used to inform ongoing program improvement.

In addition, the Federal Programs Director will make two unannounced visits to the school during the FLP per enrollment period to ensure integrity of the program. Finally, the Federal Programs Director will communicate regularly with the FLP Coordinator and Principal at each Focus School to identify and solve challenges in a timely manner.

### **Transportation**

Transportation will be provided to students.

### **Evidence-based Professional Learning**

Evidence-based professional learning will be provided to staff delivering the FLP to ensure appropriate instructional strategies are implemented to ensure the success of the students being served.

Documents to be maintained: sign-in sheets, agendas, and description of Evidence-based professional learning.

### **Required Program Data for the LEA to be Maintained by School**

Criteria used to determine how students were selected for the program and how the subjects in which the students received intervention was determined

Rank-ordered list of all eligible students designating whether or not students are enrolled in the program. List should include students, grade levels, and subjects of tutoring. Students will be ranked based on the following federal rank order:

\*FLP Rank Order1: Most academically at-risk and FRM, SWD, or EL

\*FLP Rank Order2: Other most academically at-risk students

\*FLP Rank Order 3: Students who are NOT most academically at risk

- Hours of tutoring attended for each student
- Staff hours of service
- Group size for tutoring
- Pre-assessment information for each student
- Post-assessment information for each student
- Goal or plan of tutoring for each student
- Progress toward goal by student
- Strategies to be used if goals not met by student
- When does FLP occur (before/after/during school, summer, intercession, weekends)
- The days of the week the FLP occurs
- How is transportation provided and for whom

## **Section 8: Schoolwide Plan Development Procedure**

Lowndes County School System Title I schools are school-wide rather than targeted assistance programs. This allows all children and all parents an opportunity to have equal access to all related Title I assistance.

The process to become a schoolwide school is listed below. **Process Followed to Become a**

### **Schoolwide Program**

#### **School Responsibility**

- Present schoolwide information to parents and staff.
- Assemble a committee of stakeholders to include, but not limited to principal, teachers, parents, business partners, etc.
- Maintain sign-in sheets, agendas, meeting minutes for each committee meeting.
- Assemble committee to write and approve plan.
- Post written plan in a language that parents can understand.

#### **System Responsibility**

- Submit letter of intent for each school.
- Write the Schoolwide Plan (must include the 18 components).
- Package the Schoolwide Plan.
  - Describe how the school will use resources from other sources to implement the 10 required components.
  - Describe how the school will provide individual student academic assessments in a language the parents can understand.
- Get local board of education approval.
  - When written, the schoolwide plan must be officially approved by local board of education prior to implementation.
  - By statute, only the local board of education has the authority to approve schoolwide plans.
- Fulfill program requirements.
- Maintain the intent and purpose of each federal program that is consolidated under

Schoolwide Plan.

- Uphold requirements relating to health, safety, civil rights, student and parental participation and involvement, services to private school children, maintenance of effort, and comparability of services.

### **Continuation Requirements**

- Maintain documentation related to three core components (comprehensive needs assessment, comprehensive school plan approved by the local board of education and annual evaluation of program effectiveness.
- Use Title I funds to supplement educational services and not supplant those funds that would, in the absence of Title I funds, be made available from non-federal sources for the school. Funds that would normally flow to the school from non-federal sources must continue to be provided to the school.
- Conduct an annual evaluation of the implementation of, and results achieved by, the Schoolwide Plan (SWP). This evaluation must determine whether the SWP was effective in increasing the achievement of students in meeting the GPS/CCGPS, particularly those students who had been furthest from achieving the standards.
- Review and revise the plan as necessary based on the results of the evaluation to ensure the continuous improvement in student achievement.
- Make the plan available to LEA, parents, and the general public.
- Checklist is available in the appendix.

All schools are required to have school improvement plans. It is the responsibility of the principal to make sure that all plans are reviewed and revised annually. Plans must include all the components in the schoolwide and targeted assistance program checklist. Schools plans are reviewed and revised annually with parents and other stakeholders (teachers, principals, administrators, and other school personnel). Each school will hold an annual meeting where all stakeholders are given the opportunity to review the school plan and make comments. All parents, teachers, administrators, and other school personnel will be invited to the meeting to provide input. All schools will notify stakeholders in multiple ways: Notice of the meeting dates may be placed on each school's marquee, in each school newspaper and on the website. Parents and other stakeholders will be notified by invitation sent from each individual school, and all stakeholders may be notified using each school phone messaging system.

Parents that cannot attend the meeting will be given the opportunity to obtain a copy from each school and submit input before the final revisions are approved. The Title I Family Liaison in each school will be responsible for collecting the required information (agenda, parent comments, meeting notes, and sign-in sheets). Each school will hold its meeting within the first month of school.



The school plans are typically reviewed at the annual Title I meeting in the fall. The revision date will be clearly marked on each plan (month, day, and year).

Schoolwide program checklists are used to verify that the required components are included in each plan, which includes strategies for whole school reform. On-site meetings are held with principals to discuss the current status of their plans in regard to the checklist components. Missing or items in need of revision are marked on the checklist and then rechecked when the revised plan is submitted.

Four (4) elementary schools and one (1) middle school in the Lowndes County School System are Title I Schoolwide Schools.

### **Title I Scheduling Models for School-wide Plans**

A Title I school may use one or a combination of several instructional delivery models.

#### **In-Class Model**

An “in-class” delivery model is a Title I project in which the instructional services are provided to participating students in the same classroom setting and at the same time they would receive instructional services if they were not participating in the Title I project. Title I staff work closely with the classroom teacher to provide services which are supplemental and particularly designed to meet participants’ educational needs. Examples are: small group instruction, guided reading, teacher collaboration, extended learning, before and after school tutoring, and summer school.

#### **Pull-out Model**

In a Title I pull-out delivery model, students are pulled from their regular classroom to receive instruction in a Title I Reading or Math program. Students should not be out of their regular classroom reading or math instructional time for more than 25% of that time. For example, if the classroom instructional time is 60 minutes, students cannot miss more than 15 minutes of that time. They may receive as much time in the Title I lab as identified for their grade level. Title I staff work closely with the regular classroom teacher to provide services particularly designed to meet participants’ educational needs.

#### **Replacement/Excess Cost/Extended Pull-out Model**

This model pairs a Title I teacher with a classroom teacher. The usual class load, which in this case is composed of all Title I participants, is shared by the two teachers.

#### **Add-On (Extended Learning Time)**

An “add-on” delivery means Title I services are at times when participants would not otherwise be receiving state and locally- funded instructional services. This may include periods such as vacations, weekends, before or after regular school hours, or during non-instructional time during the regular school day.

## **Section 9: Targeted Assistance**

**Lowndes County School System has no Targeted Assistance Schools at this time. In the future if the district has a school which would require Targeted Assistance, this is the procedure the LCSS would follow:**

In all schools selected to receive Title I, Part A funds under ESSA that are ineligible for a schoolwide program or that choose not to operate such a schoolwide program, a local educational agency serving such school may use funds received under this part only for programs that provide services to eligible children identified as having the greatest need for special assistance. The following are adhered to in the district's targeted assistance plan:

- Restrict Title I, Part A resources to help eligible, participating students meet the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) standards that are expected of all students.
- Ensure that planning for students served under this part is incorporated into existing school planning.
- Use effective methods and instructional strategies that are based on scientifically-based research that:
  - strengthen the core academic component of the school
  - give primary consideration to providing or increasing extended learning time, such as an extended school year, before-and after-school, and summer programs and opportunities

Eligible children are identified by the school as failing, or most at-risk of failing, to meet the GaDOE's challenging student academic achievement standards on the basis of multiple, educationally-related, objective criteria established by the district and supplemented by the school. Selection is based on the scores of more than one test. The program has an academic component. Targeted assistance schools are required to separately identify Title I students.

These schools must meet similar requirements of schoolwide programs, such as emphasizing accelerated curricula, scheduling extended learning time, using effective methods and instructional strategies that are scientifically Evidence-based, providing adequate professional development, and coordinating the Title I activities with other school reform activities. Students must be ranked using a multiple criteria selection process.

### **Description of the Method by Which Children with the Greatest Need are Selected:**

- a Students will be selected through multiple selection criteria. The Title I teachers will create a list of students deemed "at risk", based upon their ranking in the following: classroom performance, test scores, and teacher recommendation. Note that preschool through second grade students must be chosen solely on the basis of the judgment of the teacher, interviews with parents and other developmentally appropriate measures examined by the teacher.
- b Children who are economically disadvantaged, children with disabilities, migrant children, homeless children, or limited English proficient children are eligible for services under this part on the same basis as other children selected to receive services under this part. In general, the following children are eligible for services:

- A child, who at any time in the two years preceding the year for which the determination is made, participated in a Head Start, Even Start, or Early Reading First program, or in preschool services under Title I.
- A child, who at any given time in the two years preceding the year for which the determination is made, received services under Title I, Part C, Education of Migratory Children.
- A child in a local institution for neglected or delinquent children and youth or attending a community day program for such children.
- A child who is homeless and attending any school served by the local educational agency.

The district would make a concerted effort to minimize removal of students from regular classrooms during the day. The needs of each individual student would be considered.

Teacher schedules, class rosters, and rankings, would be turned into the Title I office on a monthly basis.

### **Procedure for Enrolling New Targeted Assistance Students**

A new student coming into the school after the school year has begun will be evaluated for placement as follows:

- Records for prior Title I services will be reviewed by the homeroom teacher and referral to the Title I teacher for possible Title I services will be made.
- If no prior Title I services are noted and the student's records indicate that the student qualifies for Title I consideration, the regular Targeted Assistance ranking instrument will be used.
  - Upon identifying the student's need, homeroom teacher will complete a teacher recommendation checklist.
  - Data will be collected as listed on the ranking instrument. The scoring rubric will determine the student's placement for targeted Title I services.
    - If the student comes from out of state or a private school where no data is available, other assessment instruments as listed on the ranking instrument will be used.
  - Once ranking is completed, the student will be picked up for services as space is available and need is documented.
  - If student cannot be served immediately, then his/her name will be placed on a waiting list and the student will be rotated into services as space is available.
  - If the ranking instrument determines there is no need for immediate placement for Title I services, the student will be monitored by the homeroom teacher and assessment data will be periodically re-evaluated.

### **Targeted Assistance Schools Equipment Usage**

All equipment purchases (i.e. computers, printers) by participating TA schools are to be used only by Title I teachers and eligible Title I students. A list of the Title I students must be available to ensure that the equipment is only used by these students. The district Title I department reserves the right to monitor equipment purchased with Title I funds after the school becomes a

non- participating Title I school.

## **Section 10: Audits**

### **Resolution of Audit and Cross-Functional Monitoring Findings**

The Lowndes County School System makes an ongoing effort to comply with all federal programs requirements. The federal programs office makes a continuous effort to cooperate with state and federal auditors and monitors. “*Letter of Findings*” indicates that a violation has been found, corrective action will be required and timelines for completion will be included. Either the 30-day or the 60-day timelines may be extended, if exceptional circumstances exist. The Letter of Findings will be sent directly to the complainant.

All corrective actions through the audit process or cross-functional monitoring findings are fully implemented.

### **Steps to Audit/Monitoring Resolutions:**

Once the audit/cross-functional monitoring report is received, the Federal Programs Director will review all items. The cross-functional monitoring report will be pulled from the GaDOE website under the consolidated application.

- Each item will be examined carefully, and a team of district-level staff will determine the best means of corrective action.
- Items are gathered and a report is written by the Federal Programs Director.  
The report is submitted to the superintendent.
- The completed report is then sent to the GaDOE/ state auditors as a means of resolution. The district has 30 days from the receipt of the findings to respond to the GaDOE.
- The monitoring process and the resolution process are both used as a learning resource.

## **Section 11: Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Procedures**

GADOE compares the fiscal effort of the preceding year to the second preceding fiscal year and makes the maintenance of effort determination available to the system through a marked “met” or “unmet” on the consolidated application.

Documentation for MOE is only required for districts that do not meet the required maintenance of effort. Districts’ MOE is completed by the GaDOE.

The Federal Programs Director will pull the MOE information from the consolidated application.

## **Section 12: Attendance Area Determination**

### **Rank Order Procedures.Procedure for Determining Title I Schools Comparability Eligible Attendance Area Worksheet**

Comparability is to ensure that funds made available under Title I, Part A of ESSA are used to provide services that are in addition to the regular services normally provided by a local educational agency (LEA) for participating children, the LEA must provide services in its Title I schools with State and local funds that are at least comparable to services provided in its non- Title I schools. Comparability is achieved through the use of two forms of documentation: the October FTE count for the current year and the payroll distribution report. The state comparability report provided by the Georgia Department of Education is used to report the appropriate numbers to GADOE. The total number of non- federal employees that are to be included per payroll distribution codes are counted and placed in the comparability report which automatically calculates comparability. The enrollment numbers submitted for comparability are from the October FTEcount with the exclusion of prekindergarten enrollment. High Poverty Attendance Area Schools are compared to Low Poverty Attendance Area Schools. Using the student/instructional staff ratios to compare the average number of students per instructional staff in each Title I school with the average number of students per instructional staff in non-Title I schools, comparability is achieved when High Poverty Attendance Area Schools averages do not exceed 110 percent of the Low Poverty Attendance Area Schools. Included in the count are instructional teachers and support personnel, instructional paraprofessionals, music, art, and physical education teachers, guidance counselors, speech therapists, media specialists, school social workers and psychologists. No federally- funded personnel or prekindergarten personnel are included in the count; only state and local paid staffs are counted. Comparability will be determined and established no later than November 15 of each year.

1. Pull free and reduced (F&R) information from GaDOE website. Use the previous year's first October Free and Reduced Lunch Count and the previous year's first October FTE. The FTE count is for enrollment. The Free and Reduced Lunch Count is used for determining the number of free and reduced meals.
2. This process should take place starting in April.
3. If applicable: determine new schools or schools that are being redistricted/rezoned. Request the names of the students being moved from one school to another in this rezoning/redistricting process in order to obtain a count. This information may be obtained from The Office of Student Assignment.
4. Request the free and reduced information for students affected by moving to a different school due to a new school opening or redistricting/rezoning. This information is obtained from the Nutrition Department.
5. For each school, list the schools receiving students and indicate the number of free and reduced lunch students.

Example:

<b>ABC School (receiving students from schools listed below)</b>		
<b>Students From</b>	<b># of Students</b>	<b># Free or Reduced</b>
XYZ School	5	2
EFG School	25	23

6. Place all information for all schools in the district on the large spreadsheet
7. FY 16 Worksheet for Determining the Number of Students Moved Due to Redistricting for 2016-2017.
8. Complete Worksheet for Determining the Number of Students Moved.
9. Complete the Worksheet for Eligible Attendance.
10. Use this information to complete the Eligible Attendance Worksheet which will be a required attachment to the Title I Consolidated Applications process.

### **Section 13: Allocations and Carryover**

#### **Procedures for Determining Carryover:**

The Federal Programs Director tracks the spending of each program/ school through the year via budget sheets.

At the end of the school year, carryover information is updated and reviewed. Family & Community Engagement, Flexible Learning Programs (FLP), and professional development for Focus and Priority schools are taken into consideration.

Funds are redistributed based on GaDOE criteria.

A copy of the GaDOE enrollment report is placed in file.

#### **Procedures for Determining Allocations:**

##### **Equitable Allotments for Schools**

In the LCSS, the process to ensure equitable funding for students at all schools is provided through the application of the Weighted Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) scale. The actual funding amount assigned to each specific group is provided by the GaDOE each year. Each school is awarded funding based on the specific weighted value assigned to each specific student group/subgroup and according to the FTE count at each school for those groups/subgroups. The FTE count utilized in the distribution of funds is taken from the official FTE count that is conducted in October of the preceding school year.

#### **Title Allocations**

After receiving notification of the Title I, Part A grant amounts from GaDOE, reservations in each budget are set aside for required components such as Family & Community Engagement, Evidence-based professional learning, neglected and delinquent, private school per pupil and equitable services, and homeless students. Administrative costs are also part of the reservations,

which are not part of the schools' per pupil amounts.

Per pupil amounts are allocated to schools in rank order of poverty based on the number of children from low-income families who reside in eligible attendance areas (children eligible for free/reduced price meals under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act). Low income is determined by the number of free or reduced lunches at a school using the previous year's October FTE count. Higher ranking schools receive the same amount or more than the schools ranked below those schools. The per pupil allocation is always large enough to provide a reasonable assurance that each school can operate its Title I program of sufficient quality.

Typically, carryover funds are allocated in one of two ways:

(1) to schools by increasing the per pupil amount maintaining rank order, basing that amount on the total number of children from low-income families in each area or

(2) the funds are allocated back to all the schools on an equal basis and each school is given an opportunity to spend the funds. Either way, schools must submit a written description of the expenditure requests. Set asides are recalculated for private school per pupil amounts. Equitable services are also recalculated depending on an allocation of funds for district-level activities.

Budget sheets are monitored regularly throughout the year and calculations are made from these near the end of the school year to determine that no more than 15% will be carried into the following year. Should carryover occur in private school set asides, those amounts will be added to the following year's private school set aside funds.

Title I, Part A funds are used to fund all eligible schools in the Lowndes County School System that qualify as School-wide Schools. The Lowndes County School System uses Grade Span Grouping when considering support and serves these schools in rank order (highest to lowest poverty) according to their gradespan, K-5, 6-8, and 9-12. Set asides are determined by program requirements for: Family & Community Engagement (F&CE) which includes the mandatory 1% set aside, Homeless, Neglected & Delinquent (N&D), and Private Schools. F&CE carryover will be determined each year through the completion of a carryover worksheet

#### **Section 14: Reservation of Funds**

**Professional Development:** In order to promote continuous school improvement, the Lowndes County School System will continue to pursue professional development to strengthen best practices in all classrooms. Research-based professional learning activities will be prescribed through an evidence-based design and will address the need areas identified by the System- and School Improvement Goals.

**Family & Community Engagement :** A minimum of 95 percent of 1 percent of the entire Title I allocation is given to schools. Principals have the option of expending the one percent or submitting it back to the system level. Should a principal decide to direct those funds to a

In the spring of each year, all Title I parents are asked to participate in completing a parent survey. Using this survey, parents are asked to make suggestions as to how Title I funds should be used.

These suggestions are collected and shared with school principals, parents, school council, other school-level committees, and the parent advisory council committee at the district level. This information is compiled and then used to plan activities for the next school year. Any suggestions that may be appropriate for the remaining portion of the school year will be considered and implemented where appropriate. Throughout the school year, Title I funds are used to purchase workshop materials for parents who attend school-level and district-level activities. Title I funds are used to fund the district-level Title I Annual meeting/ Family Day Event (5 Title I schools), Home School Connection Newsletters for 5 Title I schools, and brochures and educational reading materials to help engage parents in the educational process of their children.

In May, parents receive an invitation to attend an end of the year assessment meeting to review previously collected suggestions from surveys, suggestion boxes from Title I schools, and evaluations from activities offered earlier in the year. Parents at this meeting review a PowerPoint presentation explaining the CLIP. After the PowerPoint presentation, parents are afforded the opportunity to make suggestions about use of Title I funds. Parents also use this time to review/revise the district level Family & Community Engagement policy and make suggestions for the new calendar year regarding activities and use of Title I funds for students and families. Additional information is considered when the School Improvement Plan is reviewed/ revised. (All parents and stakeholders have an opportunity to participate in this process).

In the fall, parents are provided an explanation about how Title I funds can be used to support Family & Community Engagement activities. Parents are extended an invitation to ask questions and provide feedback regarding the use of Title I funds. Parents are asked to get involved in planned committees, join PTO or school council, and become a volunteer and/or mentor in the school. Also in the fall of each year, Title I Annual meetings are held at individual Title I schools to inform parents of their rights to be involved in their child's education. Parents are asked/invited to become active partners in the school. Suggestions to serve include serving on various committees, assisting in the school where needed such as proctoring and planning activities, serving as mentors and/or tutors, etc. Parents are also asked to provide suggestions for program improvement throughout the school year.

### **Title I, Part A Districtwide Parent Activity-Project Assurance**

To comply with federal guidelines, districts that receive an allocation of more than \$500,000 must reserve 1 percent of their total allocation. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the 1 percent must be allocated directly to participating Title I schools.

An exception may be made to this provision if participating Title I principals agree to pool all or part of their Family & Community Engagement allocation for a district-level Family & Community Engagement activity/project.

Districts with schools exercising this flexibility must provide supporting documentation on the Attachments Tab of the Consolidated Application budget.



**Homeless Children and Youth:** The federal programs office is required to set aside a portion of Title I funds to meet the needs of homeless children and youth. The Federal Programs Director and the Homeless Liaison consult with and train all school personnel including counselors, Family & Community Engagement Coordinator, clerks, teachers, principals, and bus drivers to identify children in homeless situations. A home survey is also used to identify homeless students.

The Federal Programs Director and Homeless Liaison are consulted if a student is found to need transportation to a school of origin and one of them will make arrangements through the transportation department. Needs assessments are conducted by school-level homeless contacts when a child is identified as homeless; the contacts then work with the homeless liaison and community agencies to meet those needs. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Grant assists with transportation, Evidence-based professional learning for homeless contacts, as well as provides school supply kits and hygiene kits for homeless students in need.

**Neglected and Delinquent Children:** The reservation amount provided by GaDOE in the Title I, Part A allocation letter and worksheet is the amount set aside for neglected and delinquent children.

Currently, there are two neglected sites in Lowndes County. These sites include Raintree Village Children's Home and the Georgia Sheriff's Boys Ranch. The Annual Survey of Local Institutions for Neglected and Delinquent Children is completed each year and is based on the number of children residing at the home for 30 consecutive days with at least one day being in October.

**Private Schools:** If Lowndes County School System ever has any private school to choose to participate, all Title I regulations for private school participation will be followed. The private school worksheet would be completed and attached to the Consolidated Application to ensure that all reservations related to Family & Community Engagement, instructional lead teachers, Evidence-based professional learning, and paraprofessionals have been reserved.

The district uses the information provided by GaDOE to determine reservations for Family & Community Engagement, CSI/TSI (if applicable), private schools, indirect cost, and neglected and delinquent.

### **Professional Qualifications Request for Lesser Amount**

The Lowndes County School System is not required to develop an improvement plan or restrict the use of federal education funds pursuant to such a plan, and the state is not required to provide Lowndes County School System the technical assistance that would be required to develop such a plan.

Additionally, the state is not required to enter into the agreement required with an LEA. Finally, Lowndes County School System is not restricted in its use of Title I, Part A funds for paraprofessionals, but still must comply with the requirements with respect to paraprofessionals in ESSA

### Requirements of Paraprofessionals

- All paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002, hired with Title I, Part A funds or employed in a Title I, Part A schoolwide program and assisting with instruction must meet one of the following requirements prior to hire:
  1. Completed at least 2 years of study at an institution of higher education.
  2. Obtained an associate's degree (or higher).

3. Met a rigorous standard of quality and can demonstrate through a formal state-approved assessment, the knowledge of, and the ability to assist in instructing, reading, writing, and mathematics, or assisting in instructing and the readiness of above named subject areas, as appropriate.
- All paraprofessionals working in a Title I, Part A funded program, including a Title I, Part A schoolwide program, shall have earned a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.
  - Title I paraprofessionals will not be assigned a duty inconsistent with duties outlined ESSA.
  - Paraprofessionals work under the direct supervision of a teacher

## **Section 15: Expenditure of Funds**

### **Financial and Program Policies and Procedures**

#### **Lowndes County School System Approach for Purchases**

The school system shall give preference in its purchases as may be reasonable and practical to local businesses and to such materials, supplies, equipment, services, and agricultural products as may be manufactured or produced in the State of Georgia. Such preferences shall not sacrifice price for quality.

The approval process for federal budgets is as follows:

- Funding amounts are approved by the GaDOE Board of Education.
- Award letters are sent to districts.
- Schools are given the allocated dollar amount for budgeting to be spent within that fiscal year.
- The budget is entered into the GaDOE Consolidated Application (electronic grant application process) by the program coordinator or authorized staff.
- The budget is approved by the program coordinator based on the assessment of **reasonable, necessary, allowable, and allocable** (as determined by the Comprehensive Needs Assessment/Improvement Plan).
- The budget is approved by the superintendent (budget may be rejected at this level and requests for revisions may be made).
- The budget is approved by the program specialist at the GaDOE (budget may be rejected at this level and requests for revisions may be made).
- The budget amount is approved by GaDOE Accounting.
- The budget is adopted by the district BOE.
- The approved budget is uploaded into the System's accounting program and is designated as the original allocations for each budget area. As amendments occur, entries may be made to make adjustments within the budgeting system.

#### **Accounting Protocols for Title Programs and IDEA --- **Internal Controls Purchases and****

#### **Requisition Process (Procurement):**

1. Each Federal budget is prepared at the system level by each grant manager.

Once the budget is submitted and approved by the state, grant director

initiates the purchasing process. For Title programs, purchases align with SIP/DIP goals.

2. At the school level, the Principal or designee initiates the requisition form, complete with:

- vendor information including phone number (and fax number if applicable)
- ship to information including the address for the school
- Corresponding School Improvement Plan goal is referenced on the requisition for Title programs
- Director/designee assigns the appropriate account numbers
- the Principal's/designee signature under "Ordered By" line
- The requisition is then sent to the Federal Programs Director/grant manager for review. (Signature of the grant manager indicates **allowability** and is given to the bookkeeper for processing)

3. The appropriate Director/grant manager then signs off on the requisition and sends to the bookkeeper for processing.

4. The order is processed and delivery of goods/services is delivered (generally, directly to the school or department). The school will send a copy of the packing slip/invoice to the appropriate Director in order to process payment.

5. All Title II, Part A, Title I, Part D and McKinney-Vento grant expenditures/purchase orders are authorized and signed-off by the Federal Programs Director/grant manager. The Special Education Director signs off on IDEA purchases through a similar process described in the Special Education Manual (which is attached as part of this manual).

6. Directors are entrusted with the authority to manage purchases under \$50,000 including "micro-purchases" (defined as \$10,000 or less). According to Board policy, any purchases between \$10,000 and \$49,999 should solicit three (3) competitive quotes (if available). Attention is exercised when looking for items needed to successfully implement or maintain efforts within the school and/or department level and meets the four-pronged test of **reasonable, necessary, allowable, and allocable**. Expenditure of funds must be allowable and reasonable in accordance with OMB Circular A-87 and EDGAR 2 CFR Part 200.

7. GUIDANCE FOR PURCHASES FOR ALL FEDERAL GRANTS:

**Micro-purchase:** Purchases where the aggregate dollar amount does not exceed \$10,000 (or \$2,000 if the procurement is construction and subject to Davis-Bacon [excluding IDEA]). When practical, the entity should distribute micro-purchases equitably among qualified suppliers. No competitive quotes are required if management determines that the price is reasonable.

**Small purchase:** Includes purchases up to the Simplified Acquisition threshold, which is currently less than \$150,000. Informal purchasing procedures are acceptable, but price or rate quotes must be obtained from an *adequate* number of sources.

**Noncompetitive proposals:** Also known as **sole-source** procurement, this may be appropriate only when specific criteria are met. Examples include when an item is available only from one source, when a public emergency does not allow for the time of the competitive proposal

process, when the federal awarding agency authorizes, or after a number of attempts at a competitive process, the competition is deemed inadequate.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST (COI)**

Employees of the Lowndes County School System are not automatically disqualified from submitting bids to advertised business opportunities/contracted services based on the fact that they are LCS employees. However, there are basic stipulations that apply to all vendors submitting for consideration- including any LCS employee wishing to be considered- for a contracted event:

- The vendor/employee must provide a current business license in the field/area being considered
- The vendor/employee must provide proof of professional insurance for the services to be rendered
- The performance of the contracted service must be done off of contract time and does not coincide/conflict with the terms of the original employment duties & responsibilities
- The employee requesting consideration for the bid may not participate in any form or fashion in the selection, awarding, and/or administration of the contracted service
- (This specific element in the Conflict of Interest would also include great consideration to others who may be involved in the same consideration for a contract. This element would compliment the other definition of Conflict of Interest included in this Handbook that relates to the personal relationships of those who may be involved/affected by the services to be provided).
- Anyone who suspects a violation in the COI procedures should report to the immediate supervisor or the next above person in the chain of command

## **PURCHASE ORDER PROCEDURES**

- Purchase orders must be approved by the Director/grant manager before orders are placed.
  - Purchase orders specifically designed to serve school-level needs must be approved by the facility Principal. Any purchases made with Federal funds must be approved by the appropriate Director. Any bid or proposal for goods or services valued at or above \$10,000 shall be advertised in the [Georgia Procurement Registry](#)
  - Purchase orders/purchases which are drawn from federal or specific grant funds must be approved by the Superintendent's designee(s) (usually a Director of the specific grant involved).
  - Purchase orders totaling between \$10,000 and \$49,999 must be submitted after three quotes (If available) and approved by the Superintendent/designee.
  - Purchase orders totaling more than \$50,000 must be determined through a sealed-bid process and approved by the Superintendent/Board.
1. Only those items included on a purchase order will be paid from that purchase order. Cancellations and substitutions should be noted on the blue copy and another purchase order issued if total prices are different.
  2. Estimate shipping costs carefully or have vendor quote shipping. Purchase order total

should always reflect the total cost of the items including shipping or other service charges.

Large delivery items and back orders should be cleared as soon as possible. Cancel purchase orders after 30 days and reorder. When purchase order is cancelled or items are returned, notify central office in writing and attach a copy of correspondence sent to vendor. This is necessary in order to give proper credits when received from vendor. Final purchase orders issued near the end of the year must be invoiced on or before June 30 to be included in the current fiscal year. No monies will be carried into the new fiscal year without being deducted from the new budget.

Purchase orders are not complete for files until the blue receiving copy is signed, dated and returned to central office by purchaser.

Copy Distribution:

Original	(White)	To vendor
Finance Copy	(Yellow)	Retain at County Office
Receiving Copy	(Salmon)	Sign and return to central office when order is complete

(Salmon) copy will be returned to school/department after approval. White copy can then be mailed/faxed by the County Office.

NOTE: Failure to comply with the above procedures could result in liability on the part of the purchaser to pay for the purchase order items. Examples are purchase orders made over the phone without prior approval or when invoices are received from vendors before purchase orders are approved and on file in the Central Office.

There shall be no exceptions to the General Purchasing Policies except as granted in writing by the Superintendent of Education or designee.

An emergency is defined as an eventuality that:

1. Cannot reasonably be foreseen;
2. Demands correction by immediate action and If not corrected, may endanger students and/or others, or result in an economic loss to the school system.

Poor planning may create a inconvenience, but such does not constitute an emergency. Adherence to these procedures along with attentive management helps prevent the loss, or damage to all assets (including funds, equipment, and materials).

The Superintendent of Schools, or designee, has the authority to make emergency purchases in

the open market without prior submission of purchase order. Whenever possible, competitive quotations will be solicited before obligating the school system, and the Superintendent, or designee, shall inform the Board of Education of all emergency expenditures.

### **PURCHASING/TRAVEL EXPENSE STATEMENTS (including Federal Funds)**

- Fill out the employee information at the top of the expense statement. You must complete all parts, ex., SSN, Headquarters, Auto License #...
- The date, departure time and arrival time must be completed for each day you are claiming travel. Identify the location of departure and arrival for each date.
- One month per expense statement.
- With permission of the CFO, purchases may be made with a county purchase card and funds will simply be transferred to cover expenses and no personal reimbursements made.

**Mileage**- Mileage allowance is (locally determined) \$ 0.45 per mile all travel. Parking fees at conference sites are reimbursable, but require a receipt. In the case of where a District vehicle is used, reimbursement will be made through a journal entry and funds will be assigned back to the District's travel funding account.

**Meals**- Meals are reimbursed at \$6.00 for breakfast, \$7.00 for lunch, and \$15.00 for dinner. Travel regulations have been revised to allow a higher meal reimbursement for high cost areas in Georgia. Reimbursement in Atlanta, Augusta, Brunswick, Savannah, and out-of-state will be \$7.00 breakfast, \$9.00 for lunch, and \$20.00 for dinner.

Breakfast - Reimbursement will not be allowed unless employee departs prior to 6:30 am.

Lunch- Generally, lunch is not reimbursable except when the meal is an integral part of the conference.

Dinner- Generally, employees will not be reimbursed for the evening meal unless they return to their headquarters after 7:30 pm. Employees will be reimbursed for meals if they were away from home on a work assignment for more than 12 hours.

**Lodging**-Lodging expenses may be reimbursed. Employees are required to attach lodging receipts to their expense statements. **When registering for lodging the employee should claim exemption from the local hotel sales tax** (if applicable). The appropriate form is available from the Central Office in paper form. Failure to submit the form at registration will result in the employee having to pay the lodging tax since it is **not** reimbursable. It is permissible to use lodging if there is a substantial savings (even in lieu of the aforementioned sales tax consideration).

The fund code from which reimbursement is being paid **must** be included in the appropriate area.

**Check with the administrator authorizing the travel to ensure funds are available and are reasonable consistent with GSA 48 CFR 31.205-46a.**

#### **Secure Approval**

The employee's supervisor must sign the employee expense statement before it is submitted to the appropriate authoring designee. An agenda must be attached to the expense statement.

**Timeline for Approval and Payment** :All expense statements should be submitted to the Federal Programs Department **within 30 days of the time the expense incurred**. When this time frame is followed, expense checks should be printed within 5-10 days. Expense statements received after 30 days may be declined for payment or added into the regular paycheck (subject to taxes/fees).

\*If an expense statement is not completed correctly, it must be returned to the employee.

## **Stipends (including Federal Funds)**

1. The principal/director is required to submit a description of the stipend and a list of personnel receiving payment to the Federal Programs Office.
2. At the completion of the Evidence-based professional learning, the principal/director includes the requisition for payment of stipends.
3. The Federal Programs Director/Director of PL (If paid with non-Title funds) reviews the requisition to verify the Evidence-based professional learning is part of the schoolwide plan/System-wide plan. Once approved, the principal writes a memo to the Federal Programs Department requesting payments for the stipends for the Evidence-based professional learning with time sheets attached, and with the appropriate account number.

## **Accounting Protocols Specific for Priority or Focus Schools**

\*Lowndes County does not have any schools designated as Priority or Focus at this time. In the future, if a school does have this designation, the following procedures will be followed:

### **Purchases and Requisition Process (Segregation of Duties):**

1. Each school budget is developed by the school and district leadership teams.
2. The principal sends a request to the Federal Programs Director of the item needed at his/her school.
3. The Federal Programs Director, along with the district leadership team, reviews the request to ensure it complies with the school and district improvement plans.
4. The Principals/Federal Programs Director initiates the Requisition Form, complete with vendor information including phone number (and fax number if applicable), ship-to information including the address for the school, department indicating Title I School Improvement, the appropriate account number based on the budget sheets and GaDOE approved list of function/object codes.
5. The Federal Programs Director then signs off on the requisition and forwards the requisition to the Finance Director for review.
6. The Office of the Finance Director then reviews the requisition and signs off to verify appropriate budget amounts and account numbers on the requisition.
7. The Finance Director forwards the requisition to the Purchase Order Clerk.
8. The Purchase Order Clerk assigns a P.O. number, logs the P.O., and orders the merchandise.
9. The Purchase Order Clerk returns the P.O. to the school or department that made the requisition.
10. When the merchandise arrives, the school or department then signs that the merchandise is accounted for and returns the P.O. to Accounts Payable for payment.

## **Crowdfunding**

Many schools and classrooms are realizing the benefits of crowdfunding. **Crowdfunding** involves the posting of projects or needs online with the expectation that people will contribute small amounts toward the fundraising goal. On some fundraising platforms the result of the fundraising campaign is the delivery of specific items named in the project description (as with Donors Choose). Other platforms cash out a completed campaign with the transfer of funds to the originator of the campaign

(as with GoFundMe).

Crowdfunding that results in the transfer of funds represents needless entanglements and risk to our employees. Crowdfunding for school or classroom projects through such platforms as GoFundMe is not permitted. In those cases where school communities wish to raise funds directly for the needs of a family or a student, those crowdfunding activities cannot be undertaken by school system employees.

DonorsChoose.Org is one non-profit entity that provides teachers the opportunity to acquire needed items for their classrooms, from Chromebooks to reading nooks. To eliminate potential confusion about these donated items, here are some basic guidelines to keep in mind when requesting and receiving items from DonorsChoose.

- The system employee shall inform the building principal of the fundraising request and post only with the principal's approval. The employee should then provide the building principal a copy of the fundraising project as posted.
- For any project that will result in the purchase of classroom technology, the employee must obtain pre-approval of the Technology Director for the item(s) requested. The Technology Department can make recommendations on models and types of equipment that are compatible with our network and that we can manage and support. [Note that Chrome OS devices in a DonorsChoose project must also include the Google Management License in order to be added to our Google management system and used with our programs.]
- For any project that will require construction or a change in infrastructure to implement, the pre- approval of the Facilities Director must be obtained.
- It should not be expected that consumables for donated items will be provided by your school or the district.
- Once posted, the fundraising campaign should be promoted schoolwide and will be shared on a system web page for open crowdfunding projects. [Marketing of a crowdfunding project should not be targeted specifically to the parents of students in the teacher's class].

The DonorsChoose program specifies that any materials received through the program become the property of the classroom at the school of the teacher who requests them. Procedures are in place for transfers within a school or district, but the donated materials do not become the personal property of the teacher and will remain with the school district if the teacher ceases to be employed by the system.

Any equipment will be added the school's inventory, and technology items will be asset tagged and added to the system

technology inventory. Items shipped directly to teachers should be taken to the school media specialist in order to be logged into the school's inventory and appropriately labeled. Any network/license configuration of technology items will be done by technology staff before the items are used in the classroom.

### **Split-Funded Personnel (Time & Effort)**

Salaries and wages of employees who work on federal programs may be paid with federal funds as long as appropriate "time and effort" records are maintained. (These are also referred to as "time distribution" records.) Charges to Federal awards for salaries, wages and/or stipend benefits must be based on records that accurately reflect the work performed. The rules for documentation vary depending on whether the employee is working on a single cost objective or multiple cost objectives. The difference between single and multiple cost objectives is determined by how an employee works, not how the employee is funded. Time & Effort reporting is not time cards which compensation is determined. T&E documentation must be collected from all federally funded grant employees, including administrative, certified and support staff. The Periodic /Annual Certification form is completed for personnel who are fully funded by federal funds (detailed further in this section).

Split-funded personnel are required to maintain a time log (PAR) delineating the specific federally funded duties performed. The format used is an electronic time log from the GaDOE. Other forms of documentation to compliment the electronic time log may be a journal, calendar with specific duties/ events, or any other relevant source of documentation. This is submitted monthly and signed off by the



appropriate supervisor. Periodic/Annual Certifications will be completed on any employee paid with federal funds (typically) annually all for federal grants. All should reflect after the fact reporting.

Forms are signed monthly by the staff member and his/her immediate supervisor. The split time log is filled out after the end of each month and submitted to the immediate supervisor for review and signature. Supporting documentation (source documentation) is kept by the person owning the time log. This source documentation includes calendar entries, etc. Signed forms are maintained in the Federal Programs office.

**SPECIFIC DOCUMENTATION EXPECTED FOR T&E:**

WHO	SAMPLE TYPES OF DOCUMENTATION		
STIPEND RECIPIENTS	Periodic/annual Certification	Registration	Sign-in Sheets
TITLE PAID STAFF (FULL)	Annual or Semi-Annual Certification	Master/Individual schedules, requisitions	Supporting Evidence
TITLE PAID STAFF (PART)	Annual or Semi-Annual Certification	PAR, Time Log, journal,	Supporting Evidence
SUBSTITUTES	Evidence/record from Time Clock (i.e.	Evidence of Allowability	

MENTORS	Annual or Periodic Certification	Registration,	Sign-in Sheets
PRINCIPALS	Evidence of Allowability	Requisitions, Procedures	Evidence of History
(OTHER)	(Documentation will reflect examples above as well as, other requested)		

**Consultants, Contracts, Purchased Services for Federal Funds Suspension and Debarment Process**

Grant requirements state non-Federal entities are prohibited from contracting with or making sub-awards under covered transactions to parties that are suspended or debarred or whose principals are suspended or debarred. Covered transactions include those **procurement** contracts for goods and services awarded under a non-procurement transaction that are expected to equal or exceed \$25,000. Lowndes County School System will utilize sam.gov to search vendors to check for suspended or debarred parties. LCSS will also maintain documentation of the search in the Federal Programs and finance offices. The Federal Programs office staff will look at total cost for vendors on a monthly basis. If the totals over the course of the year exceed \$25,000, EPLS will be utilized to search all vendors and documentation will be maintained. Contracts with consultants/vendors will be required to contain specific language on suspension and disbarment.

**System for Awards Management (SAM)**

Contracts are required for all consultants and purchased services. Agreements are entered into between the Lowndes County School System and the consultant. Each contract contains the following:

- Contracts are generated.
- Specific duties are specifically spelled out for each contract.
- The person must also submit to be fingerprinted if he/she is working with students.
- The contract includes the number of hours to work and the rate of pay.

Each contract is signed by the following:

- Contractor
- Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
- Federal Programs Director

### **Verification of Work**

The appropriate Director provides oversight in ensuring that all contractors' work is complete. Artifacts, daily sign in sheets, and completion of all workshops are kept on file in the Federal Programs office.

The Federal Programs Director signs off on all invoices/contracts prior to the issuance of payment for services. These contracts must be maintained and kept on file in the Federal Programs office.

### **Periodic Certification**

Periodic certifications for all 100% federally-funded paid staff takes place after-the-fact. The process may occur annually. Schedules (like a school's master schedule or a teacher's schedule) may be provided to verify work the assignment and will accompany the Periodic Certification for compliance documentation.

## **Section 16: Supplement Not Supplant Procedures**

Federal Programs expenditures are supplemental to schools' budgets. Federally-funded paid personnel are in addition to the number required to meet maximum class size as determined by GaDOE. Federal funds are only used to supplement and, to the extent practical, increase the level of funds that would, in the absence of federal funds, be made available from non-federal sources for the education of students participating in federal programs. Federal program funds are not used to take the place of (supplant) local, state, or other federal funding. Conversations regarding supplement versus supplant are held quite often throughout the year. Title programs/activities provide supplemental services to programs that are required by federal, state, and local law. Title program funds do not support programs that were paid with state or local funds unless there has been evidence of precipitous decline. All principals are made aware of the supplement not supplant issue during the training that takes place during the summer before school starts. The Federal Programs Director reviews budget requests to ensure that supplanting is not taking place. Expenditure of funds must be allowable and reasonable in accordance with OMB Circular and EDGAR 74.36. (SEE SECTION #13-EQUITABLE ALLOTMENTS for SCHOOLS)

Federal programs (excluding Title I, Part A) use the follow questions to ensure that programs are supplementing, not supplanting: Respond "NO" to the following questions:

1. Would other monies from the state, local, or other federal resources have been used to pay for the item or service?
2. Was the item or services provided with non-federal funds in the previous year?
3. Was the item or services provided to participating schools with Title funds and to non-participating schools with non-federal funds?

Beginning in FY 19, the District will adhere to the formulas outlined in the annual Resource Allocation Method/Plan (RAM/P) to help avoid supplanting issues. The RAM/P is developed annually in a collaborative effort between the Federal Projects Director and the Finance Office and ensure that State and Local funds are distributed equitably before any supplemental funding is allocated.

### **RAMP : DEVELOPMENT**

Annually, there is a collaborative process to determine how resources are allocated to schools. This collaborative team consists of :

- the Asst. Supt. of Finance,
- the SIS Coordinator,
- the Asst. Supt. for T&L
- The Federal Programs Director
- Human Resources
- Special Education Director

### **RAMP: PERSONNEL DETERMINATIONS**

This team will establish that appropriate teacher allocations have been provided prior to additional supplemental support (i.e. Class-size Reduction, Early Intervention, etc.). The human allocations and the supporting instructional funds should fall within the guidance of the RAM/P for a specific fiscal year.

Information included in this determination process will include:

- Current student enrollments
- Teachers allocated at each grade
- Additional positions considered that effect allocations/assignments
- Other factors that could have a bearing on this allocation process
- General Ledger allocation amounts

This process is conducted regularly throughout the initial days of school opening each year. The SIS Director can generate these figures at any given time, but it is a focused process for the first 15-20 days of school each year. Typically, the staff allocations remain in place for the remainder of a school year once the bulk of enrollment has slowed (unless there is a drastic/unusual reason to add/remove staff).

### **RAMP: INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL ALLOCATIONS**

- An instructional allocation ratio per full-time equivalent (FTE)
- Special education teacher allotments are based on maximum class sizes (Students with Disabilities of State Board Rule 160-5-1-.08 Class Size and State Board Rule 160-4-7-.14 Personnel, Facilities and Caseloads). The number of segments is considered, as well.
- ESOL teacher allotments are based on maximum class sizes (English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) of State Board Rule 160-5-1-.08 Class Size)
- Gifted teacher allotments are based on maximum class sizes (Gifted of State Board Rule 160-5-1-.08 Class Size). Schools may opt to provide Gifted support within the context of the Team concept. This may provide more Gifted certified teachers at one school in this model
- Instructional paraprofessionals are based on a grade level allocation or on program-specific requirements
- Exploratory positions are predetermined at the middle and elementary school levels and are driven by student/program enrollments at the high school level

**RAMP: OTHER STAFF**

- School administration is based on an allocation ratio for each grade
- Other support personnel are based on an allocation ratio for each grade outlined in a fiscal year's RAMP

**RAMP: SCHOOL-BASED ALLOCATIONS**

Flat allocations are provided on a per FTE for basis operations set for each specific fiscal year

**RAMP: TIMELINE**

- June/July: Creation of RAM/P Plan
- July/August: Submission of RAM/P Plan to GaDOE
- October: FTE Count
- November: Final revision of RAM/P Plan based on October FTE Count (if needed)
  - Submission of final RAM/P Plan to GaDOE

## **Section 17: Comparability of Services**

### **Procedure for Determining Title I Schools' Comparability**

Comparability is achieved through the use of two forms of documentation: the October FTE count for the current year and the payroll distribution report. The state comparability report provided by the Georgia Department of Education is used to report the appropriate numbers to GaDOE. The total number of non-federal employees that are to be included per payroll distribution codes are counted and placed in the comparability report, which automatically calculates comparability. The enrollment numbers submitted for comparability are from the October FTE count with the exclusion of prekindergarten enrollment. High Poverty Attendance Area Schools are compared to Low Poverty Attendance Area Schools. Using the student/instructional staff ratios to compare the average number of students per instructional staff in each Title I school with the average number of students per instructional staff in non-Title I schools, comparability is achieved when High Poverty Attendance Area Schools averages do not exceed 110 percent of the Low Poverty Attendance Area Schools. Included in the count are instructional teachers and support personnel, instructional paraprofessionals, music, art, and physical education teachers, guidance counselors, speech therapists, media specialists, school social workers and psychologists. No federally-funded personnel or prekindergarten personnel are included in the count; only state and local paid staffs are counted. Comparability will be determined and established by December 1 of each year.

The Georgia Department of Education calculates Title I, Part A comparability.

To document comparability, LEAs should use the Title I Comparability Report spreadsheet located under [Other Resources](#) on the Title I webpage. Documentation is kept on file in the Finance office and reflected in the online portal.

### **Comparability Report Procedures**

1. Request CPI Report 12 and 13 (certified staff and non-certified staff) from the finance department after the report has been submitted to GaDOE (usually in October). This is source documentation and must be used for this report. This report is found on the Consolidated Application. Export the names of all staff and set-up spreadsheet to count all staff members at each individual school.
2. Pull October FTE count from GaDOE website.
3. Once the report is received, strike out or highlight everyone that is not 00.
4. Count all staff not highlighted (51 – Title I Regular, 52 Title I ARRA, etc.)
5. Count these numbers up. Make sure to have an additional person double check these numbers.
6. Be careful to examine the staff that are split-funded.
7. Go to GaDOE and pull up the latest forms for comparing Title I and Non-Title I schools.
8. Pull the Oct FTE report to fill out the signature page for the report.
9. Do not count Pre-K.
10. Maintain documentation in the Federal Programs office.
11. The GaDOE staff calculates Comparability and uploads the results in the Consolidated Application.

## Compliance Timeline

<p>The district should collect the necessary data to demonstrate comparability as of the October full- time equivalent (FTE) count day. Request this information from FTE Coordinator around the 1st week in November. It is the October count.</p>	<p>1<sup>st</sup> Week in November</p>
<p>If all schools in the district are not comparable as of the October FTE, revise report</p>	<p>No later than Dec 31<sup>st</sup> of the current year</p>

### Who to Include in Staff Count:

- Teachers
- Other personnel that provide direct instructional services including music, art, and physical education teachers, guidance counselors, speech therapists, media specialists, staff that provide support instruction such as school social workers and psychologists.

### Who Not to Include:

- Custodians, cafeteria personnel, school nurses, security personnel, prekindergarten teachers, prekindergarten paraprofessionals, secretaries, and non-instructional paraprofessionals.

## **Section 18: Equipment and Real Property**

Inventory is maintained and entrusted at the school level by the designee selected by the Principal, generally the Academic Coach and/or Parent Liaison and is expected to be maintained and secured by proper and reasonable means to avoid theft, damage, or loss. Inventory is documented in a database that is updated each time equipment is purchased. All federally-funded property is identified by permanent markings on the equipment that signify the program and the fiscal year the equipment was purchased. The database includes a description of the item, serial number, and vendor name, FAIN, date of purchase, funding, cost, school, equipment location, and current condition. School personnel must annually verify the location and condition of the equipment. Each item must be checked/noted on the inventory record specifically for condition and location.

Principals attest that the equipment is as identified on the inventory record submitted to the Federal Programs Director.

Technology personnel help determine the condition of equipment. When a piece of equipment needs to be disposed of, disposal forms are completed and kept on file. Disposal occurs according to the Lowndes County School System Disposal Policy.

## **USE OF EQUIPMENT**

Principals' sign and date their inventory of federally-funded equipment annually.

The Federal Programs Director/designee signs and dates inventory of federally-funded equipment housed at the Central Office. The inventory is compiled and provided to the Principals by the office of the FPD.

## **Georgia Professional Standards Commission Code of Ethics:**

Standard 5: Public Funds and Property - An educator entrusted with public funds and property should honor that trust with a high level of honesty, accuracy, and responsibility. Unethical conduct includes but

is not limited to:

1. misusing public or school-related funds;
2. failing to account for funds collected from students or parents;
3. submitting fraudulent requests for reimbursement of expenses or for pay;
4. co-mingling public or school-related funds with personal funds or checking accounts; and
5. using school property without the approval of the local board of education/governing board.

**Method for Documenting Use in Building & Inventory Procedures** All schools are required to label all federally-funded equipment. All equipment purchased with Federal funds is inventoried annually. A report is filed in the Federal Programs office. Inventory includes Description, Serial Number/Identification Number, FAIN Number, Funding Source and Percentage of Source, Title, Vendor, Acquisition Date and Unit Cost, Location, Use (Student Instruction, Professional Development, Family & Community Engagement, etc., Condition, Disposition (including sale price, if applicable and includes the correct Federal Award Information Number (FAIN) connected to the year of purchase.

### **Schools Use of Title I Equipment - Procedures**

\*The Lowndes County School System currently does not have any Targeted Assistance schools. In the future, if need arises, the following procedures will be followed:

Equipment purchased with federal Title I funding for the Lowndes County School System Title I Schools is exclusively utilized by eligible Title I students in Title I Targeted Assisted Schools. The general purpose for this equipment is to promote mastery of core content knowledge in reading/mathematics and to facilitate remediation as well as acceleration. Each Title I school has additional equipment not purchased with federal funds available to all students.

All equipment purchases (i.e. computers, printers by participating TA schools are to be used only by Title I teachers, eligible Title I students and eligible parents. A list of the Title I students and their parents must be available to ensure that the equipment is only used by these students and parents. The district Federal Programs department reserves the right to monitor equipment purchased with Title I funds even after the school becomes a non-participating Title I school.

**Use of Title I Equipment in Targeted Assistance Schools** Any equipment purchased with Title I, Part A funds must be reasonable and necessary to implement a properly designed program for Part A participants. This should be reflected in the School Improvement Plans of each Title I school served during that particular fiscal year. However, under some circumstances, equipment purchased as part of a properly designed Part A program may, without constituting an improper expenditure, be used on a less-than- full-time basis. That equipment could be made available for other educational uses without interfering with its use in the Part A program. Equipment could be used on other projects or programs currently or previously supported by the Federal Government, “providing such use will not interfere with the work on the projects or programs for which it was originally acquired.”

LEAs should be judicious in applying these standards. Absent actual evidence to the contrary, the standards will have been presumed to be met and the use of Part A equipment in non-Part A activities is proper if use does not exceed 10 percent of the time the equipment is used in Part A activities.

However, use above that amount in non-Part A activities is not necessarily improper if the standards are met on a case-by-case basis. The use of Title I equipment in Targeted Assistance Program schools in non- Title I activities on a part-time basis must be done in a manner that protects the integrity of the equipment as a Title I expenditure. Accordingly, the LEA must ensure and document that

- the Title I equipment is part of a project that has been properly designed to meet the special educational needs of educationally deprived children.
- the equipment purchased with Title I funds is reasonable and necessary to operate the LEA’s Title I project without regard to any use in non-Title I activities;
- the project has been designed to make maximum appropriate use of the equipment for Title

I purposes; and

- the use of the equipment in non-Title I activities does not decrease the quality or effectiveness of the Title I services provided to Title I children with the equipment, increase the cost of using the equipment for providing those services, or result in exclusion of Title I children who otherwise would have been able to use the equipment.

In the absence of evidence to the contrary, it will be presumed that these standards have been met and that use of Title I activities is proper if that use does not exceed 10 percent of the time the equipment is used in Title I activities, provided the equipment is not needed in the Title I program. Permissive use of the equipment for one period of the day is allowable, if it is not needed by Title I. Before and after school use is acceptable if Title I does not need the equipment. Care should be taken that the equipment is properly supervised, that use will not affect the integrity of the equipment that the Title I program is not compromised, and that users will assume all responsibility for any and all damage to the equipment.

## **Lowndes County School System Equipment Disposition Procedure**

### **Authority to Dispose of Unserviceable or Surplus Property**

The Lowndes County Board of Education shall have the authority to sell/dispose of any unserviceable or surplus property at its discretion or as specified hereafter.

### **Schedule for Assessment of Surplus, Unserviceable, Unusable and Obsolete Property**

No less frequently than once annually a surplus review of unserviceable, unusable and obsolete property will be completed to make determinations regarding disposal.

### **Methods for Disposal of Surplus Goods and Assets (excluding real estate)**

The Lowndes County Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent or his/her designee to establish district procedures to implement this policy. When property owned by the Lowndes

County School System is no longer of economically sound use for meeting a system need as determined by the director of the department that purchased the property, the method of disposal will be determined in a manner that maximizes revenue, minimizes expenses associated with the disposals, and complies with all state and federal laws, policies and regulations. No surplus goods or assets may be disposed of without prior approval of the Superintendent of his/her designee. No surplus goods or assets may be disposed of without prior approval of the Superintendent of his/her designee. All surplus goods or assets shall be disposed of by the most cost effective of the following four methods:

1. Property may be sold to the highest bidder via a competitive bid process, spot bid sale or auction. This may include electronic or virtual auction methods. Such events shall be advertised in appropriate media, sufficiently in advance of the sale date to provide a competitive environment for maximizing system revenues.
2. Property may be sold in an "over the counter" manner to the public at any time. The prices charged will be based on prices received in the most recent spot bid or auction sale of a like item.
3. Property may be transferred at no charge to another school system or non-profit organization, preferably located within Lowndes County, in response to a written request from the organization. The school system or non-profit organization will affirm in writing its agreement to accept the transferred property and will be responsible for retrieving the property from the Lowndes County School System.
4. Surplus items not claimed or purchased may be disposed of two months after they are declared surplus or immediately after a spot bid sale or auction. If possible, items



shall be recycled in accordance with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rules and regulations, traded in or used for parts.

### **Disposal of Unrepairable, Unusable and Obsolete Property**

Property may be disposed of if items are unrepairable, unusable or obsolete (<\$5000 and/or > 3 years) as determined by the director of the department that purchased the property. The method of disposal will be determined in a manner that maximizes revenue, minimizes expenses associated with the disposals, and complies with all state and federal laws, policies and regulations. No unserviceable, unusable or obsolete goods or assets may be disposed of without prior approval of the Superintendent or his/her designee. If possible, items shall be recycled in accordance with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rules and regulations.

Disposal of all equipment purchased through the federal E-Rate program shall be disposed no less than five (5) years after installation in accordance with Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) rules.

### **Staff Conflict of Interest as it relates to "Disposition of Equipment"**

School district employees who declare items as surplus shall not purchase items they have declared as surplus. Likewise, the immediate family members as defined in Policy GARH of school employees who declare items as surplus shall not purchase items declared as surplus by their school district family member.

When federally-funded/Title programs equipment is no longer operable and/or does not meet the needs of the program, the Federal Programs office should be notified. At the time of notification, a staff member from the office will come to the school to pick up the equipment. Said equipment will either be relocated to another Title I facility (if operable) or disposed of in accordance with Lowndes County Board of Education Policy DO. All methods of disposition must be fully documented and the information kept on the inventory list for three years after the final disposition.

In the event of the closure of a Title I school, all inventoried equipment will be distributed to other Title I schools based on need. The inventory spreadsheets will be adjusted to track the movement of all equipment. Documentation will be maintained in the Title I office.

It is the policy of the Board that two employees who are related to each other as defined by this policy shall not be assigned within the school system so as to result in one of the related employees being in a direct supervisory position (responsible for the evaluation) over the other. It is the preference of the Board that no two persons who are related to each other as defined in this policy will be assigned to the same work site. However, the Board recognizes that in areas of critical need, the superintendent may determine that assignment to the same work site is appropriate.

For the purpose of this policy, relatives are defined as persons related by either blood or marriage in the following way: spouse, parents, children, brothers, sisters, grandparents, grandchildren, and any relatives living in the immediate household of the employee.

## Section 19: Cash Management (Drawdown) Procedures

- The Chief Financial Officer/designee administers the drawdowns.
- All grants are divided by 12 months.
- **Drawdowns** for federal funding payments are done monthly/bi-monthly (on or around the 17th of the month). This is an acceptable practice to our financial auditors.
- The Finance Office is very careful to draw down these funds based on actual expenditure needs. The system bookkeeper reconciles the bank statements.
- The Chief Financial Officer performs periodic review of the general ledger.
- There is no cash involved as all drawdowns are directly deposited into our bank account. All reporting documentation is kept in the Finance Office. It can be reviewed at any time.
- The **Federal Programs Director** /grant manager will monitor and approve all program expenditures on the requisition form to verify that all program expenditures comply with federal program requirements. This initiates the purchasing approval process and the signed requisition form by the grant manager is evidence that the expenditure meets the purchasing guidelines. (The **Homeless Liaison** is responsible for approving purchases specific to the Homeless grant and the Special Education Director approves IDEA purchases) .
- The **Federal Programs Director** will maintain all documentation the LEA may need for future auditing/monitoring according to the LEA Monitoring Form, which is issued annually by GaDOE. Electronic files and electronic signatures are an acceptable form of documentation for implementing/monitoring processes, procedures, and evidence.
- In years when the LEA does not receive an on-site visit, the **Federal Programs Director** will complete the Self-Assessment Checklist and submit it to the GaDOE.
- The LEA will undergo monitoring by GaDOE on a four-year cycle. The LEA/Federal Programs Director will participate in training and technical assistance updates as provided by GaDOE prior to the monitoring visit.
- After the on-site monitoring visit, the LEA will receive a comprehensive monitoring report which will contain recommendations, findings, and required actions that together provide an analysis of the implementation of the LEA's federal programs. If a corrective action plan is required, the LEA/Federal Programs Director will respond in a timely manner with a corrective action plan which must be approved by GaDOE. Implementation of the Corrective Action Plan will be monitored by the appropriate Education Program Specialist.

Monitoring is an essential component of ensuring that all facets of federal programs are being implemented as prescribed by ESSA. It is a process of systematically providing **technical assistance** and collecting data in order to provide information that can guide program implementation.

The Lowndes County School System Federal Programs Department makes use of monitoring as a means of regular observation and recording of activities taking place in the system. Critical to this process is the feedback provided to schools that can assist in improving student academic achievement. District monitoring addresses the following:

- Ensuring that all federal program activities are carried out in accordance to federal compliance guidelines
- Equipment usage monitoring
- Academic monitoring
- Budgetary monitoring
- ESSA requires the State Educational Agency (SEA) to monitor the implementation of program requirements and the expenditure of federal funds. Georgia's monitoring process consists of four major components:

As an on-going "checks-and-balances", the FPD and the Administrative Assistant for Federal Projects will thoroughly analyze the federal grant budgets monthly to ensure that expenditures remain within allowable, approved budget amounts and expenditures have been properly coded. In the event there is a discrepancy in any coding area, an amendment may be created and provided by the LEA for approval within the GaDOE Portal. This internal check will occur on or around the end of each month which coincides with our District's scheduled draw down procedures. From this check, the FPD will provide guidance the Finance staff to ensure draw downs are within acceptable guidelines and allowances.

The procedures for IDEA are very similar in scope and sequence. Expenditure reports, by program, are printed monthly. The reports include the org/object for each expenditure. Financial records that document the PO, receipt, and payment are kept in the finance department. By the 17th of each month, drawdowns are made equal to expenditures. Org/objects for expenditures of 404 funds are assigned by the Director of Special Education. Purchase Orders are input into the system by the Administrative Assistant of Special Education and approved by the Director of Special Education. The Finance Coordinator/Lead Bookkeeper runs the expenditure reports and requests drawdowns with oversight by the Assistant Superintendent of Finance.

## **Section 20: Reporting Procedures**

A copy of the completion report for the previous fiscal year will be kept on file in the Federal Programs office and in the Finance Department.

Accounting records to support the results of outlays (expenditures indicated in the completion report will be kept on file in the Federal Programs office and Finance Department.

Copies of expenditure (cumulative) reports for the respective quarter for total expenditures reported to GaDOE will be kept on file in the Federal Programs office and Finance Department.

The Federal Programs Director will check budget summary and detailed expenditure reports for all federal funds.

## **Section 21: Services for Homeless Children and Youth**

The Lowndes County School System homeless liaison meets, at a minimum, quarterly with school personnel to discuss the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act. Among the topics discussed are the transportation requirement for schools of origin and the definition of and services for students identified as homeless. The homeless liaison supervises and works very closely with the school guidance counselors/ homeless contacts and transportation director/ designee to assure students receive the services they need. He/She provides new or additional posters and assures these are placed where parents can readily see them. Annually, Lowndes County School System's policy and procedures for homeless students are reviewed.

### **Program Procedures**

- The district is responsible for identifying a homeless liaison and ensuring that the position is listed on the district's organizational chart.
- Homeless students will be identified based on the definition prescribed by the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and via a red flag in the district's student information system. All staff in the district to include bus drivers, principals, central staff, etc. will be trained in the identification and recruitment of homeless students.

- The homeless liaison will ensure training for all school system employees is provided annually.
- All schools will display flyers, brochures, and posters that identify the homeless liaison contact information.
- Services for homeless students (tutoring, etc.) will be evaluated based on needs assessment and student academic achievement.

## **Section 22: Services for Neglected and Delinquent Children**

There are two neglected facilities in Lowndes County. These include Raintree Village Children's Home (RTVCH) and Georgia Sheriff's' Boys Ranch (GaSBR). The Lowndes County School System serves these students with Title I funds. These funds may provide tutoring services, supplies, computers, and other needs as they arise. The Federal Programs Director will consult/work directly with each facility to ensure that students are receiving the services needed. Unless otherwise specified and/or due to unusual/extenuating circumstances, all students at the N&D facilities will be considered for services with priority to the most academically deficient being priority.

Meeting minutes, agendas, collaborative planning, emails, and phone logs will be maintained by the site director and Federal Programs Director.

Equipment is inventoried annually.

The director of each facility will annually submit the source data for the "*Annual Survey of Institutions for Neglected and Delinquent Children.*" The facility staff will select a thirty (30) day window in which one day falls in the month of October for the completion of all surveys.

Monitoring of N&D Services will be conducted annually through a variety of means and practices:

- Services will be monitored daily by the Site Director/Designee of each facility. The Site Director/Designee will be responsible for reviewing/signing the time sheets of the tutor(s) at the end of each day/week to attest compliance and satisfaction of the services provided. The Time Sheets will be forwarded to the FPD for compliance, evaluation, and signing for payment of services. (Time sheets are due monthly along with the accompanying time sheet data).
- The Federal Programs Director will make a site visit at least once per 9-weeks to verify services are being provided in accordance to the expectations of the services and to evaluate the needs of the students housed at the facility. Other contacts (i.e. phone correspondence, emails) to the Site Director/Designee are made once per 9-weeks, as well, to help monitor the effectiveness and satisfaction of the program. Observational notes will be maintained from these visits by the FPD. Sign in sheets and notes will be maintained.
- All documentation from on-site visits, technical assistance meetings, and contractual agreements will be shared electronically with the Provider and Site Director by the FPD.
- Students being served at the N&D facilities will receive additional academic support/tutoring based on academic areas of need. This may be based on, but not limited to, available data from the students' report card, progress report, standardized test data, classroom reports, or some other pre-assessment data.
- Inventory purchased for N&D facilities will be documented with the same procedures as for schools and the Site Director will participate at the facility in the role as the Principal would related to a school. The same inventory sheets will be used with N&D facilities that are used with schools.

- An annual outline of expectations will be provided at each N&D facility. This will be ongoing and flexible as needs change at each site and will be incorporated into the annual on-site meetings with the Site Director and FPD from the District.
- If the services provided to N&D facilities are contracted with an outside source, at least two quotes will be solicited by the LEA. All quotes will be considered and awarding of the contract will be determined by the FPD, the Assistant Superintendent of Finance, and the Superintendent. Should the recommendation exceed allowable amounts according to LEA and Federal guidelines/ policies, Board approval will be obtained.
- Technical assistance is provided by the FPD for the Site Director at the facility. Periodic contacts are made to evaluate/assess the satisfaction with the services being provided and the satisfaction with the technical assistance.
- LCS will provide each N&D facility with electronic devices for student use throughout the school year, as well as, during the summer vacation months. These devices may be used in conjunction with summer school instruction (if applicable) or for individual remediation/acceleration. The Site Director/designee will be responsible for supervision during summer months. Students housed at the N&D facilities receive prioritized consideration for summer school services based on their individual needs/performances. Other summer supports are considered based on the needs expressed by the facilities.
- LCSS will work in conjunction with the N&D Site Director and Provider to ensure that the services provided are relevant, appropriate, and meet the needs of the students. Corrections and adjustments to the delivery of/satisfaction with the quality services provided will be at the heart of the relationship between the System, Facility, and Provider. If concerns arise, a corrective plan will be developed to remedy the concerns. Should the Provider fail to provide acceptable work/services as prescribed by the contract and/or corrective plan, LCSS reserves the right to terminate the contract within acceptable notification as prescribed by law.

#### **ROLES:**

##### **SITE DIRECTOR/DESIGNEE-**

- Attest that services are provided in accordance to the agreed upon timelines
- Communicate with the Provider and FPD issues/concerns in the delivery of the services
- Serve as a Liaison to the FPD in communicating concerns
- Sign the time sheets for the Provider(s) to acknowledge the service was adequately rendered

##### **PROVIDER-**

- Render services as outlined in the contractual agreement
- Provide flexibility to meet the scheduling needs of the students/facility
- Communicate issues to Site Director/Designee and to the FPD
- Sign/submit time sheets bi-monthly
- Provide additional resources for students as needed within the context of the services
- Provide credentialing information as requested  
by the System

##### **FEDERAL PROGRAMS DIRECTOR-**

- Administer the N&D program to ensure compliance and that performance of the services being contracted are provided and are satisfactory
- Make site visits once per 9-weeks to monitor progress of the Provider
- Contact Site Director once per 9-weeks to check progress and service status
- Conduct TWO on-site meetings per year (July/August and December) to serve as an update of the services and to plan for future needs
- Evaluate, sign, and process the time sheets/invoice for payments
- Collaborate with the Site Director and Provider to support any additional needs at the facility

##### **FINANCE DIRECTOR/SUPERINTENDENT**

- Approve the type of services (i.e. hired employee, contracted service, etc.) to be implemented in providing for the requirements for the N&D facilities

## **Section 23: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk**

The Lowndes County School system serves two facilities at this time. Please refer to the previous Section 22 for more information.

## **Section 24: Title VI, Part B – Rural and Low Income**

Procedures and information regarding Title VI are kept by the Federal Programs Director **if applicable**.

## **Section 25: Pre-Kindergarten Programs**

The district does not reserve Title I funds for pre-kindergarten programs at this time. Meetings are held with area Head Start and private daycare centers to discuss potential concerns.

Policies and procedures will be put in place if the district determines that this is a Title I need in the future.

## **Section 26: Teacher Qualifications**

### **Evidence-based Professional Learning**

Evidence-based professional learning must be of high quality, sustained, intensive, Evidence-based, and classroom-focused in order to have a positive and lasting impact on classroom instruction and the teacher's performance in the classroom. It must also address one or more of the annual LEA prioritized needs.

Finally, Evidence-based professional learning must focus on increasing the ability of the teaching staff to help all students achieve high academic standards, or on increasing the ability of the school administrative staff to lead their schools' efforts to increase student academic achievement.

### **Procedures for Ensuring Qualified Employees**

Principals receive training annually on the professional qualifications for hiring and placement of teachers and paraprofessionals.

The Federal Programs office, along with Human Resources, will maintain a list that includes the status of all Title I and Title II paid staff. In the Lowndes County School System, all staff paid with Title I and Title II funds must meet the professional qualifications outlined by our District.

### **Professional Qualifications**

The Human Resources Department monitors the qualification status of teachers and paraprofessionals and of teachers who hold a non-renewable certificate on an ongoing basis. The Human Resource Specialists are in regular communication with these teachers/paraprofessionals and school administrators to assure all remediation plan requirements are being met. The HR office maintains a list of those teachers/ paraprofessionals and closely monitors, along with the principals,

their efforts to receive renewable certification. Regular progress monitoring of these teachers is done through follow-up conferences, letters, and email.

### **Procedures for Parent Notification of Non-Qualified Teacher**

Principals are trained annually and will adhere to parent notification requirements for non-qualified staff. Copies of the evidence provided to parents will be kept on file (See Section #3 for Parent Notifications of Title I Schools- similar steps are taken at all LCS). Beginning in FY 19, Title I, Part A assumes the responsibility of the parent communication for participating English learners (ELs).

Should a student be assigned to a non-qualified teacher for more than 20-instructional days, the School/System must notify the parents of the teacher's qualifications. This notification is done through what is known as the **20-day letter**. Principals are responsible for providing this information to the parents of students who are scheduled in the class of any teacher that does not meet the proper qualifying requirements to teach a specific content. A copy of this letter, the method of notification, and the list of students/parents who receive the notification are kept on file by the Principal. Parental concerns are directed back to the building-level Administration.

### **Procedures for Periodic Certification**

- The FPD/HR Director will assist in preparing the forms for principals to sign annual/periodic certification forms for all federally funded paid recipients.
  
- Periodic Certification forms will be after-the-fact\*.  
\*(A "one time", Annual Certification is now allowable. This will be submitted after the contract time ends (usually in June of each year).
- Split-funded personnel may not sign periodic certification forms.
- This information will be maintained in the Federal Programs office.
- A copy will be given to the Human Resources Department.
- 20-day Notification should occur with school 5-days of the 20th day of instruction



## **Procedures for Hiring Instructional Paraprofessionals**

Paraprofessional vacancies are posted on the website for the Lowndes County School System. A job description is included. Paraprofessional education requirements are listed below.

- Hold a paraprofessional certification
- or, a minimum of an Associate's Degree or higher in any subject
- or, successful completion of a minimum of 60 semester hours or 90 quarter hours of college coursework
- or, a minimum of a high school diploma or GED, AND a passing score on the GACE (Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators) Paraprofessional Assessment?
- or, a minimum of a high school diploma or GED, and an understanding that the GACE paraprofessional assessment must be taken and passed to be eligible for a Georgia Paraprofessional Certificate.

This ensures that the applicants have met the minimum qualifications to be professionally- qualified as outlined District expectations. Qualifying applicants are then eligible to interview with principals. Principals make recommendations to the Human Resources Department, and recommended candidates are fingerprinted and complete other employment paperwork.

### **Instructional Paraprofessionals**

1. Principals will annually train Title I instructional paraprofessionals on best practices.
2. A schedule documenting the paraprofessional is under the direct supervision of a certified teacher must be submitted to the Federal Programs office by the second week of school.

## **Section 27: Title III, Part A**

### **Purpose**

The English Language program is designed to provide consistent and non-discriminatory procedures throughout each school within Lowndes County as recommended by the U.S. Office for Civil Rights, Department of Education. The Civil Rights Acts of 1964 requires local school districts to provide an alternative program of service when there are students who are limited English proficient and are unable to participate effectively in the district's regular instructional program.

*(SEE THE LCSS TITLE III/ESOL RESOURCE GUIDE IN THE APPENDIX)*

All procedures and documentation for Title III, Part A are kept by the Federal Programs Director.

## **Section 28: Private Schools**

Invitations for private schools located within the district's boundaries are invited to consult in participation in federal programs the following calendar year are sent August/September, via receipt delivery. A meeting is

held in September/October to present information about the programs available to students in private schools. In FY 19, GaDOE will be conducting a series of regional meetings for all Private Schools and LEAs to attend. At the local meeting, all Federal Programs Directors/directors are invited to the meeting, which is complete with an agenda and sign in sheet. Upon receipt of the intent to participate form, which is provided to private school officials, a meeting is held to discuss plans and the required components of federally-funded services for private school students. If participating, meetings between the LEA and private school are scheduled every two months to discuss the progress and process of federal programs.

If the Lowndes County School System has a private school to request funds the private school students would receive their proportional share of services via a per pupil allocation and required equitable services amounts. See Reservation of Funds. Eligibility criteria are used to determine the students who are most in need of services. Using assessment data provided by the private school, scores/levels are given ranges and point values are applied to those ranges.

When a private school determines that the school would like to participate in Title I or Title II, the district will determine the per pupil allocation for qualified students.

The federal government has issued the following guidelines in determining the eligibility requirements for private schools desiring to participate in federal program services:

**E-1. Which private school students are eligible to receive benefits?**

Private school students who are enrolled in nonprofit private elementary and secondary schools, including those in religiously affiliated schools, located in the LEA generally are eligible to receive services. Some *ESSA* programs restrict eligibility or participation to a particular group of students, such as LEP students, in which case the eligibility or participation of private school students likewise is restricted. See the GaDOE's guidance on individual programs for specific eligibility requirements. See also J-1: *Federal Resources and Guidance*.

**E-2. Does the law require an LEA to provide equitable services to students and teachers in private for-profit schools?**

No. The law requires an LEA to provide equitable services to teachers and students in "private elementary and secondary schools." The law defines "elementary schools" and "secondary schools" to mean "nonprofit institutional day or residential school[s]" that provide elementary and secondary education, respectively.

**Documentation for Participation**

The private school must provide a copy of their 501(c)3 status.

**Identification of Participants**

The LEA works closely with the private school to verify attendance area of possible students. It is the responsibility of the private school to provide potential students' names, addresses, and verification of free and reduced participation for qualification of the students.

## Finance

It is the responsibility of the LEA to process third vendor work as well as materials via a requisition.

No requests for reimbursement will be allowed as all purchases must be approved prior to the purchase.

All materials, equipment, and supplies purchased by the LEA are the property of the LEA. At the time the private school no longer participates, the property will be returned to the LEA.

An inventory will be maintained at the LEA. The private school will complete an inventory and maintenance check twice per year at the request of the LEA.

## Complaints

Complaints by the private school are filed in compliance with the LEA complaint process (see Complaint Procedure.)

All complaints will be addressed within 10 calendar days of filing and will be resolved within 60 days according to the process.

## Evaluation

At the end of April, the LEA will ask each private school to fill out a survey to evaluate provided services.

## Equipment

The private schools will follow the same procedure as Lowndes County School System schools.

## Timeline for Private Schools

Month	Activity
August /September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Send letter to request participation to private schools who work with students from the Lowndes County School System for the following school year.</li></ul>
September/October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hold Private School Meeting consultation. Gather data and consult with private schools to determine services and possible participants. Begin to gather data for Eligible Participation Worksheet.</li><li>• Remind private schools that any materials or purchases must be requisitioned and remains</li><li>• Verify addresses of students attending the participating private school</li></ul>
August of following year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Begin services.</li><li>• Note: If there is a third party vendor, see policy for third party vendor from GaDOE. Sign a letter that states the requirements on both parties to enter into agreement.</li></ul>

September-November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit sites to determine services are rendered in accordance with federal requirements. Monitor all services regularly.</li> <li>• Visit sites to determine services are rendered in accordance with federal requirements. Monitor all services regularly.</li> </ul>
January - May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visit sites to determine services are rendered in accordance with federal requirements. Monitor all services regularly. Plan for evaluation of services with a survey at the end of April.</li> </ul>

## **AFFIRMATION OF CONSULTATION WITH PRIVATE SCHOOL OFFICIALS**

Title I regulations require that timely and meaningful consultation occur between the local education agency (LEA) and private school officials prior to any decision that affects the opportunities of eligible private school children, teachers, and other educational personnel to participate in programs under this Act, and shall continue throughout the implementation and assessment of activities under this section.

### **The following topics must be discussed during the ongoing consultation process:**

- How the LEA will identify the needs of eligible private school children.
- What services the LEA will offer to eligible private school children.
- How and when the LEA will make decisions about the delivery of services.
- How, where, and by whom the LEA will provide services to eligible private school children, including a thorough consideration and analysis of the views of the private school officials on the provision of services through a contract with a third-party provider.
- How the LEA will assess academically the services to eligible private school children in accordance with §200.10 and how the LEA will use the results of that assessment to improve Title I services.
- The size and scope of the equitable services that the LEA will provide to eligible private school children and, consistent with §200.64, the proportion of funds that will be allocated to provide these services.
- The method or sources of data that the LEA will use under §200.78 to determine the number of private school children from low-income families residing in participating public school attendance areas, including whether the LEA will extrapolate data, if a survey is used.
- The equitable services the LEA will provide to teachers and families of participating private school children.
- If the LEA disagrees with the views of the private school officials on the provisions of services through a contract, the LEA must provide the private schools the reasons in writing why the LEA chooses not to use a contractor.

## **Section 29: Academic Achievement Awards Program**

### **Reward Schools**

#### **Procedures for Establishing Per School Awards for Reward Schools Section 1117 Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965**

1. Schools are selected based on the schools' reward status as defined by the US Department of Education. Two categories of Reward Schools are eligible to be included receive awards: (1) **Highest- Performing Reward School** –a Title I school among the Title I schools in the State that have the highest absolute performance over a number of years for the

All Students group and for all subgroups based on statewide assessments, and, at the high school level, is also among the Title I schools with the highest graduation rates. A school may not be classified as a Highest-Performing School if there are significant achievement gaps across subgroups that are not closing in the school

(2) **High-Progress Reward School** – a Title I school among the 10 percent of Title I schools in the State that are making the most progress in improving the performance of the ALL Students group over a number of years on the statewide assessments, and at the high school level, is also among the Title I schools in the State that are making the most progress in increasing graduation rates. A school may not be classified as a High- Progress school if there are significant achievement gaps across subgroups that are not closing in the school.

2. Using the free/reduced meal (FRM) data for the fiscal year previous to the award, all schools in the state are listed in descending order according to FRM count. The schools are then divided into four equal parts resulting in four quartiles. The cutoff point between higher poverty schools and lower poverty schools is then determined by starting with the highest FRM-percentage school and moving down the ranked list to the last school in the top quartile. This quartile is the list of higher poverty schools. The second, third, and fourth quartiles are the lower poverty schools. Schools identified as a Highest-Performing Reward School or as a High-Progress Reward School in the higher poverty schools quartile draw from the 75-percent fund. Schools identified as a Highest- Performing Reward School or as a High-Progress Reward School in the lower poverty schools quartiles draw from the 25- percent fund.
3. What is meant by the 75-percent fund? At least 75 percent of the funds available for awards must go to the schools in the highest quartile based on the number of FRMs. Available funds are divided into two funds: one containing 75 percent of the funds; the other, 25 percent of the funds.
  - **Funds available for the 75 percent fund equal Total Funds Available x .75 = Amount of Award**
  - **Funds available for the 25 percent fund equal Total Funds Available x .25 = Amount of Award Highest Poverty Schools – 75 Percent Funds:**

Highest Poverty Schools are defined as schools whose poverty places the school in the top quartiles of the Rewards Schools list for the current fiscal year. GaDOE will divide the funds available for the 75 percent fund award by the number of schools in the highest poverty schools quartile to determine the award for each school.

#### **Lower Poverty Schools – 25 Percent Funds:**

Lower Poverty Schools are defined as schools whose poverty places the school in the top quartiles of the Rewards Schools list for the current fiscal year. GaDOE will divide the funds available for the 25 percent fund

award by the number of schools in the lower poverty schools quartiles to determine the award for each school.

The total amount awarded for both highest and lower poverty schools will be equal to or less than the total amount of funds available for award in the current fiscal year. Any remaining funds will be carried over to the next fiscal year.

### **Rewards School Plan for the Lowndes County School System**

#### **For Use of Title I, Part A Reward Schools and Reward Districts Budgets**

Instructions: Please complete the following questions and attach the narrative to the consolidated application when submitting your budgets. Please ensure that you provided a detailed narrative in the descriptions portion of the budget details page within the consolidated application.

Please provide a narrative response to the items below:

- Summarize the activities and materials to be funded using the Title I, Part A Reward Schools Award of the Title I, Part A Reward District Award for each school in the LEA or LEA receiving an award. This summary must delineate the decision-making process utilized at each Reward School in the LEA or Reward District for determining the expenditure of the Title I, Part A Reward Schools and Reward Districts Award funds. Please include a listing of the staff with job titles involved in the decision-making process.
- What processes and procedures does the school / LEA have in place to monitor the use of Title I, Part A Reward Schools / Districts Awards monies?
- What internal controls does the school / LEA have in place to promote efficiency of implementing the plans for this award, assure appropriate use and expenditure of Academic Achievement funds, and safeguard assets and / or fraud and error?

**\*Please Note:** If this is a Reward School Award provide the principal's signature and date of signature.

#### **Reward Schools Budget**

Approval of budgets will occur once a thorough review of all expenditure requests and supporting documentation has been completed by the GaDOE Title I Education Program Specialist for Reward Schools.

#### **Reward Schools Quick Reference Guide for Use of Funds**

- Schools receiving monetary awards must use funds for educational purposes only:
  - Resources / instructional materials

- Monetary awards for current year employees
- Schoolwide projects; such as computer labs, materials and supplies for the media center, science labs

Schools choosing to make monetary awards to staff must include all staff in the categories of staff receiving the monetary rewards. If **making awards to more than one personnel classification, schools** may award different amounts for different personnel classifications. For example, teachers in the school would be awarded the same amount; non-instructional personnel would receive the same amount, and so forth.

Schoolwide programs' staff would all be potentially eligible to receive monetary rewards. Targeted Assistance programs staff would need to be Title I staff in order to be eligible to receive a monetary reward. In both cases, staff receiving monetary rewards would need to be current staff at the Title I school.

- When the award is received, the current principal will make the final decision as to how the funds are spent. Only current Title I employees of the awarded school are eligible for any awards.
- All monetary awards to individuals are considered to be personal income and are subject to appropriate state and federal tax guidelines.
- Schools may not use funds for capital outlay projects. This would include construction, carpet, renovations of school facilities, classrooms, auditorium, multipurpose rooms, etc.
- Expenditure of funds must be allowable and reasonable in accordance with OMB Circular A-87 and EDGAR 2 CFR 200.

### **Section 30: Migrant Education Program (MEP) Services**

Identification of migrant students is completed through the **occupational survey**, which is a portion of the student enrollment packet. These surveys are faxed to and processed by the regional migrant educational provider office. If migrant students are identified, a needs assessment and delivery plan will be developed.

The Federal Programs Director is the designated person responsible for maintaining, updating, and properly coding all required enrollment, educational, and health data in the Lowndes County School System's Student Information System on migrant eligible students and would share this information on an intra-district and interstate basis.

The Federal Programs Director/designee follows these procedures:

- Records maintenance and transfer
- Identification and recruitment
- Educational support/priority of service
- Consultation with private schools
- Conducts a needs assessment
- Coordination of Migrant services
- Establishes a parental advisory council ( PAC)
- Participates in Evidence-based professional learning
- Provides services for the educational needs of migrant preschool children
- Evaluates the program
- Maintains an allowable budget

Potential migrant students are identified through the occupational survey, which is included in all Lowndes County School System registration packets. Once completed, all surveys are removed from the packet at the office's registration department and are picked up weekly by the Migrant Student Service Provider (SSP). If the parent has answered "yes" to the migrant questions, the SSP interviews the family (recruitment) and sends the information to the GaDOE Regional Migrant Education Program Office who makes a final determination of the migrant status and the student is assigned a priority of services code. If the family has children who are too young for school or out-of-school youth/drop-out, they are included in the services. The SSP also recruits migrant families in the community via various types of referrals.

LCSS provides funding through Title I, Part C to address the needs of OSY/DO and are served by the SSP(s) while they reside in the LCSS district. An annual plan is submitted and approved by the State as to how these students will be supported while residing in Lowndes County. The SSPs exhaust all efforts to accurately identify and support the needs of OSY/DO through consistent communication with the families and commonly used employers in the district. Included in the documentation kept by the SSPs in relation to OSY/DO students are:

- Documentation why a OSY/DO student is *not* being served (if available). The SSP assigned to OSY will maintain documentation in the monthly records and electronically in a database. Once a student is identified, the SSP completes a Student Profile and the GOSOSY Student Services Plan.
- When a need is identified, a timeline/schedule is designed and maintained to reflect service/support. Services for OSY will begin when a student is identified eligible for the OSY/DO services. Services typically run from September through May. A summer IP is designed to provide support during the month of June, as well.
- Staffing considerations may be considered if the SSP(s) recognize additional support is needed (i.e. contracted services). Additional support will be provided, preferably, by a current teacher of the LCSS for students enrolled in formal classes at the schools. With two SSPs employed, services for



OSY/DO are covered by the SSPs under normal circumstances.

- The SSP utilizes the Supplemental Services Tracking Form to document services and reasons why a student is not being served.
- The SSP will utilize the appropriate profiles for OSY/DO. Once a student is identified, the SSP meets with the student and completes profile and determines the most effective course of action for each individual student.
- The SSP will incorporate the “No Services” documentation template from the GaDOE website when appropriate
- LCSS employs TWO (2) SSPs. They assess student needs and divide the duties and responsibilities of providing support for MEP students. Currently, both SSPs provide collaborative student supports during the regular school year. Also during the school year and In the summer term, one SSP works with the pre-school readiness aged students and the other SSP concentrates on the OSY/DO students.

In LCSS, the SSPs are responsible for all items listed above and maintain the documentation.

A comprehensive needs assessment (CNA) is held annually based on parent, student, and teacher surveys along with student achievement data, and priorities are determined based on feedback and data obtained. Members of the CNA team/PAC meet in April/May and review the State Delivery Service Plan, comparing it to the LCSS migrant program, student achievement data, Evidence-based professional learning needs, and services that need to be offered to migrant families. This assessment is made public through the district’s website in the district’s implementation plan and CLIP responses. An implementation plan for the next school year is developed and uploaded to the GaDOE website for approval by the state. The SSP schedules tutoring sessions/inclusion as needed and assesses the priority of services for students.

His/Her schedule is on file in the Title I Director’s office. A program evaluation is submitted annually to the GaDOE Regional Migrant Education Program Office for each IP.

The Office provides ongoing professional development for the SSP and provides documentation of attendance. The SSP may also participate in system, school, and regional professional development as appropriate.

LCSS, also, identifies and supports pre-school aged students who reside in the district. Pre-school readiness is a standard component of these services and helps students and parents prepare for the formal educational setting of the regular classroom.

The SSP ensures maintenance of records of the migrant students and helps expedite the transfer of records as needed. The SSP works with families to coordinate migrant services with other community services (such as health or mental health). The SSP collaborates with the district Family & Community Engagement Coordinator to organize Family & Community Engagement activities at the school and district level. Parent Advisory Council meetings are scheduled bi-annually at a minimum.

Annual consultation for private schools is requested in the fall (October/November) as mandated by law and provided by the Federal Programs Director.

Title I-C funds are used to pay the salary and expenses of the SSP. Money is also used for supplemental materials for students as funding allows. Migrant students are included in all other services provided by the LCSS school for which they qualify, including but not limited to after-school tutoring, summer school/

intersessions, EIP, ELL, special education, and gifted programs.

### **Section 31: Charter Schools**

There are no charter schools in the Lowndes County School System; however, should a charter school open in Lowndes County and qualify for services/resources, planning would occur via discussions with representatives from the charter school. The charter school would be required to submit a plan describing how the funds will be used to support instruction and ensure that all students meet high academic achievement and performance standards. The Federal Programs Director will approve the charter school's plan and maintain the plan and any documentation of the planning process, as well as, any documentation needed for audit purposes. Like private school consultations, the charter schools will be notified regarding the federal funds available and the other provisions of ESSA governing Title I schools such as teachers who meet the professional qualifications outlined in ESSA, choice and supplemental educational services, and unsafe schools.

### **Section 32: Special State Charter and/or Commissioned Schools**

The Lowndes County School System does not have Special Charter or Commissioned Schools at this time. Procedures will be put in place if schools are added in the future.

### **Section 33: Complaint Procedures**

Complaint procedures are disseminated through the Federal Programs website and in student/ parent/staff handbooks distributed at the beginning of the school year.

Parents are expected to address complaints or grievances beginning at the school level with the teacher first and then the administration. Central office personnel should be contacted next should parents feel the issues have not been resolved. If still unsatisfied, the superintendent should be contacted. Conferences forms/ notes/minutes are kept on file as documentation of the issues. Complaint procedures are described and a form for documenting complaints is located at the Administrative Services Center or on the Lowndes County website. Complaints relating to curriculum/educational materials are referenced in the Board's policies, but the same procedure applies. If parents/students have concerns relating to the privacy of student data, the same procedures will apply to these complaints, as well.

The complaint procedures describe grounds for complaints, federal programs for which complaints can be filed, filing and investigation of a complaint, as well as rights to appeal. The Georgia Department of Education address to which complaints should be filed is included in the procedure.

*(SEE THE COMPLAINT PROCEDURES IN THE APPENDIX OF THIS HANDBOOK)*

## **LOWNDES COUNTY SCHOOLS EMPLOYEE COMPLAINTS**

*(SEE THE COMPLAINT PROCEDURES IN THE APPENDIX OF THIS HANDBOOK)*

## **SECTION 34: Ethics and Fraud, Waste, Abuse, and Corruption**

The Chief Human Resources Officer reviews the ethics, waste, fraud, abuse, and corruption policies with all new employees at New Staff Induction in July during an orientation process. The same information is provided to administrators during the first part of the new school year and shall be shared with their staff at the beginning of each school year. Compliance Director is an electronic resource that LCSS currently uses to disseminate this information to all employees. LCS employees are required to acknowledge that they have been informed and are aware of the definitions of each, the guidelines for reporting, and the consequences associated with fraud, waste, abuse, corruption, and conflict of interest. This should be completed at the appropriate levels and submitted prior to October 1st. The documentation is kept by the Human Resources Department and/or Federal Programs Director to document this has been completed. **All employees are informed during training that they are required to report fraud, waste, and abuse.** A signature by the Principal/Director reviewing the policies verifies the completion of this procedure. Principals are expected to inform their faculties about policies and updates as they are approved throughout the year. The Lowndes County School System fraud regulation describes the definition, staff responsibilities, and internal controls/ investigations. The Policies and Procedures Handbook is updated annually and will be posted online for public access.

### **Fraud Prevention**

The Lowndes County School System (LCSS) Fraud PROCEDURE is established to facilitate the development of controls that will aid in the detection and prevention of fraud, waste, abuse, or corruption against the LCSS. It is the intent of the Board of Education to promote consistent and ethical organizational behavior by providing guidelines and assigning appropriate responsibilities related to the detection and prevention of fraud.

### **SCOPE**

This procedure applies to any fraudulent activity, or suspected fraudulent activity, involving employees as well as stakeholders, consultants, vendors, contractors, outside agencies and their employees conducting business with or on behalf of the LCSS, and/or any parties with a business relationship with LCSS.

***Fraud*** is defined as the intentional deception perpetrated by an individual or individuals, or an organization, either internal or external to federal, state, or local governments, which could result in a tangible or intangible benefit to themselves, others, or the district or could cause detriment to others or the federal, state, or local governments. Fraud includes an intentional false representation of a matter of fact, whether by words or by conduct, by false or misleading statements, or by concealment of that which should have been disclosed, which deceives and/or is intended to deceive.

***Waste*** is defined as the intentional, thoughtless or careless expenditure, consumption, mismanagement, use, or squandering of federal, state, or local resources to the detriment or potential detriment of the district.

Waste also includes incurring unnecessary costs as a result of inefficient or ineffective practices, systems, or controls.

**Abuse** is defined as excessive or improper use of a thing, or to employ something in a manner contrary to the natural or legal rules of its use, including intentional destruction, diversion, manipulation, misapplication, maltreatment or misuse of resources, extravagant or excessive use as to abuse one's position or authority. Abuse can occur in financial or non-financial settings.

**Management** is defined as individuals who possess any degree of administrative or supervisory authority. They should be responsible for the detection and prevention of fraud, misappropriations, and other irregularities.

**Examples of Fraud, Waste, Abuse, and Corruption include, but are not limited to:**

- unauthorized use of district-owned vehicles
- unauthorized use of district owned supplies or equipment
- violations of system and/or state **procurement** policy
- falsification of official documents (time sheets, leave reports, travel vouchers, etc.)
- contract fraud
- inappropriate expenditures
- embezzlement

**RESPONSIBILITIES**

Reporting suspected fraud, waste, abuse, or corruption for proper investigation and **disposition** should be the responsibility of all district employees. The Superintendent is responsible for the administration and application of this policy.

**Procedures for Reporting:**

1. Anyone suspecting fraud concerning federal, state, or local programs should report his or her concerns to his or her supervisor. If the suspected fraud implicates the Superintendent, the informant shall report the information directly to the Board Chair.
2. Employees have the responsibility to report suspected fraud immediately. All reports can be made in confidence.
3. Any employee of the school system who receives a report of suspected fraudulent activity shall report this information promptly to the Superintendent or his/her designee.
4. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall conduct or cause to be conducted an investigation of employees, providers, contractors, or vendors as necessary and appropriate.

**RETALIATION PROHIBITED**

Any retaliation for reports made in good faith pursuant to this policy is strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action. All employees shall be free of intimidation or harassment when reporting to public bodies about matters of public concern, including offering testimony to or testimony before appropriate legislative panels.

Periodic communication should emphasize the responsibilities and channels to report suspected fraud.

*(SEE THE BOARD POLICY IN THE APPENDIX OF THIS HANDBOOK FOR REFERENCE)*

### **Section 35: Assessment Security Lowndes County School System Testing Plan 2016-2017 School Year**

The Lowndes County School System conducts the assessment program as required by federal and state law. It is in compliance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Georgia law relative to student assessment and data reporting. Lowndes County School System interacts with state and federal agencies relative to the assessment program and accountability mandates.

The testing coordinator handles assessment documents and reports including secure test materials, individual student score reports, and school/district data reports in both paper and electronic formats. Lowndes County School System delivers training/guidance related to the assessment program, assessment data, and accountability mandates to all stakeholders. **All employees are informed in training that they are required to report waste, fraud, and abuse concerning Assessment Security.**

Training Plan:

a. Materials:

- i. All school testing coordinators must have a sign-in sheet for documentation of teacher and proctor participation.
- ii. A GaDOE update on each test being administered will be provided as a reference/resource for school testing coordinators.
- iii. A District Update is provided to school testing coordinators to indicate any special requirements from the district.
- iv. School coordinator's manuals and examiner's manuals are usually available on the GaDOE's website. These manuals to assist in training. All manuals must be kept secure and accounted for after each use.
- v. School coordinators should distribute the roles/responsibilities for all individuals being trained: coordinator, principals, examiners, and proctors. Discuss each group's roles/responsibilities, and have individuals sign at bottom. (This document can be found in the Student Assessment Handbook from the GaDOE)

b. Topics:

- i. Checking in materials at the district office is the responsibility of the School Improvement and Assessment Director's staff. They use the packing slip from each school's shipment to check the accuracy of the delivery. Checks are made of confirmations and notations of inaccuracies. The school testing coordinators report to the district office to check in the presence of the School Improvement and Assessment Director's staff. They then sign, date, and copy the packing slip.

A copy is kept in the School Improvement and Assessment Director's office

- ii. In order to maintain the integrity of the assessment program and its results,

security must be established and maintained. The responsibility of the assessment program at the school level rests with the principal and his/her designated school test coordinator.

1. Use the Student Assessment in Georgia Schools (PSC document) to discuss the testing ethics and consequences of violations.
2. Use the Examiner “Must Do” page from the GaDOE’s Student Assessment Handbook.
3. School Coordinators are trained in using the Lowndes County School System Incident Sheet, Access Log for Secured Test Storage Area, and Transcribing or Scribbling Answer Document Form.

- iii. School Coordinators are responsible for ensuring proper coding of test documents.
- iv. School Coordinators are responsible for checking the accuracy of student information.
- v. School Coordinators are required to have test examiner’s sign materials in and out each day during test administration.
- vi. Proctors are used when required. All test proctors are trained on their roles/responsibilities.
- vii. Testing Procedures are clearly articulated to ensure a smooth and problem-free test administration. Schedules, groups and location assignments, and special directions are distributed and explained before testing administration.
- viii. Accommodations are well documented by the Special Education Department. School coordinators carefully check to ensure students are provided the appropriate and accurate accommodations for each individual test.

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c. Collection of Materials

- i. Sign-in and sign-out sheets are used to document who is responsible to each individual test booklet, the date, and number of test booklets received.
- ii. Before testing documents are returned to district office, the school coordinator carefully accounts for all materials.
- iii. During the document count, the school coordinator checks for complete information (Form Numbers, Labels, Names...) on each answer document.
- iv. Materials are returned to the District Office, where the materials are re-counted by the System Assessment Director and assistant.
- v. Principal Certification Sheets are required on all standardized tests. This document must be returned at the time of delivery of the testing materials and is maintained for five years, per GaDOE guidelines.

# APPENDIX



**OneLowndes**

WHERE EVERYONE FINDS THEIR FUTURE.

## COMPLAINT PROCEDURES

Any individual, organization or agency (“complainant”) may file a complaint with the Lowndes County School System Board of Education if that individual, organization or agency believes and alleges that a violation of a Federal statute or regulation that applies to a program under ESSA has occurred. The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date that the complaint is received, unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered systemic or ongoing.

### Federal Programs for Which Complaints Can Be Filed

1. Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies
2. Title I, Part C: Education of Migrant Children
3. Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk
4. Title II, Part A: Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund
5. Title II, Part D: Enhancing Education Through Technology
6. Title III, Part A: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement
7. Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1: Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities
8. Title VI, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income Schools
9. Title IX, Part E, Subpart 1, Section 9503: Complaint Process for Participation of Private School Children
10. Title X, Part C-McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth
11. Filing a Complaint

A formal complaint must be filed in writing to the Lowndes County School System superintendent or his/her designee. The forms are located on the website and available at the Administrative Services Center.

The complaint must include the following:

- A. A statement that the LEA has violated a requirement of a Federal statute or regulation that applies to an applicable program;
- B. The date on which the violation occurred;
- C. The facts on which the statement is based and the specific requirement allegedly violated (include citation to the Federal statute or regulation);
- D. A list of names and telephone numbers of individuals who can provide additional information;
- E. Copies of all applicable documents supporting the complainant’s position; and The address of the complainant.

### Investigation of Complaint

Within ten (10) days of receipt of the complaint, the Superintendent or his/her designee will issue a Letter of Acknowledgement to the complainant that contains the following information:

- A. The date the department received the complaint;
- B. How the complainant may provide additional information;
- C. A statement of the ways in which the department may investigate or address the complaint;



and  
D. Any other pertinent information.

If additional information or an investigation is necessary, the Superintendent will have sixty (60) days from receipt of the information or completion of the investigation to issue a Letter of Findings. If the

### Right of Appeal

If the complaint cannot be resolved at the local level, the complainant has the right to request review of the decision by the Georgia Department of Education. The appeal must be accompanied by a copy of the Superintendent's decision and include a complete statement of the reasons supporting the appeal.

The APPEAL must be addressed to:

Georgia Department of Education,  
Office of Legal Services  
205 Jesse Hill Jr. Drive SE  
2052 Twin Tower East Atlanta, GA30334

**Superintendent:** \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Complaint Form for Federal Programs

Name of (Complainant):	
Mailing Address:	
Phone Number (home):	Phone Number (work):
Person/department complaint is being filed against:	
Date on which violation occurred:	
Statement that the Lowndes County School System has violated a requirement of a Federal statute or regulation that applies to an applicable program (include citation to the Federal statute or regulation) (attach additional sheets if necessary):	
The facts on which the statement is based and the specific requirement allegedly violated (attach additional sheets if necessary):	
List the names and telephone numbers of individuals who can provide additional information	

Please attach/enclose copies of all applicable documents supporting your position.	
Signature of Complainant:	Date:
Mail or deliver this form to:  Lowndes County School System ATTN: Superintendent Lowndes County School System 1592 Norman Drive Valdosta, Georgia 31601	
Date Received:	Superintendent's Signature:
Date of Response to Claimant:	

# TITLE I PRINCIPAL ASSERTION FOR 1% ALLOCATION FOR FAMILY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The following Title I principals have agreed without coercion to pool all or part of their Family & Community Engagement allocation for a district-level Family & Community Engagement activity/project.

Title I School	Title I Principal	Signature of Title I Principal	Amount toward District-wide Activity/

Federal Programs Director's Signature\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Superintendent's Signature

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Georgia Department of Education Policies and Procedures (Reference)**

**Policy Title:** Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Reporting, State Schools

**Policy Number:** SS-2002 Descriptor Code-2016A

**Release Date:** 6-25-15

**Last Revised:**

### **Purpose**

To describe the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) policy in regard to the waste, fraud, and abuse reporting by employees of the State Schools.

### **Applicability**

This policy applies to all employees at the State Schools.

### **Policy**

Employees at the State Schools will report any known and/or suspected fraud, waste, and abuse of resources to GaDOE officials.

### **General Provisions**

All personnel shall be familiar with, and faithfully observe all applicable ethics, laws, and regulations, including the following general principles and protocols.

Any employee of the State Schools may report information, in good faith, concerning the possible existence of any activity constituting fraud, waste, and abuse in or relating to any School System program or operation. All reports may be made anonymously as outlined in Reporting of Fraud, Waste, and/or Abuse document. Such a report shall be assessed and investigated by the GaDOE's Internal Audit Department.

Examples of conduct which might be reported are any crime defined in Title 16 (the Criminal Code) of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated such as theft or fraud or bribery. No State Schools' employee will make any report of fraud, waste, inappropriate conduct or abuse with knowledge that the disclosure was false or with reckless disregard for its truth or falsity. The GaDOE will not disclose the identity of the reporting employee without the written consent of the employee, unless the agency determines that disclosure is necessary and unavoidable during the course of the investigation. In these cases, the employee will be notified, in writing, at least seven (7) days prior to the disclosure.

No punitive action shall be taken against a State Schools' employee for making a report of fraud, waste, or abuse, unless the disclosure was made with knowledge that the disclosure was false or with reckless disregard for its truth or falsity. Such punitive action includes threatening, recommending or approving personnel action, or directing others to take such action. Staff are expected to follow the directions in the Reporting of Fraud, Waste, and/or Abuse (FWA) Report which explains what an employee should do if he or she has knowledge of fraud, waste, and abuse. The GaDOE Internal Audit Department or designee should present a status/update report of allegations received to the State Board of Education's Audit Committee at its monthly meetings.

# **LOWNDES COUNTY EMPLOYEE COMPLAINT POLICY**

## **SECTION 1. PURPOSE; INFORMAL RESOLUTION PREFERRED**

It is the purpose of this policy to implement the provisions of O.C.G.A. §20-2-989.5, et seq. In accordance with the foregoing, it is the policy of the Board of Education that certified personnel shall have the right to present and resolve complaints relating to certain matters affecting the employment relationship at the lowest organizational level possible. The Board of Education encourages all employees to resolve their complaints informally in a spirit of collegiality where possible. This policy and procedure is available where such efforts do not succeed, or where, for any other reason, the certificated employee desires to pursue this procedure.

## **SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS**

*"Level One Administrator"* means the principal of a school with respect to teachers and other certificated personnel assigned to that school. With respect to the certified Administrators supervised by the Superintendent, the "Level One Administrator" shall be the Superintendent. In any case not covered by this paragraph, the "Level One Administrator" shall be the supervisory certificated person designated by the Board or in the absence thereof, by the Superintendent.

*"Central Office Administrator"* means the local school system Superintendent.

*"Complaint"* means any claim or grievance by a certificated employee of this school district which is filed pursuant to this policy and which comes within the scope of the policy.

*"Notification"* means delivery in person by a person designated by the Superintendent to the party entitled to notification, or deposit in the United States Mail, certified mail, return receipt requested or statutory overnight delivery, to the last known address of the party notified.

## **SECTION 3. SCOPE OF COMPLAINT; EXCLUSIONS**

1. *Scope* - Unless excluded by paragraph (b) hereof, this complaint and grievance procedure is applicable to any claim by any professional employee certificated by the Professional Standards Commission who is affected in his or her employment relationship by an alleged violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of statutes, policies, rules, regulations, or written agreements of this school district or with which the district is required to comply.

2. *Exclusions* - This procedure shall not apply to:

- Performance ratings contained in personnel evaluation and professional development plans pursuant to Code Section §20-2-210;
- Job performance;
- Termination, non-renewal, demotion, suspension, or reprimand of any employee, as set forth in Code Section §20-2-940;
- The revocation, suspension, or denial of certificates of any employee, as set forth in Code Section §20-2-984.5.

A certified employee who chooses to appeal under Code Section §20-2-1160, shall be barred from pursuing the same complaint under this policy.

SECTION 4. HEARING RIGHTS, EVIDENCE: REPRESENTATION; DECISIONS: RECORDS

- A. *Hearing: evidence* - The complainant shall be entitled to an opportunity to be heard, to present relevant evidence, and to examine witnesses at each level, but the complainant may not present additional evidence at the Second or Third Hearing levels unless notice of the Complainant's intention and the evidence to be presented are submitted in writing five (5) days prior to the hearing to the Administrator who will preside at such level, and in the case of the local board, to the Superintendent. When hearing an appeal from a prior level, the local Board of Education shall hear and decide all appeals de novo.
- B. *Representation* - The Complainant and the administrator against whom the complaint is filed or whose decision is appealed shall be entitled to the presence of an individual, including an attorney to assist in the presentation of the complaint and the response thereto, at the Central Office Administrator and at the local Board of Education level. The presence of any individual other than the Complainant and the Administrator at Level One is prohibited, except witnesses who present testimony or documents.
- C. *Hearing Officer* - The local Board of Education may appoint a member of the State Bar to serve as law officer who shall rule on all issues of law and other objections, but such attorney shall not assist in the presentation of the case for either party.
- D. *Overall Hearing Time Schedules* - The overall time frame from the initiation of the complaint until rendition of the decision by the local board and notification thereof to the Complainant shall not exceed sixty (60) days.
- E. *Automatic Referral to Next Level* - Any complaint not processed by the administrator or the local unit of administration within the time frame required by this policy shall be forwarded to the next level for determination.
- F. *Records* - Accurate records of the proceedings at each level shall be kept; the proceedings shall be recorded by mechanical means; all evidence shall be preserved and made available to the parties at all times; and all costs and fees shall be borne by the party incurring them unless otherwise agreed upon by the parties; except that the cost of preparing and preserving the record of the proceedings shall be borne by the local Board of Education; provided however, the cost of transcribing the transcript of

evidence and proceedings before the local Board shall be borne by the party requesting same, and all costs of the record on appeal to the superior courts and appellate courts shall be paid by the party required to do so by the laws relating thereto.

G. *Decisions* - Each decision shall be made in writing and dated, and shall contain findings of fact and reasons for the particular decision reached.

H. *Notice* - The decision at each level shall be delivered to the Complainant by a person designated by the Superintendent, either

(1) being hand delivered or

(2) being deposited in the U.S. Mail (certified mail, return receipt requested or statutory overnight delivery).

Notice to the Complainant shall be deemed to have been made on the date of hand delivery or on the date of deposit in the U.S. Mail by certified mail, return receipt requested or by statutory overnight delivery to the address stated in the complaint or, if not contained in the complaint, to the last known address of the Complainant on file with the Board of Education.

#### SECTION 5. FIRST LEVEL: PRESENTATION; TIME: CONTENTS

The complaint shall be presented in writing to the Level One Administrator within ten (10) calendar days after the most recent incident upon which the complaint is based. The complaint shall include the following:

- A. The mailing address of the Complainant to which all notices and other documents may be mailed;
- B. The intent of the Complainant to utilize this complaint procedure, clearly stated;
- C. A reference or description of the statute, policy, rule, contract provision or regulation that is alleged to have been violated, misinterpreted or misapplied;
- D. A brief statement of the facts reasonably calculated to show how such statute, policy, rule or regulation was violated or misapplied, and how it substantially affects the employment relationship of the Complainant; and
- E. A statement of the relief desired.

The Superintendent shall prepare forms for use in accordance with the foregoing requirements.

#### SECTION 6. FIRST LEVEL HEARING AND DECISION

The Level One Administrator shall record the date of filing on the complaint, and shall give notice to the Complainant of the time and place of the hearing, either by mail or hand delivery. When notice is given by mail, it shall be sent by certified mail or statutory overnight delivery to the address set forth in the complaint. If no address was included in

the complaint, then the notice shall be sent to the last known address of the Complainant on file with the Board of Education. The Level One Administrator shall conduct a hearing on the complaint and render a decision thereon within ten (10) days of the filing of the complaint. The decision shall be dated and a copy shall be sent to the complainant as provided in Section 4 above. Where service or notice is made by certified mail or statutory overnight delivery as provided above, it shall be deemed to have been perfected when timely deposited in the mail, regardless of whether it was actually received or not.

#### SECTION 7. SECOND LEVEL; APPEAL FROM FIRST LEVEL TO CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

A Complainant dissatisfied with the decision of the first level shall be entitled to appeal to the Central Office Administrator by filing written notice of appeal with the Office of the Superintendent. The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the Complainant is notified of the Level One decision. The Central Office Administrator shall record the date of the filing of the appeal and shall notify the Complainant in writing of the time and place of the hearing in the same manner as provided in Section 6 above.

The Central Office Administrator shall obtain copies of all minutes, transcripts, documents and other records relating to the complaint and shall conduct a hearing and render a decision within ten (10) calendar days of the date of the filing of the appeal, or the hearing may be conducted by any designated representative of the Central Office Administrator who shall promptly submit his or her recommendations and findings to the Central Office Administrator for final decision. The decision shall be rendered and served on the Complainant and his attorney in accordance with Section 4(h).

#### SECTION 8. THIRD LEVEL. APPEAL TO BOARD OF EDUCATION

A Complainant or Level One Administrator dissatisfied with the decision of the Central Office Administrator may appeal to the Board of Education by filing written notice of appeal with the Office of the Superintendent. The appeal must be filed within ten (10) calendar days after the date of the decision as provided in Section 4. The Superintendent shall record the date of filing on the appeal, and shall promptly give written notice in the same manner as provided in Section 6 above to the Complainant of the time and place of hearing. The Complainant and the Administrators against whom the complaint is filed or whose decision is being appealed shall be entitled to appear before the Board of Education and be heard. The Board of Education may direct that a pre-hearing conference be held prior to the hearing to identify issues and facilitate presentation. The local board shall conduct a hearing and render its decision in writing within twenty (20) calendar days after the hearing, and perfect service thereof on the Complainant and his



attorney, all in accordance with Section 4.

SECTION 9. APPEALS TO STATE BOARD

Appeals from the decision of the local Board of Education shall be governed by the State Board Rule governing appeals and O.C.G.A §20-2-1160.

SECTION 10. REPRISALS PROHIBITED

No certificated personnel shall be subjected to reprisals as a result of filing any complaint under this policy. Any reprisals may be referred to the Professional Standards Commission

SECTION 11. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING DISCLAIMER

Nothing in this policy shall be construed to permit or foster collective bargaining by or on behalf of any employee or group of employees.

SECTION 12. REPEALER

All policies and parts of policies in conflict herewith are repealed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Federal Programs Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal/Director

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*The signatures above acknowledge that all personnel have been made aware of and understand the policies, procedures, and guidelines associated with filing a formal complaint with the Lowndes County School System and have been disseminated appropriately. Please submit the acknowledgement sheets of personnel to the HR Department and to the federal Programs Director by October 1st.*

***SAMPLE AGREEMENT***

**NEGLECTED AND DELINQUENT SERVICES AGREEMENT- LOWNDES COUNTY SCHOOLS**

As a part of Title I, Part A funding, Lowndes County Schools provides services to help serve the students of our school system who reside in N&D facilities located within the boundaries our system. The following roles and responsibilities are a part of the compliance agreement:

SITE DIRECTOR:

- Direct, on-site supervision of services for N&D facility
- Annually meet with the System’s Program Director to discuss the needs of students served at the N&D facility and the effectiveness of the services being provided through Title I, Part A funds
- Communicate with the Programs Director (as need or necessary) to discuss concerns with any component of the services provided
- Sign-off on any documentation as an assurance that services are being provided in an acceptable way (i.e. time sheets)

FEDERAL PROGRAMS DIRECTOR

- Annually prescribe and provide services as determined through on-going collaboration with the Site Director of each N&D facility served
- Determine the methods and means for providing services in conjunction with
- Directly monitor/observe the services as provided at each N&D facility at least once per nine weeks
- Receive and approve required documentation to ensure expectations of the services are being provided as prescribed by the expectations of the facility, system, and provider(s)
- Assist the N&D facility by providing support and resources to help the students residing at the facility to access learning resources to address educational needs while at the facility

Evidence of the formal collaboration for the services provided for N&D facilities will be documented to include, but not limited to:

- Agenda, Sign-in Sheet of Participants, Minutes of Meeting
- Checklists, Timeline adjustments, Other relevant documentation/information
- Any corrective actions discussed

*The Lowndes County School System will embrace the challenges of serving all students entrusted to our service and will help support the educational needs of students who reside at N&D facilities within our school system. We will collaborate and partner with each facility to help ensure that all students receive the needed support to help them achieve and succeed in their educational requirements and endeavors.*

Superintendent \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Federal Programs Director \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Site Director \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Assistant Superintendent of Finance \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**SAMPLE REQUISITION**

**FY 20 REQUISITION FORM**

VENDOR: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

REQUESTING TEACHER: \_\_\_\_\_ PROGRAM: CHOOSE FUNDING SOURCE

IMPROVE- MENT PLAN GOAL(s) #	ACTION STEP(S) #	QTY.	ITEM/ MODEL #	ITEM	UNIT PRICE	TOTAL
						\$ 0.00
						\$ 0.00
						\$ 0.00
						\$ 0.00
						\$ 0.00
						\$ 0.00
						\$ 0.00
						\$ 0.00
						\$ 0.00
						\$ 0.00
						\$ 0.00
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>						\$ 0.00

Signature of person requesting: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**REQUISITION APPROVAL. (Central Office Use Only)**

Director Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ TITLE I TITLE II TITLE III/ESOL

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ TITLE I TITLE II TITLE III/ESOL

Acct#: \_\_\_\_\_ TITLE IV MIGRANT PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



**Title III Resource Guide  
2020-2021**

**LOWNDES COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM**

**1592 Norman Drive  
Valdosta, GA 31601**

## Mission

Working together to empower, challenge, and inspire - OneLowndes!

## Vision

A learning community striving for excellence every day.

## Values

- A safe and orderly school environment
- A focus on students
- Empowering leadership and teamwork
- Research-based and data-driven decision-making
- Effective and efficient operations
- Stakeholders satisfaction and support

## Guiding Principles

- The safety, education, and welfare of our students are our priorities, and this must be reflected in our actions and our facilities.
- A safe, supportive environment nurtures teaching and learning.
- Excellent teachers are the foundation of quality instruction. All educators are accountable for the quality of work provided to students, and they must be committed to the continuous improvement of that work.
- All educators and staff must be continuous learners. They must be disciplined people, with disciplined thought and disciplined action.
- The purpose of the school is to ensure that each student develops the capacity to think, reason, and use one's mind well. Each student must develop those understandings, skills, and habits of the mind which make it possible to participate fully in the life of a diverse society operating in the context of an information-based global economy.
- The focus of all schools' activities must be on providing students with quality work which engages them in meaningful learning.
- Every student can surpass their current level of learning. Students learn in different ways and at different rates; therefore, instruction should make every attempt to match learning styles and levels.
- All resources (time, people, space, information, budget, and technology) must be used effectively, efficiently, and continuously evaluated to improve the quality of education provided for our students.
- A home/school/community partnership with open communication is essential in providing each student the support needed to be successful.
- Each parent is a partner with the school system in providing a quality education to his/her child. Parent, student, and community input into every aspect of what we do as a school system is absolutely essential to everyone's success.

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## Title III, Part A Program

The Lowndes County School System's Title III Program is made up of the following:

- Supplemental Language Program
- Parent Outreach to Parents of English Learners
- Language Focused Professional Learning for Administrators and Teachers of English Learners

Title III, Part A is a federally funded program that provides eligible LEAs with funding to supplement ESOL services already in place. Lowndes County School System (LCSS) receives Title III funding. Both Title III and the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program hold students accountable for progress in, and attainment of, English language proficiency (ELP). Upon attainments of ELP, students exit from language services and are monitored for a two-year period.

## Instructional Program Goals

Both Title III and the core ESOL program have goals for ELs. ESOL is a civil right offered to K-12 students with a home language other than English and who qualify based on an English language screener. ESOL is a state-funded program for eligible English Learners (ELs) in grades K-12. This program is standards based and emphasizes academic and social language development. ESOL coursework is based upon the WIDA Consortium English Language Development (ELD) Standards and the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE). LCSS ESOL Program Goals are as follows:

- Value and build upon students' academic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds,
- Assist students in reaching their full academic potential,
- Assist students in developing their full potential in literacy and numeracy,
- Create a supportive learning environment,
- Build connections between ESOL and schoolwide programs,
- Foster understanding and appreciation of diverse populations within the school and community,
- Develop relationships between parents and schools to foster a supportive learning environment, and
- Increase English language proficiency in content-related subject matter.

## Educational Approach

The Lowndes County School System uses a sound educational approach for providing English language development and meaningful program participation for its students. Pursuant to State of Georgia Law O. C. G. A. § 20-2-156, the Lowndes County School System has created a program for limited English proficient students whose native language is not English. This program is offered to all eligible ELs in our system. The purpose of this program is to educate the whole EL child and assist such students to develop proficiency in the English language, including listening, speaking, reading, and writing, sufficient to perform effectively at the currently assigned grade level.

The responsibility for the ELs' whole education, both in language and academic content, is shared with regular classroom teachers. English language support teachers, as well as mainstream staff and other support professionals, collaborate to determine accommodations and to make language and content as comprehensible as possible throughout the entire day for ELs. As a result, all teachers function as language teachers when ELs are enrolled in their classes.

Classroom teachers integrate ELD standards with the GSE standards to enable ELs to increase their ELP in order to communicate in English and demonstrate academic, social, and cultural proficiency. Instructional practices in ESOL classes and general education classes ensure that ELs are accommodated. To the extent practicable, it is appropriate to use the EL's home language to facilitate instruction.

## Identification, Screening, & Eligibility

### Policy for Identifying Immigrant Children and Youth

An immigrant student must be born outside of the United States or Puerto Rico, be enrolled in a United States school for less than 3 years, and be between the ages of 3 and 21. When students enroll in LCSS, the registration form requires parents to document the student's country of birth, date entered United States, and date first enrolled in a United States school. This information is entered into the Student Information System (SIS), Infinite Campus, in order to identify immigrant children and youth.

## Home Language Survey

The purpose of this section is to describe the process for identifying and educating national origin minority (NOM) students in grades K-12 who have a primary and/or home language other than English (PHLOTE) and are ELs. Under federal law, schools must identify all PHLOTE students and then screen potentially eligible students for English language assistance.

When any student enrolls in a Georgia school, the questions on the required state approved universal Home Language Survey (HLS), published on the GaDOE ESOL website, are administered on paper or electronically as part of the enrollment process. The HLS is a series of questions intended to determine the student's primary and/or home language. The following four questions appear on the HLS:

1. Which language does your child best understand and speak?
2. Which language does your child most frequently speak at home?
3. Which language do adults in your home most frequently use when speaking with your child?
4. In which language would you prefer to receive school communication? (This question is required beginning in 2019-2020)

In order to ensure that responses given on the HLS are accurate and legally binding, districts should make every attempt to administer this document in the home language of the caregiver. Translations of the HLS are available in several languages in the Forms Bank located within the GaDOE Guidance link on the GaDOE ESOL Unit webpage.

If the answer to any of the questions indicates a language other than English, the student is a PHLOTE student and must then be screened for eligibility for English language assistance services. **Students must be screened for eligibility within 30 days of enrollment at the beginning of the school year, and within 2 weeks of enrollment when students enroll during the school year.**

*NOTE: In no way does this document automatically make a student eligible for ESOL services.*

## LCSS Procedures for Managing the Home Language Survey

- Enrollment personnel are trained on the importance of using enrollment forms including the HLS in a language parents understand.
- The LCSS Enrollment Center provides a welcoming environment for all parents.
- Any parent needing an interpreter is provided one through World Wide Interpreter - 1-800-945-7889.
- During the registration process, a home language survey is included in the registration packet. In addition, the universal home language survey is embedded into the online registration packet.
- All home language surveys are maintained in permanent records.
- Any home language survey with English listed as the answer for questions 1-4 is placed in the student's permanent record. In addition, English, other than Standard English, and American Sign Language should not trigger the need to screen a student for English language proficiency.
- Any home language survey with a language other than English listed as the answer for questions 1-3 is copied. The copy is sent to the appropriate ESOL teacher at the student's school. The original is maintained in the student's permanent record folder.
- Any home language survey with a language other than English listed as the answer for question 4 only is maintained in student's permanent record folder, BUT the preferred language is keyed into SIS for parent preferred language of communication. (NOTE: It is suggested that someone follow up on the HLS to make sure that the parent clearly understood question 4.)
- Any student with a home language survey with English as the answer to all four questions is automatically marked as EL-No which means the student has never been an EL.
- SIS Coding Specialist checks EL GUIDE if student enters from another Georgia school and sends a screenshot of this information and the EL History information in GUIDE - along with the home language survey and completed registration application to the ESOL teacher.
- ESOL teacher receives home language survey. Please visit LCSS Title III Website for list of ESOL teachers. If the student was not previously served in ESOL at another school, ESOL teacher checks SLDS, and if necessary, ESOL teacher screens student to see if he/she will qualify for ESOL services.
- If student was previously served in ESOL at another school, ESOL records are requested.
- If the student is EL-Y, the copy of the home language survey is maintained in the student's blue EL folder.
- If the student is EL-M, the copy of the home language survey is placed in the student's blue EL folder. The ESOL teacher will continue monitoring the student for two years after the student exits ESOL services.
- If the student is screened and does not qualify for ESOL support, the student is coded EL-N, and the copy of the home language survey is placed in the student's permanent record with appropriate documentation attached as evidence as to why this student did not qualify for services.
- If the student is EL-F, a former EL who has already been monitored for 4 years, the copy of the home language survey is placed in the student's permanent record with appropriate documentation attached as evidence as to why the student is a former EL.
- When applicable, appropriate information is then recorded in the EL Screener tab in SLDS. This is completed by the ESOL teacher and approved by the LCSS Testing and RTI Coordinator.



- The ESOL teacher shares information using a Google Sheet with the SIS Coding Specialist to ensure proper data is in Infinite Campus. This information includes EL-Y, EL-M, EL-F, or EL-N; student's home language; parents' translation needs listed on home language survey; appropriate dates; and other required information.
- The ESOL teacher sends out appropriate Combined Parent Notification for ESOL and Federal Programs Language Services letters to parents in English and home language.
- Only students who are EL-Y and ESOL-Yes can be marked Title III Served in the SIS coding system. In addition, Title III supplemental funds can only be used for Title III Served ELs.
- The SIS Coding Specialists, ESOL teachers, Title III Director work closely together to make sure all required data is complete for each student.
- Each school has a Google Sheet. The ESOL teacher inputs data and sends it to the SIS Coding Specialist so the correct information is added to SIS, which is Infinite Campus in LCSS.
- Any necessary corrections are made at appropriate times throughout the year.
- The Title III Director, ESOL teachers, and SIS Coding Specialists communicate frequently throughout the year to make sure that this process is efficient and most importantly, to meet the needs of the students in our schools.
- The Title III Director checks the Georgia EL GUIDE on a regular basis to make sure that potential ELs transferring from other Georgia schools are not inadvertently overlooked in the identification process.

NOTE: The home language survey is a **one-time document** which must be signed and dated by the parent. LCSS makes every effort to acquire the original home language survey completed by parents of children enrolling in the U.S. schools for the first time. LCSS makes every effort to maintain a copy of the original HLS that is used to determine ELP screening in the permanent record.

The HLS is a valid document which triggers subsequent ELP screening or not to screen. LCSS understands that the HLS questions may differ from state to state. In addition, some HLS responses may vary. It is challenging when parents respond differently to HLS questions when enrolling in different school systems. LCSS uses standardized EL entrance process to fulfill the intent and purpose of the definition of EL and the purpose of the ESOL program.

### **HLS Procedures for Student First Enrolled in US School**

1. Administer the HLS.
2. If a language other than English is listed to questions 1-3, administer the appropriate ELP screener.
3. Follow state criteria to determine whether the student qualifies for ESOL support.
4. Code the student correctly in SIS.

### **HLS Procedures for Student Previously Enrolled in a Georgia School**

1. Administer the HLS. If a language other than English is listed on questions 1-3, follow these procedures.
2. Identify whether the student is an EL based on transferring LEA records, the original HLS, original screener, ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Assessment.
3. Claim the student in GUIDE to see if the student has an EL status code in Georgia.
4. Check the student's previous enrollment in SLDS to see if there are any ACCESS scores or LEA entrance/exit data.
5. When applicable, open the SLDS EL tab and check to see if student was previously screened.
6. Call and/or email previous school to make every effort possible to obtain prior EL records in a timely manner.
7. If necessary, screen student, and follow state criteria to determine whether the student qualifies for ESOL support.

### **HLS Procedures for Student Previously Enrolled in US School in Another State**

1. Administer the HLS. If a language other than English is listed to questions 1-3, follow these procedures.
2. Identify whether the student is an EL based on transferring LEA records.
3. Call previous school or district to inquire about student's original home language survey, ELP Screening documents, and or ELP testing results. Make every effort possible to obtain prior EL records in a timely manner.
4. If necessary, screen student, and follow state criteria to determine whether the student qualifies for ESOL support.

### **HLS Procedures for Foreign Exchange Students**

1. Administer the HLS.
2. If a language other than English is listed to questions 1-3, sponsors are asked to provide LCSS with evidence of English proficiency which may include results of a recognized English language test or signed documentation from an academic institution or English language school.
3. When these documents are not provided, the appropriate EL Screener is administered and student may be provided English language support if student qualifies.
4. If necessary, screen student, and follow state criteria to determine whether the student qualifies for ESOL support.

### **HLS Procedures When Parents Report a Multilingual-Multiliterate Home Language Environment**

1. Administer the HLS.
2. If a parent reports two primary languages, one of which is English, on questions 1-3, then the parent has the option to complete the Multilingual Home Language Survey Amendment **during the enrollment process** if the parent of the developing multilingual child feels the ELP screening process is discriminatory against multilingual-multiliterate

families. The parent may request a **Multilingual Home Language Survey Amendment** from the Title III Director. The student is no longer considered a potential English learner nor would the student be screened for English language proficiency. All documentation will be maintained in the student's permanent record.

3. If the parent does not complete the **Multilingual Home Language Survey Amendment**, the student is screened.
4. If the student qualifies, the non-English language is identified in Infinite Campus.

### **Screening for Eligibility**

The Lowndes County School System uses the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) screening tool for grades 1-12 and the WIDA – ACCESS Placement Test (W-APT) for kindergarten to assess eligibility for language assistance services.

The WIDA screening instruments are used to measure the English language proficiency of students who have recently arrived in the United States or in our school system. These screening tools are used to determine whether or not a child is eligible for English language instructional services and are only administered once. The Kindergarten W-APT and the WIDA Screener assess students' abilities in all four language domains (listening, speaking, writing, and reading), and evaluate social and instructional English as well as academic language corresponding to the subject areas of English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. The screening results provide scores for each language domain as well as combined composite scores, including a specified composite proficiency level.

### **ESOL Eligibility Guidance**

The Lowndes County School System adheres to the Georgia Department of Education's (GaDOE) eligibility guidance which is used to determine eligibility for language assistance services.

### **Kindergarten W-APT Eligibility Screener**

The Kindergarten W-APT may be administered to a pre-K student at the end of the second semester and to a kindergarten or first grade student through the end of first semester first grade. The Kindergarten W-APT does not assign scores according to the range of WIDA English Language Development (ELD) levels 1-6. Instead, scores for speaking and listening indicate either low, mid, high, or exceptional proficiency. Scoring details can be found in the W-APT Test Administration Manual and on the scoring sheets.

Consistent with WIDA test administration guidelines, the procedures from second semester pre-kindergarten through **first semester kindergarten** are as follows:

1. Administer the listening and speaking portions of the Kindergarten W-APT and note the combined listening and speaking raw score.
2. If the student's combined listening and speaking raw score is  $\geq 29$ , the student meets the minimum criteria for English language proficiency and is not eligible for language support services.
3. If the combined listening and speaking raw score is  $\leq 28$ , then the student qualifies for language assistance services.

Consistent with WIDA test administration guidelines, the procedures for **second semester kindergarten through first semester first grade** are as follows:

1. Administer all four components of the Kindergarten W-APT.
2. If the following is true:
  - a. listening and speaking raw score is  $\geq 29$ , and,
  - b. the reading score is  $\geq 11$ , and,
  - c. the writing score is  $\geq 12$ , the student does **not** qualify for language support services and is coded EL-N in SIS.
3. If all three criteria are NOT met, the student qualifies for language support services and is coded EL-Y in SIS. The Date of ELP Screener is the testing date a student is screened for the EL program and is determined to be an EL.

### **The WIDA Screener**

The WIDA Screener for students in grades 1-12 is divided into grade clusters: 1; 2-3; 4-5; 6-8; and 9-12. The instructions for the appropriate grade cluster screener to be administered to the students in grades 1-12 are outlined in the WIDA Screener Test Administration Manual. Administration procedures should be followed as indicated in the manual. Consistent with current WIDA test administration guidelines, the WIDA Screener is administered to students from second semester first grade through second semester twelfth grade.

The criteria for eligibility are as follows:

1. Administer a lower grade cluster form for students in the **first semester of the year in a grade-level cluster.**
2. Administer the current grade cluster WIDA Screener for students enrolling in the **second semester of the lowest grade in the grade-level cluster.**

2. Administer all four components of WIDA Screener: listening, speaking, reading and writing.
3. If the student's Grade Level Adjusted Overall composite score is  $\geq 5.0$  on the WIDA Screener, the student does **not** qualify for English language assistance services. The student is coded EL-N in SIS.
4. If the student's grade level adjusted overall composite score is  $< 5.0$  on the WIDA Screener, the student is eligible for English language assistance services. The student is coded EL-Y in SIS. The Date of ELP Screener is the testing date a student is screened for the EL program and is determined to be an EL.

Eligibility flowcharts for Language Assistance Services for students in kindergarten and grades 1-12 are provided on the Georgia Department of Education's website.

If a student has been screened and determined ineligible for language support services, the student may **not** be screened again at a future date for reconsideration of eligibility without prior GaDOE ESOL Unit approval.

### **Certification to Administer WIDA Screeners**

Only certified personnel who have completed the annual WIDA training modules for the WIDA Screener are permitted to administer this assessment. The annual certification program runs from July 1 - June 30. Certificates of Certification are maintained by the LCSS Testing and RTI Coordinator.

### **Potential English Learners with Disabilities**

LCSS recognizes that the K-WAPT or the WIDA Screener may not be valid screeners for making EL eligibility determinations for students who have been identified as non-verbal or having a significant cognitive disability. To determine whether the student qualifies as an EL or not, a committee consisting of the parent, an ESOL teacher, the classroom teacher, a special educator, and a school administrator should be convened to discuss the best educational option for the student. The committee minutes must be maintained in the student's permanent record along with notes supporting the committee's decision. This decision may be revisited at any time.

In addition, when the student has a disability that precludes one or more language domains, the IEP team should convene to discuss how to determine EL eligibility when one or more language domains are missing. For example, students who are deaf, blind, and/or non-verbal would be considered as having a disability that precludes assessment in one or more language domains. Beyond these reasons, the LCSS Testing and RTI Coordinator will seek counsel from the GADOE Assessment Division who would consult with Special Education and EL Programs. The IEP Team decision must be maintained in the student's permanent record along with evidence supporting the committee's decision. This decision may be revisited at any time.

### **Identifying Students New to U.S. Schools or Entering Kindergarten**

Once a student is screened, the date of ELP Screener is recorded in the SIS. The student is coded EL- Yes or EL-No based on K-WAPT or WIDA Screener scores. The date of the ELP Screener is the same as the identified date.

If a Pre-kindergarten student was screened, the EL start date will be the first day of the kindergarten school year.

### **Identifying In-State Transfer Students**

In addition to the home language survey which is completed upon enrollment, the EL GUIDE and/or SLDS are used to help identify EL students who transfer from within the state of Georgia. Registrars must first claim the GTID. The Title III Director runs an EL GUIDE report on a regular basis and notifies ESOL teachers of any EL-Y students who may have enrolled into the LCSS during that time frame. SLDS is also used as a resource. Once a transfer student is identified, the date of ELP Screener from the transferring district is recorded in the SIS (Infinite Campus), and the student is coded as EL-Yes, EL-No, EL-Monitor (Years 1-4), or EL-Former.

### **Identifying Out-of-State Transfer Students**

When students transfer from out-of-state, EL records are requested. If a student has any ELP scores, these scores are considered in order to identify the student as EL-Yes, EL-No, EL-Monitor (Years 1-4), or EL-Former. The student is coded in the LCSS SIS system.

If a student transfers within the US or from a Department of Defense school and there are official records to support their pre-determined eligibility and services within the past year, LCSS accepts these records and places the child in an appropriate language support class.

For transfer students, the date the ELP Screener was administered in the transferring district is keyed into the SIS as the date of EL Screener.

When an ELP screener date cannot be determined, LCSS uses the earliest ELP assessment results and the first day of school for that school year as the date of ELP Screener.

If a potential EL student transfers into LCSS and records cannot be obtained within the federal timeline, LCSS will take necessary steps to ensure that it meets the appropriate deadlines for notifying parents of the EL placement in a language instruction educational program.

If the student was screened in a WIDA state and did not qualify as an EL, the student may **not** be screened again at a future date for reconsideration of eligibility without prior state approval.

If the student was screened in a non-WIDA state and did not qualify by that state's eligibility criteria, the LEA may consider rescreening the student using appropriate WIDA eligibility assessment if there is evidence that the student's level of ELP will be/is a barrier to meeting Georgia's Standards of Excellence. However, students transferring from non-WIDA states where they did not qualify for language support may NOT be reconsidered for rescreening if the student was screened more than 24 months prior to enrollment in the current LEA; was enrolled and was successful in the general education program in the previous school; and performed at the meets or exceeds level on that state's content assessments if such assessments were required and administered in the enrolled grades.

## Placement Into ESOL Program Services

When making decisions regarding student placement, the district considers the services and support in place to ensure that ELs are developing social and academic language proficiency and are able to effectively participate in all academic and special programs within the district.

ELs are considered the same as any other student eligible for any program that will help them reach the same standards of performance asked of all students. Once an EL student enters a mainstream education class, he or she may need language development or other types of support included in everyday classroom instruction. This support may include accommodations to the instructional activities, tasks, and assessments. As the EL attains fluency in English, fewer accommodations will be necessary.

When a student qualifies for English language support through the LCSS ESOL program, the date of ELP Screener is the date entered ESOL. Administrators, counselors, registrars, and ESOL teachers work together to place students in appropriate ESOL classes and mainstream classes. ESOL is an educational support program to assist ELs to overcome language barriers and participate in the school's educational programs. LCSS recognizes its responsibility in providing its EL students with a program of service consistent with its chosen educational approach. Additionally, the school system understands the importance of providing information to parents of ELs in an understandable manner, to the extent practicable, in a language the parent can understand.

ELs are placed in age appropriate grade levels or courses. If a lower grade level placement is necessary due to lack of formal schooling, Lowndes County School System will not place a student more than one year below the native English-speaking peers of the same age. The district's program of services to ELs addresses the need to provide evidence-based English language acquisition services and the need to ensure effective participation of ELs in all district academic and special programs.

### ESOL Delivery Models

ESOL refers to the class, English for Speakers of Other Languages. This is the class where the language of English is taught to ELs. The Lowndes County School System ESOL Program provides language assistance service through the use of various delivery models:

- **A scheduled class period/scheduled language acquisition** uses state delivery model code #5 which is assigned to the class. The course teacher is the ESOL teacher. Students at the elementary level or middle level receive language assistance during a flex, connection, or exploratory class in a class composed only of ELs; students at the middle and high school levels receive language assistance and/or content instruction in a class composed only of ELs. Instruction is focused primarily on learning social and academic English. The ESOL teacher should be skilled in using grade level content to build language acquisition. On the elementary level, the ESOL teacher posts a grade of Pass/Fail, but on the middle and high school levels, a number grade is used for this model.
- **Sheltered content** delivery model state delivery model code #8 which is assigned to the class. The course teacher is the ESOL teacher who is content and ESOL certified/endorsed. Students at the middle and high school level receive content instruction and language assistance in a class composed only of ELs. The teacher of this class provides and posts grades for this model.
- **Push-in** model (within reading, language arts, mathematics, science or social studies) uses state delivery model code #2 which is assigned to each student in the class. The course teacher is the content teacher, and the ESOL teacher is added as an additional teacher. There is no need for an additional ESOL class roster. Students remain in their core academic class where they receive content instruction from their content area teacher along with targeted language instruction from the ESOL teacher. The Push-in model is clearly defined by the Language Assistance Rule (160-4-5-.02) and should NOT be interpreted in the same manner as the co-teaching model of instruction implemented by Special Education. In the ESOL Push-in model, the ESOL teacher is responsible for language support, while the content teacher is responsible for delivery of academic content. Research indicates that strong teaching partnerships occur when teachers know each other's curriculum, share responsibilities, plan together, and share strategies. When students break into groups, the ESOL teacher should work with ELs, while the content teacher focuses on mainstream students. The Push-in delivery model allows the teachers to collaborate in order to facilitate meaningful language instruction with the content classroom and to appropriately plan differentiated instruction and tasks to meet the various proficiency levels of ELs. Since the ESOL teacher has access to the content teacher's gradebook, both teachers work together to provide and post grades.
- **Pull-out** model uses state delivery model code #1 which is assigned to the student. The course teacher is the content teacher, but the

ESOL teacher can be added as an additional teacher. There is no need for an additional ESOL class roster. Students are taken out of a general education class of English language arts, science, social studies, or math for the purpose of receiving small group language acquisition instruction from the ESOL teacher. Since the ESOL teacher has access to the content teacher's gradebook, both teachers work together to provide and post grades.

- An **innovative** delivery model approved by the Georgia Department of Education uses state delivery model code #6 which is assigned to the class. The course teacher is the content teacher who is ESOL-endorsed. Content area teachers differentiate instruction to provide both the grade level content and ESOL support with targeted language instruction. The innovative model teacher posts grades for the ELs served under this model. Refer to Appendix A.
- A **consultative** model specific to ELs where language support is provided through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). This model is for EL-Y, ESOL-No who are coded LSSPED (02) as the ESOL-No reason. The course teacher is the Special Education teacher. The ESOL teacher and SPED teachers collaborate regularly to support language acquisition. EL teachers do not post grades but can refer to grades posted in Infinite Campus. Refer to Appendix B.

The minimum time required for ESOL support varies by grade level:

- Grades K - 3 = 45 minute daily segments or a minimum of 225 minutes weekly
- Grades 4 - 8 = 50 minute daily segments or a minimum of 250 minutes weekly
- Grades 9 - 12 = 55 minute daily segments or a minimum of 275 minutes weekly
- For FTE reporting purposes, Lowndes County School System adheres to the following segment reporting guidelines:
- Students in grades K-3 may be served one segment per day.
- Students in grades 4-8 may be served up to 2 segments per day.
- Students in grades 9-12 may be served up to 5 segments daily. (Since classes at Lowndes High School are scheduled on a 4 x 4 block schedule consisting of 90 minutes, each blocked class will count as two segments.)

The Lowndes County School System ESOL Program does not separate ELs unnecessarily for purposes other than to achieve the support program's goals. ELs are provided services in comparable facilities to those in which non-ELs receive services.

School counselors evaluate all transcripts for high school students. This process provides consistency in the evaluation process and allows for immediate placement into appropriate courses. When transcripts are not immediately available for evaluation, the counselor will make an informal assessment based on interview or other academic assessments so placements can be made *in accordance with graduation requirements*.

Parents must be notified within 30 calendar days after the beginning of the school year and two weeks after the start of the school year that their child was placed in a Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP).

### **Steps Following Identification**

Upon identification of a student as an EL, the Combined Parent Notification for ESOL and Federal Programs Language Services letter must be sent to parents notifying them of their child's qualification for ESOL services. This letter is sent in English and in the parent's preferred language of communication. This notification letter must be sent to the parents of every student who initially qualifies or continues to qualify for basic ESOL services. Parents have the right to refuse or waive direct ESOL support. Waivers must be signed annually.

OCR Notification Requirements MAY NOT be waived. In accordance with the 2015 Dear Colleague Letter jointly issued by the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education, school districts must provide notices within thirty days from the beginning of the school year to all parents of EL students regarding the EL student's identification and placement in a language instruction educational program. School districts must, to the extent practicable, translate such notices in a language that the parent can understand.

### **ELs Who Do Not Participate in the ESOL Program**

Some ELs do not participate in the LCSS ESOL program. The students are still coded EL-Y in the SIS (Infinite Campus), but they are also coded as NON-ESOL and one of the following reasons indicated:

- 1- Parent Refusal/Parent Waived Services
- 2-Language Support Provided in SPED

### **Parent Waiver of Direct Language Assistance Services**

Some parents of students identified as ELs may choose to waive language assistance services for their child; however, the district is still held responsible for providing language support under Office for Civil Rights law. Student schedule placement is optimized to ensure that an alternate means of providing the student with support for language development and proficiency is provided outside of structured ESOL classes. Parents who waive services must do so in writing on an **annual basis**, and written documentation is required.

Although the parents may have chosen to waive a formal language assistance program, the student will still be

identified and coded as an EL. The student will continue to be coded until he/she reaches an ELP that meets the state requirements for exiting language assistance services. ELs whose parents have waived services are still eligible for accommodations on standardized tests and must participate in the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 test on an annual basis until they meet eligibility criteria to exit the ESOL program

NOTE: LCSS does not suggest that parents waive ESOL services. LCSS accommodates parent requests when waivers are signed.

### **English Learners with IEPs**

The fact that an EL has a disability does not replace the need for language assistance. The plan for continuing to provide language assistance and support should be delineated in the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP). It is important to ensure that ELs are dually served through both programs. If, due to the student's significant cognitive disabilities, it is determined that another means of support will be more beneficial to him/her, the Special Education team and the ESOL specialist must work together to determine the most effective plan and to provide needed support for implementation.

- If an EL is determined eligible for special education services, the IEP team will determine the type and degree of services (Special Education and ESOL) the student will receive.
- The ESOL teacher must be included as an active member of the IEP team for ELs with disabilities.
- If it has been demonstrated through testing that the student qualifies for special education services under the learning disability label or speech services label, the EL should be served in both programs. Scheduled time for ESOL services should not be reduced. The student will be marked EL-Y and ESOL-Yes. The IEP will include ESOL delivery model and who provides the language support. Student is LEP-Yes under Conditional Factors in the IEP. Testing accommodations should be listed for the ACCESS Test for ELLs 2.0 or the Alternate ACCESS Test.
- Students should be served in both ESOL and Special Education if they qualify for both programs, unless the disability is deemed so profound that the severity of the student's disability indicates a greater intensity of special services is required. If it is determined that the student's needs will best be met by being served in multiple segments of special education, the ESOL specialist should work with school and district personnel to set up a consultative plan for that student's language development. The ESOL specialist and the special education teacher should consult on a regular basis and maintain records of consultations as documentation of language support efforts. In this case, the student is coded EL-Y and ESOL-No because Language Support is Provided through the IEP (LSSPED02). Any EL with an IEP must have a plan for language assistance services documented on the IEP. Student is marked LEP-Yes under Conditional Factors in the IEP. Testing accommodations should be listed for the ACCESS Test for ELLs 2.0 or the Alternate ACCESS Test.

### **Monitoring Academic Progress of ELs**

Monitoring of classroom performance includes measures of English-language proficiency and curricular achievement. Schools should compare ELs' achievement to that of academically successful English-speaking background students as well as mainstreamed language-minority students. Educators should use classroom performance and/or available achievement test scores to revise a student's academic program or change the types of language assistance services he or she is receiving.

Language-minority students must be compared with native English-speaking peers in knowledge of subject matter. It is important to assess a student's foundation for the acquisition of new information, as well as the ability to effectively participate in mainstream classes.

### **Procedures for Changing the EL-Y Status of an Erroneously Identified EL**

An erroneously identified EL is a student who was identified as an EL but does not in fact meet the definition of an EL. A parent may have misunderstood or incorrectly completed the home language survey, a screener may have been incorrectly scored, or various reasons may have caused this incorrect identification. In order to change a student's incorrect EL-Y steps, the following steps must occur:

1. Parent notifies LCSS that the home language answers are incorrect.
2. If LCSS deems the parent request plausible, the parent will be given the opportunity to complete a home language survey addendum which can be found on the GaDOE website. The addendum should be in a language the parent indicates understanding.
3. The addendum requires parent signature and must be notarized.
4. The Title III Director will approve the HLS Addendum.
5. Based on the new HLS and if the next step requires a status change, the LEA will use the EL-I code for the remainder of the school year to show that the student was incorrectly identified as an EL. After that, the child is coded EL-N on July 1st and thereafter.
6. All documentation will be kept in the student's permanent record file.
7. A report will be sent to GaDOE. The report will be saved as DISTRICT.YEAR.Title III.EL-ICodeReport. The following will be included in this report via the GaDOE Secure Portal messaging system by July 30th:
  - a. Student's Name

- b. Student's Grade Level
  - c. Parent's Reason for Change
  - d. Name of LCSS Title III Director who approved the Status Change
  - e. Former Status Code
  - f. New Status Code
  - g. Date Status Change Effective
8. A student can only be reported as EL-I for the remainder of the current school year. As of July 1st, the student is coded EL-No, even if the student is transferred to another LEA.

## Title III Supplemental Language Support

Only students coded as EL-Y and ESOL-Y are eligible to be coded Title III Served. This indicates that the student is served with Title III supplemental funds. LCSS provides supplemental support through two programs: Imagine Learning and Learning A-Z. EL-Y students served in an ESOL class and who are benefiting from one of these supplemental language supports are coded Title III served in the LCSS SIS. Parents are notified of supplemental support through Combined Parent Notification for ESOL and Federal Programs Language Services letter sent home within 30 calendar days of the student's enrollment at the first of the year or two weeks of the student's enrollment date if the student begins school during the school year. Throughout the school year, parents of students receiving supplemental support are also invited to parent outreach events at each school to learn about these programs. (Refer to Appendix C: Determining Support for English Learners.)

1. Each school must have a plan for how Imagine Learning will be used as a "supplemental" language support and should be established in August so that Beginning of Year data can be collected.
2. Student must be EL-Y and served in an ESOL class.
3. Student must be in ESOL less than five years.
4. Student's most recent ACCESS score should be 3.9 or less
5. Because Imagine Learning must be used systematically and with fidelity, usage will be monitored on a weekly basis by the ESOL teacher and twice a month by the Title III Director.
6. Beginning of Year Data, Mid-Year Data, and End of Year Data will be collected in the Imagine Learning platform when students are using the program systematically and with fidelity.

## EL Participation in Regular Education

The responsibility for the ELs whole education, both in language and academic content, is shared by the mainstream classroom teachers and English language support teachers alike.

- ELs will receive appropriate accommodations in general education courses.
- Data (from ACCESS, WIDA Screener, or W-APT) can provide each student's designated language proficiency levels to all teachers that work with the student using the WIDA CAN DO Descriptors so that the mainstream classroom teachers have a clear understanding of what level of English language proficiency the student possesses.
- Mainstream classroom teachers will follow the testing accommodations for each student. Such accommodations should mirror the EL Test Participation Committee (TPC) decisions.
- ESOL teachers will meet with mainstream teachers to determine appropriate testing accommodations for each EL.
- Monitored ELs or EL-1, EL-2 students may receive appropriate testing accommodations for two calendar years upon exiting the ESOL program.
- The mainstream classroom teacher and the ESOL teacher will incorporate the WIDA standards into their lesson plans. These standards are as follows:
  - English language learners communicate for Social and Instructional purposes within the school setting.
  - English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of language arts.
  - English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of mathematics.
  - English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of science.
  - English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of social studies.

## **Suggested Teaching Strategies for Teachers of ELs**

ELs do not just “soak up” the second language. They must be exposed to meaningful learning experiences based on their English language proficiency (ELP) level. In addition, they must be able to learn in a non-threatening learning environment.

The following information may provide suggestions and strategies to enhance the instruction of the EL in the mainstream classroom. Everyone is a lifelong language learner; therefore, all teachers are language instructors. Suggestions appropriate to various grade levels and English proficiency levels are as follows:

- Remember the 5 R’s: Repeat, Rephrase, Reiterate, Restate, Reword
- Learn to pronounce each student’s name correctly.
- Speak slowly and enunciate clearly.
- Give students more wait time of 15-20 seconds.
- Assign a bilingual or English speaking peer or study buddy to assist the EL.
- Limit the use of pronouns.
- Avoid the use of slang.
- Develop and maintain routines to help ELs anticipate what will happen without relying solely on language clues.
- List and review instructions step by step.
- Make directions comprehensible. Determine your most common directions and illustrate or demonstrate them.
- Make words count by clarifying meaning.
- Emphasize 5-8 of the most important vocabulary words for a lesson.
- Avoid assumptions about routine American common language. ELs may not have experience with concepts such as Thanksgiving or Mother Goose or fairy tales. Explain idioms and cliches as needed to aid comprehension.
- With ELs who have very low proficiency levels, do not confuse the normal “silent period” of language acquisition with a lack of absorption.
- Find alternative materials that cover similar content but contain more illustrative support and simpler language.
- Make connections to the student’s native language.
- Use graphic organizers.
- Hands-on activities, role plays, chants, choral reading, rhymes, and drawings are all staples of a language rich environment.
- With students who have a low proficiency level, the use of imperative or command forms of verbs is more comprehensible.
- Use hand signals to accompany verbal instructions.
- Pantomime or use gestures when necessary.
- Avoid introducing new words without providing a context. It is a best practice to pre-teach vocabulary for ELs to have comprehensible input.
- Consider alternative ways to assess an EL. Provide word banks or offer an oral assessment.
- Have the EL view videos or listen to audio of content.
- Use read along books with audio.
- Use guided note taking strategies, or provide students with a copy or outline of notes.
- Cursive is difficult for many ELs to read and not all students are familiar with the Roman numerals.
- Model correct responses rather than overtly correcting the student’s errors.
- Provide opportunities for ELs to practice speaking with their English speaking peers.
- Keep strong communication ties with the parents or guardians using translators/interpreters when necessary.

## **Grading of ELs**

A student should never be penalized because of limited English proficiency. Teachers should be aware of the ELs most recent ELP scores and Can Do Descriptors based on those scores and differentiate instruction accordingly.

If a student is doing well academically, putting forth a determined effort, doing homework, making an attempt at learning, even if minimal due to lack of language acquisition, the student’s grades should reflect these efforts.

If the student makes NO attempt academically, does not complete/turn in homework, does not participate in class, then the student’s grade should reflect this lack of effort.

Teachers are NOT asked to lower their standards. Rather, teachers are asked to give ELs a grade based on the growth and progress of the EL in each of the student’s classes. Many EL students may not understand the academic terminology used in our classrooms. Therefore, mainstream teachers and ESOL teachers work together to increase the EL student’s vocabulary. It is important to remember that acquiring academic language takes time.

When posting grades, teachers are encouraged to use Comment 241 in the Infinite Campus gradebook. Comment 241 states: The grade issued is based on the student’s English language proficiency level in the content area.

## **Retention of ELs**

Much thought should be given before retaining an EL student due to lack of English language acquisition. If the teacher suspects the child has true learning problems NOT related to language, the child could be retained. In that case, the student should have a Response to Intervention (RTI) folder and referral to Tier 3/ Student Support Team (SST) in the RTI pyramid should be



considered. It is important to remember that potential success at the higher grade should be heavily considered when making retention decisions.

## Response to Intervention for ELs

Although the LCSS has not implemented the MTSS 3 Tier pyramid, LCSS recognizes that ELs often need extra academic support and receive services at all levels of the Pyramid of Intervention depending on the academic need. LCSS educators are attuned to the fact that ELs need immediate social and content language development and support and understand the need to provide ELs with more targeted interventions than those provided to all students. The LCSS uses evidence based practices and implements culturally responsive teaching to meet the academic needs of ELs on various English language proficiency levels. Vocabulary is taught in the content areas. Oral language development is a priority. Instruction and support in the primary language are provided when applicable. Small group instruction and computer assisted instruction is provided as needed. In addition, ELs' needs are supported through progress monitoring, data based decision making, explicit instruction, differentiated instruction, frequent opportunities to use the English language and make connections with their native language, sentence stems, paragraph frames, graphic organizers, modeled writing, modeled correct responses, etc.

When ELs are not academically successful, the LCSS seeks to understand why the individual student is struggling. What is the student's social and academic English language proficiency level? Are there significant gaps in learning or schooling? Has the student experienced trauma? How long has the student been in school in the USA? Does the student move often? What is the student's LEXILE level in the primary home language? As various aspects of the whole child are explored, interventions are implemented systematically and with fidelity. Interventions are monitored and adjusted as needed.

Currently the LCSS uses the Response to Intervention 4 Tier Pyramid. In this model, eligibility for ESOL services and placement in an ESOL class is automatically considered a Tier 4 Intervention. The ESOL class and support within that class meet the definition of the specially designed learning focus of Tier 4 with its emphasis on specialized programs, specialized instructional delivery and methodology. For the purposes of serving the student effectively and efficiently, the language minority student is served at the Tier 4 level during any scheduled ESOL classes; however, in mainstream classes, the student's needs may not be such that Tier 4 level services are recommended. As is appropriate for all students, ELs in a general education class should receive Tier 1 interventions, and often the student will require Tier 2 interventions as well to successfully access and comprehend instruction. The accommodations provided in the Presentation or Response categories of the EL/TPC are considered Tier 2 interventions appropriate to the student's English language proficiency needs, and improvement in language development and academic achievement should be noted as data for progress monitoring results. As the student progresses in language and academic proficiency, the level of interventions needed to support the student should decrease accordingly. For the specific purposes of ESOL services and language support for the majority of ELs, the RTI Pyramid functions as a regressive model rather than as a model of progressive interventions. As students near proficiency, often Tier 1 interventions, appropriate for all students, will be the only support needed. Although the nature of the RTI Pyramid indicates all students begin at Tier 1 and move upward through the tiers only if the interventions at the previous tiers are not sufficient to allow them to achieve. Title III, Part A does not permit delayed eligibility testing for language minority students. Neither should language assistance be delayed in order to allow students to progress "normally" through the tiers.

There are times when it is suspected that something beyond typical English language acquisition is a barrier to the student's academic achievement. In these situations, the RTI team should use their judgement and move the student to the Tier 3 level so that the student can receive appropriate services as soon as possible. Although ELs are considered to be at the Tier 4 level when eligible for ESOL services, this does not preclude those ELs who are found to need additional support from receiving it through the RTI process or, when they meet eligibility criteria, through Special Education. These programs would support and supplement the specialized language acquisition interventions of the ESOL program, as well as address any other learning problems that may have been identified.

## EL Assessments and Testing Accommodations

### Georgia Milestones Assessment System

The Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS) is a comprehensive summative assessment program spanning grades 3 through high school. Georgia Milestones measures how well students have learned the knowledge and skills outlined in the state-adopted content standards in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Students in grades 3 through 8 take an end-of-grade assessment in various content areas, while high school students take an end-of-course assessment for each of the ten courses designated by the State Board of Education.

In certain situations, individual needs of EL students may warrant accommodations. Testing accommodations for ELs is a team decision. The building-level ESOL teachers work with a team of teachers and the parents of ELs to determine whether or not testing accommodations are needed. Accommodations offered must be consistent with current instructional and assessment accommodations made in the classroom. Accommodations will be determined by the EL Testing Participation

Committee (EL/TPC) and will be made only when appropriate documentation is filed for each individual eligible student. Only state-approved accommodations may be considered and included in the EL/TPC form. The determination of accommodations for assessment shall be reviewed at least once a year. LCSS recognizes that accommodations for ELs provide students with access, not an advantage, in the testing experience.

### **WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0**

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 is administered annually to **all ELs/students coded EL-Y** in the Lowndes County School System. This includes all students served in ESOL, students whose parents completed an annual waiver of services, and EL/SWD students whose language support is provided in SPED class as stated in the student's IEP.

The ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment is a standards-based, criterion referenced English language proficiency test designed to measure ELs' social and academic proficiency and progress in English. It assesses social and instructional English as well as the language associated with language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies within the school context and across the four language domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

### **WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs2.0**

WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 is an assessment for EL students who are eligible for the GAA 2.0.

### **Certification to Administer WIDA Screeners and WIDA ACCESS Tests for ELs**

Only certified personnel who have completed the annual WIDA training modules for the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 and WIDA Alternate ACCESS for ELs are permitted to administer this assessment. The annual certification program runs from July 1-June 30. Certificates of Certification are maintained by the LCSS Testing and RTI Coordinator.

### **EL/TPC: Testing Accommodations for Standardized Tests**

- Testing accommodations for the EL/TPC shall be made only for EL-Y, EL-1, and EL-2 students.
- Administration of assessments and use of test administration accommodations shall be according to established guidelines and procedures in the GaDOE Student Assessment Handbook.
- Accommodations will result in either standard or nonstandard administration. Specific information concerning standard or nonstandard nature of an accommodation is noted and published in the GaDOE Student Assessment Handbook for the respective fiscal school year.
- Conditional Accommodation or reading test passages must be approved by the LCSS Testing and RTI Coordinator.
- Selected accommodations must reflect the practices used in the student's classroom.
- ELs with disabilities may use state-approved accommodations when taking the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 or the Alternate ACCESS, as applicable. These accommodations must be documented in the student's IEP. The IEP Team will determine which accommodations are needed.

#### **Some questions that the EL/TPC may consider are as follows:**

- What are the EL's proficiency levels in listening, reading, writing, and speaking on the most recent WIDA Screener, K-WAPT, or ACCESS for ELLs 2.0?
- What are the EL's previous assessment results?
- What are the EL's recent district benchmark data results?
- What accommodations were previously used?
- Does the student have any unique situations in regards to testing that should be considered?
- Does the monitored EL have an RTI folder?
- Have the number of testing accommodations decreased from year to year as the EL's level of ELP has increased?

LCSS Suggested Testing Accommodations most likely to benefit EL students at certain ELP levels are as follows:

Accommodation	ELP Levels 1.0-2.9	ELP Levels 3.0-3.9	ELP Levels 4.0-5.9
<b>Setting Accommodations</b>			
1. ESOL Classroom	✓	✓	✓
2. Small Group	✓	✓	✓
3. Preferential Seating	✓	✓	
4. Individual or study carrel	✓		
5. Individual Administration	✓		
<b>Presentation Accommodations</b>			
6. Explain or paraphrase or clarify the directions in English only*	✓	✓	
7. Oral reading of test questions in English only	✓	case by case basis	
8. Conditional: Oral reading of ELA passages in English only**	Restricted to eligible EL students only. Seek Guidance from LCSS Testing Coordinator		
9. Repetition of Directions*	✓	✓	
<b>Response Accommodations</b>			
10. Word-to-Word Dictionary (if the EL is literate in first language)***	✓ (upper elementary/middle/high school)	✓	✓
<b>Scheduling Accommodations</b>			
11. Frequent Monitored Breaks	✓	✓	
12. Extended Time within the confines of the school day*	✓	✓	✓

\*May require small group accommodation in LCSS for test scheduling purposes.

\*\*Screen reader is the preferred method of administration. When a human reader delivers the accommodation, examiners must adhere to directions provided in the Read-Aloud Guidelines.

\*\*\*EL Student must be literate in first language to receive this accommodation and will require small group accommodation.

## Transition From Direct ESOL SERVICES

The Lowndes County School System uses criteria established by the GaDOE to determine when a student has sufficient English language proficiency to meaningfully transition from the ESOL program. As ELs reach proficiency and are ready to exit language assistance services, it is imperative to ensure these students have attained a degree of proficiency that will enable them to achieve academic success at levels equal to those of their native English-speaking peers.

### Exit Criteria

LCSS administers the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 or the Alternate ACCESS to determine whether an EL qualifies to exit

from ESOL.

### **Kindergarten Students**

The Kindergarten ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 student report contains one proficiency level for each of the four domains and four composite scores. The composite proficiency level reported is the accountability score. For determining whether a kindergarten student has met the requirements to exit language assistance services, the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 Overall Composite Proficiency Level scores and the individual language domain scores must be utilized.

In order to exit English language assistance services, kindergarten ELs must score a Composite Proficiency Level (CPL)/Overall score of  $\geq 5.0$  with at least a 4.5 in the writing domain and at least a 5.0 in each of the remaining domains (listening, speaking and writing).

Kindergarten ELs who score less than 5.0 overall or whose writing domain is  $< 4.5$  or listening, speaking or reading domain is  $< 5.0$  are not eligible to exit language assistance services.

Exit flowcharts for students in kindergarten are provided on the Georgia Department of Education's ESOL Language Program Website.

### **Students in Grades 1-12**

The student must be administered all components of the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment. If the student achieves an overall score of 5.0 or greater, the student must be exited from the ESOL program.

Students achieving CPL scores between 4.3-4.9, may be deemed English proficient and exited from English language assistance services based on the English Learner Reclassification Review Committee (ELRRC) decision as documented on the English Learner Reclassification Review Form. The intent of this form is that the EL Reclassification Team will consider for exit all students whose exit scores fall within the range of 4.3-4.9. The EL Reclassification Review Committee considers the student's literacy levels using various test data, teacher recommendations, listening and speaking in English, other school supports in place, classroom performance, and other assessment measures that deal with English proficiency to determine whether or not a student should exit ESOL support. The final decision is recorded and maintained in the Exited EL student's permanent record.

When an in-state transfer student enrolls in LCSS, the EL Reclassification Team Decision made by the previous school system will be honored.

If a student transfers from a previous school system that uses a lower EL exit criterion than LCSS and if the transfer occurs during the first two weeks of school, the student may be observed for two weeks, and another EL Reclassification Team may review evidence and documentation, if applicable.

Exit flowcharts for students in kindergarten and grades 1-12 are provided on the Georgia Department of Education's ESOL Language Program Website.

### **Less Than Four-Domain Exit Procedures**

If a student's IEP team or 504 plan determines that the student's disability is directly related to a domain for which there are no appropriate accommodations, the student may be exempt from taking that language domain assessment. Students who are deaf, blind, and non-verbal would be considered as having a disability that precludes assessment in one or more language domains. Beyond these reasons, the LCSS Assessment and RTI Coordinator should seek counsel from GaDOE Assessment Division who would consult with Special Education and EL Programs.

The EL student with a disability that precludes assessment of one or more language domains should be considered for exit from EL status when the student has met the state-established criteria which can be found on the GaDOE website.

### **Alternate ACCESS Exit Procedures**

If the student scores P2 for two years consecutively or if the student scores the same score for three years in a row. The IEP Team will serve as an English Learner Reclassification Team and will complete the state provided EL Reclassification IEP Team Rubric for ELs with significant cognitive disabilities and who have met the state's established Alternate ACCESS Threshold for considering EL Exit. Copies of these documents will be placed in the student's IEP folder, EL folder, and permanent record. The student's progress toward IEP goals will be monitored for 2 consecutive years. Even though these meetings often take place near the end of the school year, the student's EL status will not be changed until after July 1.

### **Post-Exit Monitoring**

ELs who meet the criteria for proficiency are no longer eligible for language assistance services and must be exited. Students are coded EL-1 after July 1st. Title III, Part A funds may no longer be used for services for exited ELs.

The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) requires that districts monitor academic progress of ELs for two calendar years following exit from language assistance services to ensure the student did not exit ESOL support prematurely, to remedy any academic deficits, and to ensure students are meaningfully participating in standards-based instruction and assessment

comparable to their native English-speaking peers.

If an exited student transfers from another state or a private school and the two year monitoring was not completed prior to enrollment, LCSS continues to monitor the student for the remainder of the monitoring period. LCSS maintains documented evidence that the student was monitored throughout the two-year monitoring phase.

Content teachers continue to work with ESOL teachers to make needed adaptations to content material and present it to all second language learners in a less demanding language format. Content teachers will provide students with increasing opportunities to demonstrate what they know by using a variety of formative and summative assessments.

At the end of each grading period, an ESOL teacher contacts the student's teachers to find out if the student is adjusting and succeeding academically and to identify any academic or social needs. The teacher teams review grades, standardized test scores, talk with student, and talk with parents, if necessary, to ensure a smooth transition from the ESOL program. If there is evidence that the student is struggling in one or more content areas, the first step is to ensure the student is provided any instructional supports available to students within the school and to ensure that the RTI team is aware of the student's lack of academic progress and success.

NOTE: LCSS EL Monitor Forms are housed electronically in the Elevations Platform.

### **Accommodations for Post-Exit ELs**

For state assessment purposes post-exit ELs who are in the two-year monitoring period are eligible for appropriate standard accommodations for GMAS EOG or EOC tests which must be documented on the EL/TPC form. The EL/TPC may consider extended time within the confines of the day as a testing accommodation for EL-1 and EL-2 students.

## **Response to Intervention for Post-Exit ELs**

Exited ELs may struggle in some of their academic courses, even after they have been deemed English proficient and have met the criteria for exiting ESOL services. Therefore, during the two calendar year monitoring period required under civil rights law, exited ELs may still require instructional accommodations in some of their content courses. If there is evidence that the exited ELs are struggling in one or more content areas, the first step is to ensure that they are provided any instructional supports available to all students within the school and to ensure that the RTI team is aware of their lack of academic progress and success. The RTI team should review the exited ELs' data and determine appropriate next-step interventions and any increased Tier monitoring for RTI purposes. After instructional interventions have been put in place and progress is measured over time, as data, documentation, and any additional evidence are reviewed, the RTI team and progress monitors should determine whether the exited EL is struggling because of a lack of content knowledge or because of a lack of English language proficiency. ESOL teachers are essential to the RTI review process, as they understand the process and time-frame of second language acquisition. Possible considerations may include reviewing the students' academic history and considering the following questions:

- Were exited ELs educated formally in their home countries? Did they have consistent schooling or did their education have prolonged periods of interrupted schooling or no schooling?
  - What were the exited ELs' ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 scores and sub-scores in each domain?
  - Were the ELs exited from English language assistance services based on a previous year's EL Reclassification Committee Decision (ELRRC) ?
  - Were the ELs exited from English language assistance services based on the ELRRC decision?
  - If the ELRRC made a determination, was the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 overall CPL score at the high end of the 4.3-4.9 range?
  - Were the ELs' Georgia Milestones Language Arts/ELA End of Grade or End of Course scores borderline for meeting standards or were they significantly above the minimum requirement?
  - In the courses in which they are struggling, what are their areas of difficulty? Are they having difficulty specifically in the domain of writing or reading, for example, or are there factors outside of language involved?
  - If the exited ELs are struggling in a particular course, is it a course in which they have always had difficulty?
  - Are the teachers differentiating instruction specifically to reach and support second language learners?
  - Is it a lack of concentrated effort on the exited ELs' part, or do they turn in all assignments, but perhaps the quality of the work does not meet the requirements for a passing grade?
  - If so, would appropriate differentiation allow them to adequately demonstrate their knowledge and comprehension of the content, or do they lack the background content information to be able to access the curriculum and fully comprehend the material?
  - Are they receiving academic support to compensate for any lack of background information, if that is the case?
- These are some of the factors that should be considered when making a determination as to appropriate interventions for the students and/or whether the problem is content related or English language proficiency related.

The final analysis of those reviewing evidence and data should determine whether the problem truly is a lack of language proficiency, rather than a lack of content knowledge, cognitive issues, or a disability. (Refer to AppendixD: Guidance on Comparison of Language Differences vs. Learning Differences.)The English Learner Reclassification Review Committee (ELRRC) form must be completed.

If it is determined that the problem is truly a lack of English language proficiency, the RTI team reviews the evidence, and determines whether the exited ELs should be placed back into English language assistance services or continue to follow the pyramid of intervention. If so, the students' coding in the district's student information system (SIS) will be changed to EL-Y. When the student again meets the criteria for exiting and is considered proficient, the monitoring period will begin again and last for two full calendar years as required.

### **Post-Exit Reversal of Reclassification Decisions**

As students become proficient in English and their need for support begins to decline, their progress must be monitored regularly. This monitoring process provides a safety net to ensure that if the student should begin to struggle due to language proficiency, it is caught quickly, and appropriate support is reinstated.

The RTI team will meet to determine whether the EL-exited student is struggling because of a lack of content knowledge or whether the EL-exited student is struggling because of a lack of English language proficiency. ESOL teachers are essential to this review process as they understand the process and timeframe of second language acquisition, especially teachers who have taught the exited EL in recent years. The team may want to administer a valid ELP assessment; however, **the WIDA ELP Screener is NOT an option for exited EL students.**

If it is determined that the problem is a lack of ELP, then the RTI team will follow the Reverse-Reclassification EL Entrance procedures.

1. Conduct an EL Reclassification Team Meeting and document the team's decision on the EL Reclassification Form.
2. If the team determines that the student's status remains as an exited EL (EL-1, EL-2), no changes should be made in the SIS (Infinite Campus). All documentation should be maintained in the student's permanent record folder.
3. If the team determines that the student's status should **reverse back** to EL status, then parent's consent must be obtained.
4. If the Reverse-Reclassification decision is made in August or September, before the October FTE count, then change the status back to EL and serve the student in the ESOL language program.
5. If the Reverse-Reclassification decision is made between October FTE and March FTE, then change the status back to EL immediately and serve the student in the ESOL language program. However, the Data Collections error will need to be explained.
6. If the Reverse-Reclassification decision is made after March FTE, wait until after the June 30 Student Record sign-off to change the student's status back to EL-Y.
7. All documentation must be maintained in the student's permanent record folder.
8. The student whose Reverse-Reclassification decision is to be changed to EL-Y will then take the WIDA ACCESS for ELLs 2.0.
9. When the student meets the LEA's EL exit criteria, the two-year post-exit monitor period begins again.

## **STAFFING AND RESOURCES**

The Lowndes County School System understands its obligation to provide the personnel and resources necessary to effectively implement its ESOL programs. This obligation includes having teachers meet the professional qualifications outlined by the district to provide language assistance services, trained administrators who can evaluate these teachers, and adequate and appropriate materials for the ESOL programs.

### **Professionally Qualified Teaching Staff**

Lowndes County School System ensures that there are an adequate number of teachers to instruct EL students and that the teachers have mastered the skills necessary to effectively teach in the ESOL program. All teachers of ELs are fluent in written and oral English.

The State of Georgia offers a clear renewable certificate in the field of ESOL (P-12) as well as the ESOL Endorsement which allows an educator to teach ESOL to students in the grade levels approved for the educator's content certification.

### **Roles of the ESOL Teacher**

- Collaborate with registrars and counselors to ensure proper enrollment.
- Administer appropriate screeners, analyze data, and place students in the proper program.
- Notify parents (in home language) of results and placement.
- Provide testing accommodations appropriate to each individual student.

- Provide Title III parent outreach sessions.
- Participate in Title I Parent Engagement for ELs.
- Ensure each school knows how to communicate with parents in the proper language.
- Work with academic coaches to provide EL-specific professional learning trainings to classroom teachers of ELs.
- Collaborate with classroom teachers and document collaboration.
- Attend RTI and IEP meetings and ensure EL information in the IEP is correct and current.
- Provide instruction for ELs in domains of reading, writing, listening, and speaking.
- Teach, plan, and focus on language acquisition. (ESOL teacher is NOT a tutor.)
- Introduce American culture to ELs in ESOL class.
- Monitor students who have exited and collect required forms from mainstream teachers.
- Ensure the EL Screener tab in SLDS is current.
- Certify annually to administer the WIDA Screener and ACCESS Test for ELLs.
- Ensure that EL folders are organized and include all required documents.

The EL folder is maintained by the ESOL Teacher. The EL folder is maintained with permanent records. The following documents are maintained:

- Home language survey
- WIDA Screener or W-APT or out of state screener scores for ESOL eligibility
- Copy of Annual Combined Parent Notification for ESOL and Federal Programs Language Services letter in English and native language
  - OCR Notification Requirements MAY NOT be waived. In accordance with the 2015 Dear Colleague Letter jointly issued by the U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education, school districts must provide notices within thirty days from the beginning of the school year to all parents of EL students regarding the EL student's identification and placement in a language instruction educational program. School districts must, to the extent practicable, translate such notices in a language that the parent can understand.
- Annual Test Participation Committee Document of EL Testing Accommodations with signatures
- Copy of Annual ACCESS Test Notification Parent Letter in English and native language
- Annual ACCESS Test Scores in English and native language
- Copy of Annual ACCESS Test Results Parent Letter in English and native language
- Copy of Annual Parent Waiver of Services (if applicable)
- Copy of Notification of ESOL Exit Letter in English and native language (when applicable)
- Annual Cumulative Profile (printed at End of Year)

## District-Wide Sustained Evidence-Based Professional Learning for Teachers and Administrators of ELs

LCSS and school leadership teams meet annually to analyze, determine, and plan professional learning needs. LCSS recognizes the need to promote and maintain a well-informed faculty and staff who work directly with EL students in our schools. Professional learning and professional learning communities take place regularly at every school in LCSS.

The Title III Director attends conferences organized by the Georgia Department of Education and redelivers to ESOL teachers, central office level administrators, and school-level administrators.

Academic coaches provide a wealth of information on instructional strategies and differentiation in order to meet the needs of the ELs in the classroom.

A broad, general overview of Title III is provided at the beginning of each year for all certified staff. Likewise, the ESOL teachers provide additional information and support for the teachers who specifically provide instruction to EL students in the regular classrooms. Teachers are included in evidence-based professional learning opportunities that directly relate to instructional strategies for EL students. Teachers may directly participate in EL evidence-based professional learning opportunities (when available/ appropriate), or they may participate in re-delivery sessions from those who have participated first-hand. In addition, ongoing professional learning is provided through the LCSS Teachers of ELs Google Classroom PLC.

Moreover, all teachers of ELs participate in professional learning to review data, as well as the most recent ACCESS 2.0 English language proficiency scores; what the ELs in their classes "Can Do" based on these scores; what testing accommodations and classroom supports will benefit the individual students; and how to support dually served ELs with disabilities. The Ellevation platform is used as a resource for teacher collaboration, differentiation, and data analysis during PLC meetings; this electronic platform is the one-stop shop for the necessary data classroom teachers of ELs need to meet their students' instructional needs.

WIDA Focus Bulletins are used to share EL related information to help teachers of ELs teach and assess EL students in their classrooms. Each school chooses which bulletins to share based on individual school needs.

Teachers of ELs are invited to attend the annual GATESOL conference, the annual KSU ESOL Conference, WIDA workshops, EL related workshops at RESA, and other state or national offerings when possible.

ESOL teachers meet together a minimum of six times annually in order to facilitate a professional learning community focusing explicitly on the ELs at every school. At the beginning of each year, Title III requirements are reviewed so that everyone has an understanding of this federal program. ESOL teachers also provide professional learning opportunities to all teachers of ELs through the Ellevations platform. The teachers look at ACCESS test scores, WIDA Can Do Descriptors, and anecdotal notes from previous teachers as they collaborate and consider the best testing accommodations and classroom supports for each individual EL. Finally, ESOL teachers and special education teachers of dually served ELs participate in an annual training ensuring each teacher understands roles and responsibilities in meeting the needs of ELs on their caseloads. Examples of professional development that takes place at these meetings include but are not limited to the following: GaDOE Title III Guidance Reviews, Best Practices, ESOL Records, ACCESS 2.0 training, Alternate ACCESS training, WIDA AMS training, Instructional Planning, OCR Review, Parent Communication, Parent Outreach planning, Imagine Learning training, Ellevation Education training, etc. The ESOL Teacher PLC and school level PLC integrate when the ESOL teachers then return to their schools and share information learned in this PLC with their school level PLC.

In addition, the LCSS uses the Google Classroom platform as a method of professional learning for all teachers of ELs in the Lowndes County School System. Topics include best practices for teaching ELs, parent communication, ACCESS test information, EL/SWD information, parent communication, helpful websites, and more for general education teachers of ELs. Redeliveries from all conferences and workshops are posted in this electronic platform in order to share with all the teachers of ELs in LCSS. Finally, one teacher and his/her best strategy for ELs are highlighted in this Google Classroom on a monthly basis as an “Extraordinary Teacher of English learners.”

At the end of each year, ESOL teachers have the opportunity to complete an annual needs assessment of professional learning activities to help EL students improve ELP. Results of this needs assessment and student data are used to determine long range professional learning goals for the upcoming year.

The vision of LCSS is “A learning community striving for excellence every day.” In administrative meetings, ESOL teacher professional learning communities, LCS Teachers of ELs Google Classroom PLC, and school level PLCs, this vision is carried out so that ELs are provided with the best instructional practices in all their classes. General education teachers are encouraged to acquire their ESOL certification or endorsement. ESOL teachers coordinate with the Title III Director, school administrators, and academic coaches to provide various professional learning opportunities to their school faculties.

Professional development is a priority at Lowndes County Schools. The Title III Director makes every effort to provide professional learning opportunities that will benefit and improve the instruction of ELs at every school in order to validate the mission of our system: Working together to empower, challenge, and inspire - One Lowndes!

## **EL Family & Community Engagement & Notification**

### **Home Language Survey**

The home language survey is given to all parents of students to complete at registration. If a language other than English is identified, students will be screened for ESOL services.

### **School-Home Communication**

In accordance with federal law, school-home communication must be provided in a language that our parents understand. In an effort to facilitate this communication, translation and interpretation services are available at no charge to parents and guardians who require assistance in understanding all district and school related information. Lowndes County Schools provides assistance to parents/guardians of ELs in their home language. Lowndes County Schools uses World Wide Interpreter and Transact.com as resources for school home communication. Parents, guardians, or students who need assistance in a language other than English may call 229-245-2250.

### **Parent Notifications**

The district assures that parental notification is provided in English and/or the parent's preferred language of communication as required for the following:

- Combined Notification for ESOL and Federal Programs Language Services
- Notification of Annual Assessment for English Language Proficiency Letter
- Annual assessment score reports to show growth in language proficiency (Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing)
- Notification of Exit from ESOL Program Letter (when applicable)

### **Parent and Family Engagement**

The Lowndes County School System provides parents and families of ELs with opportunities to be active partners in their child's participation in programs for ELs. Title III, Part A school-level parent engagement activities are provided for EL-Y, ESOL-Yes Students who receive supplemental English language support through Imagine Learning and/or Learning A-Z. LCSS shares how these programs are being used to benefit the ELs and increase their English language proficiency and academic achievement.



In addition, Title III parent engagement activities may include parent, family, and community engagement activities, strategies that serve to coordinate and align related programs, provide family literacy services and/or training activities to improve the English language skills of ELs and to assist parents and families in helping their children to improve their academic achievement and becoming active participants in the education of their children.

Furthermore, EL Family & Community Engagement activities (either at the school level, the district level, or both) are designed to promote the importance of EL instruction and enhance the home-school connection. Classroom visits, Lunch-n-Learns, and a district-wide expo have all been used as models to allow parents to experience firsthand the dynamics of EL teaching and learning in our system. These annual programs are designed based on parent surveys, the Comprehensive Needs Assessments, or parent input to help address what parents feel are the most important issues for their children's English language proficiency and academic achievement.

Finally, the LCSS Federal Programs Title III webpage lists various resources for parents of ELs to be actively engaged in their child's educational experience in LCSS. Finally, parents of EL-Y students who are ESOL served are invited to be part of the LCSS Parents of ELs Remind group. Information specific to ELs is sent out via this electronic platform.

### **Timeline for Title III Parent and Family Engagement Activities**

#### July/August

- The Title III Director will Complete requisitions for Title III Supplemental Programs: Learning A-Z and Imagine Learning.
- The Title III Director will review the requirements for Title III Supplemental Programs and Parent Engagement Activities with school-level administrators. The Title III Director will maintain a copy of the agenda and sign-in sheet.
- The ESOL Teacher and designated school level administrator will establish a plan for supplemental language learning to take place systematically and with fidelity.
- The ESOL Teacher will establish which EL-Y, ESOL Yes students will receive supplemental Support. Refer to Section "Title III Supplemental Language Support" in the LCS Title III Resource Guide.

#### September

- The ESOL Teacher and designated school level administrator will establish a date for Title III First Semester Parent Outreach which will assist parents and families in helping their children to improve their academic achievement and becoming active participants in the education of their children and will involve Title III Supplemental Program Learning A-Z and Imagine Learning.
- Suggested Agendas and Sign in Sheets can be found in ESOL Teacher Google Classroom.
- The ESOL teacher will make copies of books in English and home language from Learning A-Z and send home to Title III served ELs and their families who may benefit from this support.

#### October/November

- The ESOL Teacher will plan and organize the Title III First Semester Parent Outreach.
  - Send invitations in English and home language.
  - Complete Phone Call Reminders in advance.
  - Make necessary handouts from parent resources provided by Imagine Learning and Learning A-Z.
- Create presentation to include students demonstrating Imagine Learning to parents and books in English and other languages from Learning A-Z.
- The ESOL teacher will make copies of books in English and home language from Learning A-Z and send home to Title III served ELs and their families who may benefit from this support.
  - Schedule a Spanish interpreter to be available.
  - Meet with parents.
  - Send copy of agenda, handouts, and sign-in sheet to Title III Director.

#### January

- The ESOL Teacher and designated school level administrator will establish a date for Title III Second Semester Parent Outreach.
- The ESOL teacher will make copies of books in English and home language from Learning A-Z and send home to Title III served ELs and their families who may benefit from this support.

#### February/March/April

- The ESOL Teacher will plan and organize the Title III First Semester Parent Outreach.
  - Send invitations in English and home language.
  - Complete Phone Call Reminders in advance.
  - Make necessary handouts from parent resources provided by Imagine Learning and Learning A-Z.
- Create presentation to include students demonstrating Imagine Learning to parents and books in English and other languages from Learning A-Z.
- Schedule a Spanish interpreter to be available.
- Meet with parents.

- Send copy of agenda, handouts, and sign-in sheet to Title III Director.
- The ESOL teacher will make copies of books in English and home language from Learning A-Z and send home to Title III served ELs and their families who may benefit from this support.

May

- The ESOL teacher will make copies of books in English and home language from Learning A-Z and send home to Title III served ELs and their families who may benefit from this support.
- The Title III Director will conduct a qualitative survey/assessment of the LCSS Title III Parent and Family Engagement Activities to analyze attendance and evaluate the effectiveness of what was done and to make improvements for the upcoming school year.
- The ESOL Teacher will send home the following documents:
  - Send home ACCESS Test letters in English and home language.
  - Send home ACCESS Student Score Reports in English and home language.
  - The WIDA GUIDE to ACCESS Scores for Parents is recommended as a resource to use at this time.
  - Send home Notification of Exit if applicable in English and home language.

### **Student & Parent Handbook**

The Lowndes County School System provides a Student and Parent Handbook in English and Spanish. It is available in print and also posted on the Lowndes County Schools webpage (which reflects the most current version as changes are made during the year). This handbook is provided for the purpose of informing students and families about the system's policies and procedures.

### **Complaint Procedures**

Any individual, organization, or agency may file a complaint with the Lowndes County School System (LCSS) if they believe and allege that LCSS is violating a federal statute or regulation regarding the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date the complaint is received unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered to be systemic or ongoing. A written complaint should be addressed to: Lowndes County Board of Education, Attn: Federal Projects Director, 1592 Norman Drive, Valdosta, Georgia 31601.

## **EL Students & Accountability**

Federal and state laws require that all students participate in the state-mandated assessment program. ELs participate in the Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS), the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, and numerous locally developed formative and summative assessments. LCSS reports on the number and percentage of ELs meeting the challenges Georgia Standards of Excellence for all ELs who are EL-Y and for four years after the students has exited ESOL services (EL-1, EL-2, EL-3, and EL-4). These students are included in the EL SUBGROUP for CCRPI accountability purposes.

In addition, LCSS reports on EL-Y students performance band growth based on ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 for CCRPI accountability. The following chart displays point values for EL Progress on the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0.

ACCESS Performance Band Growth Chart		Performance Band Movement	Point Value for CCRPI Accountability
1	1.0-2.1	No Positive Movement	0
2	2.2-2.8	Moved Less Than One Band	.5
3	2.9-3.1	Moved One Band	1.0
4	3.2-3.4	Moved More Than One Band	1.5
5	3.5-3.7		
6	3.8-4.0		
7	4.1-4.2		
8	4.3+		
9	NA		

The GaDOE EL Program website publishes an annual list of the number and percentage of EL Students obtaining ELP for each school system in Georgia. The GaDOE Accountability website publishes Closing the Gap targets that include English learners. Titles I and III, Part A are accountable for EL participation on the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment.

## PROGRAM Monitoring

LCSS monitors its Title III, Part A Program to ensure it is sufficiently compliant with Title III, Part A requirements. LCSS monitors its EL language programs with comprehensive and wide-ranging actions to support school-based programs, build capacity of school staff, and ensure programmatic and fiscal requirements are met. LCSS understands the importance of providing the financial resources to enable student success. Both local funds and federal Title III, Part A funds are allocated for critical priorities such as evidence-based professional learning, the purchase of evidence-based instructional resources, and translation or interpretation services for parents of Title III, Part A served ELs only including translation or interpretation services regarding the Title III-specific language program or in support of outreach programs and events that enhance the Title III, Part A supplemental language instruction educational program.

ESOL teachers meet a minimum of six times each school year and are provided with information and updates about Title III, Part A, which is a federal program that supplements. LCSS does not supplant with Title III, Part A funds. These questions are used to ensure that LCSS does not supplant with Title III, Part A funds.

- Are the expenditures or activities required by other federal, state, or local laws?
- Were the expenditures or activities funded in previous years by other programs or non-federal funds?
- Would the expenditures or activities happen in the absence of federal funds?

LCSS does **not** use Title III, Part A funds for anything necessary to run the basic ESOL language program. These funds are not used for anything that is required by any other federal program. In addition, it is clearly communicated that items purchased with funds from the Title III, Part A budget can **only** be used with EL-Y **and** ESOL-Yes students and that purchases made using Title III, Part A funds must be allowable, allocable, reasonable, and necessary. It is also clearly communicated that to use Title III, Part A funds for anything required by another law or by OCR or that is otherwise provided to non-ELs, is supplanting. Title III, Part A funds are used to supplement, not supplant.

Title III, Part A funds **cannot** be used for the following:

- To identify and address all potential EL students in a timely, valid and reliable manner
- To provide EL students with an educationally sound and successful ESOL program (state)
- To provide sufficiently well-prepared and trained staff and support for the ESOL language program
- To ensure that EL students have equal opportunities to meaningfully participate in all curricular and extracurricular activities
- To avoid unnecessary segregation of EL students
- To ensure that EL students who have or are suspected of having a disability under IDEA or Section 504 are identified, located, and evaluated in a timely manner and that the language needs of EL students with disabilities are considered in evaluations and delivery of services
- To meet the needs of EL students whose parents waive their ESOL services
- To monitor and evaluate EL students in ESOL to ensure their progress towards ELP and grade-level content standards including the administration of the annual ACCESS for ELLs 2.0
- To monitor exited EL students to ensure they were not prematurely exited and to remedy academic deficits
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the ESOL program to ensure EL students are acquiring ELP and academic achievement
- To ensure meaningful communication with limited English proficient parents

This information is communicated with ESOL teachers at these meetings and shared with school principals at administrator meetings. In addition, an overview presentation of Title III and ESOL are shared electronically at the beginning of the school year with all teachers and administrators in the LCSS.

The Title III Director regularly monitors data in the SIS System, Infinite Campus, to ensure timelines are met and correct data regarding ESOL eligibility, delivery models, exit data and Title III served are correctly coded. Inventories with items purchased with Title III, Part A funds are checked and updated a minimum of twice a year.

The three parts of Title III are monitored on a regular basis by LCSS.

- Supplemental Language Program - ESOL Classes in Lowndes County Schools NOTE: Title III, Part A supports are “supplemental” to the ESOL curriculum; however, ESOL teachers monitor and support the students who are Title III served with supplemental English language support in extended learning time, during morning Sunshine Clubs, by providing materials for home school enrichment in English and/or home language, as well as other opportunities.
  - Lesson plans of teachers of ELs are approved by school-level administrators.
  - Data from TKES evaluations of teachers of ELs is used to determine best placement and scheduling of ELs in academic classes.
  - Data is collected throughout the year to analyze the English language proficiency growth and academic growth of ELs using programs purchased with Title III, Part A funds.

- The Title III Director monitors the assignment of licenses and usage of programs purchased with Title III, Part A.
- Lexile score data is collected and analyzed throughout the school year to analyze ELs' growth throughout the year.
- Data is collected at end of year to analyze each EL student's progress toward English proficiency using ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 scale scores from year to year.
- Data is collected at end of year to analyze EL students' performance band movement using ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 scale scores from year to year.
- Data is collected at end of year to analyze EL students' academic achievement when comparing GMAS scores from year to year.
- Data from annual CCRPI reports is analyzed.
- Parent Outreach to Parents of English Learners
  - Each school meets with parents of EL-Y students who are also served in ESOL and who receive supplemental English language support to share information with students. The Title III Director informs administrators of the purpose of these meetings and all handouts, agendas, and sign-in sheets are sent to the Title III Director as evidence of task completion.
- Language Focused Professional Learning for Administrators and Teachers of English Learners
  - The Title III Director communicates with principals via email and in administrator meetings to share the importance and necessity for teachers of ELs to participate in professional learning opportunities regarding best strategies for teaching ELs in the mainstream classroom. The Title III Director monitors the LCSS Teachers of ELs Google Classroom, an electronic PLC, to ensure that all teachers of ELs are receiving and participating in learning opportunities each nine weeks. WIDA Focus Bulletins are presented in professional learning communities.

When there are concerns regarding compliance with Title III, Part A, the Title III Director is notified. Technical assistance is provided to remedy any situations of non-compliance.

## **Timeline for Program Monitoring**

### **August**

- ESOL teachers must certify annually to give WIDA Screener.
- Screen new students and update EL folders and all IC/Ellevations information.
- Title III/ESOL Review with all teachers and admins will be sent out by the Federal Programs Director.
- EL Reporting Spreadsheet: Complete ASAP and send to IC Central designee.
- SPED/EL Review with all SPED teachers and admins at your school
- List of all ELs with an IEP, case manager name, tentative IEP date.
- Update/Amend any IEPs with delivery model changes or any IEPs of students who have exited ESOL.
- Attend IEP meetings for students on your caseload (EL Y, EL 1, and EL 2).
- Send home Combined Notification letter for ESOL and Federal Programs Language Services
- Complete TPCs
- **Title III Inventory should be updated. Checkmarks, Signature, Date on hardcopy. Send a copy to the Administrative Assistant for Federal Programs so updates can be made and send a copy to the Title III Director.**
- **Title III Budget**
  - Create and wait for GADOE approval/guidance
- **Title III Supplemental Language Program - Imagine Learning**
  - Establish which EL-Y, ESOL Yes Students will receive Imagine Learning.
  - Set students up in Imagine Learning.
  - Establish a supplemental learning schedule.
  - Begin using this product systematically and with fidelity.
  - Students will complete Beginning of Year Assessment.
- **Title III Supplemental Language Program - Learning A-Z**
  - Establish which EL-Y, ESOL Yes Students will use Learning A-Z for RAZ-Kids and/or for receiving printed books in English and home language to take home as part of Title III Parent Outreach
  - Set students up in RAZ-Kids.
  - Establish supplemental learning schedule
  - Begin using this product systematically and with fidelity.

### **September**

- Screen new students and update EL folders and all IC/Ellevations information.
- Update any IEPs that take place this month and attend IEP meetings.
- Assign 1st 9 weeks monitor forms in Ellevation platform.
- Complete 1st 9 weeks consultative notes of ELs with an IEP when a consultative model is used.
- To ensure a correct FALL FTE count, make sure most current and updated IC reporting information has been sent to IC Central designee and check to see that information is automating to Ellevations.
- **Title III Budget Analysis**

- **Title III Supplemental Language Program - Imagine Learning**
  - ESOL Teacher will monitor student usage weekly
  - Title III Director will monitor system usage twice a month.
- **Title III Supplemental Language Program - Learning A-Z**
  - ESOL Teacher will monitor student usage weekly
  - Title III Director will monitor system usage twice a month.
- **Title III Parent Outreach to Parents of English Learners**
  - Establish Date for First Semester Parent Outreach and acquire admin approval.
  - Suggested Agendas and Sign in Sheets can be found in ESOL Teacher Google Classroom.
  - The ESOL teacher will make copies of books in English and home language from Learning A-Z and send home to Title III served ELs and their families who may benefit from this support.
- **Title III Language Focused Professional Learning for Administrators and Teachers of English Learners**
  - EL DATA, Proficiency Levels, Testing Accommodations, Notes, Etc in Ellevations Platform with all teachers of ELs and admins at your school
  - All teachers of ELs will complete Google Form - LCS Teachers of ELs ASSURANCES in GC
  - All teachers of ELs should join LCS Teachers of ELs Google Classroom Code xukcmdj.
- **The following items are due to the Title III Director by the end of month.**
  - Sample of each language for Combined Parent Notification for ESOL and Federal Programs Language Services
  - Sample of each language for any Parent Waiver Documentation
  - Ellevations Signature Page for Teachers of ELs and Admins
  - SPED/EL Review Signature Page for Teachers of ELs, Administrators and School LEA REP
  - Title 1 Notification Dissemination Sheet

#### October/November/December

- Screen new students and update EL folders and all IC/Ellevations information.
- Add all students screened to SLDS EL Screener Tab and forward names to Testing Director for final approval.
- Update any IEPs that take place this month and attend IEP meetings.
- Participate in RTI Meetings for students on caseload.
- ESOL Teachers must certify annually to give ACCESS test training.
- Complete WIDA AMS worksheets which can be found in Google Classroom.
- Teachers of ELs will write First Semester Note in Ellevation Platform.
- **Title III Budget Analysis**
- **Title III Supplemental Language Program - Imagine Learning**
  - ESOL Teacher will monitor student usage weekly
  - Title III Director will monitor system usage twice a month.
- **Title III Supplemental Language Program - Learning A-Z**
  - ESOL Teacher will monitor student usage weekly
  - Title III Director will monitor system usage twice a month.
- **Title III Parent Outreach to Parents of English Learners**
  - Complete Parent Outreach Activity for first semester.
  - Suggested Agendas and Sign in Sheets can be found in ESOL Teacher Google Classroom.
  - The ESOL teacher will make copies of books in English and home language from Learning A-Z and send home to Title III served ELs and their families who may benefit from this support.
- **Title III Language Focused Professional Learning for Administrators and Teachers of English Learners**
  - Complete 2nd Weeks PL opportunity with Teachers of ELs. This will be in Google Classroom.

#### January/February

- Send home parent notification of ACCESS testing.
- WIDA DRC: Using completed worksheets, update demographics, accommodations, etc.
- ACCESS Test Administrator Training completed by Testing Director.
- Update any IEPs that take place this month and attend IEP meeting.
- Participate in RTI Meetings for students on caseload.
- Begin testing ELs within the GADOE testing window: ACCESS 2.0 or Alternate ACCESS
- **Title III Budget Analysis**
- **Title III Supplemental Language Program - Imagine Learning**
  - Students will complete Mid-Year Assessment prior to ACCESS Testing.
  - ESOL Teacher will monitor student usage weekly

- **Title III Director will monitor system usage twice a month.**
- **Title III Supplemental Language Program - Learning A-Z**
  - **ESOL Teacher will monitor student usage weekly**
  - **Title III Director will monitor system usage twice a month.**
- **Title III Parent Outreach to Parents of English Learners**
  - **Establish Date for Second Semester Parent Outreach and acquire admin approval.**
  - **Suggested Agendas and Sign in Sheets can be found in ESOL Teacher Google Classroom. Copy of agenda and sign-in sheet should be sent to Title III Director.**
  - **The ESOL teacher will make copies of books in English and home language from Learning A-Z and send home to Title III served ELs and their families who may benefit from this support.**
- **Title III Language Focused Professional Learning for Administrators and Teachers of English Learners**
  - **Complete 3rd Weeks PL opportunity with Teachers of ELs. This will be in Google Classroom.**

### **March**

- **First School Day in March: Look in WIDA AMS to make sure that all EL-Y students have completed all 4 domains of the ACCESS Test.**
- **If a student has withdrawn, remove them from all four test sessions in WIDA AMS.**
- **To ensure a correct Spring FTE count, make sure updated and current IC reporting information has been sent to IC Central designee and is automating to Ellevations.**
- **Screen new students and update EL folders and all IC/Ellevations information.**
- **Assign 3rd 9 weeks monitor forms and Make sure all 3rd 9 weeks monitor reports are completed.**
- **Complete 3rd 9 weeks consultative notes of ELs with an IEP when a consultative model is used.**
- **Update any IEPs that take place this month and attend IEP meetings.**
- **Participate in RTI Meetings for students on caseload.**
- **Title III Budget Analysis**
- **Title III Supplemental Language Program - Imagine Learning**
  - **ESOL Teacher will monitor student usage weekly**
  - **Title III Director will monitor system usage twice a month.**
- **Title III Supplemental Language Program - Learning A-Z**
  - **ESOL Teacher will monitor student usage weekly**
  - **Title III Director will monitor system usage twice a month.**
- **Title III Parent Outreach to Parents of English Learners**
  - **Complete Second Semester Parent Outreach**
  - **Suggested Agendas and Sign in Sheets can be found in ESOL Teacher Google Classroom. Copy of agenda and sign-in sheet should be sent to Title III Director.**
  - **The ESOL teacher will make copies of books in English and home language from Learning A-Z and send home to Title III served ELs and their families who may benefit from this support.**
- **Title III Language Focused Professional Learning for Administrators and Teachers of English Learners**
  - **Complete 3rd Weeks PL opportunity with Teachers of ELs. This will be in Google Classroom.**

### **April**

- **Screen new students and update EL folders and all IC/Ellevations information.**
- **Update any IEPs that take place this month and attend IEP meeting.**
- **Participate in RTI Meetings for students on caseload.**
- **Participate in Promotion/Retention Meetings for students on your caseload.**
- **Complete 4th 9 weeks consultative notes of ELs with an IEP when consultative model is used.**
- **Title III Budget Analysis**
- **Title III Supplemental Language Program - Imagine Learning**
  - **Students will complete End of Year Assessment.**
  - **ESOL Teacher will monitor student usage weekly**
  - **Title III Director will monitor system usage twice a month.**
- **Title III Supplemental Language Program - Learning A-Z**
  - **ESOL Teacher will monitor student usage weekly**
  - **Title III Director will monitor system usage twice a month.**
- **Title III Parent Outreach to Parents of English Learners**
  - **Continue reaching out to parents of ELs to enhance or supplement language instruction.**
  - **The ESOL teacher will make copies of books in English and home language from Learning A-Z and send home to Title III served ELs and their families who may benefit from this support.**
- **Title III Language Focused Professional Learning for Administrators and Teachers of English Learners**

- **Title III Professional Learning Needs Assessment Completed by Teachers of ELs**

### **May**

- Assign 3rd 9 weeks monitor forms and make sure all are completed by EOY.
- Add all students screened to SLDS EL Screener Tab and forward names to Testing Director for final approval.
- Screen new students and update EL folders and all IC/Ellevations information.
- Update any IEPs that take place this month and attend IEP meeting.
- EOY Tasks
- Have Reclassification Meetings for any student who scored a 4.3-4.9 on the ACCESS Test.
- **Title III Inventory should be updated. Checkmarks, Signature, Date on hardcopy. Send a copy to the Administrative Assistant for Federal Programs so updates can be made and send a copy to the Title III Director.**
- **Title III Budget Analysis**
- **Title III Supplemental Language Program - Imagine Learning**
  - Students will complete the End of Year Assessment.
  - ESOL Teacher will monitor student usage weekly
  - Title III Director will monitor system usage twice a month.
- **Title III Supplemental Language Program - Learning A-Z**
  - ESOL Teacher will monitor student usage weekly
  - Title III Director will monitor system usage twice a month.
- **Title III Parent Outreach to Parents of English Learners**
  - The ESOL teacher will make copies of books in English and home language from Learning A-Z and send home to Title III served ELs and their families who may benefit from this support.
  - Send home ACCESS Test letters in English and home language.
  - Send home ACCESS Student Score Reports in English and home language.
  - The WIDA GUIDE to ACCESS Scores for Parents is recommended as a resource to use at this time.
  - Send home Notification of Exit if applicable in English and home language.
  - The Title III Director will conduct a qualitative survey/assessment of the LCSS Title III Parent and Family Engagement Activities to analyze attendance and evaluate the effectiveness of what was done and to make improvements for the upcoming school year.
- **Title III Language Focused Professional Learning for Administrators and Teachers of English Learners**
  - Title III Professional Learning Needs Assessment Completed by Teachers of ELs
  - Notify Teachers of ELs and Admins of ACCESS Test Scores

### **June**

- **Identify High-Risk Schools based on Number of ELs and ACCESS and GMAS Data**
- **Title III Budget Analysis**
- **Title III Supplemental Language Program - Imagine Learning**
  - Analyze usage and growth and compare to ACCESS 2.0 Scale Scores and Performance Band Movement
- **Title III Supplemental Language Program - Learning A-Z**
  - Analyze usage and growth and compare to ACCESS 2.0 Scale Scores and Performance Band Movement
- **Title III Parent Outreach to Parents of English Learners**
  - Involve EL Parents in development of LCSS CLIP
- **Title III Language Focused Professional Learning for Administrators and Teachers of English Learners**
  - Determine PL Needs for upcoming school year
  - Determine who is interested in attending conferences and redelivering information.

# INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

**WIDA Consortium webpage:**

<https://wida.wisc.edu/>

for information about the Consortium, the WIDA English Language Proficiency Standards, Performance Definitions, Model Performance Indicators, Can Do Descriptors, screening instruments and annual assessment of proficiency

**GaDOE Title III webpage:**

<https://www.gadoe.org/School-Improvement/Federal-Programs/Pages/Title-III.aspx>

**GaDOE ESOL webpage:**

[http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Pages/English-to-Speakers-of-Other-Languages-\(ESOL\)-and-Title-III.aspx](http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Pages/English-to-Speakers-of-Other-Languages-(ESOL)-and-Title-III.aspx)

**GaDOE English Learners and Students with Disabilities webpage:**

<https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/English-Learners---Students-with-Disabilities.aspx>

**GaDOE Assessment webpage:**

<http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Assessment/Pages/default.aspx>

for information about testing accommodations and ACCESS for ELLs 2.0

**GaDOE Curriculum webpage:**

<http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Curriculum-and-Instruction/Pages/default.aspx>

for information about Graduation Requirements and Response to Intervention

**Georgia Professional Standards Commission:**

<https://www.gapsc.com/>

for information about teacher certification



## Glossary of Frequently Used Acronyms

<b>EL</b>	<b>English Learner (term that refers to the student)</b>
<b>ELD</b>	<b>English Language Development</b>
<b>ELL</b>	<b>English Language Learner (older term)</b>
<b>EL/TPC</b>	<b>EL Test Participation Committee (testing accommodations document)</b>
<b>ELP</b>	<b>English Language Proficiency</b>
<b>ELRRC</b>	<b>English Learner Reclassification Review Committee</b>
<b>ESOL</b>	<b>English for Speakers of Other Languages (class that provides language support)</b>
<b>ESSA</b>	<b>Every Student Succeeds Act</b>
<b>GaDOE</b>	<b>Georgia Department of Education</b>
<b>GMAS</b>	<b>Georgia Milestones Assessment System</b>
<b>HLS</b>	<b>Home Language Survey</b>
<b>IEP</b>	<b>Individualized Education Plan</b>
<b>LEA</b>	<b>Local Education Agency</b>
<b>LEP</b>	<b>Limited English Proficiency (older term)</b>
<b>NOM</b>	<b>National Origin Minority</b>
<b>PHLOTE</b>	<b>Primary Home Language Other Than English</b>
<b>RTI</b>	<b>Response to Intervention</b>
<b>SST</b>	<b>Student Support Team</b>
<b>WIDA</b>	<b>World-class Instructional Design and Assessment</b>

# Appendix A: LCSS Innovative Model Approved by GADOE

## LOWNDES COUNTY SCHOOLS 2017 – 2018 Updated Innovative Classroom ESOL Delivery Model

Lowndes County School System's projected enrollment for the 2017 – 2018 school year is 10,450. That total includes students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 at 11 traditional schools, one alternative school program, and one GNETS facility. Lowndes County Schools has 11 ESOL certified or ESOL endorsed teachers. Eight of the positions are based in the elementary schools and three of those positions are based in the secondary schools. One secondary school position is an itinerant position. At the end of the 2016-2017 school year, those 11 ESOL positions serve approximately 250 active ELs and 150 monitored ELs. In our district, we currently have 24 additional teachers who hold ESOL certification or the ESOL endorsement. Through the use of this proposed delivery model, we will ensure that there is a proportional balance of native English speakers and non-native English speakers.

### Description:

We are proposing an innovative model in which we would schedule individual English Learners (ELs) in kindergarten through grade 12 in the regular education classroom with a teacher who holds an ESOL certificate or the ESOL endorsement to receive the student's ESOL instruction. In the case of the special education classroom, this innovative delivery model will take place during a time separate and apart from when the student would receive his/her special education services.

Since each school has a primary ESOL teacher, the primary ESOL teacher will work with the regular education and/or special education teacher to ensure that WIDA-based language support services are provided to the ESOL students.

The use of this innovative delivery model would be used to support the student's language acquisition while maximizing the time in the regular education setting with the student's academic peers. The ESOL teacher, the classroom teacher, the building principal, and the Title III Director, after careful consideration of the student's level of proficiency, would determine if this innovative delivery model is best suitable for the student. The proposed delivery model would not be used for students who have a low English proficiency level. Those students would be placed with an ESOL teacher for direct ESOL instruction. Likewise, students who are served through this proposed delivery model will be monitored. The students not making progress will be rescheduled, if possible, to receive direct ESOL instruction.

### Goals and Objectives:

- To increase language development as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 or the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs.
- To increase content performance on the state-mandated assessments (e.g., Georgia Milestone Assessment System and Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills).

### Rationale:

Each Lowndes County elementary school has at least one full-time primary ESOL teacher. Each Lowndes County middle school and the high school have a primary ESOL teacher who may be either itinerant or on an extended-day contract to serve the ESOL population. Staff scheduling at some of the schools has not provided the optimum time for ELs services. The ELs could miss vital content instruction if they were removed from content classes or other specialized intervention services, based on the current availability of the primary ESOL teaching staff. Lowndes County Schools make every effort to serve ELs in the least restrictive environment, and has demonstrated success over the last few years as demonstrated by meeting the federal AMAO targets.

### Professional Learning:

Targeted professional learning for the general education teacher and all ESOL teachers will include strategies to integrate the WIDA standards with the appropriate content standards and research-based instructional strategies to ensure that the academic content is comprehensible to ELs. The use of the WIDA English language proficiency standards will allow teachers to differentiate instruction for ELs according to their level of proficiency in English. The Can Do Descriptors will help teachers design activities that are pedagogically appropriate to the students' English language proficiency levels.

All ESOL certified or ESOL endorsed teachers impacted by this innovative delivery model will participate in a district initiated Professional Learning Activity. Following the professional learning activity, the school's primary ESOL teacher will consult with the ESOL certified or ESOL endorsed teacher as needed to share best practices for instruction of ELs. Consultative notes will be documented in an electronic platform shared by the teachers (i.e. Ellevations).

Curriculum and Assessment:

The Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) and the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) provides the foundation for the development of communication skills in listening, speaking, writing, and reading in English. Supplemental materials will be used to support the development of increased language acquisition skills within the content areas.

English Learners will participate in all content benchmark, formative, and summative assessments. The ELs will participate in all RTI universal screeners and state-mandated assessments.

Responsibilities:**Classroom Teacher**

- Incorporate WIDA Standards with appropriate adaptations at the ELs' proficiency level,
- Incorporate language objectives in lesson/unit plans,
- Monitor progress of ELs and provide feedback to the building ESOL Teacher, and
- Participate in regular professional learning as required by the school system
- Using Ellevations and In Class, the ESOL certified or ESOL endorsed classroom teacher will collaborate on WIDA Standards and best practices for teaching ELs

**Building ESOL Teacher**

- Using Ellevations and In Class, the ESOL certified or ESOL endorsed classroom teacher will collaborate on WIDA Standards and best practices for teaching ELs,
- Complete required Title III documentation for ELs,
- Reviews assessments of ELs and regularly discuss student growth and needs,
- Monitor progress and initiate interventions with RTI as needed,
- Administer ACCESS tests, and
- Administer W-APT tests and WIDA screener tests

**Building Principal**

- Ensure that ELs are scheduled to receive at least one segment of ESOL daily, or the weekly equivalent, provided either by an ESOL-endorsed classroom teacher or by the school's primary ESOL teacher,
- Ensure that the WIDA Standards are incorporated and aligned with the state mandated standards,
- Provide opportunities for the school's primary ESOL teacher and the classroom teacher time to collaborate
- Ensure that the school communicates with parents in a language the parents can understand.

**Title III Director**

- Provide support and professional learning for all teachers of ELs,
- Assist with locating research-based materials to use with ELs as needed,
- Oversee the district ACCESS testing,
- Meet with building administrators, ESOL teachers, and other staff as needed to create ELs' schedules,
- Collect documentation for annual Title III self-assessment reports, and
- Manage and allocate Title III funds.

FTE Funding:

This model will be used to generate FTE for the participating students. Students in kindergarten through grade 3 will earn only one segment of ESOL funding per day (225 minutes per week or 45 minutes per day). Students in grade 4 through grade 8 may earn up to two segments of ESOL funding per day (250 minutes per week or 50 minutes per day). In some cases, this innovative delivery model would be the only ESOL instruction the student receives. In other cases, (grades 4 through grade 8), this innovative model could provide an additional segment of ESOL funding per day.

All other ELs served, using one of the Georgia Department of Education's ESOL Approved Delivery Models of Instruction, will receive the appropriate ESOL funding segments based on the delivery model.

Evaluation:

The effectiveness of this innovative delivery model will consist of multiple measures of student progress to include system-based student assessments (e.g., benchmarks, formative, and summative) and state-mandated student assessments (e.g., the ACCESS for ELs 2.0, the Alternate ACCESS for ELs, the Georgia Milestone Assessment System and the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills).

## Appendix B: LCSS Consultative Model Approved by GADOE

The Lowndes County School System (LCSS) consists of 11 different schools and covers over 500 square miles. This school system employs 11 ESOL certified or ESOL endorsed teachers. Eight of the positions are based in the elementary schools and three of those positions are based in the secondary schools. One secondary school position is an itinerant position. At the end of the 2015-2016 school year, those 11 ESOL positions served approximately 224 active English Learners (ELs) and 74 monitored English Learners.

In an effort to provide English Learners in the LCSS with the best opportunity to be academically successful, we consistently evaluate the needs of each individual student. On some occasions, there are English Learners who may qualify for additional support through other programs including but not limited to Special Educational Services. The LCSS makes every effort to provide ESOL support and Special Education support dually. We recognize that in some cases, the academic needs for some ELs may best be met through Special Education services via the Individualized Learning Plan (IEP). Through the use of the ESOL consultative model, we will ensure that we are addressing the needs of all EL students through the most effective and efficient means.

### Description:

The LCSS will implement a consultative model in which we will serve individual English Learners (ELs) in kindergarten through grade 12 who have an active IEP. The instructional delivery model will only be used with EL students with an IEP and should only be considered when all other alternatives to utilize direct ESOL instruction through the other approved models have been exhausted.

Depending on the extent of the student's disability, it is appropriate for the general education teacher, ESOL teacher, and the special education teacher to work collaboratively in order to meet the needs of the student. The fact that an EL has a disability does not replace the need for language assistance. The plan for providing language assistance and support should be delineated in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). In most instances English Learners should be dually served through both programs. In the event that another means of support will be more beneficial to the student, the Special Education team and the ESOL specialist should work together to determine the most effective plan and to provide needed support for the implementation of such plan.

Since each school has a primary ESOL teacher, the primary ESOL teacher will consult with the regular education and/or special education teacher to ensure that WIDA-based language support services are provided to the EL and to monitor the student's progress. The frequency of this consultation may differ on a case-by-case basis but will occur a minimum of once each 4.5 week period or more regularly as prescribed within the terms agreed upon and documented by the teacher and ESOL provider.

The use of this consultative model will be used to support the student's language acquisition while maximizing the student's instructional learning time based on the individual EL's English language proficiency level. The ESOL teacher, the classroom teacher, the building principal, the Special Education Director/coordinator, the Special Education teacher, and the Title III Director may be involved in deciding if this consultative model is best suited for the student.

Likewise, students who are served through this consultative model will be monitored. The students not making progress will be provided additional opportunities for language acquisition through innovative instructional strategies. If the student continues to regress, the student may be rescheduled, if possible, to receive ESOL instruction through a different state approved model pending amendment of the student's IEP.

### Goals and Objectives:

- To increase language development as measured by the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 or the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs
- To increase content performance on the state-mandated assessments (e.g., Georgia Milestone Assessment System and Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills)

### Rationale:

Each Lowndes County elementary school has at least one full-time primary ESOL teacher. Each Lowndes County middle school and the high school have a primary ESOL teacher who may be either itinerant or on an extended-day contract to serve the EL population. Staff scheduling at some of the schools has not provided the optimum time for ELs who are dually served through SPED services to be provided ESOL services through the current available approved state models. The ELs could miss vital content instruction if they were removed from content classes or other specialized intervention services, based on the current availability of the primary ESOL teaching staff. The Lowndes County School System makes every effort to serve ELs in the least restrictive environment and has demonstrated success over the last few years as demonstrated by meeting the federal AMAO targets.

Curriculum and Assessment:

The WIDA English Language Development Standards, the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE), and the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) provide the foundation for the development of communication skills in listening, speaking, writing, and reading in English. Supplemental materials will be used to support the development of increased language acquisition skills within the content areas.

English Learners will participate in all content benchmark, formative, and summative assessments. The ELs who also have an IEP will participate in progress monitoring of goals stated in IEP.

All ELs will participate in state-mandated assessments.

English Learners will participate in the ACCESS Test for English Language Proficiency which is a state mandated assessment for all ELs.

Responsibilities:**Classroom/SPED Teacher**

- Incorporate WIDA Standards with appropriate adaptations at the ELs' proficiency level
- Incorporate language objectives in instructional plans
- Monitor progress of ELs and provide feedback to the building ESOL Teacher
- Adhere to the provisions, supports, and/or accommodations prescribed in the IEP and TPC/ELL
- Participate in regular professional learning with the ESOL Teacher when necessary

**Building ESOL Teacher**

- Provide professional learning with the classroom teacher including WIDA Standards and best practices for teaching ELs
- Complete required Title III documentation for ELs
- Reviews assessments of ELs and regularly discuss student growth and needs with the classroom teacher
- Monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the consultative model for the student
- Administer ACCESS tests or Alternate ACCESS tests
- Administer W-APT tests

**Building Principal**

- Ensure that ELs IEPs are amended and are re-scheduled (if possible and reasonable) to receive at least one segment of ESOL daily, or the weekly equivalent, provided by the school's primary ESOL teacher if the consultative model is ineffective in meeting the student's needs
- Ensure that the WIDA Standards are implemented in classroom teacher's lesson plans
- Provide additional time for the school's primary ESOL teacher and the classroom teacher to collaborate for purposes of monitoring the EL
- Ensure that the school communicates with parents in a language the parents can understand

**Title III Director**

- Provide support and professional learning for all teachers of ELs
- Assist with locating research-based materials to use with ELs as needed
- Oversee the district ACCESS testing
- Meet with building administrators, ESOL teachers, and other staff as needed to create ELs' schedules
- Collect documentation for annual Title III self-assessment reports
- Manage and allocate Title III funds

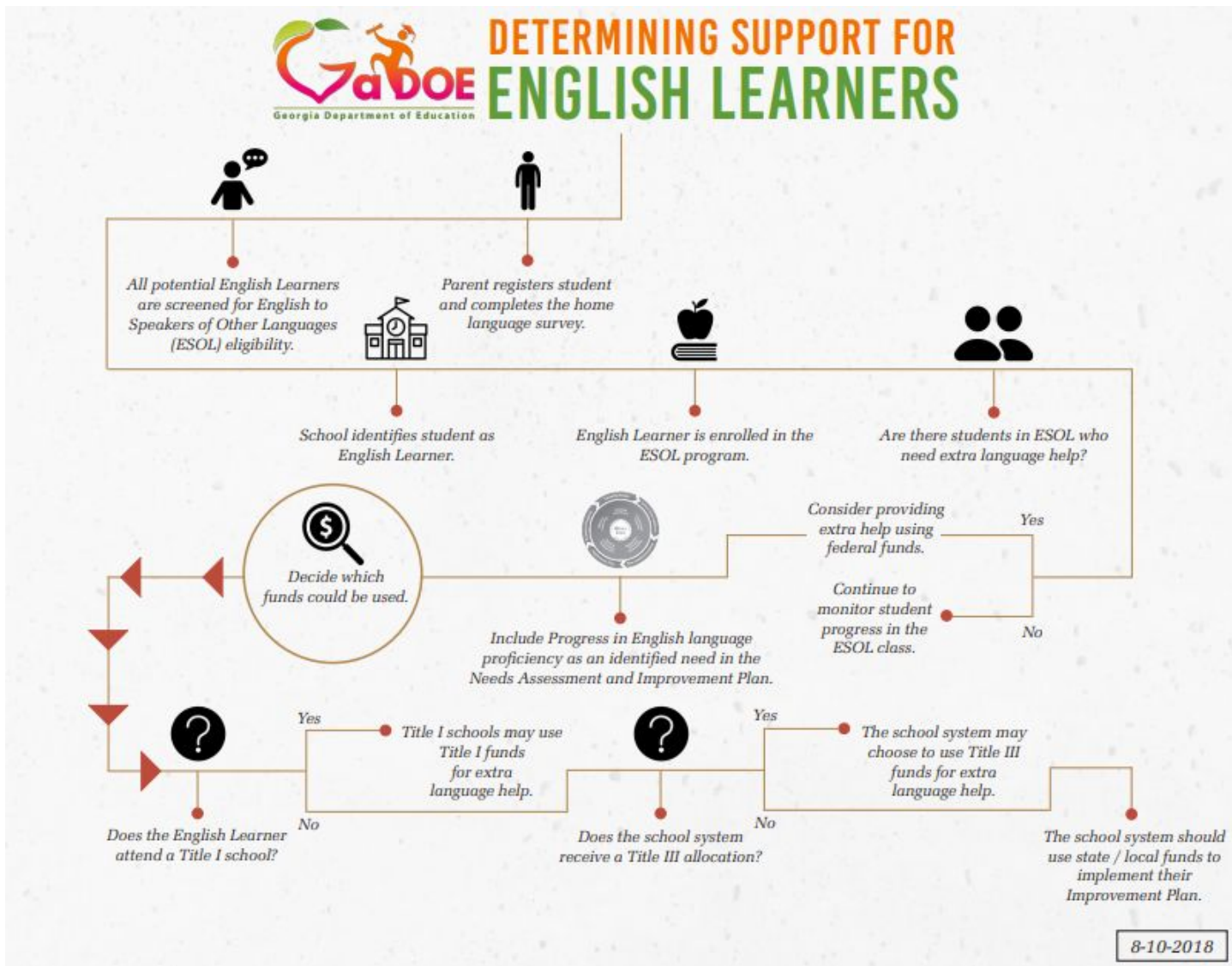
FTE Funding:

This model will not generate FTE funds.

Evaluation:

The effectiveness of this consultative model will consist of multiple measures of student progress to include system-based student assessments (e.g., benchmarks, formative, and summative) and state-mandated student assessments (e.g., the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0, the Alternate ACCESS for ELs, the Georgia Milestone Assessment System and the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills).

# Appendix C: Determining Support for English Learners



## **Appendix D: Guidance on Comparison of Language Differences vs. Learning Differences**

### Comparison of Language Differences Versus Disabilities

Learning Behavior Manifested	Indicators of a Language Difference due to 2 <sup>nd</sup> Language Acquisition	Indicators of a Possible Learning Disability
<b>Oral Comprehension/Listening</b>		
1. Student does not respond to verbal directions	1. Student lacks understanding of vocabulary in English but is demonstrates understanding in L1	1. Student consistently demonstrates confusion when given verbal directions in L1 and L2; may be due to processing deficit or low cognition
2. Student needs frequent repetition of oral directions and input	2. Student is able to understand verbal directions in L1 but not L2	2. Student often forgets directions or needs further explanation in L1 and L2 (home & School); may be due to an auditory memory difficulty or low cognition
3. Student delays responses to questions	3. Student may be translating question in mind before responding in L2; gradual improvement seen over time	3. Student consistently takes a longer time period to respond in L1 & L2 and it does not change over time; may be due to a processing speed deficit
<b>Speaking / Oral Fluency</b>		
1. Student lacks verbal fluency (pauses, hesitates, omits words)	1. Student lacks vocabulary, sentence structure, and/or self-confidence	1. Speech is incomprehensible in L1 and L2; may be due to hearing or speech impairment
2. Student is unable to orally retell a story	2. Student does not comprehend story due to a lack of understanding and background knowledge in English	2. Student has difficulty retelling a story or event in L1 and L2; may have memory or sequencing deficits
3. Does not orally respond to questions or does not speak much	3. Lacks expressive language skills in English; it may the silent period in 2nd language acquisition	3. Student speaks little in L1 or L2; student may have a hearing impairment or processing deficit
<b>Phonemic Awareness/Reading</b>		
1. Student does not remember letters sounds from one day to the next	1. Student will initially demonstrate difficulty remembering letter sounds in L2 since they differ from the letter sounds in L1, but with repeated practice over time will make progress	1. Student doesn't remember letters sounds after initial and follow-up instruction (even if they are common between L1/L2); may be due to due a visual/auditory memory or low cognition
2. Student is unable to blend letter sounds in order to decode words in reading	2. The letter sound errors may related to L1 (for example, L1 may not have long and short vowel sounds); with direct instruction, student will make progress over time	3. Student makes letter substitutions when decoding not related to L1; student cannot remember vowel sounds; student may be able to decode sounds in isolation, but is unable to blend the sounds to decode whole word; may be due to a processing or memory deficit

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### Comparison of Language Differences Versus Disabilities

3. Student is unable to decode words correctly	3. Sound not in L1, so unable to pronounce word once decoded	3. Student consistently confuses letters/words that look alike; makes letter reversals, substitutions, etc. that are not related to L1; may be processing or memory deficit
<b>Reading Comprehension &amp; Vocabulary</b>		
1. Student does not understand passage read, although may be able to read w/ fluency and accuracy	1. Lacks understanding and background knowledge of topic in L2; is unable to use contextual clues to assist with meaning; improvement seen over time as L2 proficiency increases	1. Student doesn't remember or comprehend what was read in L1 or L2 (only applicable if student has received instruction in L1); this does not improve over time; this may be due to a memory or processing deficit
2. Does not understand key words/phrases; poor comprehension	2. Lacks understanding of vocabulary and meaning in English	2. The student's difficulty with comprehension and vocabulary is seen in L1 and L2
<b>Writing</b>		
1. Errors made with punctuation/capitalization	1. The error patterns seen are consistent with the punctuation and capitalization rules for L1; student's work tends to improve with appropriate instruction in English	1. Student consistently makes capitalization and punctuation errors even after instruction or is inconsistent; this may be due to deficits in organization, memory or processing
<b>Handwriting</b>		
1. Student is unable to copy words correctly	1. Lack of experience with writing the English alphabet	1. Student demonstrates difficulty copying visual material to include shapes, letters, etc. This may be due to a visual/motor or visual memory deficit
2. Student has difficulty writing grammatically correct sentences	2. Student's syntax is reflective of writing patterns in L1; typical error patterns seen in 2 <sup>nd</sup> language learners (verb tense, use of adverbs or adjectives); improves over time	2. The student makes more random errors such as words omissions, missing punctuation; grammar errors are not correct in L1 or L2; this may be due to a processing or memory deficit
3. Student has difficulty generating a paragraph or writing essays but is able to express his or her ideas orally	3. Student is not yet proficient in writing English even though they may have developed verbal skills; student makes progress over time and error patterns are similar to other 2 <sup>nd</sup> language learners	3. The student seems to have difficulty paying attention or remembering previously learned information; the student may seem to have motor difficulties and avoids writing; student may have attention or memory deficits
<b>Spelling</b>		
1. Student misspells words	1. Student will "borrow" sounds from L1; progress seen over time as L2 proficiency increases	1. Student makes errors such as writing the correct beginning sound of words and then random

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### Comparison of Language Differences Versus Disabilities

		letters or correct beginning or ending sounds; may be due to a visual memory or processing deficit
2. Student spells words incorrectly; letters are sequenced incorrectly	2. Writing of words is reflective of English fluency level or cultural thought patterns; words may align to letter sounds or patterns of L1 (sight words may be spelled phonetically based on L1)	2. The student makes letter sequencing errors such as letter reversals that are not consistent with L1 spelling patterns; may be due to a processing deficit
<b>Mathematics</b>		
1. Student manifests difficulty learning math facts and/or math operations	1. Student lacks comprehension of oral instruction in English; student shows marked improvement with visual input or instructions in L1	1. Student has difficulty memorizing math facts from one day to the next and requires manipulatives or devices to complete math problems; may have visual memory or processing deficits
2. Student has difficulty completing multiple-step math computations	2. Student lacks comprehension of oral instruction in English; student shows marked improvement with visual input or instructions in L1	2. Student forgets the steps required to complete problems from one day to the next even with visual input; student reverses or forgets steps; may be due to a processing or memory deficit
3. Student is unable to complete word problems	3. Student does not understand mathematical terms in L2 due to English reading proficiency; student shows marked improvement in L1 or with visuals.	3. Student does not understand how to process the problem or identify key terms in L1 or L2; may be a processing deficit/reading disability
<b>Behavior</b>		
1. Student appears inattentive and/or easily distracted	1. Student does not understand instructions in English due to level of proficiency	1. Student is inattentive across environments even when language is comprehensible; may have attention deficits
2. Student appears unmotivated and/or angry; may manifest internalizing or externalizing behavior	2. Student does not understand instruction due to limited English and does not feel successful; student has anger or low self esteem related to 2 <sup>nd</sup> language acquisition	2. Student does not understand instruction in L1 or L2 and across contexts; may be frustrated due to a possible learning disability
3. Student does not turn in homework	3. Student may not understand directions or how to complete the homework due to lack of English proficiency; student may not have access to homework support at home	3. Student seems unable to complete homework consistently even when offered time and assistance with homework during school; this may be due to a memory or processing deficit

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## **LINKS FOR RELEVANT INFORMATION**

*(Click on the titles/links below or copy/paste the address provided into your browser)*

### **FRAUD-**

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fraud>

<https://www.grants.gov/learn-grants/grant-fraud.html>

**LOWNDES COUNTY PERSONNEL HANDBOOK**

**LOWNDES COUNTY PERSONNEL ACCEPTABLE USE POLICY (TECHNOLOGY)**

**LOWNDES COUNTY SCHOOLS FINANCE INFORMATION**

**LOWNDES COUNTY SCHOOLS HUMAN RESOURCES- PERSONNEL RECORDS PROCEDURES**

**LOWNDES COUNTY SCHOOLS FACILITIES USE AGREEMENT**

**STAFF COMPLAINTS & GRIEVANCES (BOARD POLICY)**

**eBOARD FOR LOWNDES COUNTY**

**GEORGIA PROCUREMENT REGISTRY**

# **LOWNDES COUNTY SCHOOLS SPECIAL EDUCATION MANUAL**

Last update: 7-23-2020

**Central Office Personnel**

Mr. Wes Taylor  
Superintendent

\*\*\*\*\*

Mr. Rodney Green  
Assistant Superintendent

\*\*\*\*\*

Mr. Ken Overman  
Assistant Superintendent

\*\*\*\*\*

Mindell Downing  
Director of Special Education

Tina Barrett  
Administrative Assistant, Special Education

**Assistant Principals Assigned to  
Special Education**

Clyattville Elementary School	Maggie Moody
Dewar Elementary School	Melanie Johnson
Hahira Elementary School	Daniele Magill
Hahira Middle School	Matt Faircloth
Lake Park Elementary School	Jessica Stanley
Lowndes High School	Dan Chappuis
Lowndes Middle School	Amanda Hires
Moulton-Branch Elementary School	Sol Summerlin
Pine Grove Elementary School	Becky Wetherington
Pine Grove Middle School	Janet Hendley
Westside Elementary School	Tim Hatton

**Special Education Coordinators**

Sandra Barnes  
Kalen Grant  
Karen Dawkins  
Lynn Lewis  
Cheryl Beall (Behavior)  
Josie Brooks (Co-Teaching)

**School Social Worker Department**

Sandra Wilcher - Director of Student Support Services  
Sharon Bradshaw  
Natalie Howell  
Tan Jones  
Penny Turner  
Sherri Willis

**School Psychologists**

Amy Browne  
Caryn Chitty (PT)  
Tracy Crutchfield  
Kim Hatton

Lowndes County Schools offers a free appropriate public education to all children who reside within school system boundaries including those identified with a disability. To fulfill this mission special education programs are provided to meet the individual needs of disabled students. No student will be evaluated without the informed consent of his/her parent or guardian. All students who are evaluated for possible special education services shall be the subject of review by the eligibility team at their school. If the determination is made that the student has a disability according to Georgia Rules and Regulations and needs special education services, an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) will be developed. All students who are recommended by the placement committee to be placed in a special education program shall have signed and informed parental consent for services on file within the school system before services can occur.

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

### **Confidential Information**

The information about a child being a child with a disability eligible under the IDEA, his or her special education and related services and other related information is confidential and is not released to others within the system unless they have a legitimate need to know nor is it released to other agencies or groups except under limited circumstances. Regarding when confidential information is released, parents have the following rights:

1. Restrict third party access to their child's records by withholding consent to disclose records except in certain limited circumstances described in the Family Education Right to Privacy Act (FERPA);
2. Restrict the release of their child's personally identifiable information to officials of participating agencies that provide or pay for transition services to their child;
3. Restrict the release of their child's personally identifiable information to a private school that is not located in the LEA of their residence;
4. To be notified and receive copies before information in their child's record is destroyed;
5. To be told to whom the information has been disclosed; and
6. To review and receive copies of all information sent to another agency when their child seeks or is eligible to enroll.

Confidentiality is one of the rights afforded to parents. The confidentiality of educational records is a basic right shared by all students in public schools and their parents. These fundamental rights are described in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) of 1974, which applies to all students, not just those with disabilities. All LEA personnel (including contracted employees) are governed by confidentiality requirements and should receive training and information regarding the law. Written and dated parental consent must be obtained before personally identifiable information can be disclosed to unauthorized individuals, organizations, or agencies (unless otherwise authorized to do so under FERPA). Personally identifiable information includes the following: • the name of the student, the student's parent, or other family member; • the student's address; • any personal identifier such as the student's social security number or student number; and • any personal characteristics or other information that would make it possible to identify the student. FERPA allows parents to inspect and review all educational records of their child maintained by an educational agency that receives federal funds. This includes all public schools. IDEA also specifies that each LEA must permit parents to inspect and review any education records that are collected, maintained, or used by the LEA under Part B of the IDEA. The LEA must comply with a request to inspect records without unnecessary delay and before any meeting regarding an IEP, a disciplinary hearing, due process hearing, or a resolution meeting. In no case should the LEA delay more than 45 days after the request has been made.

In Lowndes County, school personnel directly in contact with the student with a disability have access to the student's special education records. This includes the special education teacher, the general education teacher, assistant principal, principal, psychologist, and special education director or designee. Prior to a person accessing the student's special education records, the person must sign the access sheet indicating the date of access, their name and title, and the purpose of accessing the record. Before information is shared with a third party, except in the case of another public school with a need to know, the parent/guardian must sign an authorization to release information providing Lowndes County Schools permission to share the student's information.

At meetings, or as soon as possible after meetings, parents/guardians are given copies of Individualized Education Plans, Eligibilities, Meeting Minutes, if taken, and parental rights. Parents/guardians may contact the Special Education Department at the Central Office to obtain copies of any documents relating to their student, except testing protocols. Under normal circumstances, the records are provided to the parent/guardian

within one week of the request. No fee is typically charged for the copying of records.

At each Initial Meeting and Annual Review Meeting, parents/guardians are asked to verify their current contact information. If changes are needed, the school contacts Central Registration with the needed changes. When parents/guardians believe that information contained in the education records collected, maintained, or used is inaccurate or misleading or violates the privacy or other rights of the student, they may request that Lowndes County School amend the information. The amendment will be made within a reasonable amount of time upon receipt of the request. If Lowndes County Schools decides to refuse to amend the information in accordance with the request, parents will be informed of the refusal and their rights to a hearing.

Education records are stored at the school where the student is attending. Copies of the records are also stored at the Central Office. Once a student is no longer eligible for services in Lowndes County Schools because of being removed from special education or graduating, the records are stored at the Central Office until certain portions can be scanned by CPRESA. All records prior to 1982 have been destroyed. Prior to the destruction, a notice of destruction is placed in the local newspaper to provide parents/guardians or students the opportunity to obtain a copy of their education records. Records from 1982 forward have been scanned through Coastal Plains RESA. After the district has received access from RESA, all hard copies of records are shredded. The electronic copies are kept at the Central Office in the Special Education Department.

Testing protocols may be shredded after 5 years, the eligibility documents that record the information from the protocol are retained until the scanning process (above) occurs.

Records preparation for scanning: Records of students who have graduated from Lowndes High are removed from their accordion file and dividers are removed. The LHS case manager pulls the contents and places certain items on the top of the file: Graduation meeting minutes, most recent IEP, most recent eligibility, most recent psych report and T4D cover sheet/work samples. The School Folder Cover Form (on bright colored paper) is placed on top of the entire contents and a large rubber band is used to secure the documents. The file is delivered to the central office.

Staff at the Central office then copy the Graduation meeting minutes and most recent IEP, eligibility, and psych report, place a CPRESA cover sheet on top and send to CPRESA for scanning. The rest of the school file is placed with the Central Office file in the warehouse file cabinets by DOB. Testing protocols more than 5 years old may be shredded. Once students reach the age of 27, the entire file may be shredded. Notice of records destruction is placed in the local newspaper. The scanned and digitally maintained portions remain accessible.

Records of students who have withdrawn from the system are sent to CO to be joined to their “active” CO file and placed in the inactive files. Testing protocols more than 5 years old may be shredded.

### **Access Rights and required procedures**

Lowndes County Schools permits parents to inspect and review any education records relating to their children that are collected, maintained, or used by the LEA. Lowndes County Schools complies with a request without unnecessary delay and before any meeting regarding an IEP, any due process hearing, or resolution session, and in no case, more than 45 days after the request has been made. The rights of parents regarding education records are transferred to the adult student at age 18.

The right to inspect and review all education records includes: 1. The right to a response from the LEA to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of the records; 2. The right to request that the LEA provide copies of the records containing the information if failure to provide those copies would effectively prevent the parents from exercising the right to inspect and review the records; and 3. The right to have a representative of the parents inspect and review the records.

Lowndes County Schools presumes that the parents have the authority to inspect and review all records relating to their child unless the LEA has been advised that the parents do not have the authority under applicable State law governing such matters as guardianship, separation, and divorce. LCS records parties obtaining access. LCS keeps a record of parties obtaining access to education records collected or maintained (except access by the parents and authorized employees of the LEA ), including the name of the party, the date access was given, and the purpose for which the party is authorized to review or use the records. If any education record includes information on more than one student, the parent(s) of those students have the right to inspect and review only the data relating to their child or be informed of that specific information. Upon request, the LEA will provide the parents with a list of the types and locations of education records collected, maintained, or used by the LEA. Lowndes County Schools may charge a fee for copies of records that are made for parents under this Rule if the fee does not effectively prevent the parents from exercising their right to inspect and review those records. Lowndes County Schools will not charge a fee to search for and retrieve information.

### **Amendment of Records at Parent's Request**

Parents who believe that information contained in the education records collected, maintained, or used is inaccurate or misleading or violates the privacy or other rights of the student may request that Lowndes County Schools amend the information. Lowndes County Schools will decide whether to amend the information in accordance with the request within a reasonable period of time of receipt of the request. If LCS decides to refuse to amend the information in accordance with the request, it must inform the parents of the refusal and advise the parents of the right to a hearing provided under this Rule. Lowndes County Schools will, on request, provide an opportunity for a hearing to challenge information in education records to ensure that it is not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the child. The hearing held will be conducted according to the procedures under FERPA and its regulations.

### **Results of Hearing**

If, as a result of the hearing, Lowndes County Schools decides that the information is inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the child, it will amend the information accordingly and so inform the parents in writing. If, as a result of the hearing, LCS decides the information is accurate and not misleading or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the student, it must inform the parents of their right to place in the records it maintains on the child, a statement commenting on the information and setting forth the reasons for disagreeing with the decision of the LEA. Any explanation placed in the records of the student will be maintained by LCS as part of the records of the child as long as the record or contested portion thereof is maintained by LCS. If the records of the child, or the contested portion thereof, are disclosed by LCS to any party, the explanation must also be disclosed to the party.

### **Student Support Team**

The Student Support Team (SST) is an interdisciplinary group that uses a systematic process to address learning and/or behavior problems of students in a school. Each school in Lowndes County has a minimum of one Student Support Team. The SST consists of a referring teacher and at least of two (2) of the following participants: principal, general education teacher, counselor, lead teacher, school psychologist, subject area specialist, ESOL teacher, special education teacher, social worker, central office personnel, 504 coordinator or other appropriate personnel. Parents/guardians are also invited, and encouraged, to participate in all meetings of their child's SST and in the development of interventions for the child. Prior to referral for an evaluation for special education, the team shall follow the steps outlined in the Lowndes County Schools RtI manual.

School personnel and parents/guardians may determine that there is a reasonable cause to bypass the SST process for an individual student. Documentation in the student's record shall clearly justify such action, including whether the parent or guardian agreed with such a decision. In cases where immediate referral is

ought, the SST shall still determine what interim strategies, interventions, and modifications shall be attempted for the student. The screening of children by a teacher or specialist to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation shall not be considered to be an evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services.

It is not necessary for students who transfer into Lowndes County Schools with a current Individualized Education Program or Section 504 plan to go through the SST process.

### **Consent**

Parental consent must be obtained before personally identifiable information is disclosed to other parties in accordance with 34 C.F.R. § 99.30, unless the disclosure is authorized without parental consent under 34 C.F.R. § 99.31. Under 34 C.F.R. § 99.31, prior consent is not required to release information to: 1. Parents or eligible children; 2. Other school officials, including teachers, within the agency or institution whom the agency or institution has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes teachers within the LEA, legally constituted cooperating agencies or other agencies providing shared services; 3. Officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education in which the child seeks or is eligible to enroll, upon condition that the student's parents be notified of the transfer, receive a copy of the record, if desired, and have an opportunity for a hearing to challenge the content of the record; 4. Authorized Federal, State or local representatives in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements which relate to those programs. The information must be protected in a manner that does not permit personal identification of individuals by anyone except the officials referred to above and must be destroyed when no longer needed. 5. In connection with a child's application for or receipt of financial aid for which the child has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary; 6. State and local officials or authorities to whom this information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed pursuant to a State statute concerning the juvenile justice system; 7. Organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, educational agencies or institutions to develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; administer student aid programs; or improve instruction. Information may only be disclosed if the study is conducted in a manner that does not permit personal identification of parents and students by individuals other than representatives of the organization and the information is destroyed when no longer needed; 8. Accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions; 9. In compliance with a judicial order or a lawfully issued subpoena. The LEA must make a reasonable attempt to notify the child's parents of the judicial order or subpoena before releasing the records unless the disclosure is in compliance with a Federal grand jury subpoena or other subpoena issued for law enforcement purposes and the court or other issuing agency has ordered that the existence or the contents of the subpoena or the information furnished in response to the subpoena not be disclosed; 10. Disclosure in connection with a health or safety emergency, if the knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the child or other individuals. 11. The disclosure is information the LEA has designated as "directory information" and the LEA has given public notice to parents and eligible students of the types of personally identifiable information that the LEA has designated as directory information, a parent's or eligible student's right to refuse to let the LEA to designate any or all of those types of information about the student as directory information, and the period of time within which a parent or eligible student has to notify the LEA in writing that he or she does not want any or all of those types of information about the student designated as directory information. 12. The Office for Civil Rights; 13. Officials within the Department of Human Resources (DHR), Department of Corrections (DOC), Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) and Department of Labor (DOL) for the purpose of making appropriate educational decisions regarding placements.



## **Safeguards**

Lowndes County Schools will protect the confidentiality of personally identifiable information at collection, storage, disclosure, and destruction states. The LEA's superintendent or designee ensures the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information. Access of unauthorized persons to personally identifiable information without parent's consent is forbidden. All persons collecting or using personally identifiable information must receive training or instruction regarding department policies and procedures concerning personally identifiable information. Lowndes County Schools maintains, for public inspection, a current listing of the names and positions of employees within the LEA who may have access to personally identifiable information.

## **Destruction of Information**

Destruction means physical destruction or removal of personal identifiers from information so that the information is no longer personally identifiable. Lowndes County Schools has established a procedure for the destruction of information and informs parents when personally identifiable information collected, maintained, or used in the provision of a FAPE is no longer needed to provide educational services to the child. These procedures are in accordance with FERPA and its regulations (34 CFR part 99) and the Georgia Open Records Act (O.C.G.A. §50-18-70 et seq.). The information is destroyed at the request of the parents when the information is no longer needed to provide educational services to the child. However, a permanent record of a child's name, address and telephone number, grades, attendance record, classes attended, grade level completed and year completed may be maintained without time limitation. Through the compliance review and general supervision process, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) shall ensure that these policies and procedures are followed and that the requirements of these rules are met.

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

Child Find is a process that Lowndes County Schools uses to identify, locate, and evaluate all children in the district, birth through 21, who are suspected of having disabilities, including those who are homeless, are wards of the State or are attending private schools or home school / study programs, regardless of the severity of their disability, and who are in need for special education and related services. Georgia State Rule 160-4-7-.03 requires that districts have policies and procedures in place to ensure the identification, location, and evaluation of these children.

## **Children birth through age three**

When a child who is birth through age two is suspected of having disabilities is identified through any Child Find activities (e.g. parent-teacher conference, community referral, migrant program), the Special Education Director should be notified so an appropriate referral may be made to Babies Can't Wait for screening and evaluation. Lowndes County Special Education Director or her designee will participate in Babies Can't Wait Transition meetings to ensure a special education evaluation, eligibility, and IEP are in place by the child's third birthday.

## **Children enrolled in the LEA Schools including public charter schools**

Lowndes County Schools' policies and procedures provide for the screening and evaluation of all children enrolled in the LEA schools including public charter schools as well as children who are suspected of being children with disabilities and in need of special education, even though they are progressing from grade to grade.

## **Highly Mobile Children, including Migrant Children**

Lowndes County Schools screens and evaluates highly mobile children, including migrant children, children who are detained or incarcerated in jails or correctional facilities, children who reside in the LEA and are

enrolled in home school/study programs, parentally-placed private school children and children enrolled by their parents in private, including religious, elementary and secondary schools located in the LEA's jurisdiction.

### **Children who are detained or incarcerated**

Incarcerated Students Students eligible for special education services who have an IEP and who are in a facility operated by the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) or the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) must receive their educational programs. Each of these agencies provides services to students within their facilities in Georgia. Each agency has a responsibility to identify, evaluate, determine eligibility, and provide special education and related services to students. These agencies will contact the most recent LEA attended by a student to obtain copies of educational records so that a FAPE can be provided. DJJ and GDC are LEAs and should be treated as other LEAs when providing records in an expeditious manner. Adult students who are between the ages of 18 and 21 who, prior to being in the correctional facility, were not identified as a student with a disability, did not have an IEP in effect, and graduated from high school with a regular high school diploma, are the exception. These students do not have an entitlement to a FAPE. Currently, there are no city or county jails located in the Lowndes County Schools district.

### **Annual Child Find Activity through Public Notification**

For Child Find purposes, Lowndes County Schools places an advertisement in the newspaper once a year during the summer months to seek information from parents or others concerning anyone living in the Lowndes County Schools district, ages 3 to 21, who may have a disability that is not being addressed. Contact information for the Central Office is given within the advertisement. Lowndes County Schools' Pre-Kindergarten Program (Bright from the Start) participates in Response to Intervention. Referrals from Bright from the Start programs follow the same process as k-5 students. Referral forms can be obtained by contacting the Special Education Office.

### **Preschool children, ages 3-5 not yet eligible for state-funded kindergarten**

When an individual contacts the Lowndes County Schools Special Education Department stating that they believe a child who is not enrolled in Lowndes County Schools may be a child with a disability, a referral for special education is sent to the parent, guardian, or day care provided. Requested documentation is included in the packet. The parent's inability to obtain the requested information will not cause a delay in the evaluation process. Information is received by the administrative assistant for special education and then sent to either a psychologist or speech therapist. One of these individuals will contact the parent, guardian or other individuals to whom Lowndes County Schools has been authorized by the parent/guardian to discuss Response to Intervention (RtI), screen, and/or observe the student. If there is no RtI completed, the psychologist and/or speech therapist will provide the parent, guardian, and/or daycare provider with suggestions for RtI and ways to document whether or not the suggestions are working. If insufficient progress is made with the interventions or the parent/guardian chooses not to wait for the RtI process to be completed, the psychologist or speech therapist will begin the comprehensive evaluation. Once the evaluation is completed an eligibility meeting is held to review the findings.

### **Children Suspected of Being Children with Disabilities**

When a student is suspected of being a student with a disability, a meeting is scheduled to review the student's school records. Once appropriate scientific research based interventions have been exhausted in Tiers I, II and III, the SST may, with input from a school system psychologist, refer for a comprehensive evaluation. Eligibility for special education service is determined by an eligibility committee based on Georgia guidelines. Eligibility guidelines, found in the Georgia Rules and Regulations, should be used as eligibility drafts are developed. Speech eligibilities will be drafted by the speech language pathologists. Low Incidence (LI)

eligibilities will be drafted by the LI teachers (VI, D/HH). All other initial eligibility documents will be drafted by school psychologists. In case of dual eligibility, the primary drafter will be driven by the primary exceptionality. School psychologists draft eligibility reports in a special Google Drive folder and share them with appropriate personnel. The evaluator reviews the results with the parent(s). The Coordinator, notified by CO personnel, will schedule the initial placement meeting. The psychologist notifies a special education teacher, 10 working days prior to the end of the 60 day timeline, that the report is on the T-Drive. The teacher prepares for the Initial Placement Meeting.

There are infrequent and rare occurrences when a child would require immediate consideration for special education. In instances when an evaluation and/or placement is required due to a significant disability, an exception will be allowed. These occurrences will be clearly documented on the eligibility report.

The screening of children by a teacher or specialist to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation shall not be considered to be an evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services. Prior to referring a student for consideration for eligibility for special education and related services, a student must have received scientific, research or evidence based interventions selected to correct or reduce the academic, social or behavioral problem(s) the student is having. Student referrals for evaluation must be accompanied by documentation of scientific, research or evidence based academic and/or behavioral interventions that have been implemented as designed for the appropriate period of time to show effect or lack of effect that demonstrates the child is not making sufficient rate of progress to meet age or State approved grade-level standards within a reasonable time frame.

The goal of Lowndes County Schools is to secure the successful transition of students to their desired post-school outcomes and will collaborate to complete that transition by age 22. If a student is still attending school at age 22, services will be allowed to continue until the end of the semester. If an adult student remains after their 22nd birthday, the LEA shall notify the adult student and the parent(s) that although services will continue, no individual entitlement to FAPE or other rights under IDEA are afforded the adult student.

### **Child Find Notice**

In accordance with IDEA regulations, the Lowndes County School system seeks to ensure that all disabled students (ages birth-21) who are in need of special education within its jurisdiction are identified, located, and evaluated, including those attending private school and home school. Final identification of students with disabilities and programming for such students occurs only after an appropriate evaluation and a determination by a Multidisciplinary Placement Team. If the "child find" process indicates that a student may require special education and supportive services in order to benefit from regular education, the student shall be referred to the Multidisciplinary Placement Team to determine the student's eligibility for special education services.

### **Interventions Prior To Referral**

The screening of children by a teacher or specialist to determine appropriate instructional strategies for curriculum implementation shall not be considered to be an evaluation for eligibility for special education and related services. Prior to referring a student for consideration for eligibility for special education and related services, a student must have received scientific, research or evidence based interventions selected to correct or reduce the academic, social or behavioral problem(s) the student is having. 1. Student referrals must be accompanied by documentation of scientific, research or evidence based academic and/or behavioral interventions that have been implemented as designed for the appropriate period of time to show effect or lack of effect that demonstrates the child is not making sufficient rate of progress to meet age or State approved grade-level standards within a reasonable time frame. 2. Exceptions may be made in circumstances where immediate evaluation and/or placement is required due to a significant disability that precludes access to instruction. 3. The exception should be an infrequent and rare occurrence, and the circumstances evidencing the need for the LEA's use of the exception must be clearly documented in the eligibility decision.

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

### **Timeframes for Evaluation**

#### **60 Calendar Days**

Lowndes County Schools will conduct a full and individual initial evaluation before the initial provision of special education and related services to a child with a disability. Once a child is referred for an evaluation by a parent or Student Support Team (SST) to determine if the child is a child with a disability, the initial evaluation must be completed within 60 calendar days of receiving parental consent for evaluation. After the 60 day timeline has passed, the LEA will make a determination of eligibility within a reasonable time, preferably within 10 days. Holiday periods and other circumstances when children are not in attendance for five consecutive school days shall not be counted toward the 60 calendar day timeline, including the weekend days before and after such holiday periods, if contiguous to the holidays. Any summer vacation period in which the majority of the system's teachers are not under contract shall not be included in the 60 day timeline for evaluation. However a system is not prohibited from conducting evaluations over a summer vacation period. If the consent is received 30 days or more prior to the end of the school year the evaluation must be completed within the 60 calendar day evaluation time frame. Students who turn three during the summer period or other holiday periods must have an eligibility decision and IEP (if appropriate) in place by the third birthday.

#### **Exceptions**

The time frame described does not apply to Lowndes County Schools if the parent of a child repeatedly fails or refuses to produce the child for the evaluation or if the child enrolls in a school of another LEA after the relevant timeline has begun and prior to a determination by the previous LEA as to whether the child is a child with a disability. If there are extenuating circumstances, e.g., illness, unusual evaluation needs, or revocation of parent's consent for evaluation that affect this timeline, Lowndes County Schools will document the exceptions. Revocation of consent for an initial evaluation halts the evaluation process and as such halts consideration of eligibility. The special education office provides each school with an evaluation timeline calendar.

### **Initial Evaluation Referral Process**

#### **Parental Consent**

Students are typically referred for initial evaluation through the Student Support Team (SST) as initiated by a teacher, administrator, or parent. Refer to the MTSS/SST manual for details. Hearing and vision should be screened as part of the SST process. The parent will be asked to sign a "Consent to Evaluate" form. Psychologists and Special Education Coordinators maintain copies of the Consent to Evaluate forms. A copy of the Parental Rights will be provided along with the Consent to Evaluate form. Once the consent to evaluate has been signed, a Referral for a Comprehensive Evaluation will be obtained from the Assistant Principal (AP) in charge of special education. After the referral is completed by the SST, it will be returned to the AP. The AP will send the referral packet, which includes the signed Consent to Evaluate, the referral, passed hearing and vision screening (or a doctor's letter), and SST documentation to the Special Education Administrative Assistant who logs the referral and assigns it to the appropriate psychologist. Once the referral is received, a comprehensive evaluation will occur. When the evaluation is completed and the eligibility is drafted by the psychologist or speech/language pathologist, the two part document is shared with the special education teacher, regular education teacher, special education coordinator, and Special Education AP on the Google Drive or uploaded into the student information system, Infinite Campus. If the teacher has additional information that will be beneficial to the eligibility, he/she may send that information to the psychologist to be added. The teacher prepares for the Initial Placement Meeting. The evaluator may review results with the parent(s) prior to the meeting. The Coordinator, notified by CO personnel, will schedule the initial placement meeting prior to the evaluation being completed.

### **Parental Request for Evaluation**

When parents request an evaluation, it is important for them to understand that generally, eligibility for special education requires substantial RtI data. Therefore, a meeting with the assistant principal, psychologist and/or coordinator should be scheduled with the parent as soon as possible. It is often best to put a student in the SST process and collect data prior to the parent signing a Consent to Evaluate. However, an evaluation cannot be denied when the parent suspects the student has a disability; if they choose not to wait for the SST/RtI process, LCS must proceed with the evaluation and implement RtI strategies concurrently. If, at the completion of the evaluation, there is not enough data to substantiate special education eligibility, the committee may determine the student not eligible, then meet again once more data is collected. It is important to note that lack of substantial RtI data can NOT delay eligibility (except in the case of Specific Learning Disability) if all other data and the committee supports eligibility for services. Revocation of consent for an initial evaluation halts the evaluation process and as such halts consideration of eligibility.

### **Children NOT Enrolled in Lowndes County Schools**

For children who are not enrolled in Lowndes County Schools, referrals for a comprehensive evaluation are made directly to the Special Education Department. Personnel will gather the information and send the parent/guardian a referral packet. The parent/guardian returns the completed referral packet to the department. The completed packet will include the referral, proof of residency, and a passed hearing and vision screening, at a minimum. The birth certificate and social security card are also requested at the time of the referral but are not required for the evaluation. Sometimes the hearing and vision screening can occur at the school prior to the evaluation beginning if the parent is unable to provide one from the pediatrician or health department. The parent will sign a Consent to Evaluate once the completed packet is returned. A copy of the Parental Rights will be provided.

Once the parental consent for evaluation is received, the packet of information will be forwarded to either a School Psychologist or Speech/Language Pathologist (SLP) to guide the RtI and evaluation process. For children ages 3-5, no Response to Intervention is required, except for Speech Language Referrals. Response to Intervention may have to occur concurrently with the evaluation for students who are 6-21 years of age. The eligibility meeting is scheduled by the Special Education Coordinator prior to the evaluation beginning. The meeting notice will be sent to the parents and school staff by the Sped AA. The psychologist and/or SLP schedules assessment dates/time with the parent/guardian. The evaluation will be completed within the 60 day timeline, as required by law. An eligibility meeting will occur within a reasonable amount of time following the completion of the evaluation, typically within 10 days. The meeting can be held either at the Central Office or at the school.

Not having a birth certificate and social security card can not delay testing. Prior to the student enrolling into Lowndes County Schools, the birth certificate and social security card will be required. However, not having a copy of a birth certificate and social security card can not delay the starting of services for a child found eligible for special education services.

### **When Speech Language is the only area of concern:**

When a parent, guardian, or daycare provider has speech concerns for a child, the SLP will be contacted. Since Response to Intervention is required prior to the referral, the SLP will meet with the parent, guardian, or daycare provider to discuss how to implement and document RtI. If there is already sufficient RtI data, the referral packet is completed. Once the packet is completed and returned to the SLP, the parent will sign a Consent to Evaluate. Parental Rights will be given to the parent at the time the consent is given.

If there is not sufficient RtI documentation and the SLP wants to do a screening (such as a DP-3, etc.), the SLP will have the parent/guardian sign the screening Consent to Evaluate for pre-k only. It is similar to the SST Consent Letter. Use this form for regular pre-k also, since those students do not have SSTs. If

weaknesses are noted, SLP should proceed with the RtI process until sufficient documentation is gathered. After sufficient documentation is gathered, the SLP will have the parent sign Special Education Consent to Evaluate.

The SLP will need to assess social /emotional and motor skills, adaptive and achievement as soon as they get Consent to Evaluate signed as all evaluations must be comprehensive. If weaknesses are noted in any of the other areas, the SLP should contact the Sped Coordinator first. The Sped Coordinator will contact a psychologist and determine whether or not additional assessments are needed. If they decide assessments by a psychologist are required, Sped Coordinator will notify the Sped AA immediately as we are under the 60 day timeline rule to complete the evaluation. The SLP or the Sped AA contacts parent(s) to advise that, based on results of abbreviated assessments by SLP, the school psychologist will be involved. This does not require a new “Consent to Evaluate” but the discussion must be documented. The Sped AA or Sped Coordinator will complete the special education referral and necessary referral documents. \*Remember we are within the 60 day timeline and time is of the essence. The psychologist becomes lead evaluator and follows the process for comprehensive evaluations led by the school psychologist.

The Sped AA will send the necessary documents for enrollment to IC Central. IC Central will create a household. This will allow the special education staff to locate the child under ALL PEOPLE. The special education teacher and/or speech therapist is given ‘case manager rights’ in Infinite Campus. A draft IEP is created for the student.

If the child is found eligible, the LEA Representative will hand write the child’s name and ‘pending enrollment’ on ALL copies of the IEP. The parent is required to complete the registration process at IC Central (typically to include immunization records and a new proof of residency.). Once the registration process is completed, IC Central will inform the Special Education Coordinator, Special Education Teacher, and/or the SLP. When the child begins receiving services, the special education teacher or speech therapist will email IC Central at [iccentral-1@lowndes.k12.ga.us](mailto:iccentral-1@lowndes.k12.ga.us); informing them of the start date of service. After receiving the email, the student is given a line of enrollment. Once the child begins receiving services, the special education teacher will reprint and replace the front page of the IEP with the child’s name on it. Copies will be sent home to the parents also.

NOTE: Not having a copy of the Birth Certificate and/or Social Security Card can not delay the student receiving evaluation or services.

### **Referrals through Babies Can’t Wait**

Prior to a child’s third birthday, a referral packet is received from BCW. A transition meeting is scheduled on one of the predetermined monthly meeting dates. A representative from Lowndes County Schools attends the transition meeting, provides system and program information and provides the parent with a copy of their parental rights. At the transition meeting, the parent is asked to sign a form giving consent for an evaluation. Evaluation meetings are scheduled through the psychologist and/or SLP. The information is processed through the Sped AA. The determination meeting is held prior to the child’s third birthday and is scheduled through the Sped AA. The meeting can be held at the Central office or a school campus.

The SLP will conduct a comprehensive evaluation to include social /emotional and motor skills, adaptive and achievement as soon as they get Consent to Evaluate signed. If weaknesses are noted in any of the other areas, the SLP should contact the Sped Coordinator first. The Sped Coordinator will contact the psychologist and determine whether or not additional assessments are needed. If they decide assessment by a psychologist is required, the special education coordinator will notify the building administrator immediately as we are to meet by the child’s third birthday. Assistant principal contacts the parent(s) to advise that, based on results of

abbreviated assessments by SLP, the school psychologist will be involved. This does not require a new “Consent to Evaluate” but the discussion must be documented. Consent to Evaluate is signed at transition meetings and the deadline is always the child’s third birthday. The Sped AA will need to be notified so that she can get the file to the psychologist and sped pre-k teacher. The psychologist becomes lead evaluator and follows the process for comprehensive evaluation.

The Sped AA will send the necessary documents for enrollment to IC Central. IC Central will create a household. This will allow the special education staff to locate the child under ALL PEOPLE. The special education teacher and/or speech therapist is given ‘case manager rights’ in Infinite Campus. A draft IEP is created for the student. If the child is found eligible for services, then the parent is required to complete the registration process at IC Central (typically to include immunization records and a new proof of residency. On ALL copies of the IEP, the LEA Representative will hand write the child’s name and ‘pending enrollment’. When the child begins receiving services, the special education teacher or speech therapist will email IC Central at [iccentral-1@lowndes.k12.ga.us](mailto:iccentral-1@lowndes.k12.ga.us); informing them of the start date of service. After receiving the email, the student is given a line of enrollment. When the enrollment process is completed, the special education teacher will reprint and replace the front page of the IEP with the child’s name on it.

### **Comprehensive Evaluations**

Comprehensive evaluations are performed to determine eligibility for special education service. When conducting an evaluation the evaluator uses a variety of evaluation tools and strategies to gather relevant academic, functional and developmental information about the child, including information provided by the parents that may assist in determining whether the child is a child with a disability. The information gathered will also be used to determine the content of the child’s individualized education program including information related to enabling the child to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum (or for a preschool child to participate in appropriate activities). The evaluator will not use any single procedure as the sole criterion for determining whether a child is a child with a disability and for determining an appropriate educational program for the child. The evaluator will use technically sound instruments that may assess the relative contribution of cognitive and behavioral factors, in addition to physical or developmental factors. The evaluator will ensure that the assessments and other evaluation materials used to assess a child are selected and administered so as not to be discriminatory on a racial or cultural basis. The assessments are provided and administered in the child’s native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information on what the child knows and can do academically, developmentally, and functionally, unless it is clearly not feasible to so provide or administer. The evaluator will ensure that the assessments and other evaluation materials are used for the purposes for which the evaluations or measures are valid and reliable, are administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel and are administered in accordance with instructions provided by the producer of the assessments. The child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, if appropriate, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities. Evaluation tools and strategies are used which provide relevant information that directly assists persons in determining the educational needs of the child. Assessments and other evaluation materials include those tailored to assess specific areas of educational need and not merely those which are designed to provide a single intelligence quotient. Assessment selection and administration is such that, when administered to a child with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills, the results accurately reflect the child’s aptitude or achievement level, or whatever other factors the assessment purports to measure, rather than reflecting the child’s impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills, except where those skills are the factors which the assessment purports to measure. If an evaluation is not conducted under standard conditions, a description of the extent to which it varied from standard conditions, i.e., the qualifications of the person administering the test or the method of test administration must be included in the evaluation report. In evaluating each child with a disability under this rule, the evaluation shall be sufficiently comprehensive to identify all of the child’s special education and related services needs, whether or not commonly linked to the disability category in which the child has been

classified. Evaluations of children with disabilities who transfer from one system to another system in the same school year are coordinated with those children's prior and subsequent schools, as necessary and expeditiously as possible, to ensure prompt completion of full evaluations. The evaluation of children referred because of learning and/or behavior problems is the responsibility of a multidisciplinary evaluation team. For children who require a psychological and clinical evaluation, it must be conducted by a qualified psychological examiner.

### **Reevaluation Consideration**

As a part of an initial evaluation (if appropriate) and as a part of any re-evaluation, the parent and other qualified professionals, as appropriate, must review existing data on the child. This data can include evaluations and information provided by the parents of the child, current classroom based, local, or State assessments and classroom based observations, and observations by teachers and related service providers. On the basis of the review and input from the child's parents, the committee will identify what additional data, if any, are needed to determine whether the child is a child with a disability and the educational needs of the child, or in case of a reevaluation of a child, whether the child continues to have such a disability and the educational needs of the child; the present levels of academic achievement and related developmental needs of the child; whether the child needs special education and related services, or in the case of a reevaluation of a child, whether the child continues to need special education and related services; and whether any additions or modifications to the special education and related services are needed to enable the child to meet the measurable annual goals set out in the IEP of the child and to participate, as appropriate, in the general curriculum.

### **Evaluation before Termination of Eligibility**

Lowndes County Schools will comprehensively reevaluate a child with a disability before determining that the child is no longer a child with a disability who requires special education services. However, reevaluation is not needed when 1) when the child graduates from high school with a regular high school diploma, or 2) when the child has exceeded the age of eligibility (22nd birthday) for a FAPE. The LCS must, however, provide the child with a summary of academic and functional performance that includes recommendations for meeting postsecondary goals when the child is graduating with a regular high school diploma or aging out of school. Best practice would also include providing a summary of performance for the child who receives a special education diploma or other exit documents. Services cease at the end of the semester or school year in which the child turns 22 years of age.

A "regular high school diploma" is the standard high school diploma awarded to the preponderance of students in a State that is fully aligned with the State's standards and does not include a general equivalency diploma, certificate of completion, certificate of attendance, or any other similar or lesser credential, such as a diploma based on meeting Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals. The term "regular high school diploma" also includes any "higher diploma" that is awarded to students who complete requirements above and beyond what is required for a regular high school diploma.

### **Independent Educational Evaluations**

When a parent requests an Independent Educational Evaluation, the administrator or special education coordinator will contact the Director of Special Education.

Upon approval by the District of an Independent Educational Evaluation, a list of evaluators who meet the District's requirements will be provided to the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian is not limited to the evaluators provided by the District. If an evaluator is chosen, who is not on the provided list, the evaluator must meet the District's requirements. The independent evaluator must maintain the same qualifications as the evaluator(s) who conducted the School District's evaluation with which the parent disagrees.



#### Evaluator Requirements for Psychological Evaluations:

- Have training in school psychology; and
- Hold a licensure in psychology in Georgia; and
- Hold at least a Master's degree in psychology; and
- Have experience conducting psychological evaluations and recommending school-based services.

#### Evaluator Requirements for Speech and Language Evaluations:

- Have training and experience in speech language and central auditory processing disorders; and
- Hold a licensure in speech language pathology in Georgia; and
- Hold at least a Master's degree in speech language pathology; and
- Have experience conducting a speech language evaluation and recommending school-based services.

#### Evaluator Requirements for Physical Therapy or Occupational Therapy Evaluations:

- Have training and experience in Physical Therapy or Occupational Therapy; and
- Hold licensure in Physical Therapy or Occupational Therapy in Georgia; and
- Hold at least a Master's degree in Physical Therapy or Occupational Therapy; and
- Have experience conducting Physical Therapy or Occupational Therapy evaluations and recommending school-based services; and
- Have familiarity with and preferably use the Criteria for Educationally Relevant Therapy (CERT) form.

Assessments utilized must comply with the same requirements for assessments completed by the School District and in compliance with all state and federal laws.

The independent evaluator must provide the school system with a written evaluation report at the conclusion of the evaluation at the same time it is provided to the family. The evaluation report must contain at least the following: dates the evaluation was conducted; relevant medical and/or educational history; summary of all educational information reviewed; summary of observation and data collection in the school environment; and a discussion and interpretation of test results; and school-based recommendations.

Payment will be rendered to the independent evaluator upon receipt of the evaluation report. Prior to the evaluation, parents/guardians must provide written consent for an exchange of information between the District and independent evaluator, including the release to the District of the evaluation report and results of all assessment data collected by the independent evaluator(s). The evaluation report will be provided to the District at the same time it is provided to the Parents/Guardians.

The Lowndes County School District will reimburse the independent speech/language pathologist up to \$200.00 for the evaluation and report. The District will reimburse the independent Physical Therapist or Occupational Therapist up to \$250.00 for the evaluation and report. The District will reimburse the independent psychologist up to \$700 for the evaluation and report. In the event services are recommended by an IEP team, neither the evaluating professional nor agency will be paid by the District as the service provider.

Any additional expenses, including attendance at an IEP Meeting, are not included in the cost and will be considered on a case by case basis and must be approved in writing by the Director of Special Education.

The independent evaluator must be found within a 140-mile range of Valdosta, Georgia.

Exceptions to the above criteria will be considered on a case by case basis with prior approval by the Director of Special Education.

### **Initial Eligibility Determination**

Upon completion of the administration of assessments and other measures, a group of qualified professionals and the parent(s) of the child (Eligibility Team) determine whether the child is a child with a disability and the educational needs of the child. Lowndes County Schools will provide a copy of the eligibility report at no cost to the parent. A child must not be determined to be a child with a disability if the primary factor for that determination is: 1) lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including the essential components of reading instruction, 2) lack of appropriate instruction in mathematics or, 3) limited English proficiency and, 4) if the child does not otherwise meet the eligibility criteria under this Rule.

In interpreting evaluation data for the purpose of determining if a child is a child with a disability and the educational needs of the child, LCS will 1) draw upon information from a variety of appropriate sources, including aptitude and achievement tests, parent input, and teacher recommendations as well as information about the child's physical condition, social or cultural background, and adaptive behavior, 2) ensure that information obtained from all of these sources is documented and carefully considered, 3) if a determination is made that a child has a disability, and the disability adversely affects educational performance (academic, functional and/or developmental) and therefore needs special education and related services, and the parent consents to services, an IEP/Services Plan will be developed for the child within 30 days of the eligibility determination.

Only an eligibility committee can make the determination regarding Georgia eligibility for special education; it is based on Georgia guidelines. Eligibility guidelines, part E of this manual should be used as eligibility drafts are developed. Speech eligibilities will be drafted by a speech language pathologist. Low Incidence eligibilities will be drafted by the LI teachers (VI, D/HH). All other initial eligibilities will be drafted by school psychologists. In case of dual eligibility, the primary drafter will be driven by the primary exceptionality. Eligibility templates are on the Google Drive. An eligibility meeting is conducted. The eligibility meeting determines whether a disability exists and what the impact is on the education of the child. If there is an adverse impact, the team may determine that the child is a child who needs special education and related services.

### **Documentation of Evaluation results**

A report is developed that contains two parts. Part I is the Evaluation Report and Part II is the Eligibility Report. The Evaluation and Eligibility reports are created regardless of whether the child is determined eligible or ineligible. Eligibility reports shall provide statements for each component of the eligibility and shall be comprehensive and detailed enough to serve as the evaluation report. For those children determined not eligible for special education and related services, the eligibility report shall clearly explain the Eligibility Team's determination. The parent shall receive a copy of the evaluation/eligibility report at no cost.

### **Consent for Services**

In order for a student to receive special education services, a Consent for Services must be signed by the parents. A Consent for Services form will be offered at initial placement meetings and when students with IEPs transfer to Lowndes County Schools. Parents will be provided a copy of Parental Rights. Individual Education Plans (IEP) are offered after the parent has signed a Consent for Services form.

**\*\*DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY IS NOT MADE PRIOR TO A COMMITTEE MEETING\*\*****Reevaluation Meetings**

Lowndes County Schools conducts a reevaluation determination for each child with a disability every two years. No additional evaluations will be conducted unless the parent and the school agree that additional information is needed to determine continued eligibility. A reevaluation may not occur more than once a year, unless the parent and the school system agree otherwise; and must occur at least once every three years, unless the parent and the school agree that a reevaluation is unnecessary. Each school shall obtain informed parental consent prior to conducting any reevaluation of a child with a disability, except that such informed parental consent need not be obtained if the school can demonstrate that it has taken reasonable measures to obtain such consent and the child's parents failed to respond.

Every two years, the IEP team will meet to discuss whether or not the student continues to meet eligibility requirements. The most convenient time to hold this conference is during the Annual Review (AR) meeting in the year prior to the 3 year anniversary of the most recent evaluation. The team will review current information from a variety of sources, such as, state tests, classroom grades, adequate vision and hearing, parental input, data collected through the T4D process concerning academic achievement, behavior, cognitive functioning, and communication. If the information reviewed supports the continuation of special education services and the committee members are in agreement that no additional information is needed, the Re-Evaluation Determination (RED) form will be completed to show continued eligibility for services and signed by the committee members. The eligibility will be in effect for an additional three years. If the parent or teachers feel that additional information is required, the Re-Evaluation Determination form will be completed indicating the needed information. Consent for Evaluation will be signed by the parents. A Psychologist Evaluation Request will be completed. A date to review the additional information will be determined.

A Psychologist Evaluation Request (PER) form is used when a teacher or committee believes an eligibility area needs to be added, changed, or dismissed. (This can also be used with transfer-ins as needed.) A Consent to Evaluate is obtained from the Coordinator or Psychologist. The meeting to review the additional data is set. The Case Manager is responsible for sending the meeting notice and reminder to the parent/guardian. The coordinator sends PER to the Sped AA. The Sped AA records on calendar and forwards to psychologists. The psychologist will gather the pieces of information and add them to the eligibility in one of the following ways, depending on the psychologist's preference and individual circumstances:

- 1) type information on the Reevaluation Determination Addendum (form in IC), or
- 2) write a new comprehensive eligibility form, or
- 3) write a condensed eligibility form.

**Procedure for Speech Dismissals**

When dismissing students who have speech as a secondary eligibility, formal testing is not required. The speech therapist may dismiss with the following documentation:

1. Mastery of IEP Goals
2. Up to date progress notes clearly indicating mastery

Steps to complete when dismissing speech as a secondary eligibility:

1. Complete the Re-evaluation form.
2. Complete the Speech Dismissal form in Campus
3. Write on the front page of the most recent eligibility report the meeting date and write "not eligible for SI".

4. Scan and upload a copy of the Speech Dismissal and Re-evaluation Form attached to the front of the entire Eligibility to Campus

When dismissing students who have speech as the primary eligibility, formal testing in the areas that qualified the student must be completed. The information from the evaluation may be recorded on the comprehensive eligibility form.

IC Central will be notified via email that the student was dismissed from Speech.

### **Procedures for Using a Private Psychological Report**

Parents may provide the school a copy of a private psychological evaluation report completed on their child.

#### **Regular Education Student**

When a private psychological evaluation is received by the school it is forwarded to the administrator, coordinator and school psychologist. A Team meeting will be held. The administrator and/or school psychologist should attend.

The private psychological report will be uploaded to the Documents Tab in the Special Education section. The coordinator will raise the "Priv Eval" key on the General Tab Section. The hard copy will be shredded as the report needs to be kept confidential under FERPA.

If the team determines additional information is needed, perform a H/V screening to rule out those issues. The SPED Consent to Evaluate must be signed by the parent prior to any assessments. Once the information has been gathered, an eligibility meeting is scheduled to review the evaluation. See [Placement Procedures](#).

If the team determines no additional information is needed, there is no need for a Consent to Evaluate. An eligibility meeting is scheduled to review the array of data (including the information in the private psychological report) and make an eligibility determination. However, if a school psychologist is involved, they prefer to have a Consent to Evaluate signed and have a notation on the face of the Consent that references the review of the private psychological report as the basis for the evaluation.

#### **Special Education Student**

It is required that we "consider" a private psychological report when it is presented. It is not necessary to have a meeting if a student is receiving special education services with current, appropriate eligibility and the private evaluation has been submitted to the school to provide additional information. The report should be read by the sped teacher, AP, coordinator and school psychologist. If the private report indicates a significant difference from the original placement information, an IEP meeting should be conducted. It may be appropriate to hold a Re-evaluation Determination meeting. The private psychological report is filed in the student's confidential folder. It may be uploaded into IC. If the parent requests an IEP meeting, a meeting will be held.

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

*For families where English is not the primary language, contact the special education administrative assistant for forms in the appropriate language.*

No student shall be placed in a special education program until that student is the subject of a meeting of the Eligibility Team. Members may include the Director of Special Education, Special Education Coordinator, parents, student, principal, assistant principal, counselor, psychologist, classroom teachers, any special teachers who are serving or who might be assigned to serve the student, related service personnel, and any other personnel whose knowledge and/or expertise would assist in determining whether the child is a child with a disability and the educational needs of the child. At initial placement meetings the Director of Special Education, Special Education Coordinator, Assistant Principal, or trained teacher will act as the Local Education Agency Representative (LEA Rep.). At annual reviews and other IEP reviews the assistant

principal, special education coordinator, or trained teacher will serve as the LEA Rep.

### **Determination Of Eligibility**

a) Upon completion of the administration of assessments and other measures, a group of qualified professionals and the parents of the child (Eligibility Team) determine whether the child is a child with a disability and the educational needs of the child. (b) The Lowndes County Schools will provide a copy of the evaluation report (Part I) and the documentation of determination of eligibility (Part II) at no cost to the parent. (c) A child must not be determined to be a child with a disability if the primary factor for that determination is one of the exclusionary factors.

### **Exclusionary Factors for Eligibility**

1. Lack of appropriate instruction in reading, including the essential components of reading instruction as defined in section 1208(3) of ESEA); 2. Lack of appropriate instruction in mathematics; or 3. Limited English proficiency; and 4. If the child does not otherwise meet the eligibility criteria under this Rule.

### **Documentation of Eligibility/Ineligibility**

In interpreting evaluation data for the purpose of determining if a child is a child with a disability and the educational needs of the child, each LEA must: 1. Draw upon information from a variety of sources, including aptitude and achievement tests, parent input, and teacher recommendations as well as the information about the child's physical condition, social or cultural background, and adaptive behavior; 2. Ensure that information obtained from all of these sources is documented and carefully considered. 3. If a determination is made that a child has a disability, and the disability adversely affects educational performance (academic, functional and/or developmental) and therefore needs special education and related services, an IEP must be developed for the child in accordance with Rule 160-4-7-.06

### **Evaluation Report and Determination Provided to Parents**

An evaluation/eligibility report which documents the area of disability shall be completed and placed in each child's special education folder. The report shall provide statements for each component of the evaluation and eligibility and shall be comprehensive enough to serve as the evaluation report when necessary. (a) For those children determined not eligible for special education and related services the two part report shall clearly explain the Eligibility Team's determination. (b) The parent of the child shall receive a copy of the report at no cost to the parent

### **Definitions of Areas of disability for children aged 3 to 21:**

\*\*\*In the title of each area of disability, a link is embedded to the Georgia Department of Education for additional information specific to the area of disability.

#### **[Autism Spectrum Disorder \(AUT\)](#)**

Definition: Autism spectrum disorder is a developmental disability generally evident before age three that adversely affects a child's educational performance and significantly affects developmental rates and sequences, verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction and participation. Other characteristics often associated with autism spectrum disorder are unusual responses to sensory experiences, engagement in repetitive activities and stereotypical movements and resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines. Autism does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance. Children with autism spectrum disorder vary widely in their abilities and behavior. The term autism spectrum disorder includes all subtypes of Pervasive Developmental Disorder provided the child's educational performance is adversely affected and the child meets eligibility criteria. These subtypes include Autistic Disorder, Rett's Disorder, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder, Asperger Syndrome, and Pervasive Developmental Disorder, Not Otherwise Specified. Autism

spectrum disorder may exist concurrently with other areas of disability.

A child with autism spectrum disorder may be served by an appropriately certified teacher in any educational program as described in the child's individualized education program (IEP). The identification of autism spectrum disorder for educational programming does not dictate a specific placement; however it is based on the assessed strengths, weaknesses and individual goals and objectives of the child.

### **Deafblind (DB)**

Definition: Deafblind means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.

### **Deaf/Hard of Hearing (D/HH)**

Definitions: A child who is deaf or hard of hearing is one who exhibits a hearing loss, whether permanent or fluctuating, that interferes with the acquisition or maintenance of auditory skills necessary for the normal development of speech, language, and academic achievement and, therefore, adversely affects a child's educational performance.

A child who is deaf can be characterized by the absence of enough measurable hearing (usually a pure tone average of 66-90+ decibels American National Standards Institute without amplification) such that the primary sensory input for communication may be other than the auditory channel.

A child who is hard of hearing can be characterized by the absence of enough measurable hearing (usually a pure tone average range of 30-65 decibels American National Standards Institute without amplification) that the ability to communicate is adversely affected; however, the child who is hard of hearing typically relies upon the auditory channel as the primary sensory input for communication.

### **Emotional and Behavioral Disorder (EBD)**

Definition: An emotional and behavioral disorder is an emotional disability characterized by the following:

- a. An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and/or teachers. For preschool-age children, this would include other care providers.
- b. An inability to learn which cannot be adequately explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
- c. A consistent or chronic inappropriate type of behavior or feelings under normal conditions.
- d. A displayed pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
- e. A displayed tendency to develop physical symptoms, pains or unreasonable fears associated with personal or school problems.

A child with EBD is a child who exhibits one or more of the above emotionally based characteristics of sufficient duration frequency and intensity that interferes significantly with educational performance to the degree that provision of special education service is necessary. EBD is an emotional disorder characterized by excesses, deficits, or disturbances of behavior. The child's difficulty is emotionally based and cannot be adequately explained by intellectual, cultural, sensory general health factors, or other additional exclusionary factors.

### **Intellectual Disability (ID)**

Definition: Intellectual disabilities refer to significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning which exists concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior that adversely affects educational performance and originates before age 18. Intellectual disability does not include conditions primarily due to a sensory or physical impairment, traumatic brain injury, autism spectrum disorders, severe multiple impairments, cultural influences or a history of inconsistent and/or inadequate educational programming.

Significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning is defined as approximately 70 IQ or below as measured by a qualified psychological examiner on individually administered, nationally normed standardized measures of intelligence.

All IQ scores defining eligibility for children with intellectual disabilities shall be interpreted as a range of scores encompassed by not more than one standard error of measurement below and above the obtained score. The standard error of measurement for a test may be found in the technical data section of the test manual.

Any final determination of the level of intellectual functioning shall be based on multiple sources of information and shall include more than one formal measure of intelligence administered by a qualified psychological examiner. There may be children with IQ scores below 70 who do not need special education. Interpretation of results should take into account factors that may affect test performance such as socioeconomic status, native language, and cultural background and associated disabilities in communication, sensory or motor areas.

Mild intellectual disability (MID). (1) Intellectual functioning ranging between an upper limit of approximately 70 to a lower limit of approximately 55; and 160-4-7-.05-12 ELIGIBILITY (2) Deficits in adaptive behavior that significantly limit a child's effectiveness in meeting the standards of maturation, learning, personal independence or social responsibility, and especially school performance that is expected of the individual's age level and cultural group, as determined by clinical judgment. Moderate intellectual disability (MOID). (1) Intellectual functioning ranging from an upper limit of approximately 55 to a lower limit of approximately 40; and (2) Deficits in adaptive behavior that significantly limit a child's effectiveness in meeting the standards of maturation, learning, personal independence or social responsibility, and especially school performance that is expected of the individual's age-level and cultural group as determined by clinical judgment. Severe intellectual disability (SID). (1) Intellectual functioning ranging from an upper limit of approximately 40 to a lower limit of approximately 25; and (2) Deficits in adaptive behavior that significantly limit a child's effectiveness in meeting the standards of maturation, learning, personal independence or social responsibility and especially school performance that is expected of the individual's age-level and cultural group as determined by clinical judgment. Profound intellectual disability (PID). (1) Intellectual functioning below approximately 25; and (2) Deficits in adaptive behavior that significantly limit a child's effectiveness in meeting the standards of maturation, learning, personal independence or social responsibility and especially school performance that is expected of the child's age-level and cultural group, as determined by clinical judgment.

### **Orthopedic Impairment (OI)**

Definition: Orthopedic impairment refers to a child whose severe orthopedic impairments adversely affect their educational performance to the degree that the child requires special education. The term may include:

1. Impairment caused by congenital anomalies, e.g., deformity or absence of some limb.
2. Impairment caused by disease (poliomyelitis, osteogenesis imperfecta, muscular dystrophy, bone tuberculosis, etc.)
3. Impairment from other causes, e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures.
4. Secondary disabilities may be present, including, but not limited to, visual impairment, hearing

impairment, communication impairment and/or intellectual disability.

Children served in a program for orthopedic impairments should be functioning no lower than criteria outlined for mild intellectual disabilities program. For those children with orthopedic impairments served in other special education programs due to the severity of their sensory or intellectual disability, support by the OI teacher regarding the implications of the child's orthopedic impairment may be appropriate.

### **Other Health Impairment (OHI)**

Definition: Other health impairment means having limited strength, vitality or alertness including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that –

1. Is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficient hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, or heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette Syndrome, and
2. Adversely affects a child's educational performance. [34 C.F.R § 300.8(c)(9)]
3. In some cases, heightened awareness to environmental stimulus results in difficulties with starting, staying on and completing tasks; making transitions between tasks; interacting with others; following directions; producing work consistently; and, organizing multi-step tasks.

### **Significant Developmental Delay (SDD)**

Definition: The term significant developmental delay refers to a delay in a child's development in adaptive behavior, cognition, communication, motor development or emotional development to the extent that, if not provided with special intervention, the delay may adversely affect a child's educational performance in age-appropriate activities. The term does not apply to children who are experiencing a slight or temporary lag in one or more areas of development, or a delay which is primarily due to environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage or lack of experience in age appropriate activities. The SDD eligibility may be used for children from ages three through nine (the end of the school year in which the child turns nine). [See 34 C.F.R. § 300.8(b)]

### **Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)**

Definition: Specific learning disability is defined as a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia. The term does not apply to children who have learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor disabilities, intellectual disabilities, emotional or behavioral disorders, environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.

### **Speech-Language Impairment (SI)**

Definitions: Speech or language impairment refers to a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language or voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. A speech or language impairment may be congenital or acquired. It refers to impairments in the area of articulation, fluency, voice or language. Individuals may demonstrate one or any combination of speech or language impairments. A speech or language impairment may be a primary disability or it may be secondary to other disabilities.



## **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)**

Definition: Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) refers to an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects the child's educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments which are immediate or delayed in one or more areas, such as cognition, language, memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgment, problem solving, sensory, perceptual and motor abilities, psychosocial behavior, physical functions, speech and information processing. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative in nature, brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

## **Visual Impairment (VI)**

Definitions: A child with a visual impairment is one whose vision, even with correction, adversely impacts a child's educational performance. Examples are children whose visual impairments may result from congenital defects, eye diseases, or injuries to the eye. The term includes both visual impairment and blindness as follows:

1. Blind refers to a child whose visual acuity is 20/200 or less in the better eye after correction or who has a limitation in the field of vision that subtends an angle of 20 degrees. Some children who are legally blind have useful vision and may read print.
2. Visually impaired refers to a child whose visual acuity falls within the range of 20/70, but who have a medically indicated expectation of visual deterioration may be considered for vision impaired eligibility based on documentation of the visual deterioration from the child's optometrist or ophthalmologist.

*A copy of the eligibility is given to the parent after the eligibility meeting at no charge to the parent.*

## **Change in Eligibility and Dismissal from Special Education**

Lowndes County Schools will evaluate a child with a disability before determining that the child is no longer a child with a disability. 1. The evaluation is not required before termination of a child's disability due to graduation from high school with a regular education diploma, or due to exceeding the age eligibility for FAPE. 2. However, LCS will provide the child with a summary of the child's academic achievement and functional performance, which shall include recommendations on how to assist the child in meeting the child's post-secondary goals.

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

### **Children With Disabilities In Private Schools Placed Or Referred By The LEA**

(a) Lowndes County Schools ensures that a child with a disability who is placed in or referred to a private school or facility as a means of providing special education and related services: 1. Is provided special education and related services in conformance with an IEP; (i) At no cost to the parents; (ii) Is provided an education that meets the standards that apply to education provided by the GaDOE and the LEA; and (iii) Has all of the rights of a child with a disability who is served by the LEA. (b) GaDOE/DES shall: (i) Monitor compliance of these children through procedures such as written reports, on-site visits and parent surveys; (ii) Disseminate copies of State standards to each private school and facility to which an LEA has referred or placed a child with a disability; and (iii) Provide an opportunity for those private schools and facilities to participate in the development and revision of State standards that apply to them.

### **Placement Of Children By Parents When Fape Is At Issue**

(a) If Lowndes County Schools made a free appropriate public education (FAPE) available to a child and the

child's parents elect to place the child in a private school or facility, LCS is not required to pay for the cost of the education, including special education and related services, for the child at the private school or facility. However, these students are included in the activities in paragraph (3) of this Rule.

1. Disagreements about FAPE: Such disagreements regarding the availability of a program appropriate for the child and the question of financial responsibility are subject to the procedural safeguards provided in Rule 160-4-7-.09 Procedural Safeguards/Parent Rights.

### **Reimbursement and Limitations on Reimbursement for Private School Placement**

2. Reimbursement for Private School Placement: If the parents of a child with a disability, who previously received special education and related services in LCS, enroll the child in a private preschool, elementary school or secondary school without the consent of or referral by LCS, a court or an administrative law judge (ALJ) may require LCS to reimburse the parents for the cost of that enrollment if the court or ALJ finds that LCS had not made a FAPE available to the child in a timely manner prior to that enrollment and that the private placement is appropriate. A parental placement may be found to be appropriate by an ALJ or a court even if it does not meet the state standards that apply to education provided by the State or LEA.

### **Provision of Written Notice by Parent to LEA**

3. Limitation on Reimbursement: The cost of reimbursement described in (a)(2) above may be reduced or denied if: (i) At the most recent IEP Team meeting that the parents attended prior to the removal of the child from LCS, the parents did not inform the IEP Team that they were rejecting the placement proposed by LCS to provide a FAPE to their child and did not state their concerns or their intent to enroll the child in a private school at public expense; or (ii) At least 10 business days prior to the removal of the child from LCS, the parents did not give written notice to LCS that they were rejecting the placement proposed by LCS to provide a FAPE to the child and did not state their concerns or their intent to enroll the child in a private school at public expense. (iii) If, prior to the parent's removal of the child from LCS, LCS informed the parents through the notice requirements of its intent to evaluate the child, including a statement of the purpose and scope of the evaluation that was appropriate and reasonable, but the parents did not make the child available for evaluation; or (iv) Upon a judicial finding of unreasonableness with respect to actions taken by the parents.

4. Exception to Limitation on Reimbursement: The cost of reimbursement must not be reduced or denied for a parent's failure to provide the notice to LCS described in paragraph (3) immediately above if: (i) The school prevented the parents from providing the notice; (ii) The parents had not been provided a copy of the parent's rights under IDEA and, therefore, had not been notified of the requirement to provide the notice described in paragraph (3) above; or (iii) The provision of notice would likely result in physical harm to the child.

5. The cost of reimbursement may, in the discretion of the court or administrative law judge, not be reduced or denied for a parent's failure to provide the notice to LCS described in paragraph 4 immediately above if: (i) The parents are not literate or cannot write in English; or (ii) The provision of notice would likely result in serious emotional harm to the child.

### **Children With Disabilities Enrolled By Their Parents In Private Schools**

(a) As used in this part, the term "parentally-placed private school children with disabilities" means children with disabilities enrolled by their parents in private schools, including religious, schools or facilities when the provision of a FAPE is not at issue. The term does not include private school children with disabilities placed by Lowndes County Schools as a means of providing special education and related services.

### **Home Schooled Students**

1. Children who are homeschooled within the jurisdiction of LCS are also considered parentally-placed private school students for the purposes of this Rule. (b) Child Find. Each LEA shall locate, identify, and evaluate all private schools children with disabilities (including out of state students) enrolled by their parents in private, including religious, elementary and secondary schools located in LCS district zone in accordance with Child Find activities described in Rule 160-4-7-.03 Child Find. The Child Find activities utilized to comply with

this requirement are comparable to activities undertaken for children with disabilities enrolled in LCS.

### **Child Find Process and Children in Private Schools**

1. The Child Find process must be designed to ensure the equitable participation of parentally-placed private school children and to provide an accurate count of children with disabilities.

2. LCS will consult with appropriate representatives of private school children with disabilities to carry out Child Find activities; the activities are similar to those undertaken for the public school children and completed in a time period comparable to that for children attending public schools. (c) Provision of services. To the extent consistent with their number and location in the state, provisions must be made for the participation of private school children with disabilities in programs provided under Part B of the IDEA by providing children with special education and related services in accordance with this section (3).

1. A services plan shall be developed and implemented for each private school child with a disability who has been designated to receive special education and related services by LCS in which the private school is located.

2. LCS maintains its records and provides to the GaDOE, the following information related to parentally-placed private school children: (i) The number of children evaluated; (ii) The number of children determined to be children with disabilities; and (iii) The number of children served. (d) To meet the requirements for the provision of services above, LCS shall adhere to the following guidelines regarding expenditures: 1. For children ages 3-21, LCS expends an amount that is the same proportion of LCS's total Part B of IDEA flowthrough funding as the number of private school children with disabilities, ages 3-21, residing in its jurisdiction is to the total number of children with disabilities, ages 3-21, in its jurisdiction; and 2. For children ages 3-5, LCS expends an amount that is the same proportion of the IDEA preschool funding as the number of private school children with disabilities, ages 3-5, residing in its jurisdiction is to the total number of children with disabilities, ages 3-5, in its jurisdiction. (i) Children ages 3-5 are considered to be parentally-placed private school children when they are enrolled by their parents in a private school that meets the definition of elementary school to include having a kindergarten program.

### **Equitable Services**

3. If LCS has not expended for equitable services all of the funds required in this section by the end of the fiscal year, LCS obligates the remaining funds for special education and related services (including direct services) to parentally-placed private school children with disabilities during a carry-over period of one additional year. 4. Expenditures for Child Find activities may not be considered in determining whether LCS has met these requirements.

### **Consultation with private schools for Child Count**

5. LCS shall consult with representatives of private school children in deciding how to conduct the annual count of the number of private school children with disabilities who reside in its jurisdiction. (i) LCS shall ensure that the child count is conducted on the first Tuesday in October each year. (ii) The child count shall be used to determine the amount LCS must spend on providing special education and related services to private school children with disabilities in the following fiscal year. 6. State and local funds may supplement and in no case supplant the proportionate amount of federal funds required to be expended for parentally-placed private school children with disabilities in this section. (e) Consultation. To ensure timely and meaningful consultation, LCS consults with private school representatives and representatives of parents of parentally-placed private school children with disabilities during the design and development of special education and related services for the children regarding the following: 1. The Child Find process, including how parentally-placed private school children suspected of having a disability can participate equitably and how the parents, teachers, and private school officials will be informed of the process. 2. The determination of the proportionate share of federal funds available to serve parentally placed private school children with disabilities, including the determination of how the proportionate share of those funds was calculated. 3. The consultation process among the LEA, private school officials, and representatives of parents of

parentally-placed private school children with disabilities, including how the process will operate throughout the school year to ensure that parentally-placed private school children with disabilities identified can meaningfully participate in special education and related services. 4. How, where, and by whom special education and related services will be provided for parentally-placed private school children with disabilities, including a discussion of the types of services, how services will be apportioned if funds are insufficient to serve all parentally-placed private schoolchildren and how and when those decisions will be made. 5. How, if LCS disagrees with the views of the private school officials on the provision of services or the types of services, LCS will provide to the private school officials a written explanation of the reasons why LCS chose not to provide services directly or through a contract. (f) Written affirmation. When timely and meaningful consultation has occurred, LCS will obtain written affirmation signed by representatives of participating private schools. If the representatives of the participating private schools do not provide the affirmation within a reasonable period of time, LCS forwards documentation of the consultation process to the GaDOE. (g) Compliance. A private school official has the right to submit a complaint to the GaDOE that the LEA did not engage in consultation that was meaningful or timely or did not give due consideration to the views of the private school officials. 1. The complaint must be submitted through the Formal Complaint Process identified in Rule (12) Dispute Resolution. 2. If the private school is dissatisfied with the decision of the GaDOE, the official may submit the complaint to the US DOE and the GaDOE must forward a copy of the appropriate documentation. (g) Equitable services determined. No parentally-placed private school child with a disability has an individual right to receive some or all of the special education and related services that the child would receive if enrolled in a public school. 1. LCS makes the final decisions with respect to the services to be provided to eligible parentally-placed private school children with disabilities prior to the start of the school year. 2. A services plan shall be completed for each private school child with disabilities who will receive special education and related services provided by LCS and the LCS will: (i) Initiate and conduct meetings to develop, review, and revise a services plan for the child; and (ii) Ensure that a representative of the private school is invited to each meeting. If the representative cannot attend, LCS shall use other measures to ensure participation, including individual or conference telephone calls. (h) Equitable services provided. Services provided to private school children with disabilities must be provided by personnel who meet the same standards as personnel providing services in the public schools, except the personnel are not required to meet the highly qualified definition. 1. Parentally-placed private school children with disabilities may receive a different amount of services than children with disabilities in public schools. 2. Each parentally-placed private school child with disabilities who has been designated to receive special education and related services shall have a services plan that describes the specific special education and related services that LCS will provide to the child (i) The services plan must, to the extent appropriate, provide a statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services to be provided to the child. (ii) The services plan must be in effect at the beginning of each school year and must be developed, reviewed and revised periodically, but not less than annually. 3. Services may be provided by: (i) Employees of LCS; or (ii) Through contract by LCS with an individual, organization, association, agency, or other entity.

### **Secular, Neutral and Non-ideological**

4. Special education and related services provided to parentally-placed private school children with disabilities, including materials and equipment must be secular, neutral, and non-ideological.

### **Location of services-Private**

Services provided to private school children with disabilities may be provided on-site at the child's private school, including a religious school, to the extent consistent with the law. 1. If it is necessary for the child to benefit from or participate in the services provided under his or her services plan, the private school children with disabilities must be provided transportation according to the following: (i) From the child's school or home to a site other than the private school; and (ii) From the services site to the private school, or to the child's home, depending on the timing of the services. (iii) LCS is not required to provide transportation from the child's home to the private school. (iv) The cost of transportation as described in this Rule may be included

in calculating whether LCS has met the requirements of proportionate funding in this rule. (j) Complaints. The procedural safeguards outlined in Rule 160-4-7-.09 Procedural Safeguards/Parents Rights do not apply to complaints that LCS has failed to meet requirements of this rule, including the provision of services indicated on the child's services plan except that: 1. The procedural safeguards outlined in rule 160-4-7-.09 Procedural Safeguards/Parents Rights do apply to complaints that LCS has failed to meet the requirements of Child Find, of this Rule, including the requirements in Rule 160-4-7-.05 Eligibility Determination and Criteria. Child find complaints must be filed with the LEA in which the private school is located and a copy must be forwarded to GaDOE. 2. The formal complaint procedures contained in Rule 160-4-7-.12 Dispute Resolution (a) Complaints do apply to complaints that LCS has failed to meet the requirements of equitable and timely consultation. (k) Requirement that funds not benefit a private school. 1. An LEA may not use IDEA Part B flow-through or federal preschool funds to finance the existing level of instruction in a private school or to otherwise benefit the private school. LCS will use funds provided under the IDEA to meet the special education and related services needs of children enrolled in private schools but not for: (i) The needs of the private school; or (ii) The general needs of the children enrolled in the private school. ( l ) Use of personnel. LCS may use IDEA Part B flow-through or federal preschool funds to provide personnel in a private school to the extent necessary to provide services under this rule to private school children with disabilities if those services are not normally provided by the private school. 1. In order to provide services to private school children with disabilities as described in this rule, LCS may use IDEA Part B flow-through or federal preschool funds to pay for the services of an employee of a private school if the employee performs the services outside of his or her regular hours of duty and under LCS supervision and control. (m) Separate classes prohibited. LCS may not use IDEA Part B funds for classes that are organized separately on the basis of school enrollment or religion of the children if: 1. The classes are at the same site; and 2. The classes include children enrolled in public schools and children enrolled in private schools.

### **Property, Equipment, and Supplies**

LCS controls and administers the funds used to provide special education and related services and hold title to and administer materials, equipment, and property purchased with those funds. 1. LCS may place equipment and supplies in a private school for the period of time needed for the program. 2. LCS must ensure that the equipment and supplies placed in a private school are used only for special education purposes and can be removed from the private school without remodeling the private school facility. 3. LCS shall remove equipment and supplies from a private school if they are no longer needed for special education purposes or the removal is necessary to avoid their unauthorized use for other than special education purposes. 4. No funds under IDEA Part B may be used for repairs, minor remodeling, or construction of private school facilities.

### **Child Find Process and Children in Private Schools - Lowndes**

When a parent/guardian of a child who is enrolled in a private school or is home schooled contacts the Lowndes County Special Education Department stating that they believe the child may be a child with a disability, a referral for special education is sent to the parent/guardian or school. The parent/guardian is asked to provide copies of a passed hearing and vision screening or Ear, Eye, Dental form, birth certificate, social security card, proof of residence, copies of school records including at least one set of standardized test scores, if age-appropriate, and documentation of interventions. Once the information is received, the information is sent to either a psychologist or speech therapist. One of these individuals will contact the parent/guardian or private school to discuss Response to Intervention (RtI), screen, and/or observe the student. If there is no RtI completed, the psychologist and/or speech therapist will provide the parent, guardian, and/or private school with suggestions for RtI and ways to document whether or not the suggestions are working. If insufficient progress is made with the interventions or the parent/guardian insists, the psychologist or speech therapist will begin the evaluation process. Once the evaluation is completed an eligibility meeting is held to review the findings.

### **Provision of IEPs and Service Plans to Privately Placed Students**

Students who attend private schools or are homeschooled are eligible for special education services based on Georgia eligibility guidelines. If a parent does not wish to enroll their child with an established eligibility within Lowndes County Schools, but wishes for them to remain in a private school and receive some special education service, an **Individual Service Plan (ISP)** is developed. Components of the ISP are the same as for an Individualized Education Plan. Georgia guidelines do not require local systems to provide the same services to students in private schools or home schools as they do to students enrolled within their system. Private school/home school services are dependent on available funds as determined by the state formula. Services may include speech therapy at the public school location, consultative services, staff development to private school staff, materials or equipment, among other options. ISP forms are found in Infinite Campus. At the meeting for a private school student, copies of the ISP are distributed to parents, placed in the school special education file, and sent to the central office. Private school representatives are invited to IEP meetings. All efforts will be made to accommodate their schedule(s). Phone attendance is available.

Public school-age students are evaluated and served based on the address of the private school or home school they attend. Students younger than school age are evaluated and served based on their home address unless he/she attends a private school which also serves kindergarten or above; this child is treated as a school-age child.

According to Georgia guidelines and established procedure, the system determines annually, with input from local private school/home school providers, the type of services to be provided based on available funds. Each summer, information is gathered from private and home-school agencies regarding services they would like to see their students receive. The director considers students with disabilities who are not in the public school and determines what services will be provided through proportionate share funds.

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

#### **LRE Requirements**

Lowndes County Schools' policies and procedures ensure that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities in Georgia, shall be educated with children who are not disabled. Special classes, separate schooling or other removals of children with disabilities from the regular class environment shall occur only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

#### **Annual IEP Placement Determination**

In determining the educational placement of a child with a disability, including a preschool child with a disability, Lowndes County Schools ensures that the placement decision is made by a group of persons, including the parents, and other persons knowledgeable about the child, the meaning of the evaluation data, and the placement options. The child's placement is determined at least annually, is based on the child's IEP.

#### **Location of Services - LCS**

Services are as close as possible to the child's home. Unless the IEP of a child with a disability requires some other arrangement, the child is educated in the school that he or she would attend if nondisabled. In selecting the LRE, consideration is given to any potential harmful effect on the child or on the quality of services that he or she needs. A child with a disability is not removed from education in age-appropriate regular classrooms solely because of needed modifications in the general education curriculum. Students with disabilities who are unable to participate in non-academic and extracurricular activities independently with non-disabled students may be served through the supplementary aid delivery model. The appropriateness of this service model will be made by the IEP team.

## School age placements

To the greatest extent possible services should be provided in the general education classroom with age-appropriate non-disabled peers, if required by the IEP: (i) Additional supportive services. The child remains in regular classroom with supplementary aids and services provided to the teacher and/or child to implement the IEP. The services provided may be from personnel such as paraprofessionals, interpreters, or others. (ii) Direct services. The child remains in the regular classroom with direct services from special education personnel on a consultative, collaborative, or co-teaching basis 2. Instruction outside the general classroom for individuals or small groups. 3. Separate day school or program (GNETS)

Students with disabilities may receive services through one or more of the following delivery models.

- ◆ **Separate Class** – a designated classroom to which the students come for instruction by a certified special education teacher.
- ◆ **Co-Teaching:** the special education teacher works with the regular teacher within the actual regular classroom setting as a team teacher. They share responsibility for planning and implementing daily lesson plans. Special education teachers are scheduled to work within the general education classroom for the entire class segment.
- ◆ **Collaboration:** the special education teacher works with the regular teacher within the actual regular classroom setting as a team teacher. They share responsibility for planning and implementing daily lesson plans. The special education teacher works with the regular education teacher a minimum of 50% of a segment in a general education class.
- ◆ **Consultative model** – the special education teacher assists the regular education teacher in understanding the needs of the disabled student and in developing appropriate accommodations, interventions, and instructional strategies to meet the student’s needs within the regular classroom. At a minimum, the special education teacher should work directly with the disabled student one segment per month. The special education teacher must be certified in the student’s primary area of disability.
- ◆ **Departmental model** – Special education services may be provided by a variety of special education-certified teachers; however, the student must be served at least one segment per month by a special education teacher certified in the student’s primary area of disability.
- ◆ **Supplementary Aids**– Aids who are provided in regular education classes, other education-related settings, and in extracurricular and non-academic settings, to enable children with disabilities to be educated with non-disabled children to the maximum extent appropriate in accordance with the requirements for FAPE.
- ◆ **Supplementary Services** – are instructional services provided to special education students that are duplicating services provided in the general education setting (double-dipping).

**Service delivery at Horizon Academy (Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) is determined by an IEP team. For more information see GNETS .**

## Hospital/Homebound Instruction Program

The application for and approval of HHB services for sped students follows the same requirements and processes as those for regular students until the point in which a team is to discuss services. For a special education student, the team is an IEP team. The IEP team will develop an Educational Service Plan (ESP) for the HHB student. This plan must address the disabling condition, anticipated length of absence, accommodations and modifications recommended by the licensed physician or licensed psychiatrist, instructional delivery method, place of instruction, adult parent designee if the student is under 18 years of age, team members participating, and strategies for the student’s re-entry to school upon his or her return. The plan does not need to be lengthy, but it must give all parties enough information to adequately serve the student’s needs. If the doctor does not address reentry on the medical referral form, the LEA may want to contact the doctor directly. If such information is not provided, the school team can develop the reentry plan

without doctor input. The ESP shall identify the number of hours necessary to meet the instructional needs of the student. To comply with the Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.31 Hospital/Homebound (HHB) Services and meet attendance requirements, a minimum of three hours of instruction per week must be provided. The ESP shall identify the appropriate course load for the student during the approved period of HHB instruction. It is noted that HHB instruction is not structured to supplant the regular school day and may, therefore limit the number and type of classes offered. For additional information, see HHB regulations.

### **Home-Based Instruction**

Home-Based instruction may be used as a short-term placement option on occasions when the parent and LCS agree at an IEP meeting with the following considerations: 1) A free and appropriate public education (FAPE) is provided and includes access to the general curriculum and an opportunity to make progress toward the goals and objectives included in the IEP; 2) home-based services must be reviewed no less than quarterly by the IEP team; and 3) all IEPs that require home-based placements will include a reintegration plan for returning to the school setting.

### **State-operated schools**

Students presenting severe sensory impairments and/or multiple disabilities may be considered for education services at a state-operated school. Local school systems may refer these students for placement consideration. State-operated schools are the Georgia School for the Deaf and Georgia Academy for the Blind.

### **Residential Placement**

If placement in a public or private residential program is necessary to provide special education and related services to a child with a disability, the program, including non-medical care and room and board, must be at no cost to the parents of the child.

### **Related Services**

The primary goal of Related/Support Services is to improve the ability of a student with a disability to benefit from IEP goals/objectives. Support personnel can provide direct services and/or program recommendations to classroom teachers, special education teachers, and instructional paraprofessionals for individual students and groups. Related services include educationally relevant Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and sometimes Speech and Language Therapy. Related services are addressed in the Georgia regulations under Definitions. For more information, see [Section VI a](#).

### **Preschool Placements and Services - Early Readiness Services for children with disabilities ages 3-5**

Preschool placements include: (1) A regular education early childhood program in the public school or community (such as Head Start, Bright from the Start Pre-Kindergarten, public or private daycare), and preschool programs with special education services delivered as; (i) Additional supportive services when the child remains in a regular early childhood program with supplementary aids and services provided to the teacher and/or child to implement the IEP. The services provided may be from personnel such as paraprofessionals, interpreters, or others. (ii) Direct services are when the child remains in a regular early childhood program with direct services from special education personnel utilizing a consultative, collaborative or co-teaching model or when the child is in the regular education early childhood program but special education and related services are provided outside a regular education early childhood program.

(2) Placements for children not attending a regular early childhood program include: (i) A separate special education program housed in the public school or in a community-based setting, in a separate school or residential school or facility; (ii) A program provided at home as a natural environment; (iii) A program provided through service providers in their offices; or (iv) Any combination of the above and/or other settings based on the child's IEP.

Special education services are provided to students determined to have a disability who turn three according to



Georgia guidelines. Early intervention programs, Babies Can't Wait, daycare or preschool teachers, or physicians may suggest to parents that an evaluation could be needed. The referral must be made by the parent. Referrals are made to the Central Office Department of Special Education. A Lowndes County Preschool Special Education Referral form will be sent to the parent for completion. Upon receipt of the referral and required documentation, a Consent for Evaluation will be sent to the parents. Upon return of signed consent, an appropriate evaluation will be completed. A meeting to determine eligibility and appropriate services will be held.

Preschool children receive services based on their individual needs as documented through the IEP. Services are provided within the LCS school district at daycare and preschool settings, at Head Start locations, and at system schools. Early Readiness Services are available for students based on an IEP team recommendation. These classes are located at Hahira Elementary, Lake Park Elementary, Pine Grove Elementary, and Westside Elementary. Because this service is only offered for preschool-aged students, siblings are not transferred to the service school unless they are approved for school choice.

Students entering kindergarten will return to the elementary school for which they are zoned. Parents may submit the school choice application requesting to stay at the elementary school where the student attended for special education preschool. The application can be found on the Lowndes County School's website. Parents are informed by the district office whether or not their application has been approved.

Data regarding the effectiveness of special education services for young children must be reported to the State annually. Teachers and speech therapists are required to maintain documentation and turn it into the assigned coordinator prior to the end of each school year for each child on his/her caseload who meets the exit criteria.

The state recognizes 5 reasons for exiting preschool:

- Child is 6 years of age or near age 6
- Child is leaving preschool and entering kindergarten
- Child has moved out of state
- Child is no longer eligible for special education services
- Child is deceased

In addition to demographic information, data provided to the state when a child exits the preschool program is:

- Date of entry into program
- Entry Age
- Entrance data on Social Emotional, Communication, and Adaptive Behavior
- Date of exit from program
- Duration of services
- Teacher / therapist name when exited
- Exit data on Social Emotional, Communication, and Adaptive Behavior

The Exit data is put on the Pre-K Outcome Data Summary Form by the teacher or therapist and is collected by the coordinator. The data is provided to the State by the director of special education via the GaDOE Portal.

The Preschool exit data template is found on the Portal under the "view documents", "special education" tabs.

### **Discipline** (State Rule: 160-4-7-.10)

The code of student conduct shall apply to all children unless a child's individualized education program (IEP) specifically provides otherwise. Lowndes County Schools shall ensure that the parents and the child with a disability receive notice of the rules and regulations applicable to children with disabilities with respect to

child management, discipline and suspension/expulsion upon the child's entry into a special education program or at the annual IEP review.

In Lowndes County Schools, all students follow the system's Student Code of Conduct. On occasion, the child's individualized education program (IEP) will specifically provide other rules for the child to follow. In Lowndes County, each child is given a copy of the Student Code of Conduct at the beginning of the year. In the back of the Student Code of Conduct is a tear-out page which is to be signed and returned to the school once the parent/guardian(s) have reviewed the Student Code of Conduct. At each initial meeting, and subsequent Annual Review Meeting, parents are given their Rights as Parents Regarding Special Education. In these rights, there is a section detailing the procedures when disciplining children with disabilities.

Each administrator at the school level may consider any unique circumstances on a case-by-case basis when determining whether a change in placement is appropriate for a child with a disability who violates a code of student conduct. School personnel may remove a child with a disability who violates a code of student conduct from his or her current placement to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting, another setting or suspension, for no more than 10 consecutive school days (to the extent those alternatives are applied to children without disabilities), and for additional removals of not more than 10 consecutive school days in that same school year for separate incidents of misconduct as long as those removals do not constitute a change of placement. After a child with a disability has been removed from his or her current placement for 10 school days in the same school year, during any subsequent days of removal Lowndes County Schools must provide FAPE.

For disciplinary changes in placement that would exceed 10 consecutive school days, if the behavior that gave rise to the violation of the school code is determined not to be a manifestation of the child's disability, school personnel may apply the relevant disciplinary procedures to children with disabilities in the same manner and the same duration as the procedures would be applied to children without disabilities except

1. The student must continue to receive educational services (FAPE) so as to enable the child to continue to participate in the general educational curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP; and
2. Receive, as appropriate, a functional behavioral assessment and behavioral intervention services and modifications as set forth in the behavioral intervention plan and IEP, where appropriate, that are designed to address the behavior violation so it does not recur.
3. If services are provided to a child without disabilities who has been similarly removed, Lowndes County School will be required to provide services during periods of removal to a child with a disability who has been removed from his or her current placement for 10 school days or less in that year.
4. After a child with a disability has been removed from his or her current placement for 10 school days in the same school year, if the current removal is not for more than 10 consecutive school days and is not a change in placement because of disciplinary removal, school personnel, in consultation with at least one of the child's teachers determine the extent to which services are needed in order to provide FAPE, so as to enable the child to continue to participate in the general education curriculum, although in another setting, and to progress toward meeting the goals set out in the child's IEP.
5. If the removal is for more than 10 consecutive school days or is a change in placement because of disciplinary removals, the child's IEP team will determine appropriate services needed in order to provide FAPE.
6. The services required may be provided in an interim alternative educational setting.

### **Procedures for Suspended Students**

Each month, the special education coordinator will run a report identifying students who have received Out of School Suspension (OSS) and In School Suspension (ISS). The coordinator will notify the assistant principal the names of students who are reaching 10 days of ISS or OSS.

## **Manifestation Determination**

Once the student has reached 10 days of OSS or prior to being assigned to the Alternative Program, a manifestation determination meeting is scheduled. The special education coordinator will contact the parent, the school psychologist, the special education teacher and any other relevant school personnel to schedule the meeting. A meeting invitation will be created and provided to the parent. Parental rights will be provided at the meeting. At the MD Review meeting, the team will review all of the relevant information in the child's file, including the child's IEP, any teacher observations and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine if the conduct in question was caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the child's disability or if the conduct in question was the direct result of the school's failure to implement the IEP. The Manifestation Determination Form, found in Infinite Campus, will be used to guide the manifestation meeting.

## **Functional Behavior Assessment**

If the conduct is determined to be caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the child's disability or if the conduct in question was the direct result of the school's failure to implement the IEP, the conduct must be determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability. In this case, the school must conduct a functional behavioral assessment, (unless the school had conducted an FBA before the behavior that resulted in the change of placement occurred), and develop a behavioral intervention plan for the child.

At each school, at least one person has been trained in conducting functional behavioral assessments. If an FBA is required, the manifestation committee would contact the person on staff to initiate the FBA. At the same time, the committee will schedule a review of the FBA which will be approximately three weeks from the original manifestation meeting. After the completion of the FBA, the manifestation committee will reconvene to review the results of the FBA and develop a behavior intervention plan.

If a behavior intervention plan has already been developed, the committee must review the behavioral intervention plan and modify it, as necessary, to address the behavior, and return the child to the placement from which the child was removed, unless the parent and the school agree to a change of placement as part of the modification of the behavioral intervention plan.

If the behavior is a manifestation of the child's disability because of the direct result of the school's failure to implement the IEP, the school must take immediate steps to remedy those deficiencies.

When the behavior is determined not to be a manifestation of the child's disability, the school may proceed with the change of placement. However, FAPE must be provided. Suspension services may include several segments per week of services at a community location, such as the public library, or at a system school, after hours, with the consent of the administrator. Suspension service hours may not equal the number of segments that would be provided if the child were in school.

## **Special Circumstances**

There are special circumstances when a change in placement may occur without a manifestation meeting. Under these special circumstances, the interim alternative educational setting is determined by the IEP team. School personnel may remove a child to an interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 school days without regard to whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability, if the child:

1. Carries a weapon to or possesses a weapon at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of the state or the school district;
2. Knowingly possesses or uses illegal drugs, or sells or solicits the sale of a controlled substance,

while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of the state or school system; or

3. Has inflicted serious bodily injury upon another person while at school, on school premises, or at a school function under the jurisdiction of the state or school system.

### **Bus Discipline**

Students will follow the bus discipline outlined in the Lowndes County Schools Student Code of Conduct. If the bus suspension impedes the ability of the school to provide FAPE, the IEP committee will convene to determine appropriate actions.

### **Notification**

When a child is being disciplined for conduct that is in violation of the system's student code of conduct, the administration will contact the parent either by phone or in writing about the disposition. When the disposition involves a change of placement, the parent will be notified the same day. Parental rights will be given to the parents on the same day.

### **Appeal**

If the parent of a child with a disability is in disagreement with any decision regarding placement or the manifestation determination or the school believes that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or others, may appeal the decision by requesting a hearing. The hearing is requested by filing a due process hearing request. An administrative law judge or hearing officer hears the facts and makes a determination regarding an appeal under the disagreement. In making a determination, the administrative law judge or hearing officer may:

1. Return the child with a disability to the placement from which the child was removed if, during the review, it was decided that the child's behavior was indeed a manifestation of the child's disability; or
2. Order a change of placement of the child with a disability to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 school days if it is determined that maintaining the current placement of the child is substantially likely to result in injury to the child or to others.

### **Placement during Appeals**

When an appeal has been made by either the parent or the school system, the child must remain in the interim alternative educational setting pending the decision of due process hearing or until the expiration of the 45 school day time period, whichever comes first, unless the parent and the LEA agree otherwise.

### **Protections for Children Not Yet Eligible for Special Education and Related Services**

A child who has not been determined to be eligible for special education and related services and who has engaged in behavior that violated a code of student conduct, may assert any of the protections provided to a child with a disability if the school system had knowledge that the child was a child with a disability before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred. For the school system to be deemed to have knowledge that a child is a child with a disability before the behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action occurred:

1. The parent of the child expressed concern in writing to supervisory or administrative personnel of the appropriate educational agency or a teacher of the child, that the child is in need of special education and related services; or
2. The parent of the child requested an evaluation of the child; or
3. The teacher of the child or other personnel of the school system expressed specific concerns about a pattern of behavior demonstrated by the child directly to the director of special education of the school system or to other supervisory personnel of the school system.

A school system would not be deemed to have knowledge that a child is a child with a disability if the parent of the child has not allowed an evaluation of the child or has refused services or the child has been evaluated and determined not to be a child with a disability. If a request is made for an evaluation of a child during the time period in which the child is subjected to disciplinary measures the evaluation must be conducted in an expedited manner. Until the evaluation is completed, the child remains in the educational placement determined by school authorities, which can include suspension or expulsion without educational services. If the child is determined to be a child with a disability, taking into consideration information from the evaluation conducted by the agency and the information provided by the parents, the school must provide special education and related services.

### **Referral to and Action by Law Enforcement and Judicial Authorities**

Nothing prohibits the school from reporting a crime committed by a child with a disability to appropriate authorities or prevents State law enforcement or judicial authorities from exercising their responsibilities with regard to the application of Federal and State law to crimes committed by a child with a disability. The school reporting a crime committed by a child with a disability must ensure that copies of the special education and disciplinary records of the child are transmitted for consideration by the appropriate authorities to whom the agency reports the crime. The school reporting a crime may transmit copies of the child's special education and disciplinary records only to the extent that the transmission is permitted by FERPA.

### **Change of Placement Because of Disciplinary Removals**

A change in placement occurs if the removal is for more than 10 consecutive school days, or if the child has been subjected to a series of removals that constitute a pattern. A pattern is considered when the series of removals total more than 10 school days in a school year or the child's behavior is substantially similar to the child's behavior in previous incidents that resulted in the series of removals. The similarities may be in the length of each removal, the total amount of time the child has been removed and the proximity of the removals to one another. The school system determines on a case by case basis whether a pattern of removals constitutes a change of placement.

### **Monitoring Discipline Procedures**

Monthly, a Special Education Coordinator will run discipline reports for all schools of students with and without disabilities who have received In School Suspension or Out of School Suspension. Using this data, the special education coordinator will document any trends in frequency of students, events, discipline actions, teachers, and administrators. Any trends noted in frequency of students, events, actions, and teachers will be reported to the school level administrator, as well as the Special Education Director. Any trends in frequency of administrator will be reported directly to the Special Education Director. Technical assistance will be provided to teachers who are identified by the school level administrator as needing assistance.

A Discipline Procedure Log will be developed at the Central Office level to monitor the discipline procedures at the school level. The log will track manifestation meetings, parental notifications, Functional Behavioral Assessments, continuation of services, placements at the alternative program, and tribunals. At the school level, the Assistant Principal or Special Education Coordinator will complete the Discipline Procedure log after each manifestation meeting. Monthly, the log will be reviewed by the Special Education Director or designee. The log will be compared to the discipline reports run monthly by the Special Education Coordinator. Quarterly, the Special Education Director or designee will randomly select names of students on the Discipline Procedure Log for a records review. If there is a need, technical assistance will be provided to teachers/staff who are not following procedures.

### **Technical Assistance**

Each school will receive training or a refresher in the discipline procedures through a faculty meeting at the

beginning of each school year. As identified by school level administrators, technical assistance may be provided for teachers/staff on an as needed basis. Areas of assistance that may be provided are conducting Functional Behavioral Assessments, writing Behavior Intervention Plans, classroom management, and de-escalation training.

### **Individualized Education Program (IEP) (State Rule: 160-4-7-.6)**

#### **GENERAL.**

The IEP is a written statement, current within one year, for each child with a disability. It is developed, reviewed, and revised in a meeting in accordance with this Rule, and that must include a statement of the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, including how the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum (i.e., the same curriculum as for nondisabled children); how the disability affects the child's participation in appropriate activities; a statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals designed to meet the child's needs that result from the child's disability to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum; and meet each of the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disability. For children with disabilities who take alternate assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards, a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives; a description of how the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured; and when periodic reports on the progress the child is making toward meeting the annual goals (such as through the use of quarterly or other periodic reports, concurrent with the issuance of report cards) will be provided. A statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services, based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable, to be provided to the child, or on behalf of the child, and a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided to enable the child to advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals; to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum and to participate in extracurricular and other non-academic activities; and to be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and nondisabled children in academic, non-academic and extracurricular activities; an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with nondisabled children in the regular class and in non-academic and extracurricular activities; a statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on State and district wide assessments; and if the IEP Team determines that the child must take an alternate assessment instead of a particular regular State or district wide assessment of student achievement, a statement of why the child cannot participate in the regular assessment; and why the particular alternate assessment selected is appropriate for the child. The parents of the child must be informed that the child is being assessed against alternate or modified achievement standards and any consequences of such assessments. IEP teams must select for each assessment only those accommodations that do not invalidate the score according to state standards. The projected date for the beginning of the services and program modifications and the anticipated frequency, location, and duration of those services and program modifications. The IEP is accessed by all service providers

#### **Meetings:**

*For families where English is not the primary language, contact the special education administrative assistant for forms in the appropriate language.*

No student shall be placed in a special education program until that student is the subject of a meeting of the Eligibility Team and parent(s) have consented to services. Members may include the Director of Special Education, Special Education Coordinator, parents, student, principal, assistant principal, counselor, psychologist, classroom teachers, any special teachers who are serving or who might be assigned to serve the student, related service personnel, and any other personnel whose knowledge and/or expertise would assist in determining whether the child is a child with a disability and the educational needs of the child. At initial placement meetings the Director of Special Education, Special Education Coordinator, or Assistant Principal

will act as the Local Education Agency Representative (LEA Rep.). At annual reviews and other IEP reviews the assistant principal or special education coordinator will serve as LEA Rep. In some instances, specially trained teachers or speech therapists may act as the LEA Rep.

### **Initial Meetings:**

When the Sped AA receives the referral, she will contact the coordinator of the school that a meeting needs to be scheduled within a reasonable time after the evaluation is completed. In Lowndes County, the meeting is typically scheduled within 10 days after the evaluation is completed. The Sped AA will supply the coordinator with the date the evaluation. The coordinator will schedule a meeting with the AP prior to the evaluation being completed. The Sped AA sends the meeting notice to the parent via postal mail. A notice of the meeting, along with a reminder notice is sent, via email, to the special education teacher, regular education teacher, coordinator, AP and other needed school personnel.

Once the evaluation has been completed, the psychologist will share a copy of the evaluation through Google Drive with the special education teacher. The special education teacher will read the draft report. A copy of the draft report can be made available to other necessary school personnel to review prior to the meeting. The special education teacher will draft an IEP in Campus. If necessary, the IEP committee will reconvene no later than 30 days from determining eligibility to discuss the IEP. The special education teacher will make at least 2 more contacts with the parent/guardian about attending the meeting. The regular education teacher and other parties needed for the eligibility meeting will be reminded by the special education teacher.

**Note: A minimum of three notification attempts to the parents must be documented.**

### **Initial Placement Meeting Outcomes:**

1. Initial Placement Meeting is held. The student is not eligible for special education. The student is returned to the SST for continued monitoring.
- OR
2. Initial Placement Meeting is held. The student is found eligible for special education. The IEP is developed.

If special education placement is recommended, Parental Consent for Services is obtained. The parents are given a copy of the IEP, Evaluation/Eligibility Reports, and Parental Rights. If available, a psychological evaluation is also given to the parents.

If parents refuse the offer of initial IEP, the student is not considered to be a SWD, even though he/she was found eligible. A Consent for Services, indicating no and reasons why the parent refuses services, is signed by the parent. No Revocation of Consent for Services Is needed.

If the parent does not attend the meeting, IEP implementation date is made 10 days from meeting date. Copies of the Consent for Placement, IEP, Eligibility Reports, Parental Rights, psychological evaluation, as appropriate, and LC-10C (found in IC) are sent to the parent. If the parent does not return Consent for Placement within 10 days, the AP contacts the parent. If the parent does not respond within 15 days, the AP contacts the social worker to request a home visit. Once the Consent for Placement and LC-10C are received by the school, services may begin. If there is a disagreement concerning placement, either the parent or the school may request mediation or a Due Process Hearing.

### **Annual Review Meetings:**

The special education teacher completes the following:

- A. Schedule annual review with AP or Coordinator

- B. Notify required participants (parent, regular ed teacher, LEA rep., etc.).
- C. Gather T4 documentation.
- D. Assess expiring IEP objectives to determine progress.
- E. Draft information into the IEP program.
- F. Remind participants of the meeting.
- G. Document parent meeting reminders/responses on the original Meeting Notice. **Note: A minimum of three notification attempts to the parents must be documented on the IEP.**

## Procedures for Conducting a Meeting

### Definition of IEP Team

The IEP team is a group of individuals responsible for developing, reviewing, or revising an IEP. Each IEP team must include, *at a minimum*, the following participants:

- Parent(s) of the student
- Not less than one regular ed teacher if the student is, or may be, participating in the regular education environment (see excusal from meeting below)
- Not less than one special ed teacher
- A representative of the LEA, knowledgeable about 1) specially designed instruction, 2) general ed curriculum, and 3) LEA resources
- An individual knowledgeable about instructional implications of evaluation results
- Whenever appropriate, the student

*Excusal from the Meeting* – see Teacher Excusal letter in Infinite Campus

A member of the IEP Team (described above) is not required to attend an IEP Team meeting, in whole or in part, if the parent of a child with a disability and the LEA agree, in writing, that the attendance of the member is not necessary because the member's area of the curriculum or related services is not being modified or discussed in the meeting.

### Parent Participation

Lowndes County Schools shall (a) take steps to ensure that one or both of the parents of a child with a disability are present at each IEP Team meeting or are afforded the opportunity to participate, including notifying parents of the meeting early enough to ensure that they will have an opportunity to attend, and scheduling the meeting at a mutually agreed upon time and place. (b) The invitation to the IEP Team meeting shall indicate the purpose, time, and location of the meeting, participants who will be in attendance, and informs the parents of their right to invite other individuals who, in their opinion, have knowledge or special expertise regarding their child, including related services personnel. The invitation shall also inform the parents of a child previously served in Babies Can't Wait of their right to request that an invitation to the initial IEP Team meeting be sent to the service coordinator or other representative of Babies Can't Wait to assist with the smooth transition of services. (c) For a student with a disability, beginning not later than entry into ninth grade or by age 16 whichever comes first, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP Team, the invitation must also indicate that a purpose of the meeting will be the consideration of postsecondary goals and transition services for the student. LCS will invite the student and identify any other agency that will be invited to send a representative. (d) If neither parent can attend an IEP Team meeting, LCS will use other methods to ensure parent participation, including individual or conference telephone calls or video conferences. A meeting may be conducted without the parents in attendance if the LEA is unable to convince the parents that they should attend. In this case, LCS will keep a record of its attempts to arrange a mutually agreed on time and place such as detailed records of telephone calls made or attempted and the results of those calls; copies of correspondence sent to the parents and any responses received; and detailed records and results of visits made to the home or place of employment and the results of those visits. (e) LCS will take whatever



action is necessary to ensure that the parents understand the proceedings of the IEP Team meeting, including arranging for an interpreter for a parent who is deaf or whose native language is other than English. (f) LCS will provide a copy of the IEP to the parents at no cost. (g) LCS will ensure that the parents of each child with a disability are members of any group that makes decisions on the child's educational placement.

### **When The IEP Must Be In Effect**

(a) At the beginning of each school year, Lowndes County Schools will have an IEP in effect, for each child with a disability within its jurisdiction. (b) IEP or IFSP for children aged three through five. In the case of a child with a disability aged three through five, an IEP or IFSP shall be in place. If the IFSP is utilized, it must be: 1. Consistent with the Georgia rule for IEPs; and 2. Agreed to by LCS and the child's parents. 3. LCS will - (i) Provide to the child's parents a detailed explanation of the differences between an IFSP and an IEP; and (ii) If the parents choose an IFSP, obtain written informed consent from the parents.

### **Initial IEPs Provision Of Services**

Lowndes County Schools ensures that a meeting to develop an IEP for a child is conducted within 30 days of a determination that the child needs special education and related services; and as soon as possible following development of the IEP, special education and related services are made available to the child in accordance with the child's IEP.

### **Accessibility Of Child's Iep To Teachers And Others**

Lowndes County Schools ensures that: (a) The child's IEP is accessible to each regular education teacher, special education teacher, related services provider, and any other service provider who is responsible for its implementation; and (b) Each teacher and provider is informed of - 1. His or her specific responsibilities related to implementing the child's IEP; and 2. The specific accommodations, modifications, and supports that must be provided for the child in accordance with the IEP.

### **Excusal of IEP Team Members**

A member of the IEP Team described in (described above) may be excused from attending an IEP Team meeting, in whole or in part, when the meeting involves a modification to or discussion of the member's area of the curriculum or related services, if the parent, in writing, and the LEA consent to the excusal and the member submits, in writing to the parent and the IEP Team, input into the development of the IEP prior to the meeting.

### **Introduction**

All members of the committee introduce themselves. The LEA Rep. explains the purpose of the meeting.

### **Eligibility Status:**

For Initial Placement Meetings Only: The committee reviews the draft eligibility, considers criteria for special education services and determines whether or not the child is a child with a disability. **A psychologist must be present at all eligibility determinations for Learning Disabilities and on an "as needed" basis for all other eligibility determinations.**

For Annual Reviews, the teacher will inform the committee of the current eligibility status.

For Re-evaluation Determination (RED) Meetings, see page 21

### **Required Sections of the IEP**

#### **Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)**

The PLAAFP should be updated at each IEP review with current information. The PLAAFP shall be constructed by answering the state-mandated "questions to be answered." **Parent comments should be**

**included whether or not they attend the meeting. Teachers should communicate with parents well before the meeting date to determine any areas of concern.** This narrative should provide the basis from which goals and objectives are developed. Placement recommendations or decisions are not part of the PLAAFP. Assessment results from current norm-referenced tests, as well as classroom assessments, should be included. The PLAAFP should address all areas of a child's performance, regardless of the eligibility category.

The Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) is the meat of the IEP. A person should be able to read the PLAAFP and know the student. *There should be a common thread throughout the IEP that is directly related to the student's weaknesses.* The PLAAFP is the starting point or baseline for each goal. This section clearly indicates current academic achievement and functional performance. Progress on annual goals can be reported, also.

### **Results of Initial/Most Recent Evaluation**

Information should be listed from general to specific. Put the most historical information first and move on to the most recent. Make sure to label all reports including dates. List any medical information that is relevant. Related services evaluations (SI, PT, OT) should go next if the student receives those services. The therapists will need to include dates and the type of evaluations.

### **Results Of State Assessments**

The results of state assessments would be listed next. Include all of the subtests from the last results obtained. Explain what the passing score is. Make sure to include what accommodations the student received on the tests. Next, include the progress on the IEP goals/objectives. Explain what was mastered and what wasn't. For students served in Life Skills, academic and functional skills testing could be listed after the GAA results. Lastly, list other relevant current data such as the number of absences or the number of discipline referrals a student might have.

### **Academic, Developmental, and/or Functional Strengths**

In this section, the student's strengths and interests will be discussed. Make sure to include educational programming strengths, such as learning processes, sub-skill areas, etc. (There are more examples listed in the sample IEP given at the training.) Do not pair a strength with a weakness.

### **Academic, Developmental, and/or Functional Weaknesses**

This is the most important section. Prioritize the needs of the student, especially when there are many weak areas. The needs are the starting point for goals and objectives. The needs should be written in observable and measurable terms. If something is a need, then there should be a goal to address it. *The needs are the common thread throughout the IEP.* There is a formula you can use to write the needs. 1. Label the area of need. 2. Write a sentence identifying the skill weakness. 3. Give specifics related to the skill. 4. Provide baseline or starting point.

### **Parental Concerns**

This is written as a result of ongoing communication between the teacher and the parent. Try to discuss this prior to the meeting. Give yourself credit for the times you talk to the parent in the car line, picking up from the nurse, or at the grocery store!

### **Effect of the Disability**

Do not put a label. Discuss what it is about the disability that negatively impacts the student's progress in the general education curriculum. Do not discuss placement needs. This is where academic supports will derive.

### **Consideration of Special Factors**

This section considers special factors that include behavior issues, communication, Braille use for blind or visually impaired students, the unique needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing, assistive technology and limited English proficiency. Children identified with visual impairments shall be evaluated to determine the need for braille skills consistent with the requirements of 34 C.F.R. 300.324(a)(2)(iii) and Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-4-7-.05. All students receiving service through the Emotional and Behavioral Disordered Program must have behavior as a special factor. A Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) should be developed as part of the IEP if the goals are not effectively addressing the behavioral concern. If a student is attending Horizon Academy a BIP is required. Assistive Technology must be considered for all students. For more information about special factors for specific categories of eligibility, go to the GaDOE website at: <http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/default.aspx>

### **Goals and Objectives**

At an Initial Placement meeting, determine appropriate goals and objectives based on student weaknesses as discussed in the PLAAFP.

At an annual review, discuss collected and analyzed data, document level of progress for each objective prior to developing new goals and objectives. Determine new goals and objectives based on student weaknesses as document PLAAFP.

### **Annual Goals/Short Term Objectives**

All students with special needs are expected to learn the content of the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE), therefore, these will be the understood goals of all students. **Do not restate the GSE.**

If there is a need in the PLAAFP, there must be a goal. Goals are skills-based. They are not standards. Goals work on skills that provide access to the standards. The goals must be observable and measurable (See it, Hear it, Count it).

### **Measurement**

There are three parts to a measurable goal. These are Performance, Conditions, and Criteria. Performance is what the student is expected to do or produce. Use an action verb and observable pronouns. You must be able to hear or see it. The Condition is the condition or context under which the performance is to occur. It influences the nature of the performance. It may include special materials, prompts, cues, settings or times of day and level of material. The Criteria is how well the performance must be done to be considered mastered. The Criteria must make sense with the performance. Do not use percentages with no frame of reference. You must be able to monitor the stated performance at least each grading period.

As goals are written, consider how the data will be collected or how the datasheet will look. The use of teacher observation is not allowed, according to case law. Make sure the instrument listed is appropriate for the number of times it must be given. Standardized tests are only given once a year, so they are not appropriate for monitoring progress.

### **Short Term Objectives**

Short Term Objectives/Benchmarks are required for students being assessed through the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA). These are the smaller steps or components that allow the student to reach the goal. Typically, 3-5 objectives are needed per goal.

### **Transportation**

Most students with disabilities do not have needs that limit their participation in regular transportation. Some students, however, may need special transportation based on needs identified through the IEP process. The school system provides special transportation at the recommendation of the IEP committee. The committee may recommend special transportation based on a student's physical, behavioral, intellectual or other needs. If the IEP committee recommends special transportation the LEA Rep. will contact the Director of Transportation to make arrangements. A student's participation in either regular or special transportation may not be changed without convening an IEP committee meeting. Special transportation should be reviewed annually to determine continued need.

### **Extended School Year Services (ESY)**

Lowndes County Schools ensures that extended school year services are available as necessary to provide a FAPE. Extended school year services must be provided only if a child's IEP Team determines, on an individual basis, that the services are necessary for the provision of FAPE to the child. 2. Lowndes County Schools will not limit extended school year services to particular categories of disability or unilaterally limit the type, amount, or duration of those services.

Definition. As used in this Rule, the term extended school year services means special education and related services that are provided to a child with a disability beyond the normal school year of the LEA in accordance with the child's IEP, at no cost to the parents of the child; and meet the standards of the State. **Teachers who provide ESY services must acquire the appropriate forms to log service time for payment. These forms can be obtained from the special education office.**

### **Testing Accommodations**

**All students in Lowndes County Schools participate in the State assessment program.** At each IEP meeting, the committee will determine whether a student can participate in the assessment program without accommodations, whether a student will need accommodations to access assessments or if the student will participate in the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA). All Kindergarteners in Lowndes County Schools participate in the Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS). Students grades 3-8 will participate in the Georgia Milestones End of Grade test. Students in grades 9-12 will participate in the Georgia Milestones End of Course test.

The allowed [testing accommodations](#) for the Georgia Milestones Assessment System, GAA 2.0, GKIDs, ACCESS, and NAEP can be found on the Georgia Department of Education website under Testing/Assessments.

### **GAA**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) and the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) require that states ensure all students, including those with significant cognitive disabilities, have access to challenging academic standards and participate in the state's assessment program. The U.S. Department of Education defines alternate achievement standards as establishing performance expectations that differ in complexity from grade-level achievement standards. These standards must be aligned with the state's content standards, promote access to the general content standards, and articulate the highest achievement levels possible for the individual student. This means teachers may customize learning expectations for students who participate in alternate assessments.

For students with disabilities, each student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team determines how the student shall participate in Georgia's student assessment program. When considering the GAA 2.0, the IEP team must complete the [Eligibility Criteria for the Georgia Alternate Assessment 2.0](#) annually. This form is

found in Infinite Campus. If a student's IEP team determines that a student cannot meaningfully access the Georgia Milestones Assessment System, even with maximum appropriate accommodations, then the student must participate in the GAA 2.0.

The GAA 2.0 is designed to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities are provided access to the state academic content standards and given the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the knowledge, concepts, and skills inherent in the standards.

This assessment will provide meaningful information about classroom instruction and help identify students' areas of strength and improvement through standardized tests. Unlike the original GAA, GAA 2.0 is not a portfolio-based assessment. Thus, it will measure students' achievement and not progress. The GAA 2.0 will be administered to all eligible students in the following areas:

- Grades K, 3-8, and 11 will be assessed in English language arts and mathematics.
- Grades 5, 8, and 11 will also be assessed in science and social studies.

The GAA 2.0 will include standardized items with multiple access points. The intent is to reduce the teacher's burden related to selecting or developing tasks; bring greater standardization to the administration; improve scoring reliability; and introduce an online task submission system.

### **Classroom/Program Accommodations**

Appropriate Classroom, Testing, Supplementary Aids/Services and Instructional Accommodations or Supports for Personnel should be completed as a portion of every IEP. Consideration should be given to all areas of the school environment when developing these classroom and program accommodations. Classroom accommodations are those supports that a student needs in order to be successful in the general curriculum. Testing accommodations are the supports a student needs in order to show their knowledge level of the material taught in the classroom. If the student requires testing accommodations on State mandated testing, they should be reflected in the testing accommodations for the classroom. Sometimes, students have testing accommodations allowed in the classroom that are not allowed on State-mandated tests. If a student receives support from a Supplemental Aids/Support, a statement must be included. Supports for School Personnel is anything that teachers may need to know about a student. For example, if the student has a piece of equipment that is used each day, teachers will need to be trained on how to use the equipment.

### **Full Continuum of Alternative Placements - Services Considered**

The committee should consider service options on a continuum from regular class, regular class with supplementary aids/services, consultative, small group to pull-out, in the child's area of disability. Goals should be discussed and a specific location and service determined for each. Each service considered is listed in the "Services Considered" section in the IEP.

### **Plan for Services**

The plan for services must include special education services, related services if appropriate, modifications/accommodations, positive behavior supports with frequency, location, and duration of services. Explanation for exclusion of participation with non-disabled peers: **when a service that removes a child from a general education setting is recommended, a narrative of why the child cannot be served within the general education classroom must be included.**

### **Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)**

A student served in special education through any eligibility category may have a BIP if needed. A BIP is required for students being served at Horizon Academy (HA). The plan will target behaviors that impact the student's learning and/or the learning of others. The plan will include a continuum of interventions. Committees must carefully consider appropriate interventions. All students are expected to follow the system and school discipline code without modification of the code. The behavior plan outlines interventions to assist students in following the discipline code. In addition to interventions, consequences, both positive and negative, need to be addressed.

### **Assistive Technology**

(a) Children with disabilities who require assistive technology in order to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) are eligible for assistive technology devices or services, or both, as a part of the child's special education, related services, or supplemental aids and services. (b) Each IEP Team will consider whether or not a child requires assistive technology devices and services in order to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Minimal compliance will be indicating the appropriate response in the Consideration of Special Factors section of the IEP. Assistive technology can also be addressed when considering other factors such as communication needs and instruction in the use of Braille.

### **Assistive Technology Evaluations**

(c) An assistive technology evaluation may be required if appropriate assistive technology solutions are not known to the child's IEP Team through the consideration process. This evaluation shall be conducted by a multidisciplinary team of professionals knowledgeable about assistive technology devices in the technology areas being assessed. The child and family should also be included in this evaluation process. The evaluation should result in recommendations for assistive technology devices and services, if required. (d) If the child's IEP Team determines that assistive technology devices or services are required for the child to receive a FAPE, a statement to that effect must be included in the child's IEP. 1. If assistive technology is required for the child to participate in district-wide or Statewide testing, the need for technology should be documented in the appropriate section of the IEP and provided to the child. 2. If assistive technology devices or services, or both, are required for a child who is blind or other print disabled to access alternative format instructional materials, the assistive technology should be documented in the IEP and provided to the child.

### **Home Use of Assistive Technology**

(e) If the IEP Team determines that the child with a disability requires school purchased assistive technology at home or in other settings to receive a FAPE, the assistive technology must be provided to the child at no cost to the parent. The need for assistive technology in non-school settings should be documented in the child's IEP. An AT Referral should be completed only when the school resources have been exhausted.

### **Individual Transition Plan**

A transition plan is required upon a child turning 16 years old or prior to entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade, whichever comes first. A transition plan must include appropriate, measurable postsecondary goals based upon student preferences and interests and get appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and where appropriate, independent living skills. Transition services, including courses of study needed to assist the student in reaching those goals, will be included. Teachers utilize the Lowndes County Schools Transition Checklist to ensure all required components are included for state compliance. The plan will be developed during the student's 8th-grade year when the annual review would normally take place. The transition plan will be updated each year, thereafter, until the student graduates with a regular education diploma or ages out by reaching his or her 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday. (See Section V. Readiness for College and Career) Lowndes County Schools will invite the student with a disability to attend the student's IEP Team meeting if a purpose of the meeting will be the consideration of the postsecondary goals for the student and the transition services needed to assist the student in reaching those goals. If the student does not attend the IEP Team meeting, LCS will take other steps to ensure that the student's preferences and interests are considered. To the

extent appropriate, with the consent of the parents or the adult student who has reached the age of 18, in implementing the transition requirements, LCS will invite a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services.

### **Transfer of Rights**

Beginning not later than one year before the student reaches age 18, the IEP will include a statement that the student has been informed of the student's rights under Part B of the IDEA, if any, which will transfer to the student upon reaching age 18.

### **Summary of Performance (SOP)**

The Summary of Performance (SOP) is required under the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA). IDEA requires the following: "For a child whose eligibility under special education terminates due to graduation with a regular diploma, or due to exceeding the age of eligibility, the local education agency shall provide the child with a summary of the child's academic achievement and functional performance, which shall include recommendations on how to assist the child in meeting the child's postsecondary goals." When developing the SOP, the student should actively participate. Other IEP team members, family members or other community agencies involved in this student's transition planning process should also provide input. The SOP becomes the student's resume as he or she transitions to postsecondary settings. The SOP will include; Student Information, Student's Postsecondary Goals, Present Levels of Performance Summary, Recommendations to Assist the Student in Meeting Post-Secondary Goals, Student Perspective and Post-Secondary Community Agency Contacts, Team Members, and Supports.

### **Parent Signatures**

- When parents attend the IEP staffing, the LEA Rep. will check the appropriate boxes of the items given to the parent(s). Attendance is noted within the IEP. No signatures are collected.
- When a parent is not present, the LEA Rep. will indicate the parent did not attend and check the boxes of the items sent to parent(s). A LC-10C, created in Infinite Campus, will be sent home for parent signature, indicating the IEP has been seen and agreed to. Implementation of the IEP is delayed 10 days to allow time for the parent to review and respond. If the parent does not respond, agreement is assumed. A person participating by phone is considered to be in attendance, a LC-10C is not required.

### **Meeting Notes**

Typically, meeting notes are not taken. Notes should be taken, however, when there are complicated and/or adversarial issues that need more documentation than required at a typical meeting.

After each initial meeting and when there are changes to a student's program or schedule, a copy of the student's schedule with the changes and/or information from the initial meeting are faxed or emailed to IC Central.

### **Adjourning IEP Meeting**

There may be special circumstances when it is appropriate to adjourn the IEP meeting and reschedule for a later date. The chairperson may want to adjourn if the following circumstances occur:

1. There are questions about eligibility that must be resolved through the collection of additional data.
2. Additional IEP committee members are needed to give information or authorize special services that cannot be provided by the members present.
3. Additional evaluations are needed.
4. The parent contacts the IEP committee and asks that the meeting be rescheduled.

5. There are confrontations or highly charged emotions that impede rational decision making or create extreme discomfort.
6. The parent brings an audio recording device that cannot be duplicated by the school system.
7. When an attorney for the student/parent is present and the school board attorney is not present.

When a parent notifies the committee that he/she will bring an attorney, the school should contact the Director of Special Education. The meeting will be scheduled for a time when the school board attorney and Director of Special Education can attend.

Meetings are not to be video-taped. If parents make a request to make a video-tape, call the Director of Special Education for instruction.

### **For Special Education Transfer-Ins**

When a student enrolls and the parent/guardian indicates the student received special education services, the registrars at IC Central will have the parent sign a Consent for Services. If an IEP is in hand, the parents sign the top portion of the Consent for Services. The bottom portion of the Consent for Services is signed when no IEP is provided by the parent. The registrars send a records request to the former school for special education records as well as for regular education records. Registrars bring the Consent to the Sped AA for additional records request follow-up. The Consent for Services is printed on pale green paper by the Sped AA and provided to Registrars.

At the high school, the Sped Coordinators follow up with the previous school concerning the special education paperwork, rather than the Sped AA.

**No student shall be placed in a program until the system has a current IEP in hand. Telephone verification is not allowed.**

Once Sped AA gets the information, whether it is an IEP delivered by the parent and/or records received from the previous school, Sped AA will upload them into Infinite Campus on the Special Education Documents Tab. The sped AA will notify the appropriate Assistant Principal and Coordinator that the documents are uploaded.

It then becomes the coordinator's responsibility to:

1. Stamp paperwork "Received and Date" (use date of enrollment in IC).
2. Contact parents if amendments are needed, changes will be handwritten on IEP.
3. Give a copy of all paperwork to the sped teacher (include meeting date deadlines).
4. Give Sped AA a tan transfer-in form. If there have been amendments to the IEP, attach a copy of the amended IEP.
5. Uploaded into IC.
6. Create a skeleton in IC and create an evaluation editor tab.
7. Email or fax schedule to IC Central.

When a student transfers into Lowndes County Schools with an expired IEP, the special education coordinator is to be contacted.

The coordinator will review the special education paperwork. If the eligibility is included and is current, the IEP will be accepted. The date the IEP is accepted, typically the date the student enrolls becomes the new start date of the IEP. For students with IEPs who transfer in during the summer through Labor Day rush, the coordinator will determine the appropriate review date based on the quality of the received paperwork. Students who transfer in prior to March 1st will have an annual review prior to the end of the school year.



Students who transfer in after March 1st through the end of the year will have a meeting no later than September 30th of the following school year. There may be circumstances that override this schedule. The Special Education Coordinator will use professional judgment in these cases.

If the eligibility is received, and meets Georgia eligibility requirements, the eligibility is accepted. If the eligibility is a Georgia eligibility, the actual date of the eligibility will be used when creating the evaluation tab in Campus. Re-evaluation will be indicated in the Evaluation Tab in Campus. If the eligibility is from out of state, the date the student enrolls becomes the date used in the Evaluation Tab in Campus. Initial will be indicated in the Evaluation Tab in Campus.

If the eligibility does not meet Georgia eligibility requirements, is out of date or is not received, a request for a psychological evaluation is completed by the Special Education Coordinator. The date the student enrolled in Lowndes County Schools becomes the date of the initial evaluation. A consent to evaluate will be obtained and a referral for an evaluation will be completed. The steps for an [initial evaluation](#) will be followed, excluding the 60 day requirement. The eligibility created from the evaluation will be considered a re-evaluation.

### **In State Transfer Ins (Intra-State)**

In Infinite Campus (IC), the special education coordinator will create a Transfer In IEP. The IEP will be considered an Annual Review. Make sure to use the drop down menu to choose Annual Review. The Transfer In IEP must be locked after the information has been added. The required information in the transferred IEP is:

- Exceptionality Classification
- Student Supports
- Specific Testing Accommodations
- Services In General Education
- Services In Regular Education
- Related Services

When preparing for the Annual Review, do not copy or modify the Transfer In IEP. A new IEP must be created in Infinite Campus.

The Evaluation Tab will be completed. The date of eligibility will be the date used in the Evaluation Tab. On The Evaluation Tab this is considered a Re-Evaluation.

### **Out of State Transfer Ins (Inter-State)**

In Infinite Campus (IC), the special education coordinator will create a Transfer In IEP. The IEP will be considered an Initial. Make sure to use the drop down menu to choose Initial. The Transfer In IEP must be locked after the information has been added. The required information in the transferred IEP is:

- Exceptionality Classification
- Student Supports
- Specific Testing Accommodations
- Services In General Education
- Services In Regular Education
- Related Services

When preparing for the Annual Review, do not copy or modify the Transfer In IEP. A new IEP must be created in Infinite Campus. The new IEP will be considered an Annual Review.

The Evaluation Tab will be completed. The date the student enrolled will be the date used in the Evaluation Tab. On the Evaluation Tab this is considered an Initial. Any additional Evaluation Tabs will be considered a Re-Evaluation.

When no eligibility is received, the special education coordinator will complete the Transfer In Eligibility if there is enough information to complete an eligibility. The IEP committee will meet within approximately 60 days to conduct an IEP/RED meeting. At the meeting, the committee will review the data along with T4 data collected by teachers, to determine eligibility. If all of the eligibility requirements are met, the Reevaluation Determination form will be completed with signatures. It will be attached to the transfer in eligibility. If any data is missing, indicate on the Reevaluation Determination form the additional information required. Once the additional information is obtained, meet again to determine Georgia eligibility. Attach the additional information to the transfer eligibility. Complete and sign the Reevaluation Determination form and attach to the front of the transfer eligibility.

### **Development, Review, and Revision of IEP.**

General. In developing each child's IEP, the IEP Team must consider – 1. The strengths of the child; 2. The concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child; 3. The results of the initial or most recent evaluation of the child; 4. The results, as appropriate, of the child's Statewide or district wide assessments; and 5. The academic, developmental, and functional needs of the child.

Consideration of special factors. The IEP team must 1. In the case of a child whose behavior impedes the child's learning or that of others, consider the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports and other strategies, to address that behavior in the IEP or behavioral intervention plan; 2. In the case of a child with limited English proficiency, consider the language needs of the child as those needs relate to the child's IEP; 3. In the case of a child who is blind or visually impaired, provide for instruction in Braille and the use of Braille unless the IEP Team determines, after an evaluation of the child's reading and writing skills, needs and appropriate reading and writing media, that instruction or the use of Braille is not appropriate for the child; 4. Consider the communication needs of the child, and in the case of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing, consider the child's language and communication needs, opportunities for direct communications with peers and professional personnel in the child's language and communication mode, academic level, and full range of needs, including opportunities for direct instruction in the child's language and communication mode; and 5. Consider whether the child needs assistive technology devices and services.

Each LEA must ensure that extended school year services (ESY) are available as necessary to provide FAPE. ESY services must be provided only if a child's IEP Team determines, on an individual basis, that the services are necessary for the provision of FAPE to the child. The LEA shall not limit ESY services to a particular disability category or unilaterally limit the type, amount or duration of those services. 1. The IEP Team shall determine if ESY services are needed as part of the child's FAPE. In doing so, it shall consider the individual needs of the child. 2. If the IEP Team determines that ESY shall be provided, it shall: (i) Indicate which goals are being extended or modified to deliver FAPE; and, (ii) State the specific services needed, the amount of time for each service, the beginning and ending dates for the services and the service provider and location. 3. Lowndes County Schools shall provide ESY services as required by the child's IEP and all necessary transportation at no cost to the parent.

A regular education teacher of a child with a disability, as a member of the IEP Team, must, to the extent appropriate, participate in the development of the IEP of the child, including the determination of 1. Appropriate positive behavioral interventions and supports and other strategies for the child; and 2. Supplementary aids and services, accommodations, program modifications, and support for school personnel.

Changes or amendments to the IEP may be made either by the entire IEP Team at an IEP Team meeting or by agreement between the parents and LEA. 1. In making changes to a child's IEP after the annual IEP Team meeting for a school year, the parent(s) of a child with a disability and the LEA may agree not to convene an IEP Team meeting for the purposes of making those changes, and instead may develop a written document to amend or modify the child's current IEP. (i) If changes are made to the child's IEP, the LEA must ensure that the child's IEP Team is informed of those changes. (ii) A parent must be provided with a revised copy of the IEP with the amendments incorporated.

### **Review and Revision of IEPs**

Lowndes County Schools ensures that the IEP Team (a) Reviews the child's IEP periodically, but not less than annually, to determine whether the annual goals for the child are being achieved; and

(b) Revises the IEP, as appropriate, to address 1. Any lack of expected progress toward the annual goals and in the general curriculum, if appropriate; 2. The results of any reevaluations conducted. 3. Information about the child provided to, or by, the parents; 4. The child's anticipated needs; or 5. Other matters. (c) To the extent possible, the Lowndes County Schools encourages the consolidation of reevaluation meetings for the child and other IEP Team meetings for the child.

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

#### **Personnel**

Professionals employed by or under contract with Lowndes County Schools are responsible for maintaining his/her current credentials. Lowndes County Schools Human Resource Department maintains a record of current credentials of all certified employees. Lowndes County Schools recruits, hires, and trains highly qualified (certified or licensed) personnel, including special education, related services and leadership personnel, to meet the needs of children with disabilities.

Related service personnel who deliver services in their discipline or profession must maintain current, State approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration or other comparable requirements that apply to the professional discipline in which those personnel are providing special education or related services. These related service personnel must have not had certification or licensure requirements waived on an emergency, temporary or provisional basis.

For all personnel providing educational interpreting for children who are deaf or hard of hearing in Lowndes County Schools, regardless of job title, shall hold a current Georgia Quality Assurance Screening (G-QAS) rating of Level III or higher in both interpreting and transliterating, as approved and maintained by the Georgia Department of Labor/Vocational Rehabilitation Program (DOL/VR) and/or documentation of advanced interpreting skills and qualifications through current national certification from the National Association of the deaf (NAD) Levels III, IV, or V, and/or documentation of advance interpreting skills and qualifications through a current Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment® (EIPA) rating of Level 3.5 or higher. The EIPA rating can not be more than five years old. It is the responsibility of the interpreter employed by Lowndes County Schools to maintain current credentials for purposes of educational interpreting for children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Maintenance of records of current credentials shall be the ongoing responsibility of Lowndes County Schools. Current credential of educational interpreters must be filed with other personnel records (e.g., teacher certification credentials).

#### **Facilities**

Lowndes County Schools provides classrooms of suitable size in a distraction-free area, as required by the type of program or services to be established, with appropriate furniture, materials, supplies and equipment to meet the needs of the class or individual children to be served. Thirty-eight square feet shall be provided for each child in the class with a variance of 10 percent depending upon the total number of personnel in the class at any time, the type of children and class, the kind and amount of furniture and equipment required and the

necessity for storage capabilities. Special circumstances shall be reviewed by the Facilities Department of the GaDOE and shall be address in the approved local facility plan.

### Caseloads

The following are maximum class sizes and caseloads for personnel providing services for children, ages 3 through 5, in the Community, Full Day, and Part Day classes. All numbers shown are for Maximum Class Size are with a paraprofessional.

	Maximum Class Size	Caseload
Full Day	8	16
Part Day	12	32
Community	-	32

### Class Sizes and Caseloads for students ages 5 through 22

Program Area	Self-Contained (SC) Resource (R)	Maximum W/O Para	Class Size With Para*	Caseload
Intellectual Disabilities	Mild SC R	10	13	14
		10	13	26
	Moderate SC	NA	11	11
		NA	7	7
	Profound SC	NA	6	6
Emotional and Behavioral Disorders	SC	8	11	12
	R	7	10	26
Specific Learning Disabilities	SC	12	16	16
	R	8	10	26
Visual Impairments	SC	NA	6	7
	R	3	4	13
Deaf/Hard of Hearing	SC	6	8	8
	R	3	4	11
Deaf-Blind	SC	NA	6	7
Speech-Language Impairments	SC	11	15	15
	R	7	NA	55
Orthopedic Impairments	SC	NA	11	11
	R	4	5	15

*Note: Each \*paraprofessional (para) is equivalent to 1/3 teacher and affects individual class size, caseload and system average proportionately. Three paras are the maximum number that can be used to increase the maximum class size for any special education class.*

*Note: If children from different programs/delivery models are within the same segment, the class size shall be determined by the program/delivery model with the smallest class size. The caseloads shall be determined by averaging the respective caseloads.*

*Note: The placement of children with Autism, Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), or Other Health Impairments (OHI), and Significant Developmental Delays (SDD), in grades K and above, in the above program areas will not change class sizes.*

*Note: Children, with an IEP designating the service location for the delivery of goals and objectives to be the regular classroom environment, shall be reported in their special education program category if instruction is provided in a Team/Collaborative Model or Consultative model.*

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

DEFINITIONS. (a) All terms used in this Rule that are not defined in Section (1) and appear in the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 U.S.C. §1401(3) et seq. and/or its implementing regulations, 34 C.F.R. §300 et seq. have the meaning stated in IDEA. (b) Fiscal agent - the local educational agency (LEA) or regional educational service agency (RESA) responsible for the fiscal management and budgeting of GNETS funding. (c) Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) - the state agency charged with the fiscal and administrative management of certain aspects of K-12 public education, including the implementation of federal and state mandates. Such management is subject to supervision and oversight by the State Board of Education. (d) Local Educational Agency (LEA) - a local school system pursuant to local board of education control and management. (e) Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) - an agency established under O.C.G.A. § 20-2-270 to provide shared services to improve the effectiveness of educational programs and services of LEAs and to provide direct instructional programs to selected public school students. (f) State Board of Education (SBOE) - the constitutional authority which defines education policy for the public K-12 education agencies in Georgia. (g) State Education Agency (SEA) – The term used in federal laws and regulations for the state education authority which in Georgia is the Georgia State Board of Education (SBOE). (h) Therapeutic Supports – Intensive individualized interventions and/or therapy that remediates severe disruptive and self-destructive behaviors. (i) Zoned school - the K-12 Public School that a student is assigned by the Local Education Agency (LEA)

Georgia Network for Educational and Therapeutic Support (GNETS) is a service available within the continuum of supports for Lowndes County School's to consider when determining the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities, ages 5-21. GNETS services is an option in the continuum of supports that prevents children from requiring residential or more restrictive placement. Specifically, GNETS provides comprehensive educational and therapeutic support services to students who exhibit intense social, emotional and/or behavioral challenges with a severity, frequency or duration such that the provision of education and related services in the general education environment has not enabled him or her to benefit educationally based on the IEP. GNETS services aim to support students with social, emotional and/or behavioral challenges. These students' behaviors may include but are not limited to, significant, aggressive, self-destructive, atypical, and withdrawal behaviors. Children receiving GNETS services are taught coping skills, behavior regulation, and adaptive behaviors, with a keen focus on developing positive interpersonal relationships with others. (c) GNETS services are implemented with greater intensity and frequency than what is typically delivered in a general education school environment. The supplemental aids and services available at GNETS must be appropriate and necessary in order for the child's IEP team to consider GNETS services.

(d) GNETS will be staffed to meet the needs of a unique population of students requiring intensive individualized supports, including providing appropriate therapeutic services identified in the IEP. The staff receive specialized training in skills designed to deescalate major disruptive behaviors and assist students with meeting their IEP goals. (e) GNETS staff will collaborate with professionals from a variety of agencies to enhance students' social, emotional, behavioral and academic development based on their IEPs. (f) The IEP team will assess at least annually whether the student with disabilities is ready to transition to a less restrictive setting. Progress monitoring data aligned with IEP goals should be reviewed to determine if the student is ready to receive a free appropriate education (FAPE) in the lesser restrictive environment.

### **Consideration For GNETS Services.**

Consideration for GNETS services is determined by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team using the criteria set forth in SBOE Rule 160-4-7-.06. (b) IEP teams considering recommendation of GNETS services will follow the notice requirements of SBOE Rule 160-4-7-.06. The IEP meeting will include a GNETS director or his/her designee. (c) An individual student is considered for GNETS services only if his or her IEP team recommends GNETS services based on the existence of all of the following, which will be documented in the student's education record: 1. Documentation that indicates evidence of annual IEP reviews, progress monitoring data aligned with IEP goals, documentation indicating prior services were delivered in a lesser restrictive environment and the student's inability to receive FAPE in that environment. 2. A Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and/or Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) administered within the past year. 3. Documentation that a comprehensive reevaluation has been completed within the last 3 years.

### **Continuum Of Gnets Service Delivery And Environments**

The IEP team must determine that GNETS services are necessary for students to receive FAPE. Removal from the general education setting will occur only when the nature or severity of students' social, emotional and/or behavioral challenges are such that education in a general education setting with the use of supplementary services and intensive individualized interventions cannot be achieved. The IEP team will consider the various setting in which GNETS services may be delivered and determine whether the individual student is likely to receive FAPE in each environment, beginning with the least restrictive setting. The GNETS continuum of services by environment may be delivered as follows: 1. Services provided in the general education setting in the student's Zoned School or other public school. 2. Services provided in the student's Zoned School or other public school setting by way of a "pull out" from the general education setting for part of the school day. 3. Services provided in the student's Zoned School or other public school for part of the school day in a setting dedicated to GNETS. 4. Services provided in the student's Zoned School or other public school for the full school day, in a setting dedicated to GNETS. 5. Services provided in a facility dedicated to GNETS for part of the school day. 6. Services provided in a facility dedicated to GNETS for the full school day.

### **Duties And Responsibilities.**

The State Education Agency shall: 1. Receive and disburse funds appropriated by the Georgia General Assembly to support GNETS services. 2. Administer the grant funds by performing the following in collaboration with the GaDOE: (i) Develop rules and procedures regulating the operation of the GNETS grant, including the application process; (ii) Notify the fiscal agents regarding each fiscal year's allocation and approve GNETS services budgets; and (iii) Monitor GNETS to ensure compliance with Federal and state policies, procedures, rules, and the delivery of appropriate instructional and therapeutic services. (b) The LEA shall: 1. Ensure that FAPE is delivered to students recommended for GNETS services in the least restrictive environment (LRE). 2. Convene IEP team meetings as required by State Board of Education Rule 160-4-7-.06. 3. Conduct FBAs/BIPs for any student considered for GNETS services in accordance with (3)(c)(2) of this rule. 4. Collaborate with the GNETS to determine opportunities for students to have access to general education activities. 5. Provide transportation to and from a GNETS, as required, including transportation to and from home/school for students receiving GNETS services for part of the school day and for students participating in extracurricular activities. 6. Maintain and report student record data in accordance with the

State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.07 and GaDOE guidance. 7. Provide student outcome assessments and other relevant data to GNETS director or designee. 8. Monitor student IEP goals annually to determine students' progress and access to services in a lesser restrictive environment. 9. Provide ongoing professional learning opportunities and best practices for teachers to support students who exhibit social, emotional and/or behavioral challenges. 10. Allocate supports and resources, which may include in-kind services to GNETS to facilitate flexible models of service delivery and best practices for equitable educational support as appropriate. 11. To the maximum extent possible, collaborate with community service providers to deliver mental health services and/or family support in students' Zoned schools. 12. Collaborate with GNETS to examine student records and discuss the coordination of service provisions for students being considered for GNETS in accordance with 34 CFR §300.501(2)(3). 13. Provide GNETS staff access to longitudinal data for all students receiving GNETS services to ensure teachers can access records for students included on their rosters. 14. Submit student schedules to the GaDOE with the GNETS code. 15. Monitor facilities for safety and accessibility for students served by GNETS and report identified concerns to all key stakeholders such as fiscal agents, GNETS directors and any other appropriate parties.

The GNETS shall: 1. Collaborate with LEAs to ensure that special education related services are provided to all students receiving GNETS services. 2. Collaborate with GaDOE to implement activities outlined in the GNETS strategic plan to improve GNETS practices and student services. 3. Complete the annual needs assessment embedded in the GNETS strategic plan. 4. Submit application for grant funds annually. 5. Submit budget request to support program operations to fiscal agents. 6. Collaborate with the fiscal agent to ensure appropriate expenditure of funds. 7. Submit student and program data as requested by the GaDOE. 8. Collaborate with LEAs to provide access to general education activities. 9. Collaborate with LEAs to ensure that students receiving GNETS services are provided access to general education classes and general education activities to the fullest extent possible based on the student's most recent IEP. 10. Conduct FBAs/BIPs for any student considered for GNETS services in accordance with (3)(c)(2) of this rule. 11. Monitor student IEP goals annually to determine students' progress and access to services in a lesser restrictive environment. 12. Collaborate with LEAs on building capacity for professional learning opportunities, flexible models of service delivery, and determining best practices for educational support. 13. To the maximum extent possible, collaborate with community service providers to coordinate the delivery of mental health services and/or family support. 14. Collaborate with LEAs to examine student records and discuss the coordination of service provisions for students being considered for GNETS in accordance with 34 CFR §300.501(2)(3). 15. Collaborate with LEAs to convene IEP team meetings as required by State Board Of Education Rule 160-4-7-.06. 16. Collaborate with LEAs in the service area to determine a calendar that is best suited to provide GNETS services for students. 17. Provide valid teacher identification to LEAs to ensure teachers can access longitudinal records for students included on their rosters. 18. Monitor facilities for safety and accessibility for students served by GNETS and report identified concerns to all key stakeholders including, LEAs, fiscal agents and any other appropriate parties.

The Fiscal Agent shall: 1. Be either the respective LEA(s) and/or Regional Educational Service Agency affiliated with the GNETS Services. 2. Account for and disburse grant funds in accordance with general accepted accounting and financial reporting principles to restricted GNETS accounts, including, but not limited to, maintenance and operation, instructional materials, media, and sick leave. (For information concerning procedures, see the Financial Management for Georgia Local Units of Administration.) 3. Submit financial reports as required by the SEA and the GaDOE. 4. Monitor facilities for safety and accessibility for students served by GNETS and report identified concerns to all key stakeholders including, LEAs, GNETS directors and any other appropriate parties. 5. Report requested data to the SEA or the GaDOE. 6. Submit grant applications and budgets through the consolidated application. The fiscal agent will calculate indirect cost using one percent. Indirect cost may be used for providing such services as accounting, data processing and purchasing. 7. Serve in this capacity for the respective unit, for a minimum of three fiscal years in accordance with O.C.G.A. §20-2-270. 8. Ensure that GNETS services are provided for all local school systems within the GNETS service area. (e) Any fiscal agent who decides to no longer serve as fiscal agent for GNETS shall meet with school superintendents of the local school systems within a service area to take a vote

no later than April 1 to be effective for the ensuing fiscal year

Students who are demonstrating significant need for more comprehensive services than those available through the various EBD delivery models within the school setting may be referred to Horizon Academy (HA). It is strongly suggested that an observation by HA personnel be obtained soon after discussion of a possible referral begins. The HA staff may be able to offer suggestions and interventions that may result in improved behavior by the student. If a referral is deemed appropriate by the school administrator, a Request for Services Form must be obtained from the coordinator, AP, or school social worker. The request form is completed by the referring teacher, signed by the parent and the school's principal or assistant principal, and forwarded to the Director of Special Education with all required information. It is important that the referral packet include documentation of the most severe behaviors that are keeping the student from being successful in the home school. The Department of Special Education will forward the referral to HA.

Horizon Academy personnel will contact the school to schedule observations and/or teacher interviews. Once they have completed gathering information, the consultant will notify the Special Education Coordinator of the home school to set up an IEP meeting. The meeting will be held at the student's home school. Exit criteria will be established at the IEP meeting.

Students who are receiving part or full day services from HA may have annual review meetings scheduled at either HA or the home school. The assistant principal or Special Education Coordinator will act as LEA Rep at annual review meetings.

Students placed at HA will remain on a special education teacher's caseload at his/her home school for the purpose of case management and to assist with transition from the home school to HA and from HA to the home school when appropriate. When the HA teachers begin to consider a student for transition, the special education teacher at the home school will need to participate in planning for an effective transition. When possible, the home school administrator and/or special education teacher should observe the student at HA.

When an IEP meeting is held due to a projected change of placement, the home school Assistant Principal or the Special Education Coordinator for the student's home school will be notified to act as LEA Representative.

Special education teachers at a student's home school are responsible for maintaining the confidential folder, updating eligibility reports, etc. as needed.

### **Language Enriched Academic Program (LEAP)**

The Language Enriched Academic Program (LEAP) is a program offered to students in grades K-2 in Lowndes County Schools. The typical LEAP student exhibits characteristics of high functioning Autism. Social language deficits that impact peer and adult relationships resulting in inappropriate behaviors are frequently observed. Sensory deficits are also common. Autism eligibility is not required. The students should have cognitive skills of 75 or above. LEAP is an intensive program that incorporates various methods to enable each child to meet individual goals; academically, socially and behaviorally, in order to have a positive and successful transition into the general education setting. There are two LEAP classes housed at Westside Elementary School. Students who are found eligible to attend LEAP are provided transportation to and from WES through special transportation. Siblings of students attending LEAP do not attend WES under the "sibling rule".

Prior to requesting a referral, the assistant principal will visit LEAP to gain an understanding of the program and the students who attend the program. The administrator will request a referral from the Special Education Director through email. The school designated psychologist will complete an observation prior to the referral



be completed. The administrator will return the completed referral and observation to the Special Education Director. It is important for students to have received maximum support in their home school prior to considering placement in LEAP. Students must receive social language instruction to address social and behaviors deficits at their home school prior to referral. They should have a significant amount of direct instruction services outside the general education classroom prior to attending LEAP as there is minimal exposure to general education peers in LEAP.

Once the referral has been received by the Special Education Director, a committee will meet to score the rubric and consider other factors to determine if the student meets eligibility requirements for LEAP. The committee will consist of the Special Education Director, Special Education Coordinators, referring school representative, LEAP representative, and School Psychologists. If needed, other school personnel will be asked to participate on the committee. The school administrator will be informed whether or not the student is eligible to attend LEAP. If the student is eligible, the IEP team will convene a meeting to discuss placement options with the parent/guardian.

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

#### **(1) General**

A free appropriate public education (FAPE) must be available to all children residing in the State between the ages of 3 and 21, inclusive, including children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school. It is the goal of Lowndes County Schools that students will have a successful transition to their desired post-secondary outcomes. Faculty and staff of LCS will collaborate to complete that transition by the time the student turns 22. At the last IEP meeting before a student turns 22, the committee will notify the adult student and the parent(s) that although services will continue, no individual entitlement to FAPE or other rights under IDEA are afforded to the adult student. Any student who is still receiving services upon reaching age 22 shall be allowed to remain in those services until the end of the semester in which he/she turns 22. Lowndes County Schools has established a goal of providing full educational opportunities to all children with disabilities, aged birth through 21.

A free appropriate public education for children begins at age 3. Lowndes County Schools is obligated to make FAPE available to each eligible child residing in the district no later than the child's third birthday which includes implementing an IEP. If a child's third birthday occurs during the summer, the child's IEP Team shall determine eligibility prior to the child's 3rd birthday. The services will start at the beginning of the new school year. Each LEA must ensure that FAPE is available to any individual child with a disability who needs special education and related services, even though the child has not failed or been retained in a course or grade, and is advancing from grade to grade.

(2) Limitation - exception to FAPE for certain ages. (a) General. The obligation to make FAPE available to all children with disabilities does not apply with respect to the following: 1. Adult students aged 18 through 21, who, in the last educational placement, prior to their incarceration in an adult correctional facility: (i) Were not actually identified as being a child with a disability; (ii) Did not have an IEP in effect; and (iii) Graduates from high school with a regular high school diploma. This constitutes a change in placement, requiring written prior notice. 2. The exception does not apply to adult students with disabilities, aged 18 through 21, who: (i) Had been identified as a child with a disability and had received services in accordance with an IEP but who left school prior to their incarceration in an adult correctional facility or local jail; (ii) Did not have an IEP in their last educational setting, but who had actually been identified as a child with a disability; or (iii) Have graduated from high school but have not been awarded a regular high school diploma. The term regular high school diploma does not include an alternative degree that is not aligned with

the State's academic standards such as a special education diploma, certificate of attendance or a general educational development credential (GED). (b) Documents relating to exceptions. The LEA must assure that the information it has provided is current and accurate.

The State of Georgia changed the graduation rule for students graduating any time after 2008. According to the change, some students with disabilities may graduate with a regular high school diploma if they stay in school until their 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday or transition to a post-secondary school or work place and participate in the Georgia Alternative Assessment (GAA) in 8th and 11th grade.

Because of this change, it is important to spread these years of schooling across the elementary, middle, and high school. This could cause a student to stay at a school level longer than other students. It is recommended that students stay at the elementary level until age 12 by September 1st and at the middle school level until 16 years old by September 1st. This would leave only five or six years being spent at the high school level. This is only a recommendation, IEP teams will have the final determination regarding grade placement.

### **Delay of Services Not Allowed**

Lowndes County Schools ensures that there will be no delay in implementing a child's IEP, including any case in which the payment source for providing or paying for special education and related services to the child is being determined.

### **Report of Student Progress**

Progress reports will be sent to parents as stipulated in each student's IEP. Generally, parents will be informed of the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals at least quarterly. Teachers are encouraged to communicate student progress and behavior using other means, i.e. weekly folders, carry cards, Google Drive, SWIS, Class Dojo, Remind 101. The types and frequency of communication are determined at the classroom and school level.

### **Accessible Instructional Materials**

Lowndes County Schools will provide print instructional materials in specialized, accessible formats (i.e. Braille, audio, digital, large-print, etc.) to children who are blind or other print disabled in a timely manner. LCS will take all reasonable steps to ensure that children with print disabilities have access to their accessible format instructional materials at the same time as students without print disabilities. Print instructional materials include textbooks and related core materials that are required by the LEA for use by children in the classroom. Specialized formats refer to Braille, audio, or digital text which is exclusively for use by children who are blind or other persons with print disabilities. Large print formats are also included when the materials are distributed exclusively for use by children who are blind or other persons with disabilities. Specialized formats do not include altering the content (e.g. breadth, depth, or complexity) of the print instructional materials in the production of accessible instructional materials. The Vision Impaired teacher will facilitate the provision of materials for children who are blind or other print disabled.

### **Extracurricular Activities Accessibility**

FAPE can also include non-academic and extracurricular services. Lowndes Schools will consider supplementary aids and services necessary to provide students with disabilities the equal opportunity to participate in non-academic and extracurricular activities. This may include but is not limited to, participation in clubs, referral to agencies that provide services, special interest groups, employment assistance, counseling, health services, or athletics. An IEP does not negate eligibility requirements such as having to try out for the team or having an "A" average to be in French Club. Access to Physical Education and Specially Designed Physical Education Lowndes County Schools ensures that: (a) General Physical education services, specially designed if necessary, are made available to every child with a disability receiving FAPE, unless the school system enrolls children without disabilities and does not provide physical education to children without

disabilities in the same grades. (b) Each child with a disability is afforded the opportunity to participate in the regular physical education program available to nondisabled children unless: 1. The child is enrolled full time in a separate facility – Lowndes County Schools is responsible for the education of any child with a disability who is enrolled in a separate facility and ensures that the child receives appropriate physical education services; or 2. The child needs specially designed physical education, as prescribed in the child's IEP, which is a Related Service: Adapted PE . (If specially designed physical education is prescribed in a child's IEP, Lowndes County Schools provides the services directly or makes arrangements for those services to be provided through other public or private programs.)

### **Non-academic Settings**

For extracurricular services and activities, including meals, recess periods, and other services and activities, Lowndes County Schools ensures that each child with a disability participates with nondisabled children in the extracurricular services and activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of that child. Lowndes County Schools will ensure that each child with a disability has the supplementary aids and services determined by the child's IEP Team to be appropriate and necessary for the child to participate in non-academic settings. Lowndes County Schools will ensure the provision of supplementary aides and services determined appropriate by the IEP team in order to allow children with disabilities an equitable opportunity for participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities. non-academic and extracurricular services may include counseling services, athletics, transportation, health services, recreational activities, special interest groups or clubs sponsored by the LEA, referrals to agencies that provide assistance to individuals with disabilities, and employment of students, including both employment by the public agency and assistance in making outside employment available.

### **Full Educational Opportunity Goal (FEOG).**

Lowndes County Schools has in effect policies and procedures that have established a goal of providing full educational opportunity to all children with disabilities, aged 3 through 21, and a detailed timetable for accomplishing that goal.

### **Charter Schools**

Children with disabilities who attend public charter schools and their parents retain all rights to a FAPE as described in this Rule. Charter schools that are public schools of an LEA. Each LEA must ensure that charter schools that are public schools of the LEA must serve children with disabilities attending those charter schools in the same manner as the LEA serves children with disabilities in its other schools, including providing supplementary and related services on site at the charter school to the same extent to which the LEA has a policy or practice of providing such services on the site to its other public schools; and provide funds to those charter schools at the same time and on the same basis as the LEA provides funds to the LEA's other public schools, including proportional distribution based on relative enrollment of children with disabilities. If the public charter school is an LEA, that charter school is responsible for ensuring that all of these requirements are met.

### **Program Options**

Lowndes County Schools ensures that children with disabilities have available to them the variety of educational programs and services available to nondisabled children in the area served by the system, including art, music, and Career, Technical and Agricultural Education.

### **Routine Checking of Hearing Aids/Other Components**

#### **Hearing aids**

Each LEA must ensure that hearing aids worn in school by children with hearing impairments, including deafness, are functioning properly. Daily, the teachers of students with disabilities who wear hearing aids

conduct the Ling test with the students. The teachers present, in random order and without the students seeing the teacher, five sounds that cut across the speech frequency. Students are expected to repeat each sound to the teacher. If they do not respond to the teachers within a few seconds, the teacher will check the hearing aid or cochlear implant. The teachers and school nurses keep hearing aid batteries at school. Cochlear implant batteries are recharged at home.

### **External components of surgically implanted medical devices.**

Lowndes County School is not responsible for the post-surgical maintenance, programming or replacement of the medical device that has been surgically implanted (or of an external component of the surgically implanted medical device).

### **Prohibition on Mandatory Medication**

Lowndes County Schools prohibit personnel from requiring parents to obtain a prescription for substances identified under schedules I, II, III, IV, or V in section 202(c) of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 812(c)) for a child as a condition of attending school, receiving an evaluation or receiving services. This does not create a prohibition against teachers and other school personnel consulting or sharing classroom-based observations with parents or guardians regarding a child's academic and functional performance, or behavior in the classroom or school, or regarding the need for evaluation for special education or related services as it relates to child find.

### **FAPE--Methods and Payments**

Georgia may use whatever State, local, Federal, and private sources of support that are available in the State to meet the requirements of this Rule. For example, if it is necessary to place a child with a disability in a residential facility, Georgia could use joint agreements between the agencies involved for sharing the cost of that placement. Nothing relieves an insurer or similar third party from an otherwise valid obligation to provide or to pay for services provided to a child with a disability. (c) The LEA must ensure that there is no delay in implementing a child's IEP, including any case in which the payment source for providing or paying for special education and related services to the child is being determined. (d) Children with disabilities who are covered by public benefits or insurance.

### **Medicaid**

1. A LEA may use the Medicaid or other public benefits or insurance programs in which a child participates to provide or pay for services required under IDEA, as permitted by the public benefits or insurance except: (i) With regard to services required to provide FAPE, the LEA may not require the parents to sign up for or enroll in public benefits or insurance programs in order for their child to receive FAPE; The LEA may not require the parents to incur any out-of-pocket expenses such as the payment of a deductible or co-pay amount incurred in filing a claim for services provided, but may pay the cost the parents would otherwise be required to pay; and the LEA may not use a child's benefits under a public benefits or insurance program if that use would: (I) Decrease available lifetime coverage or any other insured benefit; (II) Result in the family paying for services that would otherwise be covered by the public benefits or insurance program and are required for the child outside of the time the child is in school; (III) Increase premiums or lead to the discontinuation of benefits or insurance; or (IV) Risk loss of eligibility for home and community-based waivers, based on aggregate health-related expenses; and 2. The LEA shall obtain parental consent prior to accessing a child's or parent's public benefits or insurance for the first time and after providing notification to the child's parents consistent with paragraph (3)(d)3. of this rule and the parental consent to access a child's or parent's public benefits or insurance shall: (i) Meet the requirements of 34 C.F.R. § 99.30 and 34 C.F.R. § 300.622 by specifying the personally identifiable information that may be disclosed (e.g., records or information about the services that may be provided to a particular child), the purpose of the disclosure (e.g., billing for services provided under IDEA), and the agency to which the disclosure may be made (e.g. the Georgia Department of Community Health); and (ii) Specify that the parent understands and agrees that the LEA may access the child's or parent's

public benefits or insurance to pay for services provided under IDEA.

### **Notice to Parents Regarding Use of Benefits**

3. Prior to accessing a child's or parent's public benefits or insurance for the first time, and annually thereafter, the LEA shall provide written notification to the child's parents consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 300.503(c) that includes: (i) A statement of parental consent provisions in 34 C.F.R. § 300.154(d)(2)(iv)(A)-(B); (ii) A statement of the "no cost" provisions in 34 C.F.R. § 300.154(d)(2)(i)-(iii); (iii) A statement that the parents have the right under 34 C.F.R. part 99 and 34 C.F.R. part 300 to withdraw their consent to disclosure of their child's personally identifiable information to the agency responsible for the administration of Georgia's public benefits or insurance program at any time; and (iv) A statement that the withdrawal of consent or refusal to provide consent under 34 C.F.R. part 99 and 34 C.F.R. part 300 to disclose personally identifiable information to the agency responsible for the administration of Georgia's public benefits or insurance program does not relieve the LEA of its responsibility to ensure that all required services are provided at no cost to the parents. (e) Children with disabilities who are covered by private insurance. 1. With regard to services required to provide FAPE to an eligible child, a LEA may access the parents' private insurance proceeds only if the parents provide consent. 2. Each time the LEA proposes to access the parents' private insurance proceeds, the LEA must – (i) Obtain parental consent; and (ii) Inform the parents that their refusal to permit the LEA to access their private insurance does not relieve the LEA of its responsibility to ensure that all required services are provided at no cost to the parents

### **Proportionate Share**

Definition: spending a "proportionate" amount of IDEA money on students who have been placed in a private school (or homeschool) by their parent(s). The private school must be located in the LCS District. An elementary school is defined as having at least one grade at fourth grade or below. Typically, if a private elementary school has any grades, it will have kindergarten. Daycare centers that have a kindergarten class meet the definition of an elementary school. For homeschool, the student/parent must reside in the LCS District.

Our obligation:

- Provide an accurate count of children with disabilities who are in private school or homeschool and reside in our school district.
- Provide these children with special education and related services, to the extent consistent with their number and location in the state, up to the proportionate share amount.
- Services Plans must be in effect at the beginning of each school year and must be developed, reviewed, and revised periodically, but not less than annually.
- Ensure a representative from the private school is invited to each Services Plan meeting. If the representative cannot attend, use other means to encourage participation (i.e. phone conference).
- Services Plans (like an IEP) must describe the specific special education and/or related service LCS will provide.

Annually, a meeting with private and homeschool providers is held. Along with the invitation, a survey is sent to the private and homeschool providers. The survey provides the private and homeschool providers an opportunity to share the number of identified students with disabilities enrolled, the number of those enrolled students with disabilities who receive services, and what types of services they receive. The survey also asks

what types of services the private and homeschool providers feel would benefit their students with disabilities. Search the internet to find private schools in the LCS district. The Title I director may be of assistance.

To determine homeschooled students, use SLDS>Operational Dashboard>Home School Report. Export the list to Excel (CSV). Filter previous years and non-SWD. Check address to ensure the student is LCS and not a neighboring school system (i.e. Valdosta City Schools).

In most cases, students will come to a school to receive their services. This will typically be the school in the zone in which the student resides, but there may be instances when another school provides the services, these will be decided on a case by case basis. The most frequently considered reason for a change is convenience to the parent. The SLP/SPED teacher will coordinate with the parent for the date/time for delivery of direct service.

Speech therapists/SPED teachers will keep a record of the Private or homeschooled students they serve. At the end of each year, the log will be turned in to the Central Office. The hourly rate of the SLP/SPED teacher is used to determine the amount of money spent; that will be calculated at the CO.

When students with an IEP withdraw to homeschool or attend a private school in the LCS District, we must offer a Services Plan. Should the parent refuse the offer of services, document the refusal in the SPED folder and follow withdrawal procedures.

When students in kindergarten and above choose to receive services, a “Services Plan” rather than an IEP will be developed. The Services Plan form is in IC in the Special Education tabs, Documents Tab> New Plan. It is also on the Google Drive > Special Education Manual along with directions.

### **Periodic Certification**

Where employees are expected to work solely on a single Federal award or cost objective, charges for their salaries and wages will be supported by periodic certifications that the employees worked solely on that program for the period covered by the certification. These certifications will be prepared at least annually and will be signed by the employee or supervisory official having first- hand knowledge of the work performed by the employee.

In June of each year, the special education director will ask payroll to provide payroll information from the previous year on all employees paid with IDEA funds (4041 and 4042). From this list of paid employees, she will develop a Certification form for each school or department that has employees paid with these funds. The administrator who supervises these individuals will be responsible for certification. This is an after-the-fact certification of time worked; therefore, it must be signed and dated after the end of the time period. The signed and dated form is returned to the special education director. The documentation is retained by the special education director in a notebook titled “Periodic Certification”.

Within the most current Periodic Certification notebook are directions for the payroll clerk to run an accurate “Detail Check History Report”.

Electronic forms and documentation are stored digitally on the special education director’s computer under: desktop > Finance > Periodic Certification.

### **Procedural Safeguards and Parental Rights (State Rule: 160-4-7-.09)**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Federal law concerning the education of students with disabilities, requires schools to provide parents of a child with a disability with a notice containing a full explanation of the procedural safeguards available under the IDEA and U.S. Department of Education regulations.

A copy of this notice must be given to parents only one time a school year, except that a copy must also be given to the parents: (1) upon initial referral or parent request for evaluation to determine if the student is a student with a disability; (2) upon receipt of the first written formal complaint involving the student's system; (3) upon receipt of the first due process complaint involving the student's system in a school year; (4) when a decision is made to take a disciplinary action that constitutes a change of placement; and (5) upon parent request. (6) upon request by the parent. The parent may elect to receive the Procedural Safeguard/Parent Rights notice by electronic mail, if the LEA makes that option available.

### **Content of Parental Rights**

The content of the notice includes a full explanation of all the procedural safeguards available relating to: 1. Independent Educational Evaluations; 2. Prior written notice; 3. Parental consent; 4. Access to education records; 5. Opportunity to present and resolve complaints through the State complaint procedures and a due process hearing including: (i) The time period in which to file a complaint or due process hearing; (ii) The opportunity for the agency to resolve the complaint; and (iii) The difference between the due process hearing and the state complaint process, including the jurisdiction of each procedure, what issues may be raised, filing and decisional timelines, and relevant procedures; 6. The availability of mediation; 7. The child's placement during the pendency of any due process hearing; 8. Procedures for children who are subject to placement in an interim alternative educational setting; 9. Requirements for unilateral placement by parents of children in private school at public expense; 10. Due process hearings, including requirements for disclosure of evaluation results and recommendations; 11. Appeals of due process hearings, including the time period in which to file those actions; 12. Attorneys' fees; and 13. Notice provided in a language understandable to the parents.

Lowndes County Schools has established and maintains procedures to provide an opportunity for the parents of a child with a disability to: 1. Inspect and review all education records relating to the identification, evaluation, educational placement and provision of FAPE to the child. 2. Participate in meetings with respect to the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the child and the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to such a child. 3. Obtain an independent educational evaluation of the child. (e)

Lowndes County Schools has established and maintains procedures to ensure that parents: 1. Receive notice before the school initiates or changes (or refuses to initiate or change) the identification, evaluation, educational placement of the child, or the provision of FAPE (services) to the child, 2. Receive notice of places to contact for assistance in understanding the procedural safeguards/parents' rights, 3. Receive procedural safeguards notice and a full explanation of the procedural safeguards.

Except for an initial evaluation, initial placement, and re-evaluation, consent is not required as a condition of any benefit to the parent(s) or child.

### **Parental Opportunity to Review Records**

Lowndes County Schools has established and maintains procedures that permit the parents of a child with a disability an opportunity to inspect and review any education records relating to their children that are collected, maintained or used in the identification, evaluation, educational placement and provision of a FAPE. These rights include the right to a response from LCS to reasonable requests for explanations and interpretations of the records, the right to request LCS to provide copies of the records and the right to have a representative of the parent to inspect and review the records. All rights of parents to examine education records shall transfer to the child at age 18, consistent with Rule 160-4-7-.09 Confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information. The LEA may presume that the parent has these rights unless the LEA has been advised that the parent does not have the authority due to State law governing, guardianship, separation and divorce.

## **Georgia Special Needs Scholarship**

At the initial Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting, parents will be notified, in writing, of the options available under Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program (GSNS).

For students to qualify for the GSNS Program, ALL of the following requirements must be met:

1. A student must have a parent/guardian who currently lives in Georgia and has been a resident for at least one calendar year.
2. A student was enrolled and completed the previous school year in a Georgia public school in grades kindergarten through twelfth.
3. A student was reported as attending a Georgia public school by a school district(s) during mandatory student counts conducted in October and March.
4. A student does not need to have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for the entire school year to qualify for the GSNS Program. A student must have received special education services at some point during the previous school year through an IEP. A student must be reported by a school district(s) in either the October OR March student counts OR in final student record as a student receiving special education services by the end of the current school year.

*For example, for students to qualify for the 2015-2016 school year, the eligibility criteria must be met in the 2014-2015 school year.*

At the end of the school year, school systems update student records for students served by an IEP after the March count to reflect that they are special education students. By mid-July the database for the scholarship calculator is updated to include these students.

If a student meets the eligibility criteria for the GSNS Program; a parent/guardian has the right to request a transfer from a student's current public school to: (a) Another public school within their district of residence; or (b) Another public school district outside their district of residence; (c) or One of the three state schools for the blind or deaf; (d) or A private school authorized to participate in the GSNS Program.

Funds received through the GSNS Program can only be used to pay for tuition and fees at a private school authorized by the State Board of Education to participate in the program.

## **Revocation of Consent for Services**

A parent may revoke consent for the receipt of special education and related services once the child is initially provided special education and related services. 1. Revocation of consent to provide special education and related services is for all special education and related services; not individual services. 2. The intent to withdraw the child from special education and related services must be made in writing by the parent to the Lowndes County Schools. 3. The LEA may not continue to provide special education and related services to the child, but must, prior to removing the child from special education and related services, provide the parent prior written notice that meets the requirements of paragraph (5) of this rule. 4. LCS may not use the procedures of mediation or due process hearings to override the withdrawal of consent. 5. LCS will not be in violation of the responsibility to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to a child with a disability because of the failure to provide further special education and related services. 6. LCS is not required to convene an IEP meeting for a child whose consent to receive special education and related services has been revoked. 7. Subsequent referrals for special education and related services shall be considered an initial evaluation and subject to the sixty day evaluation time period. 8. LCS is not required to amend the records of the child to remove any references to the provision of special education and related services prior to the receipt of the revocation of consent.



When a **parent is present** and requests to revoke consent for sped services

1. Give parents the most recent copies of
  - a. consent to evaluate
  - b. consent to place
  - c. eligibility or evaluation report
  - d. invitation to the meeting or documentation of parent contact
  - e. IEP (and minutes, if taken)
  - f. Other relevant documents as appropriate
  - g. Parental Rights
2. Explain the reason(s) we believe the student needs services
3. Explain Statements 1-8 on the “Revocation (Withdrawal) of Consent for Services” form found in Infinite Campus under Custom Forms
4. Have parent sign and date “Revocation” form
5. Make a copy for the parent to keep along with copies of items in #1
6. Services cease immediately
7. Inform IC Central through email
8. Send the due process file, including “Revocation” form to Central Office

\*services cease immediately

When a **parent is not present** but communicates his/her desire to revoke consent

1. Notify Administrative Assistant in SPED Dept. at Central Office immediately
2. From CO, the parent will be sent items listed in #1 above, a “Revocation” form, and a self-addressed, stamped envelope along with a cover letter.
3. Once the CO has received written confirmation,
  - a. the school will be notified and the student’s due process folder should be sent to the CO
  - b. IC Central will be informed via email including the changes on the schedule

Sample text for Revocation of Consent cover letter:

It has come to my attention that you have decided to remove special education services for \_\_\_\_\_. Revoking consent for special education services is certainly within your rights and will be honored.

The information we are required to provide is enclosed.

Also, we need to have on file a “Revocation (Withdrawal) of Consent for Services” form. Please sign the enclosed form and return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope. This will complete the process.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 229-316-1855 or [mindelldowning@lowndes.k12.ga.us](mailto:mindelldowning@lowndes.k12.ga.us)

### **Parental Training and Awareness**

Parents may be provided assistance to understand the special needs of their child and information about child development; and to acquire the necessary skills to support the implementation of their child's IEP if determined by the IEP Team as a related service.

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

#### **Appointment**

In order to provide every child eligible for a public education with the protection of procedural due process, a surrogate parent shall be appointed by the LEA when: (a) No parent can be identified; (b) The LEA, after reasonable efforts, cannot locate the parents; (c) The child is a ward of the State under the laws of Georgia; or (d) The child is an unaccompanied homeless youth as defined in section 725(6) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U. S.C. 11434a(6)).

Lowndes County Schools shall have procedures to determine that a child needs a surrogate parent and the assignment of an individual to act as a surrogate for the child. (b) Each LEA responsible for educating children with disabilities shall maintain a list of eligible persons to serve as surrogate parents .

#### **Wards of the State**

In the case of a child who is a ward of the State , the surrogate parent alternatively may be appointed by the judge overseeing the child's case, provided that the surrogate meets the requirements listed below.

#### **Criteria for Selection of Surrogate Parents**

Lowndes County Schools will ensure that a person selected as a surrogate parent: (i) Is not an employee of the GaDOE, the LEA or any other agency that is involved in the education or care of the child; (ii) Has no personal or professional interest that conflicts with the interest of the child the surrogate parent represents; and (iii) Has knowledge and skills that ensure adequate representation of the child

#### **Non-Employee Requirement; Compensation**

A person otherwise qualified to be a surrogate parent under paragraph (4) of this section is not an employee of the LEA solely because he or she is paid by the LEA to serve as a surrogate parent.

#### **Unaccompanied Homeless Youth**

In the case of a child who is an unaccompanied homeless youth, appropriate staff of emergency shelters, transitional shelters, independent living programs, and street outreach programs may be appointed as temporary surrogate parents without regard to paragraph (4)(a)(i) of this section, until a surrogate parent can be appointed that meets all of the requirements of paragraph (4) of this section.

#### **Surrogate Parent Responsibilities**

The surrogate parent may represent the child in all matters relating to the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of the child; and the provision of FAPE to the child.

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

COMPLAINT PROCESS. An organization or individual, including an organization or individual from another state, may file a signed, written complaint regarding allegations of substance. The complaint shall include a statement that Lowndes County Schools has violated requirements of the IDEA and the facts on which the

statement is based, the signature and contact information for the complainant, and, if alleging violations with respect to a specific child, the name and address of the residence of the child, the name of the school the child is attending, in the case of a homeless child or youth, available contact information for the child and the name of the school the child is attending, a description of the nature of the problem, including facts relating to the problem, and a proposed resolution to the problem to the extent known and available to the party at the time the complaint is filed.

(a) The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one year prior to the date the complaint is received. (b) The party filing the complaint must forward a copy of the complaint to the LEA at the same time the party files the complaint with the GaDOE. (c) The complaint shall be reviewed and investigated as necessary and appropriate action taken within 60 calendar days of its receipt by the GaDOE. (d) If a written complaint is received that is also the subject of an impartial due process hearing or contains multiple issues, some of which are a part of an impartial due process hearing, the portions of the complaint that are not a part of that hearing shall be resolved, following the time limits and procedures described in this rule. The portions of the complaint which are also the subject of an impartial due process hearing shall be set aside pending the conclusion of the hearing. (e) If a written complaint is received which contains issues previously decided in an impartial due process hearing involving the same parties, the hearing decision is binding on that issue, and the complainant shall be so informed by the GaDOE. However, a complaint alleging a LEA's failure to implement an impartial due process hearing decision shall be resolved, following the time limit and procedures described in this rule. (f) Through activities of the GaDOE and the LEAs, the state complaint procedures will be widely disseminated to parents and other interested individuals, including parent training and information centers, protection and advocacy agencies, independent living centers, and other appropriate entities.

### **Complaint Process**

The complaint procedure is as follows: 1. Complaints from any organization or individual shall be signed and addressed in writing to: Director, Division for Special Education Services Georgia Department of Education 1870 Twin Towers East Atlanta, Georgia 30334-5010 2. The party filing the complaint must forward a copy of the complaint to the LEA serving the child at the same time the party files the complaint with the State. The complaint should be forwarded to the Superintendent or the Special Education Director of the LEA. 3. The complaint shall include a statement that the State or LEA has violated a requirement of Part B of IDEA and the facts on which the statement is based, the signature and contact information for the complainant, and, if alleging violations with respect to a specific child, the name and address of the residence of the child, the name of the school the child is attending, in the case of a homeless child or youth, available contact information for the child and the name of the school the child is attending, a description of the nature of the problem of the child, including facts relating to the problem, and a proposed resolution to the problem to the extent known and available to the party at the time the complaint is filed. 4. The Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports shall address the issue with the LEA in writing and request a response within 10 business days from the public agency directly involved. (i) The LEA involved shall respond directly in writing and shall describe any explanation and/or actions relevant to the allegations. (ii) Copies of all correspondence shall be sent to the parties involved that include the complainant, the GaDOE and the LEA. In some cases, where the parent of the child is not the complainant, the parent shall also receive copies of all correspondence and the complainant may only receive copies of information that include personally identifiable information if the parent has provided consent to release such information. 5. The parent who files the complaint and LCS shall have the opportunity to voluntarily engage in mediation to resolve the issues within the complaint. 6. Upon receipt of the first State complaint from a parent in a school year, LCS shall provide the parent with a copy of procedural safeguards available to the parents of a child with a disability. 7. The Divisions For Special Education Supports And Services shall review the Lowndes County School' response and a decision may then be made that no further action is required. If, however, the issue is not fully resolved, complaint investigators from the Divisions For Special Education Supports And Services shall be assigned to carry out an independent investigation, including an on-site visit, if necessary, to clarify the issue. 8. The on-site complaint team shall gather information to determine whether there has been a violation of state

rules and/or Part B of the IDEA. The on-site review may include examination of records, interviews and classroom visits. 9. The Divisions For Special Education Supports And Services shall give the complainant the opportunity to submit additional information, either orally or in writing, regarding the allegations in the complaint. 10. The Divisions For Special Education Supports And Services shall review all relevant information and make an independent determination as to whether LCS is violating a requirement of Part B of the IDEA. 11. The Divisions For Special Education Supports And Services shall issue a written decision to LCS and the complainant that addresses each allegation in the complaint and includes findings of fact and conclusions and the reasons for the final decision. (i) The Divisions For Special Education Supports And Services shall include in the decision the steps necessary to resolve the complaint, including technical assistance activities, negotiations, and corrective actions to achieve compliance. This letter of notification shall include specific requirements and timelines that shall be met in order to continue to receive IDEA federal funds or state special education funds. (ii) If the complaint findings indicate a failure to provide appropriate services, the complaint resolution process will address how LCS is to remediate the denial of those services, including, as appropriate, the awarding of monetary reimbursement or other corrective action appropriate to the needs of the child and to the future provision of services for all students with disabilities. (iii) GaDOE must not make any final determination that LCS is not eligible for assistance under part B of the Act without first giving LCS reasonable notice and an opportunity for a hearing under 34 C.F.R. § 76.401 (d). GaDOE's hearing process can be found in Rule 160-5-2-.02 Withholding of Funds from Local Units of Administration. 12. An extension of the 60 calendar-day time limit for resolution may be made by the GaDOE only when exceptional circumstances exist with respect to a particular complaint or if the parent or other complainant and LCS involved agree to extend the time to engage in mediation, or to engage in other alternative means of dispute resolution. (h) Complaints - Private Schools. Complaints that LCS has failed to meet the requirements regarding children who are parentally-placed in private schools must be filed under the complaint procedures outlined above. Complaints regarding child find are to be filed with the LEA in which the private school is located and a copy forwarded to the GaDOE.

### **Mediation Process**

Lowndes County Schools shall ensure that procedures are established and implemented to allow parties to disputes involving any matter relating to the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to resolve such disputes through a mediation process. (a) The mediation process shall be available on request of either party to resolve disputes. (b) Mediation shall be available and offered upon each receipt of a complaint or a due process hearing request. (c) The procedures shall ensure that the mediation process:

1. Is voluntary on the part of the parties; 2. Is not used to deny or delay a parent's right to a hearing on the parent's due process complaint, or to deny any other rights afforded under Part B of IDEA; and 3. Is conducted by a qualified and impartial mediator who is trained in effective mediation techniques. (d) LCS may establish procedures to offer to parents and schools that choose not to use the mediation process, an opportunity to meet at a time and location convenient to the parents with a disinterested party who is under contract with an appropriate alternative dispute resolution entity, a parent training and information center or a community parent resource center in the State established under section 671 or 672 of IDEA, who would explain the benefits of and encourage the use of the mediation process to the parents. (e) The GaDOE shall maintain a list of individuals who are qualified mediators and knowledgeable in laws and regulations relating to the provision of special education and related services. Mediators shall be selected on a random, rotational or other impartial basis.

1. An individual who serves as a mediator may not be an employee of the GaDOE or the LEA that is involved in the education or care of the child; and 2. Mediators must not have a personal or professional interest that conflicts with the person's objectivity. (i) A person who otherwise qualifies as a mediator is not an employee of a LEA or State agency solely because he or she is paid by the GaDOE to serve as a mediator. (f) The State shall bear the cost of the mediation process. (g) Each session in the mediation process shall be scheduled in a timely manner and shall be held in a location that is convenient to the parties to the dispute. (h)

If the parties resolve a dispute through the mediation process, they shall execute a legally binding agreement that sets forth the resolution and states that:

1. Discussions that occur during the mediation process shall be confidential and may not be used as evidence in any subsequent due process hearings or civil proceedings; and 2. Is signed by both the parent and a representative of the LEA with the authority to bind the LEA. 3. The written signed mediation agreement is enforceable in any state court of competent jurisdiction, in a district court of the United States or through the State Complaint Process.

### **Impartial Due Process Hearings.**

The impartial due process hearing is designed to provide a parent or LEA an avenue for resolving differences with regard to the identification, evaluation, placement or provision of a (FAPE) to a child with a disability.

(a) The due process hearing request must allege a violation that occurred not more than two years before the date the parent or LCS knew or should have known about the alleged action that forms the basis of the due process hearing request.

1. The timeline does not apply to a parent if the parent was prevented from filing a due process complaint due to specific misrepresentations by the school district that it had resolved the problem forming the basis of the complaint; or 2. The school district's withholding of information from the parent that was required to be provided to the parent. (b) Due process hearings are provided at no cost to either party; however each party is responsible for his, her, or its costs associated with hiring legal counsel or expert witnesses unless a court awards the recovery of such costs to the prevailing party (c) LCS must inform the parents of low-cost or no cost legal and other relevant services available if the parent requests the information or whenever a due process request is received by LCS. (d) Due Process Request Procedures are as follows:

1. The party filing a due process hearing request must provide a copy to the other party and the state. When the party filing a due process hearing request is not the LEA, the party must provide a copy to the LEA's Superintendent at the same time it provides it to the State. 2. Either party, or the attorney representing either party, may file the due process hearing request. 3. The state and the parties shall keep the content of the due process request confidential. 4. The content of the complaint must include: (i) The name of the child; (ii) The address of the residence of the child; (iii) The name of the school and the LEA the child is attending; (I) For a homeless child, the contact information for the child and the name of the school and LEA the child is attending; (iv) A description of the nature of the problem of the child relating to the proposed or refused initiation or change in the identification, evaluation, placement or provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) including the facts relating to the problem; (v) A proposed resolution to the problem to the extent known and available to the party at the time. 5. A hearing may not occur until the party or the attorney representing the party files a request that meets the requirements stated above. 6. The request for the due process hearing must be deemed sufficient unless the receiving party notifies the hearing officer and the other party in writing, within 15 days of receipt of the due process request that the receiving party does not believe the request meets the requirements above. (i) Within five days of receipt of notification of alleged insufficiency, the administrative law judge or hearing officer must make a determination on the face of the due process request of whether it meets the requirements and must immediately notify the parties in writing of that determination. 7. A party may amend its due process request only if: (i) The other party consents in writing to the amendment and is given the opportunity to resolve the due process request through mediation or a resolution meeting; or (ii) The administrative law judge or hearing officer grants permission not later than five days prior to the beginning of the hearing. (iii) If an amended due process hearing request is appropriately filed, the timelines for the resolution meeting and the resolution period begin again. 8. LEA response to a due process hearing request. (i) If the LEA has not sent prior written notice regarding the subject matter of the due process hearing request to the parent, the LEA must within ten days of receiving the due process hearing request, send to the parent a response that includes: (I) An explanation of why the LEA proposed or refused to take action; a description of other options that the IEP team considered and the reasons why these options were rejected; a description of each evaluation procedure, assessment, record, or report the LEA used as the basis for the proposed or refused action; a description of the other factors that are relevant to the LEA's

proposed or refused action. 9. The LEA response does not preclude the LEA from asserting that the parent's due process request is insufficient. 10. Unless responded to as above, any party receiving a due process hearing request must send to the other party within ten days a response that specifically addresses the issues raised in the due process hearing request. (e) Resolution process: Within 15 days of receiving a parent's due process hearing request and prior to the initiation of a due process hearing, the LEA must convene a meeting with the parent and relevant members of the IEP Team who have knowledge of the facts identified in the due process request that:

1. Includes a representative of the LEA who has decision-making authority on behalf of the LEA; and
2. May not include an attorney for the District unless the parent is accompanied by an attorney. 3. The parent and the LEA determine the relevant members of the IEP Team to attend the meeting. 4. The purpose of the meeting is for the parent of the child to discuss the due process hearing request, and the facts that form the basis of the request, so that the LEA has the opportunity to resolve the dispute that is the basis of the request for a due process hearing. 5. The resolution meeting need not be held if the parent and the LEA agree in writing to waive the meeting; or the parent and the LEA agree to use mediation to attempt to resolve the due process hearing request. (f) The resolution period: If the LEA has not resolved the due process hearing request to the satisfaction of the parent within 30 days of the receipt of the due process complaint, the due process hearing may occur.

1. The failure or refusal of the parent to participate in the resolution meeting shall delay the timelines for the resolution process and the due process hearing until the meeting is held, unless the parties have agreed to waive the resolution meeting or to participate in mediation. 2. If the LEA is unable to obtain the participation of the parent in the resolution meeting after reasonable efforts have been made (and documented using the procedures in Rule 160-4-7-.06(11)(d)), the LEA may at the conclusion of the 30-day resolution period, request that an administrative law judge or hearing officer dismiss the parent's due process hearing request. 3. If the LEA fails to hold the resolution meeting within 15 days of receiving notice of a parent's due process hearing request or fails to participate in the resolution meeting, the parent may seek the intervention of an administrative law judge or hearing officer to begin the due process hearing timeline. (g) The timeline for issuing a decision in a due process hearing begins at the expiration of the 30-day resolution period, unless an adjustment to the 30-day resolution period is necessary.

1. The 45-day timeline for the due process hearing starts the day after the administrative law judge or hearing officer has been informed of one of the following events: (i) Both parties agree in writing to waive the resolution meeting; (ii) After either the mediation or resolution meeting starts but before the end of the 30-day period, the parties agree in writing that no agreement is possible; (iii) If both parties agree in writing to continue the mediation at the end of the resolution period, but later, the parent or LEA withdraws from mediation. (h) If a resolution to the dispute is reached at the resolution meeting, the parties must execute a legally binding agreement that is signed by both the parent and a representative of the LEA who has the authority to bind the LEA;

1. The agreement is enforceable in any State court of competent jurisdiction or in a district court of the United States, or through the State Complaint Process. 2. If the parties execute an agreement, a party may void the agreement within three business days of the agreement's execution. (i) The impartial administrative law judge or hearing officer. At a minimum, an administrative law judge or hearing officer:

1. Must not be an employee of the GaDOE or the LEA that is involved in the education or care of the child; (i) A person who otherwise qualifies to conduct a hearing is not an employee of the GaDOE or its representatives solely because he or she is paid by GaDOE to serve as an administrative law judge or hearing officer. 2. Must not be a person having a personal or professional interest that conflicts with the person's objectivity in the hearing; 3. Must not be previously familiar with the student or the parents/guardian/surrogate unless through previous administrative procedures; 4. Must not be previously personally familiar with the specific program or services of the LEA at issue in the hearing. Information arising solely from previous due process hearings shall not impair an administrative law judge's impartiality, but information or personal knowledge from other sources about the specific LEA or family, including the education or employment of the administrative law judge's family shall impair that particular individual's impartiality in the particular case; 5.

When any factor or event may impair or appear to impair the impartiality of the administrative law judge, such factors shall be timely disclosed to all parties. 6. Must possess knowledge of, and the ability to understand, the provisions of the IDEA, Federal and State regulations pertaining to the IDEA, and legal interpretations of the IDEA by Federal and State courts; 7. Must possess the knowledge and ability to conduct hearings in accordance with appropriate, standard legal practice; and 8. Must possess the knowledge and ability to render and write decisions in accordance with appropriate, standard legal practice. 9. GaDOE or its representatives must keep a list of the persons who serve as administrative law judges or hearing officers. The list must include a statement of the qualifications of each of those persons. (j) Subject matter of due process hearings. The party requesting the due process hearing may not raise issues at the due process hearing that were not raised in the due process hearing request, unless the other party agrees otherwise. (k) Timeline for requesting a hearing. A parent or agency must request an impartial hearing on their due process hearing request within two years of the date the parent or agency knew or should have known about the alleged action that forms the basis of the due process request.

1. Exceptions to the timeline. The timeline does not apply to a parent if the parent was prevented from filing a due process hearing request due to specific misrepresentations by the LEA that it had resolved the problem forming the basis of the due process hearing request; or the LEA's withholding of information from the parent that was required to be provided to the parent. (l) Any party to a due process hearing has the right to:

1. Be accompanied and advised by counsel and by individuals with special knowledge or training with respect to the problems of children with disabilities; 2. Present evidence and confront, cross-examine, and compel the attendance of witnesses; 3. Prohibit the introduction of any evidence at the hearing that has not been disclosed to that party at least five business days before the hearing; 4. Obtain a written, or, at the option of the parents, electronic, verbatim record of the hearing; 5. Obtain written, or, at the option of the parents, electronic findings of fact and decisions. 6. Disclosure by each party to the other party at least five business days prior to a hearing all evaluations completed by that date and recommendations based on the offering party's evaluations that the party intends to use at the hearing. (i) An administrative law judge or hearing officer may bar any party that fails to comply with this disclosure rule from introducing the relevant evaluation or recommendation at the hearing without the consent of the other party. 7. The calculation of business days under this section for the purposes of disclosure shall be calculated in accordance with the Georgia Civil Practice Act, O.C.G.A. § 9-11-6; O.C.G.A. 1-3-1(d)(3). 8. Obtain a list of all potential witnesses at least five business days before the hearing. If the witness list, due to its length or other factors, does not reasonably disclose the potential witnesses in the hearing, any party or the administrative law judge on his/her own motion may require a party to amend his/her witness list to include only the names of such persons who may actually testify and the general thrust of their testimony. (m) The parties may agree to settle the matters in dispute at any time whereupon the ALJ, upon written request, shall enter an order dismissing the matter.

1. A party may file a motion for voluntary dismissal at any time, up until five days before the scheduled date of the hearing. No motion for voluntary dismissal shall be considered if filed after that time. 2. Any motion for voluntary dismissal filed pursuant to this subsection shall include a statement of the reason(s) for requesting dismissal. 3. Within five (5) days after service of the motion for voluntary dismissal pursuant to this subsection, the opposing party may file a response to the motion for voluntary dismissal. 4. If the ALJ determines that the motion has been made for good cause, the case shall be dismissed without prejudice and the party shall be authorized to re-file the complaint within the time authorized under the applicable statute(s) of limitations. 5. If the ALJ determines that there is a lack of good cause, and the party fails to appear at any scheduled hearing, or to otherwise prosecute their case, the party's claims will be deemed abandoned and dismissed with prejudice. (n) The party seeking relief shall bear the burden of persuasion with the evidence at the administrative hearing. The administrative law judge or hearing officer shall retain the discretion to modify and apply this general principle to conform with the requirements of law and justice in individual cases under unique or unusual circumstances as determined by the administrative law judge or hearing officer. (o) Parents involved in hearings must be given the right to:

1. Have the child who is the subject of the hearing present; 2. Open the hearing to the public; and 3.

Have the record of the hearing and the findings of fact and decisions provided at no cost to parents. (p) An administrative law judge or hearing officer's determination of whether a child received FAPE must be based on substantive grounds.

1. In matters alleging a procedural violation, an administrative law judge or hearing officer may find that a child did not receive a FAPE only if the procedural inadequacies: (i) Impeded the child's right to a FAPE; (ii) Significantly impeded the parent's opportunity to participate in the decision-making process regarding the provision of a FAPE to the parent's child; or (iii) Caused a deprivation of educational benefit. (I) Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to preclude an administrative law judge or hearing officer from ordering a LEA to comply with procedural requirements. (q) Nothing in this Rule shall be construed to preclude a parent from filing a separate due process hearing request on an issue separate from a due process hearing request already filed. (r) The GaDOE, after deleting any personally identifiable information, must transmit the findings and decisions to the State advisory panel and make those findings and decisions available to the public. (s) A decision made in a due process hearing is final, except that any party involved in the hearing may appeal the decision under the provisions in paragraph (s) below. (t) The GaDOE must ensure that not later than 45 days after the expiration of the 30- day resolution period or the adjusted resolution time periods that:

1. A final decision is reached in the hearing; and 2. A copy of the decision is mailed to each of the parties. 3. An administrative law judge or hearing officer may grant specific extensions of time beyond the periods set out in this rule at the request of either party. The hearing officer or administrative law judge must notify the parties in its written order granting the extension of the new date by which the decision shall be provided. 4. Each hearing must be conducted at a time and place that is reasonably convenient to the parents and child involved. (u) Civil Action. Any party aggrieved by the findings and decision made by an administrative law judge or hearing officer has the right to bring a civil action with respect to the due process hearing request notice requesting a due process hearing. The action may be brought in any State court of competent jurisdiction or in a district court of the United States without regard to the amount in controversy.

1. The party bringing the action shall have 90 days from the date of the decision of the administrative law judge or hearing officer to file a civil action. 2. In any civil action, the court: (i) Receives the records of the administrative proceedings directly from the administrative law judge or hearing officer; (ii) Hears additional evidence at the request of a party; and (iii) Basing its decision on the preponderance of the evidence, grants the relief that the court determines to be appropriate. (v) The district courts of the United States have jurisdiction of actions brought under section 615 of the IDEA without regard to the amount in controversy. (w) Rule of construction. Nothing in this part restricts or limits the rights, procedures, and remedies available under the Constitution, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, or other Federal laws protecting the rights of children with disabilities, except that before the filing of a civil action under these laws seeking relief that is also available under section 615 of the IDEA, the procedures under IDEA must be exhausted to the same extent as would be required had the action been brought under the IDEA. (x) Attorneys' fees. In any action or proceeding brought under the due process hearing provisions of the IDEA, the court, in its discretion, may award reasonable attorneys' fees as part of the costs to the prevailing party who is the parent of a child with a disability; or (y) To a prevailing party who is the GaDOE or LEA against the attorney of a parent who files a complaint or subsequent cause of action that is frivolous, unreasonable, or without foundation, or against the attorney of a parent who continued to litigate after the litigation clearly became frivolous, unreasonable, or without foundation; or (z) To a prevailing GaDOE or LEA against the attorney of a parent, or against the parent, if the parent's request for a due process hearing or subsequent cause of action was presented for any improper purpose, such as to harass, to cause unnecessary delay, or to needlessly increase the cost of litigation. (aa) Funds under Part B of the IDEA may not be used to pay attorneys' fees or costs of a party related to any action or proceeding under the due process hearing provisions of the IDEA. This does not preclude a public agency from using funds under Part B of the IDEA for conducting an action or proceeding under section 615 of the IDEA. (bb) If a court awards reasonable attorneys' fees, they must be based on rates prevailing in the community in which the action or proceeding arose for the kind and quality of services furnished. No bonus or multiplier may be used in



calculating the fees awarded under this paragraph. (cc) Attorneys' fees may not be awarded and related costs may not be reimbursed in any action or proceeding under the due process hearing provisions of IDEA for services performed subsequent to the time of a written offer of settlement to a parent if:

1. The offer is made within the time prescribed by Rule 68 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure or, in the case of an administrative proceeding, at any time more than 10 days before the proceeding begins; 2. The offer is not accepted within 10 days; and 3. The court or administrative hearing officer finds that the relief finally obtained by the parents is not more favorable to the parents than the offer of settlement. (i) An award of attorneys' fees and related costs may be made to a parent who is the prevailing party and who was substantially justified in rejecting the settlement offer. (dd) Attorneys' fees may not be awarded relating to any meeting of the IEP Team unless the meeting is convened as a result of an administrative proceeding or judicial action, or at the discretion of the State, for mediation. (ee) A meeting conducted pursuant to the resolution process shall not be considered a meeting convened as a result of an administrative hearing or judicial action, or an administrative hearing or judicial action, for purposes of this section. (ff) The court may reduce the amount of the attorneys' fees awarded, if the court finds that:

1. The parent, or the parent's attorney, during the course of the action or proceeding, unreasonably protracted the final resolution of the controversy; 2. The amount of attorney's fees otherwise authorized to be awarded unreasonably exceeds the hourly rate prevailing in the community for similar services by attorneys of reasonably comparable skill, reputation, and experience; 3. The time spent and legal services furnished were excessive considering the nature of the action or proceeding; or 4. The attorney representing the parent did not provide to the LEA the appropriate information in the due process hearing request notice. (gg) The provisions of paragraph (dd) of this section do not apply if the court finds that the State or LEA unreasonably protracted the final resolution of the action or proceeding or there was a violation of section 615 of IDEA. (hh) Child's status during proceedings. Except as noted in the Rule 160-4-7-.10 Discipline, during the pendency of any administrative or judicial proceeding regarding a due process complaint notice requesting a due process hearing, unless the State or LEA and the parents of the child agree otherwise, the child involved in the complaint must remain in his or her current educational placement. (ii) If the due process hearing request involves an application for initial admission to public school, the child, with the consent of the parents, must be placed in the public school until the completion of all the proceedings. (jj) If the due process hearing request involves an application for initial services under this part from a child who is transitioning from Part C (Babies Can't Wait) to Part B and is no longer eligible for Part C services because the child has turned three, the LEA is not required to provide the Part C services that the child had been receiving. If the child is found eligible for special education and related services under Part B and the parent consents to the initial provision of special education and related services, the LEA must provide those special education and related services that are not in dispute between the parent and the LEA. (kk) If the administrative law judge or hearing officer in a due process hearing conducted by the State agrees with the child's parents that a change of placement is appropriate, that placement must be treated as an agreement between the LEA and the parents.

### **System Complaint Process:**

When it is felt that the rights of the student or parent/guardian have been violated, Lowndes County Schools encourages the complainant to follow the chain of command. However, at any time, a complaint can be filed with the Georgia Department of Education, see information above.

Typically, a parent/guardian should meet with the teacher(s) to discuss their concerns. This can occur through a parent-teacher conference or an IEP meeting. If the issue is not resolved at the teacher level, the parent/guardian should meet with the school based administration. If after meeting with the school based administrator, the parent/guardian still has a complaint, the parent/guardian should contact the Central Office. At the Central Office, the chain of command is the Director of Special Education, the Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, then the Superintendent.

### **Readiness for College and Career (Bridge Law)**

A transition plan is required upon a child turning 16 years old or prior to entering the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, whichever comes first. A transition plan must include appropriate, measurable, postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and where appropriate, independent living skills. The plan will be developed during the student's 8<sup>th</sup> grade year at the annual review.

At the middle school level, counselors begin working with students in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade teaching lessons that are specific for each grade level. During the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, each student completes the Career Cluster Survey in Georgia College 411 in January. During the 7<sup>th</sup> grade, each student completes the Career Key and Exploration in Georgia College 411 in January. During 8<sup>th</sup> grade, each student completes an Interest Profiler in Georgia College 411. Students also participate in High School 101 and visit Lowndes High School in February. Individual Graduation Plans are completed with the 8<sup>th</sup> graders in March. A transition information packet is sent home with each 8<sup>th</sup> grade student in January by the case manager. This gives parents and students the opportunity to view the information, submit elective preferences and ask individual questions prior to students being officially scheduled for high school courses. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers complete LHS Must Know Information sheets which provide high school teachers a snapshot of how the student performs academically and/or behaviorally. The high school special education department meets with the 8<sup>th</sup> grade special education teachers about high school curriculum requirements so students can be registered correctly for classes.

For middle school students, the information gathered during the Georgia College 411 lessons will be used by the special education case manager as the initial formal assessment for the transition plan. Annual updates may be assessed formally or informally at the high school. At the high school, teachers are able to use the VIVA: Viking Inventory of Vocational Accountability (attached), along with the information gathered in Georgia College 411, to update the transition plans of students served in general curriculum. For students served in adaptive curriculum, the special education case managers will use the Lowndes High Transition Service Plan Update (attached) to update transition plans.

At Lowndes High School, teachers use Pyramid of Intervention (POI) every 3 weeks. The teachers print grades periodically to review with students. Teachers update grades on Infinite Campus weekly. These grades can be viewed by parents and students online. Parent phone calls are made by classroom teachers and VIP teachers. The dates for POI are listed on the school's Google Calendar. Credit summary reports are run each semester by the counselors. Students, specifically juniors and seniors, are put on an LLC (Lowndes Learning Center) plan if they are lacking credits. Teachers meet with the assistant principal over special education to review schedules at the end of the year for next year to ensure that the student's schedule, IEP, and transition plan match. The counselors and case managers use the graduation checklist to make sure that students are on track for graduation. For students served in adaptive curriculum, case managers use the Lowndes High Individual Graduation Plan. For students who are credit deficient, the counselor meets with them to develop a course schedule to help ensure the students receive the credits needed for graduation. Counselors review EOCT scores. Through the Homeless Grant, the case manager reviews grades each 9 weeks as well as graduation tests and EOCT scores of students who have been declared homeless. The Homeless Children and Youth case manager will meet with students and teachers if the students are not passing. To ensure that students served in access courses receive the elective credits needed for graduation, Life Skills Vocational Elective classes have been created. Students participate in cooking classes, the Crimson Café and the bookstore. Students learn interpersonal skills, money skills, work ethic lessons, and other lessons that are generalized into outside employable skills.

Students with disabilities are required to attend IEP meetings if the purpose of the meeting is to consider the postsecondary goals for the student and the transition services needed to assist the student in reaching those goals. To the extent appropriate, with the consent of the parents or the adult student who has reached the age of 18, in implementing the transition requirements, Lowndes County Schools will invite a representative of

any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services. The signed parental permission of the Meeting Notice will be found in the special education Due Process folder. IEPs and transition plans are reviewed after each meeting by the LHS Coordinators using the IEP checklist (attached). Quarterly, the review committee, consisting of the assistant principal over special education, the two high school coordinators will randomly pull two transition plans from each of the teachers at the high school. The review committee will use the Transition Rubric (attached) to check the components of the transition plans. Biannually, the Special Education Department at the district level will randomly select a sampling of transition plans to review for compliance. The same Transition Rubric will be used to review the transition plans. After each review, positive feedback and corrective actions will be provided to the teachers. Corrective actions may include 1) a new transition plan; requiring a new meeting; 2) improved transition plan; requiring an amendment; or 3) recommendations for future transition plans. The information gathered on the rubrics will be transferred into a spreadsheet. This will easily depict areas of weakness for which training will be provided.

## **Other Procedures**

### **Related Services**

#### **Interpreter for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

An interpreter may be provided for deaf or hard of hearing students who must have this accommodation to understand instruction in the general education classroom. When it is expected a student may require the services of an interpreter, the assistant principal in the school should notify the director of special education.

#### **Physical Therapy / Occupational Therapy**

**These services are provided only through IEPs or 504s.**

**Evaluations are required to determine the needs of students for Occupational and/or Physical Therapy as Related Services.**

#### **Occupational Therapy (OT)**

Occupational Therapy services provided by a qualified occupational therapist to develop and enhance the independent physical functioning of students with disabilities so the students can receive FAPE. **Occupational therapy services provided by schools are for educational purposes to enable a student with a disability to progress on his or her Individualized Education Program (IEP).** These services include:

1. Improving, developing or restoring functions impaired or lost through illness, injury or deprivation
2. Improving ability to independently perform educationally related tasks if functions are impaired or lost.
3. Preventing, through early intervention, initial or further impairment or loss of function.

#### **Physical Therapy (PT)**

Physical Therapy services provided by a qualified physical therapist to develop and enhance the physical functioning of students with disabilities so the student can receive FAPE. **Physical therapy services provided by schools are for educational purposes to enable a student with a disability to progress on his or her IEP.** These services include:

1. Increasing muscle strength, mobility and endurance.

2. Focusing on gross motor skills that rely on the large muscles of the body involved in physical movement and range of motion.
3. Improving the student's posture, gait and body awareness, and monitoring the function, fit and proper use of mobility aids and devices.

### **When to refer?**

The severity of a student's disability and the impact of the disability on the student's progress in the educational environment will determine the need for an OT or PT referral. Students with severe disabilities, who have difficulty accessing the educational environment due to severe deficits in fine or gross motor function may need to be referred for an OT and/or PT evaluation as part of their initial referral to special education.

A student who demonstrates mild fine and/or gross motor delays needs to be monitored as to progress on IEP goals to determine if direct instruction/intervention by the special education teacher can address these needs. Only when adequate services have been provided over time and a student has limited mastery due to fine or gross motor delays, should a referral be made.

Handwriting deficits need to be addressed through classroom instruction. If a student with an IEP demonstrates difficulties with handwriting, the IEP team should develop appropriate goals and objectives to address this weakness. Only in cases where children cannot master handwriting objectives with direct instruction should a referral be made for an OT evaluation. Occupational Therapists do not work on written expression goals covering the concepts of grammar or sentence structure. This is the responsibility of the regular and/or special education teacher.

### **Referral Process**

To refer a student for an OT and/or PT evaluation, complete the OT/PT referral form and obtain consent for OT/PT evaluation. Clearly indicate which services are being requested. Completed referrals are sent to the Special Education Administrative Assistant at the Central Office. She will log in the referral and forward it to the appropriate therapist. A copy of the request will be filed in the student's special education folder.

#### **A referral for OT/PT evaluation is not to be given directly to a therapist.**

Upon completion of the evaluation, a copy of the evaluation will be given to the assistant principal and Special Education Secretary at the central office. The school will schedule an IEP meeting to discuss the results and any needed services. If an evaluation isn't completed within 30 days, please notify the Special Education Administrative Assistant.

A portion of the therapist's evaluation includes the determination of educational relevance of therapy. Therapists use the CERT scoring sheet to assist with determining educational relevance and the appropriate level of intervention. Therapy that is rehabilitative, rather than educational, is not provided under Georgia guidelines.

**Reminder: Our therapists serve students at multiple sites, including schools and community based settings, each week. We have asked our therapists to schedule their time to maximize services to students. Therefore, please do not ask them to consult with teachers without an appointment. Contact the therapist for an appointment.**

Referral for evaluation of students who do not have an IEP: When teachers have concerns with the fine or gross motor development of students within their classes, these concerns should be monitored through the SST process. An SST plan should be developed to address the student's needs within the classroom. Referrals made through SST 504s that may require OT and/or PT evaluations should be sent to the special education

department.

### **Transfer-In Students**

Students who enroll in Lowndes County Schools who have an IEP with OT/PT services will receive those services as accepted. The parent will be asked for a new prescription. The school SPED coordinator will request for the prescription from the previous school. Follow-up requests for the previous script and the new will be made by the treating OT/PT.

### **Hearing/Vision Screening Procedure**

A current (within one year) hearing and vision form must be complete noting that the student has passed hearing and vision screenings before any formal assessment may be completed.

If the student passes both vision and hearing, place the white copy in the special education folder, send the yellow copy to the County Office with the referral packet, and send the pink copy to the parent

If the student fails either section, after having been checked for a second time, the school nurse will send the pink copy of the form along with the Notice of Vision or Hearing Screening Failure Letter to the parent. The pink copy contains a section on the back to be completed by a doctor. A copy of the Notice of Vision or Hearing Screening Failure Letter should be placed in the special education file.

When the school nurse receives the physician's report, a copy will be given to the case manager. The case manager will attach the results to the back of the pink copy and file in student's special education folder.

Assessment accommodations must be used if the physician's report indicates the hearing or vision loss has been addressed, even though it may not be corrected.

### **Projected Special Transportation Needs**

At the end of each school year a list of students receiving special transportation and the name of their school for the coming school year will be forwarded to the Director of Special Education. The Department of Special Education will notify the transportation department of any changes so there is no disruption of transportation at the beginning of the school year.

**Request for Records:** To request information from any source, an Authorization to Release Information form must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian/ surrogate or student when of legal age. Retain a copy for the student's confidential file and send the original to the location of the requested records. (Found in Infinite Campus)

**Release of Records:** To release records to a parent or third party by request of parent, an Authorization to Release Information form must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian/surrogate. Retain the original in the student's confidential file. (Found in Infinite Campus)

**All records from a student's confidential special education folder requested by SSI, another school system, or the justice system are released only from the Department of Special Education. Forward any releases of this nature to the Administrative Assistant to the Director of Special Education at the Central Office.**

### **Procedures for Implementing School Programs with VSU Student Personnel**

Lowndes County Schools provides placements for Valdosta State University students completing degrees in various fields of education, including special education and communication disorders. Individual professors from VSU work with school principals to establish student placements. VSU students work in the public

school environment at various levels of participation from classroom observation to student teaching. Some placements require occasional direct instruction by VSU students, while student teaching programs and the graduate speech clinician program require direct instruction with individual students and student groups daily for an entire semester. From time to time students participating from various VSU classes may ask to have access to a student's IEP. An IEP is a part of a student's confidential file. Only **special education student teachers** and **graduate speech clinicians** may have access to a student's IEP. A letter of consent granting permission for these students to view a student's IEP must be in each child's folder and sent to the central office. There is a separate letter for speech clinicians working within the school setting and for student teachers. Other VSU students may see examples of sample IEPs with confidential information removed. They may also review the IEP "Classroom Modifications Summary" sheet that regular education teachers file in their lesson plan books. It is the responsibility of the supervising special education teacher to train the VSU student on confidentiality procedures.

### **Maintaining Student Folders**

Confidential special education folders are maintained on students both in their schools and in the central office. The school folder is the official folder and contains originals. School folders are to be filed in the school's vault or other designated fire-proof location. Files are to be kept confidential and should be viewed only by the school system staff involved in delivery of services to the student. Access sheets are to be kept in the front of all folders and are to be signed when folders are removed from the vault/file.

All confidential special education folders are to be kept in expandable folders provided by the central office. Teachers are responsible for maintaining folders in expandable files with dividers and information as stated below. When expandable folders wear out, teachers should request a new folder from the assistant principal.

### **Bold headings are divider titles**

#### Access

Access Sheet signed as folder is read/reviewed

#### SST/RTI/H/V

##### SST/RTI Information

If student is a transfer student or preschool student and no SST information is available insert a typed single sheet stating "Transfer Student-no SST file received" or "Student referred to Special Education in Preschool-bypass SST process"

##### Hearing/Vision Screening Results

Hearing and vision screening results must be current within 3 years. A current (within one year) hearing and vision form must be complete, noting that the student has passed hearing and vision screenings before any formal assessment may be completed.

#### Referral Information

Referral information for initial or re-evaluation

Consent for Evaluation

#### Eligibility

##### Eligibility Report

Social History attached to EBD

Doctor's letter attached to OHI; OI; TBI

Vision Report attached to VI

Audiological and Otological attached to D/HH

Analyzed work samples attached to SLD

Classroom observation for SLD and ID

Re-evaluation determination (Pink) form should be attached to front of eligibility

Psychological

Current psychological evaluation

If there is no psychological evaluation, insert a typed single sheet stating “No Psychological Evaluation - See Eligibility Report”

Notice/Consent/Notes

Notice of most recent IEP meeting (additional notifications documented on form)

Consent for Placement

Notes of most recent IEP meeting (if taken)

IEP

Current IEP with:

Behavioral Intervention Plan (as needed)

Transition Plan (as needed)

LC-10C, if parent not present

Progress report form

Correspondence/Other

Medical records/Medicaid Forms

Test protocols

Old IEP data (minutes, progress notes, data, ESY determination, regression assessment form, notice, GAA results)

Miscellaneous

**Monitoring Post Graduate Outcomes**

It is the mission of the Lowndes County Schools Department of Special Education to provide appropriate services to students to encourage students to remain in school until graduation. In accordance with requests from the DOE, Lowndes County Schools monitors the post-graduate activities of students one year after graduation date. The assistant principal assigned to Special Education at Lowndes High School will complete a post-graduate form on each graduating senior. Once posted (march) the Director of Special Education downloads the Post-Secondary Outcomes Data Collection spreadsheet from the GaDOE Portal. The spreadsheet is then shared with special education coordinators at the high school. The coordinators use the post-graduate form to make contact with the student or student’s family and record the post-secondary activity. The coordinators share the information with the Special Education Director in mid-July. Prior to the submission due date, the Director attempts to contact students who were not contacted by the high school coordinators. Information on all graduates is submitted to the GaDOE through the Portal by the Director of Special Education.

**Criteria for Special Education Students to be referred to the Alternative Program**

- Automatic approval if mandated by school board policy or required by the courts. Home school personnel should be in contact with alternative program personnel and be sure the folder, with current information is sent ASAP. If a crisis referral is deemed necessary, contact the Director of Special Education for assistance.

- Prior to a referral, except mandated referrals, a special education student must be receiving a minimum of 15 segments weekly of special education services.
- When the option of the alternative program is being considered by school personnel or parent/guardians for a special education student, an IEP meeting should be held to review or create the Behavior Intervention Plan. The AP of the alternative program should be notified.
- If the IEP committee still considers the alternative school as a viable option, the IEP committee will set a date for considering the effectiveness of the BIP and any other relevant information.
- If IEP committee decides the student **DOES** need alternative education services, a referral form for the alternative school should be completed and sent to the Assistant Principal of the alternative program. The AP will coordinate with school based AP or SPED coordinator.
- The special education student must have an IEP that will be valid for at least 3 months prior to arriving at the alternative program and departing from the alternative program

*Things to consider before referring a special education student to alternative program:*

- *What can the alternative program provide for the student that the home school cannot?*
- *Alternative program may not provide a smaller teacher/student ratio in the classroom.*

### **Procedures for Restraining of Students**

1. Physical restraint by LCS personnel will only be used when a student is an immediate danger to himself or to others and the student is not responsive to less intensive behavioral interventions including verbal directives or other de-escalation techniques.
2. Physical restraint is prohibited as a form of discipline or punishment, when the student cannot be safely restrained, and/or when the restraint is contraindicated due to the student's psychiatric, medical, or physical condition(s) as described in the student's educational records.
3. Physical restraints will be terminated when the student is no longer an immediate danger to himself or others or if the student is observed to be in severe distress.
4. Select members of the Lowndes County Schools faculty and staff will be trained in the use of de-escalation techniques and physical restraint as well as LCS procedures regarding the use of physical restraint.
5. Each physical restraint will be observed by at least one other LCS employee.
6. The observing adult(s) should carefully observe the student throughout the restraint to observe the student's behavior and physical status and to assist in determining when the student is no longer a danger to himself/herself or others.
7. Staff members directly involved in the restraint as well as staff monitoring the restraint will collaborate in the documentation of the incident.
8. As soon as appropriate after the restraint is removed, the staff should discuss the incident leading up to the restraint with the student and discuss alternative behaviors that could have been utilized.
9. A "Physical Restraint Incident Report" will be completed on the day of the incident and given to the designated administrator on site.
10. Written parental notification will be given when physical restraint is used to restrain their student within a reasonable time not to exceed one school day from the use of restraint. Maintain documentation of parental notification.
11. A copy of the Physical Restraint Incident Report will be provided with the written parental notification.
12. A copy of the Parental Rights will be provided with the notification and report.
13. School administrator will send a copy of the Incident Report to the Director of Special Education.
14. Each school will maintain an annual summary report to document the use of physical restraint.
15. The annual summary report will be signed by the school administrator and kept on file at the school.



16. A copy of the annual summary report will be provided to the Director of Special Education at the close of each school year.

17. Completed incident reports will be reviewed annually and more often as appropriate.

### **Amending the IEP in Infinite Campus**

1. Click on locked IEP. Will change to dark blue.
  2. Click on “Amend” tab.
  3. Warning box comes up. Click “Ok.”
  4. A gray box comes up. Do not click “Amend Editor.”
  5. Instead click on the page to amend (i.e., Services outside General Ed. Classroom).
  6. A small box comes up. Now, click “Amend Editor.”
  7. Type in amendment date and reason(s) in white box (keep the reason simple).
  8. If you need to end class(es) delete the services that need to be removed.
  9. If you need to add class(es) in (i.e., Services outside General Ed. Classroom), click on New Service Provided (that box will appear under the Amendment Reason and Service Provided List boxes). Fill in as usual; however, make sure the initiation date is the same as the amendment date and be sure to insert the end date as the same end date of the original IEP. Click “Save.” (If you have other classes to add, continue in the same manner.)
  10. If you also need to end or add classes in Services inside General Ed. Classroom, you would do the same as mentioned above, starting with #5.
  11. If you also need to add Goals and Objectives, click on it. Click “Amend Editor.” Type in date and reason(s). Click New Plan Goal. Fill in as usual. Click “Save.” (If you have other goals to add, continue in the same manner.)
  12. When there are no more pages to amend, click on “Review Amendment.”
  13. If the information typed in is correct, click on the calendar icon and add the amendment date.
  14. Click “Save.”
- Then, click “Complete Amendment.”

### **Parent provided support**

Parents may request that a private behavior analyst, therapist, or tutor observe their child on campus. Observations are limited to a maximum of one time per week; not to exceed 45 minutes. The school administrators may allow this to occur when this activity is not disruptive to the learning environment of the child or other students. Core academic instructional time must be protected.

School administrators will provide the Parent Request for Observation form for the parent to give to the private provider. The parent should return the form along with required documentation. These items include current: Georgia Business License, proof of insurance, personal credentials, background check, mandated reporter education, parental consent/Authorization to Release Information. Other items may be required in unique situations. A mandated reporter training video and acknowledgement form are available on the LCS website, under “School Social Work > Volunteer / Chaperone Procedures and forms”.

School administrators will approve or deny the request. The administrator may revoke approval of the request at any time by notifying the parent. Scheduling of the observation(s) will be determined by the school administration. Any recommendations from the observer are to be made in writing to the Principal. When an administrator has approved an observation request, the form is sent to the Director of Special Education for signature. The completed form is returned to the school.

### **FTE (Full Time Equivalent) Procedures**

Twice each school year, the state collects data from the systems concerning FTE. These count dates are identified as Cycle 1 and Cycle 3. Cycle 1 occurs on the first Tuesday in October. Cycle 3 occurs on the first Thursday in March.

Cycle 1 reports information on all students. The following are specific for students with disabilities.

- Primary area
- Hours per week
- Inclusion
- Supplemental speech
- Special Transportation
- Related hours
- Itinerant teacher
- Special education environment
- GAA flag
- All special education services

Cycle 3 reports information on active students. The following are specific for students with disabilities.

- Primary area
- Inclusion
- Supplemental speech
- Special Transportation
- Itinerant teacher
- Inclusion
- All special education services

For FTE Cycles to run smoothly, it is required that the information within Infinite Campus is up to date and correct. Each month prior to the count day, special education teachers will provide the special education coordinator or AP a copy of the schedule and services page for each student on their caseload. Teachers must ensure that the services and schedule match.

Along with the schedule and services page, the following information must be provided:

- Primary area served
- Speech students - provided by the SLP, indicating who is seen on count days
- Supplemental Speech
- Special Transportation
- Environment code - calculated or verified by the special education coordinator
- Area served for students whose primary areas are TBI, AUT, or SDD

Students who receive consultative services must be seen on the first Tuesday each month in the first semester and on the first Thursday each month in the second semester.

## **Tracking Devices**

Permission to use GPS tracking devices may be granted to parents providing they do not inhibit the education environment or learning of the wearer or of other students. The listen-in feature is absolutely prohibited as it is an eavesdropping device. Additionally, the FERPA and HIPPA rights of other students must be recognized and protected. Some GPS device manufacturers have an option in place to suspend the listen-in feature during school provided transportation and the school day, Devices may be worn while on school transportation and during the school day when the parent has worked with the school and the manufacturer to ensure the listen-in feature is deactivated, as long as it does not interfere with the traditional function of the school.

## **Monitoring Procedures**

### **Special Education Folders**

Special Education Teachers are charged with keeping the Due Process folder at the school for each student on their caseload. Each year, teachers complete the Special Education Folder Checklist. After the case manager has checked his/her folders, another special education teacher checks the folder using the checklist. At the district level, using the checklist, the Special Education Coordinators randomly review at least 2 student folders from each teacher's caseload before the end of post planning.

### **IEP**

At the central office level, the special education coordinators review at least 1 random IEPs from each teacher's caseload using the IEP Compliance Checklist. If there are errors noted, the paperwork is returned to the case manager to correct. Once the corrections have been made, the case manager will correct the errors in Infinite Campus including an explanation in the Plan Comments section. Two copies of the IEP will be printed, one for the Due Process Folder and one for the parent/guardian. If a teacher has errors on an IEP, additional IEPs for that teacher will be reviewed. If the teacher has errors on additional IEPs, technical assistance will be provided. The Technical Assistance will include scheduled time with the special education coordinator to review errors and to assist in writing their next IEP. Additional TA may include IEP writing courses through the district or RESA. A copy of the IEP Compliance Checklist will be returned to the teacher and the school level administrator with a copy kept at the Central Office.

### **Transition Plans**

Prior to transition meetings, teachers use the Lowndes County Transition Checklist to ensure all parts of the transition plan are completed correctly. After the meeting, the special education coordinators review the transition plans using the checklist. Quarterly, randomly chosen transition plans will be selected at the district level to ensure compliance. The Lowndes County Transition Checklist will be used to ensure compliance. After reviewing the transition plan, the reviewer will complete the Transition Plan Monitoring Form. This form will allow for the district to monitor the checking of Transition Plans.

### **Eligibilities**

After each eligibility meeting, the eligibility is uploaded into Infinite Campus. It is attached to the current school year and the evaluation tab in IC. As eligibilities are being discussed in meetings, team members and parents have the opportunity to provide feedback for accuracy for any needed corrections. As eligibilities are being discussed in meetings, team members and parents have the opportunity to provide feedback for accuracy in any area discussed. Corrected copies are also uploaded into IC.

### **Tier 4 Documentation**

Tier 4 Documentation is the term used to describe special education progress monitoring. Teachers progress monitor the IEP goals of students on their caseload. Using the T4-D data collection sheets to organize the information, teachers will collect work samples and test scores each nine weeks to show whether or not the student is making progress towards mastering the goal. The information is kept in a purple folder Twice a

year, the special education coordinators will randomly select students at each school to review the information in the purple folder. If the information is lacking, the teacher will receive a written request indicating what is missing. The coordinator will recheck the folder after two weeks to see if the request has been completed. After reviewing the folders, the reviewer will complete the T4 D Monitoring Form. This form will allow the district to monitor the checking of T4 documentation.

## **Administrative Procedures**

### **Inventory**

The electronic inventory is housed on the Special Education Director's harddrive. It is titled "spedinventory" and it is password protected. All required elements are maintained in columns on a spreadsheet. Description, Serial/ID number, funding and percentage of source, Title, Vendor, Acquisition Date and Unit Cost, Location, Use, Condition, and Disposition (including sale price if applicable). Additionally, Lowndes maintains the name of the person to whom the item is assigned and the date of the most recent update. The tabs at the bottom are Original (to the director), Active Records and Inactive Records. Active records are inventoried annually, typically in January. Active records over 5 years old are moved to the Inactive Records tab and maintained there indefinitely.

Annually, the director sorts the active records by Fiscal Year of purchase. Items that are older than 5 years and are not easily pilfered are moved to the Inactive Records sheet. Remaining items are sorted by who they are assigned. The Director emails relevant portions of the spreadsheet to the employees who are listed as "Assigned". The employee then provides information to the Director regarding the current condition of the item, to whom the item was reassigned (if appropriate), and any additional information deemed relevant.

The information provided by the employee to whom the item is assigned is then transposed to the Special Ed System Inventory and the "Last Update" column is dated.

Inventoried items are those that are non-expendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5000 or more per unit. Additionally, items that are non-expendable, tangible property having a useful life of more than one year and are easily pilfered may be inventoried.

### **Budget**

There are three State budgets supervised by the Director of Special Education. These budgets are managed in the GaDOE Portal through the Consolidated Application. Directions for Budgets and Grants are on the GaDOE public website in the Under Offices and Divisions; Federal Programs; Special Education Services and Supports. The three budgets are: PreSchool Disability Services, Special Ed - Preschool - Regular Project, and Special Ed - Flowthrough. Both PreSchool budgets should be exhausted with personnel salary and benefits as there is no carryover allowed in these two budgets. Combined, there are not enough funds to cover the required personnel. Flowthrough funds should be used to cover costs above those in the PreSchool budgets.

The vast majority of Flowthrough funds are spent on personnel. In order to accurately predict budgets, the finance department will provide the Director with a spreadsheet of projected salaries and benefits. This spreadsheet is invaluable to the budgeting process. Once all salaries and benefits are budgeted, the remaining funds should be budgeted by considering recurring annual needs and expected needs. Previous years' budgets should be used to inform decisions. Requirements and timelines can be found on the GaDOE website.

### **The drawdown of IDEA funds procedure**

Expenditure reports, by program, are printed monthly. The reports include the org/object for each expenditure. Financial records that document the PO, receipt, and payment are kept in the finance department. By the 17th of each month, drawdowns are made equal to expenditures. Org/objects for expenditures of 404 funds are

assigned by the Director of Special Education. Purchase Orders are input into the system by the Administrative Assistant of Special Education and approved by the Director of Special Education. The Finance Coordinator/Lead Bookkeeper runs the expenditure reports and requests drawdowns with oversight by the Assistant Superintendent of Finance.

### **Proportionate Share**

Definition: spending a “proportionate” amount of IDEA money on students who have been placed in a private school (or homeschool) by their parent. The private school must be located in the LCS District. An elementary school is defined as having at least one grade at fourth grade or below. Typically, if a private elementary school has any grades, it will have kindergarten. Daycare centers that have a kindergarten class meet the definition of an elementary school. For homeschool, the student/parent must reside in the LCS District.

Our obligation:

- Provide an accurate count of children with disabilities who are in private school or homeschool and reside in our school district.
- Provide these children with special education and related services, to the extent consistent with their number and location in the state, up to the proportionate share amount.
- Service Plans must be in effect at the beginning of each school year and must be developed, reviewed, and revised periodically, but not less than annually.
- Invite representatives from the private schools to each Services Plan meeting. If the representative cannot attend, use other means to encourage participation (i.e. phone conference).
- The Service Plan (like an IEP) must describe the specific special education and/or related service LCS will provide.

Currently, Proportionate Share direct services are offered in the eligibility category of Speech Impairment. The LEA can provide consultative services in other areas.

Annually, a meeting with private and homeschool providers is held. Along with the invitation, a survey is sent to the private and homeschool providers. The survey provides the private and homeschool providers an opportunity to share the number of identified students with disabilities enrolled, the number of those enrolled students with disabilities who receive services, and what types of services they receive. The survey also asks what types of services the private and homeschool providers feel would benefit their students with disabilities. Search the internet to find private schools in the LCS district. The Title I director may be of assistance.

To determine homeschooled students, use SLDS>Operational Dashboard>Home School Report. Export the list to Excel (CSV). Filter previous years and non-SWD. Check address to ensure student is LCS and not VCS.

In most cases, students will come to a school to receive their services. This will typically be the school in the zone in which the student resides, but there may be instances when another school provides the services, these will be decided on a case by case basis. The most frequently considered reason for a change is convenience to the parent. The SLP will coordinate with the parent for the date/time for delivery of direct service.

Speech therapists will keep a record of the Private or homeschooled students they serve. At the end of each year, the log will be turned in to the Central Office. The hourly rate of the SLP is used to determine the amount of money spent; that will be calculated at the CO. The Central Office will maintain a record of services to include 1) number of children evaluated, 2) number of children determined to be a student with a disability, and 3) number of children served.

When students with an IEP withdraw to homeschool or attend a private school in the LCS District, we must offer a Service Plan. Should the parent refuse the offer of services, document the refusal in the SPED folder and follow withdrawal procedures.

When students in kindergarten and above choose to receive services, a “Service Plan” rather than an IEP will be developed. The Service Plan form is in IC in the Special Education tabs, Documents Tab> New Plan. It is also on the Google Drive > Special Education Manual along with directions.

The director maintains a notebook to document who was invited to attend the annual meeting, what the invitees received, who responded to the invitation and what was discussed at the meeting. The Private School Consultation Agreement will be requested of each private school or home school participant.

### **Timelines**

At the beginning of each school year, a log is created on the Google Drive for Initial Evaluations. The log is created and maintained by the administrative assistant, named Referral Log [school year] and shared with the director. A similar log is created for referrals that are made through Babies Can't Wait. A log is created for each SLP to be maintained by the SLP and shared with the director at the close of each school year. The individual SLP logs are compiled into a single log. It is important to ensure that duplicate entries are noted on the SLP log. Once duplicates have been noted, they can be sorted out of the final tally.

The information contained in the two logs (Initial Referral and SLP Compilation) is used to complete the Timelines Summary Report required by the GaDOE. The report is located on the Portal. To remain in compliance, be sure the report is submitted prior to the deadline.