

Georgia's Focus District Effectiveness

September Convening

September 22, 2014

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Georgia's Focus

District Effectiveness

ESEA Flexibility Waiver

- Principle 2: State-Developed Differentiated Recognition, Accountability, and Support
- Principle 2.G: Subsection labeled “Build SEA, LEA, and school capacity to improve student learning”
- Principle 2.G: The GaDOE will provide District Effectiveness Specialists to build capacity at the district level to support the school improvement process in all schools.
- The District Effectiveness Specialist will refine Georgia's district standards to reflect district practices that have been proven effective with improving schools.



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District Effectiveness

In order to build the capacity of districts to address the needs of all schools and turn around the lowest performing schools, District Effectiveness Specialists will initiate actions and support implementation of the following strategies at the district level.

1. Communicate the vision and organize resources to implement the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).
2. Align curriculum, instruction, and assessment policies/practices to implement the CCSS.
3. Align professional learning to implement the CCSS.
4. Build accountability for implementing the CCSS.



Georgia's Focus

District Effectiveness

- GaDOE provides a district effectiveness specialist to provide support and monitor the implementation of the District Effectiveness Plan.
- The District Effectiveness Specialist facilitates discussion among district personnel to identify district level barriers and supports that either serve as an obstacle or an enabler for school effectiveness.



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District Effectiveness

- Describes best practices of districts that result in increase student learning an efficient operations.
- Details how districts should support schools as they engage in continuous improvement
- Explains how schools work within a framework to attain district's mission.
- Provides a newly-hired superintendent with the means to determine the status quo in a district
- Allows districts to self-assess their processes and procedures
- Allows GaDOE to target support to specific districts
- Serves as a foundation for external review process (i.e., School Keys, GAPSS)



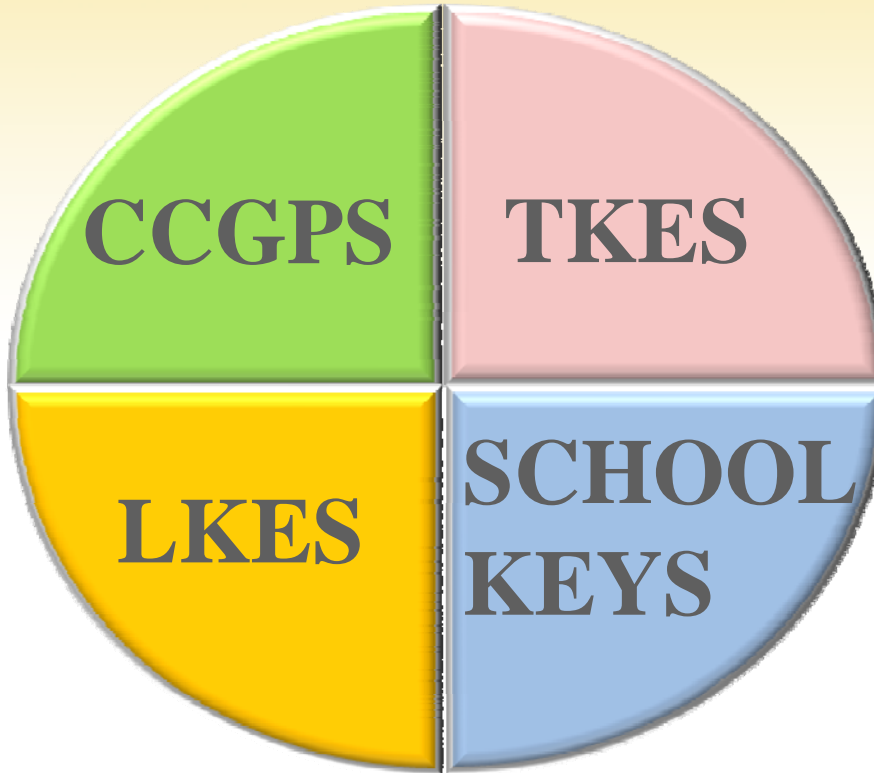
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District Standards

District Standards

What **STUDENTS** should know, understand, and be able to do.

What **LEADERS** should know, understand, and be able to do.



What **TEACHERS** should know, understand, and be able to do.

What **SCHOOLS** should know, understand, and be able to do.

District Standards

District Standards



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District Effectiveness

Seven Strands

1. Vision and Mission
2. Governance
3. Planning, Organizing, and Monitoring
4. Allocation and Management of Resources
5. Teaching and Learning
6. Leader, Teacher, and Staff Effectiveness
7. Family and Community Engagement



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Strands and Standards

Governance: Policies and procedures that support a shared vision and promote student success in all schools

- **G 1:** Builds support for district and school goals and initiatives by engaging school board members and other stakeholders.
- **G 2:** Establishes and aligns policies, procedures, and practices with laws and regulations to attain district vision and mission.
- **G 3:** Communicates district policies and procedures in a timely manner to relevant audiences to accomplish the district vision and mission.
- **G 4:** Defines the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of leaders at all levels of the district to meet student learning and staff performance goals.
- **G 5:** Defines and grants flexibility to school leaders to address individual school needs in order to achieve student learning goals.



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Governance Standard 1: Builds support for district and school goals and initiatives by engaging school board members and other stakeholders

Exemplary	Operational	Emerging	Not Evident
<p>Stakeholders, including school board members, take leadership roles in advancing district and school goals and initiatives.</p>	<p>The district consistently engages stakeholders, including school board members, in supporting achievement of district and school goals and initiatives.</p>	<p>The district engages a limited group of stakeholders or involvement is limited to operations and information.</p>	<p>Engagement of stakeholders is superficial or not directly aligned to district and school goals and initiatives.</p>



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Indicator Examples

Governance Standard 1: Builds support for district and school goals and initiatives by engaging school board members and other stakeholders

Sample Indicators:

- G 1.1 Professional learning is provided to school board members and other stakeholders regarding upcoming initiatives and innovations.
- G 1.2 A summary of data analysis and trends of student progress is regularly presented to school board members and other decision makers.
- G.1.3 Parents and other community members are empowered to take leadership roles in advancing district goals.



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District Review Process

- Similar to a GAPSS (Georgia Assessment of Performance on State Standards) Review.
- Based on District Standards and Indicators
- Uses a rubric very similar to the GAPSS process.
- Composed of review of various data sources, staff interviews and classroom observations.



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Components of District Review

- Review of Data
- Staff Interviews
- Classroom Observations
- Scored by District Standards Rubric
- Triangulation of Data



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- **Invited by Superintendent:** Problem or concern identified for support
- **Collaboration:** Work with superintendent/designated staff to design/develop the needed work- need to identify progress indicators & develop smart goals
- **Technical Assistance/Coaching:** Work with key staff/dept. to address the problem or concern
- **Regular Status Updates:** Provide a summary of services or support to Supt/school board
- **Examination of Practice:** Assessment of indicators and smart goals



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Issues Identified

- Poor student achievement results
- Frequent breakdown in communication between districts and schools
- Lack of systematic processes and procedures in districts
- Ineffective district personnel
- Poor planning by districts and schools
- Poor problem-solving and decision making skills by districts and school leaders.



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Barriers and Challenges

- Districts tend to hang on to their old ways of doing business (culture).
- Districts can “talk the talk” but in reality its not happening.
- Politics is a strong factor in many districts.
- Lack of monitoring or follow-through by the district of schools.
- Lack of expertise or knowledge among district personnel assigned to specific programs/initiatives.
- Lack of written protocols or processes by which to fulfill district responsibilities.
- Difficult to recruit strong leaders to districts that are considered weak.



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Lessons Learned

- Many of the problems and much of the difficulty at the school level originate at the district level.
- Knowing-doing gap exists at both the school and district levels.
- Some districts and schools put adults needs/wants ahead of student needs.
- Strong leadership at the district or school level make a huge difference



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Lessons Learned (cont.)

- Everyone is looking for a “silver bullet” for turning around schools (purchasing programs).
- A lot of funds and time are spent on professional learning with minimal to no monitoring of its impact.
- Districts and schools suffer from poor implementation of initiatives.
- Low expectations for personnel are pervasive throughout many districts.



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Implications for our work

- Assist district personnel in finding their own answers (build capacity).
- Collegiality and collaboration are the answer in working with districts.
- Weak districts have a tendency to have a lot of initiatives with poor implementation plans.
- Work with districts in developing protocols/processes to find answers to recurring issues or ongoing challenges to help district staff own the work making the efforts sustainable over the long term.



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