

**APPENDIX A: GraduateFIRST and College and Career Readiness
Worksheet
SPDG Evidence-based Professional Development Components**

Worksheet Instructions

Use the SPDG Evidence-Based Professional Development Components worksheet to provide descriptions of evidence-based professional development practices implemented during the reporting year to support the attainment of identified competencies.

Complete one worksheet for each initiative and provide a description relevant to each of the 16 professional development components (A1 through E2).

Provide a rating of the degree to which each description contains all necessary information (e.g., contains the elements listed in the “PD components” column) related to professional development practices being implemented: 1=inadequate description or a description of planned activities, 2=barely adequate description, 3=good description, and 4=exemplar description. Please note that if you are describing a plan to implement an activity, it will not be considered as part of the evidence for the component. Only those activities already implemented will be considered in scoring the component description.

The “PD components” column includes several broad criteria for elements that grantees should include in the description to receive the highest possible rating. Refer to the SPDG Evidence-Based Professional Development Components rubric (Rubric A) for sample descriptions corresponding with each of the ratings.

Professional development (PD) domains	PD components <i>(with required elements the description should contain)</i>	Project description of related activities (please note if you are attaching documents)	Project's self-rating
A(1) Selection	<p>Clear expectations are provided for PD participants and for schools, districts, or other agencies.</p> <p>Required elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of expectations for PD participants (e.g., attendance in training, data reporting).ⁱ • Identification of what schools, districts, or other agencies agreed to provide (e.g., necessary resources, supports, facilitative administration for the participants).^{ii,iii} • Description of how schools, districts, or other agencies were informed of their responsibilities.^{2,3} <p>Provide a brief description of the form(s) used for these agreements.</p>	<p>During Year 6, efforts were made to integrate the work of GraduateFIRST and the College and Career Readiness (CCaR) projects to provide a seamless integration of support for participating districts and schools. Both projects continued to work to build sustainability of established processes while supporting the implementation of the data-driven intervention framework and implementation of evidence-based practices including transition practices. Coordinated support and feedback to regional, district, and school leadership allowed a focused effort to remove barriers to graduation and promote successful post school outcomes for students with disabilities.</p> <p>Direct face-to-face supports were further reduced during Year 6 in the participating districts and schools to encourage sustainability and to enable the state to scale up graduation improvement strategies to other districts and schools. To support continued implementation of the established processes and framework, district and school leaders and team members were given the opportunity to participate in face-to-face meetings focused on implementing evidence-based practices, improving coaching, dropout prevention and attendance strategies.</p> <p>During Year 6, the SPDG supported 44 GraduateFIRST schools, 15 CCaR districts and the 50 districts receiving intensive support in coordination with Georgia's State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) which is referred to as Student Success. Of these 50 Student Success districts, 22 of them have had participating GraduateFIRST schools. In Year 6, the Student Success districts were supporting 99 schools. Student Success builds on the GraduateFIRST intervention framework and focuses on building district capacity to support school leaders in improving teaching and learning so that students can achieve academically and graduate from high school with a regular diploma.</p> <p>The project descriptions below include activities to sustain the work in participating districts and schools for GraduateFIRST, CCaR, and Student Success.</p> <p><u>Expectations for PD participants (e.g., attendance in training, data reporting):</u> Participating districts and schools agreed to the following expectations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain district and/or school leadership teams to address improving graduation rates for students with disabilities; • Designate a district coach or school-based team leader to support implementation and facilitate communication; • Participate in training, technical assistance and coaching session; 	4

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement evidence-based strategies and practices with fidelity; • Collect, analyze, and report data for a target list of students; • Complete the Quality Indicators for Exemplary Transition Planning Needs Assessment (CCaR only); and • Review policies, practices, and procedures pertaining to transition for students with disabilities to meet compliance and result in positive postsecondary outcomes as reported in the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) Indicators 13 and 14. (CCaR only). <p><u>Identification of what schools, districts, or other agencies agreed to provide (e.g., necessary resources, supports, facilitative administration for the participants:</u> Participating districts and schools agreed to provide time for staff to participate in professional development and training. Districts agreed to involve the Central Office personnel, including the Special Education Director, in project initiatives.</p> <p>The district agreed to designate a district coach, school team leader, or point person responsible for implementation. The district also agreed to dedicate staff to participate in coaching sessions with regional coaches. In addition, the district/school agreed to provide time for team members to analyze data, provide resources and time for the implementation of evidence-based practices, and collect and submit outcome data for the district, school and the target group of students.</p> <p>The district and/or school leadership agreed to use facilitative administration strategies to assist and support the district and school team in utilizing and sustaining the established processes. The district and school leadership also agreed to reduce barriers through activities such as adjusting staff responsibilities and workload, increasing communication, and convening team meetings more frequently. In addition, districts and schools have made revisions in policies and procedures to facilitate implementation of GraduateFIRST, CCaR, and Student Success.</p> <p><u>Description of how schools, districts, or other agencies were informed of their responsibilities:</u> Prior to entering the GraduateFIRST project, schools were informed of their responsibilities through the GraduateFIRST Project Application and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). The FAQ included a description of the GraduateFIRST project, benefits for the school, strategies for identifying school team members and the school team leader, and a description of the coaching provided. In addition, a timeline with quarterly and monthly responsibilities were distributed to provide additional guidance about project responsibilities. Regional coaches contacted schools to review the application and</p>	

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		<p>answer questions. Roles and responsibilities were further defined in the GraduateFIRST and Student Success Implementation Manuals.</p> <p>Aligning state initiatives is a priority for Student Success. District responsibilities were initially integrated into the MOU for GaDOE School and District Effectiveness for the 34 districts having schools identified as Priority and Focus. Student Success MOUs were provided for the remaining 16 districts. Initially meetings were held with district leadership to inform the district of their responsibilities and to highlight the support the district would receive from the State and the Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA)/ Georgia Learning Resources System (GLRS). Joint meetings with School and District Effectiveness were held whenever appropriate. Representatives from the RESA and GLRS, and Student Success regional coaches participated in the meetings with districts to provide context and answer questions. In Year 6, to further define district expectations, responsibilities and tasks for teams and coaches, an outline of Student Success Expectations, a Student Success Process Timeline, and FAQs were provided in the Student Success Implementation Manual.</p> <p>For the CCaR districts, each Special Education Director received an email from the State Program Specialist for Transition concerning expectations for district personnel participating in the project. A webinar was also conducted in Fall 2016 to review expectations with district personnel. Follow-up sessions with the Transition Coalition and ASPIRE in-house experts at the GLRS provided in-depth information on responsibilities for district personnel, and participants were provided with the required responsibilities and activities.</p>	
A(2) Selection	<p>Clear expectations are provided for SPDG trainers and SPDG coaches/ mentors.¹</p> <p>Required elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations for trainers' qualifications and experience and how these qualifications will be ascertained. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Description of role and 	<p><u>Expectations for trainers' qualifications and experience and how these qualifications will be ascertained:</u></p> <p>The minimum and preferred qualifications were described in the job description for the GraduateFIRST/Student Success trainers. This job description was provided to the RESA/GLRS Director who was responsible for assuring that these expectations were met through the application and interview process. These trainers must be certified by the Professional Standards Commission at Level 5 or higher and have teaching or leadership experience with Special Education. Trainers must have demonstrated skills in providing professional development, technological proficiencies, and communication abilities. Additional qualifications for the state trainer included school or district leadership and demonstrated knowledge of adult learning processes and instructional design.</p> <p>To supplement the prior qualifications and experience for Student Success, bi-annual training was coordinated and provided by a Program Manager for Georgia's Division for Special Education</p>	4

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	<p>responsibilities for trainers (the people who trained PD participants).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations for coaches'/mentors' qualifications and experience and how these qualifications will be ascertained. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Description of role or responsibilities for coaches or mentors (the people who provided follow-up to training). 	<p>Services and Supports who is charged with the implementation of the State Systemic Implementation Plan (SSIP). She was assisted by other staff from the Division of Special Education Services.</p> <p><u>Description of role and responsibilities for trainers (the people who trained PD participants):</u> During Year 6, GraduateFIRST and Student Success identified a state trainer, two state area coaches, two state implementation specialists, and regional trainers/coaches. The 19 regional coaches are known as Student Success Coaches and they provided the training and coaching for districts and schools in their assigned geographic region.</p> <p>A job description signed by the state trainer included roles and responsibilities for the SPDG. The state trainer was expected to plan, direct, and deliver training in accordance with the training plan developed by the State Implementation Team. The state trainer was also expected to design and implement activities for follow-up to assure acquisition of skills. She developed and facilitated quarterly statewide trainings for the regional coaches.</p> <p>In Year 6, two area coaches continued to support the work in the North/Metro and South areas of the state. These coaches had documented experience in providing high quality professional development and supporting systems change in districts and schools. Previously, they had been effective SPDG regional coaches for over five years.</p> <p>For CCaR regional Trainers/Coaches: The Georgia SPDG contracted with regional trainers/coaches through one of the Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs) to support district teams in completing activities associated with the KU Transition Coalition self-study courses. They also provided compliance professional development based on district data regarding compliant transition plans.</p> <p><u>Expectations for coaches'/mentors' qualifications and experience and how these qualifications will be ascertained:</u> The minimum and preferred qualifications were described in the job description for the regional coach position. This job description was provided to the RESA Director and GLRS Director who were responsible for assuring that these expectations were met through the application and interview process. These regional coaches must be certified by the Professional Standards Commission at Level 5 or higher and have teaching or leadership experience with Special Education. Preferred qualifications</p>	

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		<p>included experience in effective team functioning, the school improvement process, and experience in data collection and analysis.</p> <p><u>Description of role or responsibilities for area coaches or mentors (the people who provided follow-up to the training):</u></p> <p>The SPDG supported area coaches, regional coaches, district coaches, and school team leaders. In Year 6, the area coaches were extremely helpful in bridging the work of the State Implementation Team and the regional teams as well as the GaDOE Division of School and District Effectiveness. The work of these coaches and their monthly conference calls with members of the State Implementation Team provided an important feedback loop on implementation successes and barriers as well as support for the regional teams and regional coaches. The area coaches met monthly with the regional teams and regional coaches through face-to-face, virtual meetings, and/or conference calls. Their responsibilities included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with District Effectiveness personnel to provide support for districts in designated areas; • Directly support regional teams in their work with the districts receiving intensive Student Success support; • Inform and provide statewide technical assistance for all regional teams; • Support regional teams in alleviating barriers that impede student success; • Sustain fluid feedback loops that foster effective communication at the state, regional, district and local levels; • Provide technical assistance including coaching; • Coordinate, plan, and deliver area/ regional meetings and trainings; and • Coordinate with the regional teams to complete required data collection <p><u>Description of role or responsibilities for regional coaches or mentors (the people who provided follow-up to training):</u></p> <p>Regional coaches provided an important feedback loop with the districts and schools. They provided information to the area coaches, and they provided information to the districts and schools. Their roles included providing training, coaching/technical assistance, support for teams, and maintaining open communication with schools, districts, regional technical assistance providers, and the area coaches. Their responsibilities designed to assist teams and included:</p>	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an effective team in participating districts and schools; • Analyze district, school, and student level data; • Align improvement initiatives and provide technical assistance; • Collect, analyze, and monitor student level data including data in the following areas: attendance, behavior, academic performance, and determine priorities related to a targeted group of students ; • Develop and implement a District/School plan which supports initiatives designed to eliminate barriers associated with access to the general curriculum, a positive school climate, and providing specialized instruction; and • Monitor and evaluate the outcomes and the fidelity of implementation <p>Roles and responsibilities for the regional coaches focused on transition are documented in the MOUs signed with the RESA. The responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-deliver trainings on compliance training and other transition topics based on district data and need; • Support district personnel in completing activities of the KU Transition Coalition online modules/Georgia study guides; • Conduct monthly meetings with district leadership teams as needed; • Monitor the fidelity of implementation of individual initiatives chosen by the district; and • Verify validity of data submitted for Indicator #13 (compliance). 	
B(1) Training	<p>Accountability for the delivery and quality of training.</p> <p>Required elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of the lead person(s) accountable for training. <p>Description of the role and responsibilities of the lead person(s) accountable for training.</p>	<p><u>Identification of the lead person(s) accountable for training:</u></p> <p>The lead person for accountability for the delivery and quality of training in this SPDG initiative was the SPDG Project Director who was assigned 0.50 FTE for this work. She was supported by a GaDOE Program Manager.</p> <p><u>Description of the role and responsibilities of the lead person(s) accountable for training:</u></p> <p>The Project Director and Program Manager met at least twice per month either face-to-face or by phone conference and provided reports at the monthly State Implementation Team meetings. They were responsible for designing a training plan; training content, ensuring all trainers meet the expectations; planning of training events; and monitoring the efficacy of the trainers through evaluations. They participated in monthly conference calls with the area coaches and met twice during the year with the regional trainers/coaches to address progress, pacing, and content. These meetings were designed to assist with problem-solving.</p>	4

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B(2) Training	<p>Effective research-based adult learning strategies are used.^{iv,v,vi}</p> <p>Required elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of adult learning strategies used, including the source (e.g., citation). • Description of how adult learning strategies were used. • Description of how data are gathered to assess how well adult learning strategies were implemented. 	<p><u>Identification of adult learning strategies used, including the source (e.g., citation):</u> GraduateFIRST, CCaR, and Student Success trainings utilized effective adult learning principles and strategies based on the work of Dunst, C.J., & Trivette, C. M. (2012) including preparation, introduction, demonstration, engagement, evaluation, and mastery. Trainings in GraduateFIRST, CCaR, and Student Success had clearly defined learning targets, an evidence base, and implementation expectations. Trainings included interactive activities so that participants could talk with each other, reflect, and share thoughts and ideas. During the training sessions individuals shared challenges and other participants were encouraged to share possible solutions and best practices. Participants were asked to identify next steps and support was provided during follow-up sessions.</p> <p><u>Description of how adult learning strategies were used:</u></p> <p>These principles were the foundation for all professional learning activities. They were accomplished through:</p> <p>Preparation: Learning targets, readings, and/or reflective questions were provided. Agendas were shared, and rapport was established.</p> <p>Introduction: Information was introduced through the use of pre-training exercises, identification of the research, training lectures and/or presentations.</p> <p>Demonstration: The information was illustrated or demonstrated with case studies and real-life examples, instructional videos, and active learner input. Participants were provided with examples and a common vocabulary was shared.</p> <p>Engagement: Participants were asked to practice with each other in pairs or small groups to rehearse new skills. Opportunities for expressing personal experiences and thoughts were provided.</p> <p>Evaluation: Opportunities were provided for participant reflection and discussions about how to incorporate the skills into practice. Assessment based on the learning targets was conducted.</p>	4

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		<p>Mastery: Participants applied the new skills at the district and school level. Follow-up activities were provided to discuss barriers to implementation. Additional coaching and support was provided to ensure fidelity.</p> <p><u>Description of how data are gathered to assess how well adult learning strategies were implemented.</u> Participants provided feedback and completed post-training surveys based on the learning targets. These surveys included items that assessed the participants' perception of the relevance, usefulness, and quality of the professional learning and the use of adult learning strategies. These data were reviewed quarterly by the State Implementation Team and revisions were made to the training plan as needed.</p> <p>For the state trainings, the <i>Observation Checklist for High-Quality Professional Development Training</i> (HQPD) was used in the planning of training, to collect data and evidence, and to assess how well the learning strategies were implemented. The checklist was used during the planning phase of training to ensure that essential elements were included in the training. The professional development was considered to be of high quality with no more than one item missed per domain on the checklist.</p> <p>Dunst, C.J., & Trivette, C. M. (2012) Moderators of the effectiveness of adult learning method practices. <i>Journal of Social Sciences</i>, 8, 143-148.</p> <p>Noonan, P., Gaumer-Erickson, A.S., Brussow, J.A., & Langham, A. (2015). <i>Observation checklist for high quality professional development in education. (Updated version)</i>. Lawrence, KS. University of Kansas, Center for Research on Learning.</p>	
B(3) Training	<p>Training is skill-based (e.g., participant behavior rehearsals to criterion with an expert observing).^{3,5}</p> <p>Required elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of skills that participants were expected to acquire as a result of the training. 	<p><u>Description of skills that participants were expected to acquire as a result of the training:</u></p> <p>The training provided over the six years of GraduateFIRST and CCAR implementation has been built on a foundation provided by the National Dropout Prevention Center for Student with Disabilities (NDPC-SD) and the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition. (NTRACT). In Years 1 and Year 2, intensive training was provided for participating district and school teams through appropriate Institutes and Best Practice Forums. Regional coaches continued to provide training as needed for participating district and school teams on the established core components. Training in Year 3 focused on improving the skills of the regional coaches as they supported the schools in their work and to build the districts' and schools' capacity for sustainability. Training in Years 4, 5 and 6 was designed to help participating districts and schools sustain the practices implemented and refining skills for monitoring implementation fidelity.</p>	4

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of activities conducted to build skills. • Description of how participants' use of new skills was measured. 	<p>In Year 6 of the SPDG, there was an emphasis on implementing and sustaining evidence-based practices that improve transition and graduation rates especially practices for improving attendance and behavior. Throughout the year, technical assistance providers received professional learning and follow-up coaching on the established processes. The State Implementation Team in collaboration with the state trainer, and the area and regional coaches identified the learning target (expectation) of improving outcomes for students with disabilities by selecting and implementing evidence-based practices and strategies with the following skills to be acquired and maintained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select and implement evidence-based practices and strategies; • Effectively provide supports that include a district coach, professional learning, technical assistance, and resources to support implementation; • Monitor implementation fidelity; and • Evaluate the effectiveness of implementation. <p><u>Description of activities conducted to build skills:</u> Regional coaches were observed during the spring of 2017 to assess skills. Information from these observations and feedback from the regional and district coaches was used to identify training needs and to develop training for the 2017-2018 school year. District coaches expressed a need for additional coach training. Based on this feedback, the SPDG identified coaching as a training priority. This training coaching strategies to foster improvement. Jim Knight's book, <i>The Impact Cycle: What Instructional Coaches should do to Foster Powerful Improvements in Teaching</i>, served as the basis for the coaches training this year. Ansley Rose from Corwin Press provided training on systems coaching in July 2017, and the area coaches provided follow-up coaching using accompanying study guide, <i>The Reflection Guide to The Impact Cycle</i>. Topics from <i>The Impact Cycle</i> were included in Leadership Launch webinars and during face-to-face meetings conducted by the area coaches.</p> <p>Area coaches addressed the needs of regional coaches during monthly conference calls and quarterly meetings. Regional coaches addressed the needs of district coaches during bi-monthly meetings and coaching sessions. Coaches engaged in, demonstrations, guided practice, and reflection activities to practice these new skills. Three-month surveys and follow-up observations were conducted to ensure application of these skills in practice.</p> <p>Regional teams formed during the fall of 2015 continued to provide and coordinate technical assistance to districts receiving intensive support through Student Success. GLRS Directors, area</p>	

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		<p>coaches, and regional coaches participated in quarterly statewide meetings designed to improve the skills of these teams. During these sessions information was provided by the State Director and Program Managers for the Division of Special Education Services and Supports and the state trainer. Participants engaged in demonstrations, guided practice, and reflection activities to practice new skills.</p> <p>Participating districts and schools continued to refine implementation in the schools with reduced support from regional coaches. Leaders and educators from these schools were invited to all professional learning opportunities and all resources were shared with the school team leaders.</p> <p>District teams continued to work to build district capacity to support schools. Quarterly Leadership Launch webinars were provided to support the work of the district teams. With the support and guidance of GLRS and the regional coaches, districts engaged in data analysis, assessing current capacity and infrastructure, strengths and opportunities, barriers, and developing a District Plan. In Year 6, training for participating districts and schools and/targeted staff members included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In June 2017, a Leadership Academy was conducted for Georgia Vocation Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) personnel in an effort to improve transition services and outcomes. The purpose of the Academy was to prepare GVRA personnel to provide Pre-Employment and Transition supports and services for students with disabilities in districts receiving intensive supports through Student Success. • In July 2017, 110 district and school personnel participated in a two-day institute on systems coaching by Ainsley Rose of the Corwin Institute. The professional learning focused on effective coaching strategies that can be used to support the implementation of SPDG-supported practices. • Between September - November 2017, 88 district coaches participated in regional professional learning meetings provided by their Regional Student Success Coaches. The content of these meetings, which focused on building the capacity of districts and schools to support the implementation of evidence-based practices, was developed by the Area Student Success Coaches to ensure consistency in content across the state. • In October 2017, consultants from Attendance Works provided professional learning for 200 members of district and school teams on practices designed to improve student attendance. Absenteeism is one of the risk factors associated with failure to graduate from high school, and many districts selected to receive intensive supports through Student Success have identified poor attendance as a contributing factor to academic growth and low graduation 	

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		<p>rates. Reducing absenteeism rates is a primary focus of the SPDG in the No-Cost Extension period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In November 2017, 130 district staff participated in four professional development opportunities focusing on the Self-Determined Model of Instruction (SDLMI). This model is closed aligned to ASPIRE, Georgia's student engagement initiative. In the SDLMI professional development, participants were provided with an introduction to the three-phase process that teaches students to make choices and decisions; develop action plans for academic goals; and self-monitor and self-evaluate progress toward academic goals. The State is making plans to expand implementation of SDLMI in the 2018 – 2019 school year. • In November 2017, 88 district personnel participated in professional learning and technical assistance related to compliant transition practices. Follow-up professional development was provided for 27 participants in January 2018. Throughout this grant cycle, the State has demonstrated an increase in compliant transition practices in the 15 districts participating in the College and Career Readiness Project. • In January 2018, 43 district coaches participated in regional professional learning meetings provided by their Regional Student Success Coaches. The content of these meetings was developed by the Area Student Success Coaches to ensure consistency in content across the state. • In February 2018, professional learning was provided for members of district and school teams on practices to reduce dropout in secondary schools using resources developed by the National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance at the Institute of Education Sciences. 148 district and school team members participated in the professional learning opportunity. Participants were provided with opportunities to share practices that they had implemented to reduce dropout and improve graduation rates. • Throughout the year, staff from 41 districts selected to receive intensive supports through the Student Success participated in technical assistance activities related to ASPIRE (<u>A</u>ctive <u>S</u>tudent <u>P</u>articipation <u>I</u>nspires <u>R</u>eal <u>E</u>ngagement). In addition, 15 targeted schools are implementing ASPIRE. District and school personnel receive technical assistance and coaching from in-house experts located in each of the 18 GLRS Centers. Student engagement is critical to improving post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. • Throughout the year, the State also hosted a series of eight webinars focusing on effective transition plans and other transition related issues such as career technical instruction, 	

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		<p>assistive technology, and self-determination. Approximately 150 individuals participated in the webinars.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional trainings on various topics related to implementation were provided by state and regional service providers based on identified needs. For example, 36 of the 50 Student Success districts are identified as a Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) district and receive training, technical assistance, and supports through the PBIS initiative. <p>All of these trainings included demonstrations, guided practice, and reflection activities as well as opportunities for participants to express personal perspectives and interact with each other.</p> <p><u>Description of how participants' use of new skills was measured:</u></p> <p>For the area and regional coaches, the use of new skills was measured by observation and the Coach Rubric. Area and regional coaches described their application of skills in surveys following the training and during quarterly meetings. Area coaches also described their application of skills during monthly conference calls.</p> <p>For regional teams, the use of new skills was measured by informal team feedback and the GLRS Regional Team Meeting Implementation Fidelity Rubric.</p> <p>For district teams, the use of new skills was measured by informal regional coach observations, informal team feedback, and the District Student Success Implementation Fidelity Rubric.</p> <p>For the GraduateFIRST school teams, the use of previously acquired skills was measured by informal team feedback and annual administration of the GraduateFIRST School Implementation Scale.</p> <p>For the College and Career Readiness districts, participants use of new skills was measured by follow-up contacts with transition specialist and by the QI2.</p> <p>Knight, J. (2018). <i>The impact cycle: What instructional coaches should do to foster powerful improvements in teaching</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.</p> <p>Knight, J., Knight, J. R., & Carlson, C. (2017). <i>The reflection guide to the impact cycle: What instructional coaches should do to foster powerful improvements in teaching</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.</p>	

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B(4) Training	<p>Training outcome data are collected and analyzed to assess participant knowledge and skills.⁵</p> <p>Required elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of training outcome measure(s). • Description of procedures to collect pre- and post-training data or another kind of assessment of knowledge and skills gained from training. • Description of how training outcome data were reported. • Description of how training outcome data were used to make appropriate changes to the training and to provide further supports through coaching. 	<p><u>Identification of training outcome measure(s):</u> The GA SPDG Professional Development Evaluation Form was used to evaluate all training. This measure assessed the participants' knowledge acquired based on the learning targets (outcomes) developed for the training and participants' perception of the training in the areas of preparation, engagement, structure/delivery, evaluation, quality, relevance, and usefulness.</p> <p><u>Description of procedures to collect pre- and post-training data or another kind of assessment of knowledge and skills gained from training:</u> Prior to trainings, participants were asked to complete a pre-test designed to assess knowledge and skills to be acquired. Following training, the participants completed a post-test designed to assess the knowledge and skills learned.</p> <p><u>Description of how training outcome data were reported:</u> All pre-assessment and post assessment training data were submitted to the External Evaluator who aggregated/disaggregated the data by trainer and content. She provided a summary of these data for the State Implementation Team for their review. The State Implementation Team provided the summary to the area coaches/ trainers and they collectively discussed the results and determined a plan of action that addressed any changes that need to be made in the training content or delivery or changes in the follow-up coaching.</p> <p><u>Description of how training outcome data were used to make appropriate changes to the training and to provide further supports through coaching:</u></p> <p>Training outcome data were consistently used to make adjustments to training provided to area and regional coaches and district team members. For example, during the spring of 2017, training participants indicated that they would like to hear more about implementation of evidence-based and best practices from their peers. They also indicated that they would like to have additional time to plan how to implement what they learned. Suggestions were solicited from all the area and regional coaches. In the winter of 2018, a Best Practices Forum was provided with districts sharing their work in implementing practices that yielded positive outcomes for students. As result of this outcome data, additional team planning time was integrated throughout the Best Practices forum to allow teams to plan together. Teams selected an evidenced-based practice and discussed who else needed to be involved for implementation and what professional learning, technical assistance, and resources were</p>	4

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		needed to sustain implementation. They also discussed how implementation fidelity can be improved and what leadership and organizational supports are needed to sustain implementation.	
B(5) Training	<p>Trainers (the people who trained PD participants) are trained, coached, and observed.^{5,vii}</p> <p>Required elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of training provided to trainers. • Description of coaching provided to trainers. • Description of procedures for observing trainers. • Identification of training fidelity instrument used (measures the extent to which the training is implemented as intended). • Description of procedures to obtain participant feedback. • Description of how observation and training fidelity data were used (e.g., to determine if changes should be made to the content or structure of trainings, such as schedule, processes; to ensure that trainers are qualified). 	<p><u>Description of training provided to trainers:</u> The state trainer for regional trainers/coaches received intensive training from the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities (NDPC-SD) in implementing the GraduateFIRST process. In addition, the state trainer received advanced training in specific content areas based on the identified needs for regional coaches. Also, the state trainer received certification from the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network as a Dropout Prevention Specialist. The state trainer received additional training by participating in the Cross-state Collaborative and by attending state and national conferences focused on improving graduation rates and preventing dropout.</p> <p>Initially, the regional trainers received training from the NDPC-SD and NTACTION. The regional trainers observed the national trainers as they provided training to school teams. Then the regional trainers participated up to five days of training from national trainers. The national trainers provided modules, scripts, and reflective questions for training.</p> <p><u>Description of coaching provided to trainers:</u> Initially, the regional coaches co-taught the modules with national trainers, and then the national trainers observed the regional trainers teaching and provided feedback. Course evaluations were reviewed by the national trainers and state trainer. Support was provided to improve content delivery and/or facilitation skills. Coaching was available from the national trainers until the regional trainers were able to train using the modules independently. These regional coaches have continued to provide training for districts. Training aids, web-based seminars, and downloadable resources were provided to improve training outcomes.</p> <p>In Year 6, the number of area coaches was reduced to two based on the increased capacity of the regional coaches. These two dedicated area coaches provided ongoing support to the regional coaches. New regional coaches participated in initial training sessions which included face-to-face meetings and conferences, virtual meetings, and individual conferencing and coaching sessions. Trainers with less than 3 years of experience were paired with experienced trainers who provided support and feedback on performance.</p>	4

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		<p><u>Description of procedures for observing trainers:</u> New SPDG trainers providing statewide training were observed annually and evaluated using the Observation Checklist for High-Quality Professional Development Training (HQPD) and feedback was provided to the state trainer to strengthen the training. Regional trainers were observed at least annually using the Coach Observation Rubric. All standards were observed, but there was a focus on Standard 4, Guiding the Process, which addressed the training. Standard 4 indicates that the regional trainer/coach employed practices that develop participants' expertise and self-efficacy with the GraduateFIRST/Student Success process.</p> <p><u>Identification of training fidelity instrument used (measures the extent to which the training is implemented as intended):</u> Initially, regional trainers were observed using a fidelity checklist for each module related to the GraduateFIRST process. After multiple satisfactory observations, regional trainers participated in debrief sessions and shared their perceptions about training content and facilitation. Annually, regional trainers were observed using the Coach Observation Rubric. Pre-observation conferences with the regional coaches were held to provide context, and post-observation conferences were held to provide feedback to the coaches.</p> <p><u>Description of procedures to obtain participant feedback:</u> The GA SPDG Professional Development Evaluation Form was used to evaluate all training. This measure assessed the participants' knowledge aligned with the learning targets and participants' perception of the training in the areas of preparation, engagement, structure/delivery, evaluation, quality, relevance, and usefulness. Participants completed the evaluation form at the conclusion of each training session. The forms were submitted either by paper or electronically to the SPDG evaluator. These data were aggregated and disaggregated, and a report was generated for the State Implementation Team.</p> <p><u>Description of how observation and training fidelity data were used (e.g., to determine if changes should be made to the content or structure of trainings, such as schedule, processes; to ensure that trainers are qualified):</u> The SPDG consistently used observation and training fidelity data to make adjustments in training content and structure. One example of how training fidelity data was used occurred in spring of 2017. Following training, the State Implementation Team identified from the results of the High Quality Professional Development Checklists that there was a need to be more intentional about providing</p>	

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		<p>readings, activities, and questions prior to trainings. During Year 6, this was made as a priority and increased participant engagement during training was evident.</p> <p>Additionally, fidelity data and feedback from district and school teams continued to indicate that support was needed to build for long-term sustainability. During Year 6, the district model, Student Success, continued to be refined and strengthened. Ongoing support was provided for the districts and schools in the implementation of Student Success and building for sustainability was integrated into most trainings.</p>	
C(1) Coaching	<p>Accountability for the development and monitoring of the quality and timeliness of SPDG coaching services.^{viii}</p> <p>Required elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of the lead person(s) responsible for coaching services. • Description of the role and responsibilities of the lead person(s) accountable for coaching services. • Description of how data were used to provide feedback to coaches and improve coaching strategies. 	<p><u>Identification of the lead person(s) responsible for coaching services:</u> The GaDOE Program Manager is responsible for monitoring coaching services in GraduateFIRST/Student Success. She had 0.5 FTE dedicated to these responsibilities, and she was supported by the two area coaches.</p> <p><u>Description of the role and responsibilities of the lead person(s) accountable for coaching services:</u> The GaDOE Program Manager collaborated with the State Implementation Team members and the area coaches to provide training, support, and technical assistance in order to increase graduation rates for students with disabilities. She facilitated the bi-weekly or monthly conference calls with the area coaches about the coaching services and she provided targeted support and problem-solving with districts as needed.</p> <p>The minimum and preferred qualifications were described in the job description for the area coach positions. The area coaches must be certified by the Professional Standards Commission at Level 5 or higher and have teaching or leadership experience with Special Education. Preferred qualifications included skills in effective team functioning, leading the school improvement process, and demonstrated coaching experience. Key responsibilities for the area coaches included: collaborating with the State Implementation Team in coordinating coaching services, supporting regional teams and regional coaches with technical assistance, resources, and individualized support, assisting regional coaches in aligning state, regional, and district initiatives, sustaining fluid feedback loops that foster effective communication at the state, regional, district, a and local levels, and conducting observations and providing assistive feedback to regional coaches.</p> <p><u>Description of how data were used to provide feedback to coaches and improve coaching strategies:</u> The area coaches met monthly with the regional coaches and regional team members, provided virtual coaching sessions, set up individual coaching calls, and provided ongoing communication with the coaches about implementation. The area coaches oversaw the coaching fidelity measures and provided</p>	4

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		<p>insight to the GaDOE Program Manager and the State Implementation Team about coaching outcome data and the overall training plan for coaches. The state trainer observed the area coaches annually and provided assistive feedback.</p> <p>Additionally, regional coaches were provided multiple sources of data as feedback to improve the coaching in GraduateFIRST, CCaR, and Student Success. Beyond the coaching fidelity and outcome data reported, coaches also received feedback from coaching log reports and team meeting agendas/minutes. Monthly reports were provided to the area coaches. These data were reviewed to identify state, regional, and individual needs that were addressed during the monthly statewide meetings. These reports were also discussed during the monthly calls or meetings with the regional coaches. These monthly meetings were held for the sharing of successes and barriers as well as to identify specific professional development or coaching needs.</p> <p>In Year 6, the area coaches observed the regional coaches. Prior to each regional coach observation, there was a conference to discuss issues related to the ongoing coaching for teams. Following each regional coach observation, there was a debriefing session with the observer. Collectively, the coach and the observer identified goals and strategies for improvement. Summaries of implementation fidelity data and the results of the Coaching Effectiveness Survey were shared with each regional coach and a statewide summary was also provided. Regional coaches used this information to target coaching services and to refine training provided.</p>	
C(2) Coaching	<p>SPDG coaches use multiple sources of information in order to provide assistive feedback to those being coached and also provide appropriate instruction or modeling.</p> <p>Required elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should describe the coaching strategy used and the appropriateness for use with adults (i.e., 	<p><u>Description of the coaching strategy used and the appropriateness for use with adults (i.e., evidence provided for coaching strategies):</u></p> <p>Coaching strategies identified as effective with adults were used in GraduateFIRST, CCaR, and Student Success. These coaching strategies were based on the work of Knight (2007 & 2017) and Wiggins (2012). Throughout the coaching process, regional coaches used a cycle of coaching designed to help teams assess, set goals, implement, and reflect/debrief. During onsite visits with district and school teams, regional coaches used questioning techniques such as asking clarifying and mediating questions. They also used reflective listening and provided meaningful feedback. Meaningful feedback in GraduateFIRST and Student Success was defined by the following nine qualities: timely, user friendly, descriptive and specific in regard to performance, consistent, accurate, honest yet constructive, and ongoing (Wiggins 2012).</p>	4

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	<p>evidence provided for coaching strategies).⁶</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how SPDG coaches monitored implementation progress. • Describe how the data from the monitoring is used to provide feedback to implementers. 	<p>Formats for coaching services in the SPDG included individual conferencing, video conferencing, small group sessions, problem-solving, and modeling of practices. In all coaching sessions, there was time for sharing of ideas, discussion, reflection, and feedback.</p> <p>Knight, J. (2007). <i>Instructional coaching: A partnership approach to improving instruction</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.</p> <p>Knight, J. (2018). <i>The impact cycle: What instructional coaches should do to foster powerful improvements in teaching</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.</p> <p>Wiggins, G. (2012). Seven keys to effective feedback. <i>Educational Leadership</i>.70(1). 10-16.</p> <p><u>Description of how SPDG coaches monitored implementation progress:</u> As the SPDG approaches the end of its funding cycle, coaching supports have focused on building district capacity. There were two area coaches, 19 regional coaches, and three coaches focused on improving transition. These regional coaches made 998 coaching contacts to support district and school teams and area coaches made 171 coaching contacts to support regional and district coaches.</p> <p>Throughout Years 1-5, regional coaches monitored implementation using the GraduateFIRST Implementation Scale and the Student Success District Implementation Fidelity Rubric. These assessments were used to assess implementation and to tailor the coaching services in Year 6. The regional coaches met with the district and school teams as well as district coaches and school team leaders to discuss challenges and successes related to targeted support initiatives. During the monthly meetings of the regional coaches, the area coaches were available to address specific challenges and problem-solve possible solutions.</p> <p><u>Description of how the data from the monitoring is used to provide feedback to implementers:</u> The data from the implementation pulse checks, fidelity assessments, coaching observations, and district/school team meetings were used to help teams identify next steps to build implementation capacity and improve student outcomes. Using this information, regional coaches provided assistive feedback to the teams to help them address barriers to implementation and to determine how successful implementation practices could be shared with other teams. Regional coaches also directed teams and district coaches or school team leaders to specific resources designed to address the identified challenge. Administrators and team members visited other participating districts and schools to observe successful implementation.</p>	

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D(1) Performance Assessment (Data-based Decision Making)	<p>Accountability for fidelity measurement and reporting system is clear (e.g., lead person designated).¹⁰</p> <p>Required elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a description of the role/responsibilities of the lead person and who this person is. 	<p><u>Description of the role/responsibilities of the lead person and who this person is:</u> The SPDG Project Director and the GaDOE Program Manager share the responsibility for implementation fidelity. They are the lead persons designated for accountability for fidelity measurement and statewide reporting. They work collaboratively with the External Evaluator to ensure that all measures are completed as intended within the established timelines.</p> <p>Their responsibilities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overseeing the selection and revision of fidelity implementation scales for the project and the completion of fidelity implementation scales; • Meeting with the GaDOE Program Manager, SPDG Director, trainers, and coaches to review the fidelity data and progress toward the project goals; • Measuring ongoing activities using coaching activity logs and reporting on these activities to the State Implementation Team; • Reporting on progress toward performance measure targets and project outcomes; • Communicating with the SPDG trainers and coaches regarding the activity logs, school and student data collection, barriers to coaching and implementation, and concerns; • Conducting pre/post GA SPDG Training Evaluation Forms, Coaching Effectiveness Survey, Participating Personnel Survey, Collaboration Survey, and other fidelity measurements; and • Analyzing data and communicating results regularly. 	4
D(2) Performance Assessment	<p>Coherent data systems are used to make decisions at all education levels (SEA, regional, LEA, school).</p> <p>Required elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe data systems that are in place for various education levels. • Describe how alignment or coherence is achieved between various data 	<p><u>Description of the data systems that are in place for various education levels:</u> A comprehensive data system is in place at all education levels for the SPDG.</p> <p><u>SEA level:</u> The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) has designed a comprehensive data system that is designed to meet all Federal and State data collection requirements. The single largest data collection was through the Student Record which includes data collections and reporting on multiple elements including graduation, discipline, course completions, and attendance. Information is also available on instructional services provided to students including students with disabilities. Data from schools and districts were uploaded to the Student Record via local Student Information Systems (SIS).</p> <p>Information collected through the Student Record and other GaDOE data collections was used to initially to select participating schools. For example, the schools which were most recently enrolled in GraduateFIRST were selected in collaboration with School Improvement from the Reward, Priority,</p>	4

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	<p>systems or sources of data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how multiple sources of information are used to guide improvement and demonstrate impact.¹⁰ 	<p>Focus, and Alert Schools lists based on these data. These data were also used to select 50 districts receiving intensive support through Student Success.</p> <p>Data from the Student Record and other data collections were also used to monitor improvements (outcomes) in GraduateFIRST schools. For example, data from the reports were used to assess improvements in graduation rates, attendance, and course completion for participating schools.</p> <p><u>District and School Levels:</u> As described above, school level data were collected through district selected Student Information Systems. These data were aggregated at the district level for accountability and improvement planning purposes and were uploaded through a secure portal to the Student Record Application at the GaDOE.</p> <p>Districts and schools participating in Student Success and GraduateFIRST used data from their Student Information Systems in selecting students to participate in the project. For each reporting period, data from the SIS for targeted students were then monitored for attendance, behavior (suspensions and expulsions), and course completions- the three indicators for dropout. As needed, regional coaches supported Student Success District teams and GraduateFIRST school teams in monitoring student data and adjusting school and student supports. Data were reported to the SPDG external evaluator and were analyzed for reporting in the APR.</p> <p>The CCaR districts completed the KU Quality Indicators for Exemplary Transition Programs(QI2) to measure improvements in district and school transition programs. The QI2 was completed annually by districts teams and was scored by the University of Kansas Transition Coalition.</p> <p>Student Success districts completed the Student Success District Implementation Fidelity Rubric, and targeted schools completed the Student Success Implementation Fidelity Rubric. These measures were used to assess implementation fidelity of the Student Success Process at the district and school levels. Regional coaches provided supports to districts and schools to assist them in addressing improvements that needed to be made based on the administration of the fidelity rubrics.</p> <p>GraduateFIRST schools completed the GraduateFIRST Implementation Scale. Participating schools completed the scale twice per years in Years 1 – 5. Regional coaches used data from the fall administration of the scale to identify areas in which additional coaching was needed. In Year 6, with permission from the Project Officer, the fidelity assessments were no longer a SPDG Program</p>	

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		<p>Measure. However, to have gradual release and to ensure sustainability, participating districts and schools were encouraged to use the fidelity rubrics as a self-assessment, lead discussions about successes and challenges to implementation and to discuss the results with the regional coach. Participating districts and schools did engage in this self-assessment using the fidelity rubrics and did engage in discussions of progress with their team and regional coach. All 44 GraduateFIRST schools, 50 districts identified to receive intensive supports through the SSIP, and 99 targeted schools completed the implementation measures.</p> <p>Throughout Years 1-5, the Implementation Fidelity Specialists met with the regional coaches and regional team members twice annually to discuss implementation data and to evaluate progress. They shared these data with the State Implementation Team. In spring of Year 5, the results of these fidelity assessments indicated that the established processes were generally being implemented with fidelity.</p> <p>During Years 1 – 5, College and Career Readiness districts completed the College and Career Readiness Implementation Fidelity Rubric. In Year 6, with permission from the Project Officer, the fidelity assessments were no longer a SPDG Program Measure.</p> <p>While sustainability was always part of SPDG discussions, in Years 5 and Year 6, sustainability became a primary focus. Efforts to ensure that participating districts and schools had the capacity and efficacy to maintain the established processes were systematically implemented. The regional coaches attended meetings led by participating district and school teams and gave feedback to leaders as well as to the district coaches and/or school team leaders. Regional coaches provided support as districts and schools faced challenges with sustainability of processes, implementation drift, and intervention adaptation. Regional coaches encouraged districts and schools to problem-solve independently but did provide direct support as needed. These regional coaches facilitated many coaching sessions designed to increase the skills of the cadre of personnel who would be leading the efforts at the end of the SPDG funding cycle.</p> <p><u>Description of how alignment or coherence is achieved between various data systems or sources of data:</u> All student level data used in GraduateFIRST was collected at the school level via the district's Student Information System based on business rules established by the GaDOE. District personnel have processes in place to ensure that data were accurate and reliable.</p>	

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		<p>These data were then uploaded to the state via the secure portal mentioned previously. Numerous edit checks were in place at the GaDOE to ensure that data are of high quality. Data were then reported to the public via the public reports referenced earlier in this section.</p> <p>Essentially coherence was achieved because data collected at the school and district levels were based on required data elements established by the GaDOE. District and school personnel worked with their SIS vendors to ensure that data submitted to the GaDOE comply with the data collection requirements and associated business rules.</p> <p><u>Description of how multiple sources of information are used to guide improvement and demonstrate impact.</u> Student level data on attendance, behavior (suspension and expulsion), and course completion were used to assess the impact of GraduateFIRST participation on student outcomes. These data were reported in Performance Measure 2 of this APR.</p> <p>In addition, a variety of data collection elements were established to measure improvements in implementation. For example, the GraduateFIRST Implementation Scales measured fidelity of implementation of the GraduateFIRST process (e.g. establishing a team, analyzing data, selecting target students, etc.). Participating schools completed the scales in the fall of each year, and the school team in collaboration with the regional coach used information from the scales in planning action steps and to make changes in implementation strategies and activities.</p> <p>The State Implementation Team met on a monthly basis to review data and to discuss changes that needed to be made for sustainability of the processes established. Information on the impact of Student Success and GraduateFIRST was shared in regional meetings of special education directors, at state conferences, and with stakeholders.</p>	
D(3) Performance Assessment	Implementation fidelity and student outcome data are shared regularly with stakeholders at multiple levels (SEA, regional, local, individual, community, other agencies).¹⁰	<p><u>Description of the feedback loop for each level of the system the SPDG works with:</u> The State Implementation Team developed clearly defined processes, protocols, and feedback loops to eliminate gaps in communication between various levels of the state's system (e.g. GaDOE, regional technical assistance agencies, districts, and schools). The cascading team structure provided the conduit for communication and well-defined feedback loops supported the sharing of information from one level of the system to another. Information about barriers to implementation in schools and districts was shared with regional teams that assisted them in addressing these barriers. Systemic issues that could not be addressed at the regional levels were then referred to the next highest level,</p>	4

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	<p>Required elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the feedback loop for each level of the system the SPDG works with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Describe how these data are used for decision-making to ensure improvements are made in the targeted outcome areas. • Describe how fidelity data inform modifications to implementation drivers (e.g., how can Selection, Training, and Coaching better support high fidelity).¹⁰ 	<p>the State Implementation Team. This team problem-solved issues for systemic barriers and shared school teams. When changes in procedures or processes were required to address barriers to implementation, these changes were then communicated back down the cascading team structures to local schools.</p> <p>The State Implementation Team provided sample agenda templates for school, district, regional, and state meetings to promote structured times for team members to address implementation barriers and successes and to identify resources and supports needed. The State Implementation Team used information gathered through the feedback loops to adjust processes and timelines. Information about barriers experienced in districts was also used to inform the development and distribution of resources to support districts in implementing the process.</p> <p><u>School and District Level:</u> Participating districts and schools collected student outcome data and implementation data. These data were shared with students and their families during conferences and at IEP meetings. Most of the participating districts and schools had access to a web-based management system. These schools entered the data into the web-based management system, which was reviewed by district administrators.</p> <p>At the school and district levels, student outcome and implementation data were used to assess outcomes, to identify successes, and to identify barriers to implementation. Successes were celebrated, and challenges were addressed in team meetings.</p> <p>Regional coaches shared this information about implementation barriers and successes with the area coaches. This information was then used to make changes in supports statewide. These changes were then communicated back down to the schools by the regional coach.</p> <p><u>Regional Level:</u> Implementation data collected at the districts and schools were shared with regional technical assistance providers as well as the regional coaches. Regional School Improvement Specialists, GLRS Directors, District Liaisons and regional coaches met to discuss district, school, and, student outcome data from participating districts and schools within the region. This data sharing provided opportunities to discuss challenges and to identify those strategies which were being implemented in participating schools in the region.</p>	

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		<p>In addition, regional coaches, regional GLRS Directors and district Special Education Directors met monthly in Collaborative Communities to discuss issues related to improving graduation rates and the regional and district implementation of Student Success. Special Education Directors were encouraged to meet with district and school teams to review the student outcome data.</p> <p><u>State Level:</u> Subsequently, implementation-and outcome data were provided to the State Implementation Team. This team met monthly and reviewed information and data from regions, districts, and schools. This information was then used to change processes and practices which was then communicated back to districts and schools via the regional agencies and assigned coaches.</p> <p>Student data were also submitted electronically to the SPDG evaluator and reports were shared with the State Implementation Team.</p> <p>Both internal and external stakeholders were identified, and project information and data were shared throughout the year. For Student Success, stakeholder involvement included opportunities to provide suggestions regarding sustainability, evaluation measures, methods, and timelines during scheduled stakeholder meetings throughout the year and through phone and email communication between meetings.</p> <p><u>Description of how these data are used for decision-making to ensure improvements are made in the targeted outcome areas:</u> These data and the insights of the area and regional coaches were used to make decisions about how to target support for schools not demonstrating progress with identified outcomes. In conjunction with regional team members, Student Success district teams identified areas for support or improvement in their district plan. Regional coaches worked with the district teams and district leadership to implement the action steps in the district plan.</p> <p><u>Description of how fidelity data inform modifications to implementation drivers (e.g., how can Selection, Training, and Coaching better support high fidelity):</u> The GraduateFIRST Implementation Scales were based on the implementation drivers and served as one of the primary fidelity measures in the project. In Years 1-5, the scales were completed by each of participating school teams at least two times per year, and in some schools the scales were reviewed more frequently. Information from these scales was used to adjust implementation of the GraduateFIRST process and associated activities in the school. School teams in collaboration with</p>	

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		<p>GraduateFIRST regional coaches adjusted action steps as needed to improve fidelity and associated student outcomes. In Year 6, the GraduateFIRST Implementation Scale was completed one time.</p> <p>In Years 5-6, the Student Success District Implementation Fidelity Rubric was completed annually districts receiving intensive support. This rubric provided data about the selection of the district team members as well as the team structure and roles and responsibilities. It also provided data on district implementation of the plan aligned with the necessary district implementation supports (professional learning, district coach, technical assistance, and resources). Also, data were provided on monitoring implementation of the process and outcomes. These rich data sets along with information provided by the area and regional coaches helped shape what training and coaching was needed.</p> <p>Throughout Year 6, as the work of the SSIP and the SPDG continued to be aligned, personnel were supported, retooled, or hired to provide the needed support. A need for area coaches continued to be identified, and two area coaches were supported through the SPDG. The role of the regional coaches was expanded, resources were developed or repurposed, and training was provided to provide the necessary support for district coaches and district teams.</p> <p>An important modification to the implementation drivers in Year 6 occurred based on the results of fidelity assessments completed in Year 5. With the SPDG no-cost extension for Year 6, the focus on sustainability needed to become intentional. Coaching was adjusted to focus on capacity building and sustainability. This shift in coaching for implementation to coaching for sustainability was challenging at times especially as districts and schools added new personnel. Area coaches included discussions about sustainability as part of their meetings with regional coaches. Regional coaches, in turn, included discussions about sustainability in their meetings with district coaches.</p>	
D(4) Performance Assessment	<p>Goals are created with benchmarks for implementation and student outcome data, and successes are shared and celebrated.¹⁰</p> <p>Required elements:</p>	<p><u>Description of how benchmarks are created and shared:</u> Goals for GraduateFIRST were established in the SPDG application process and were reflected within each of the performance measures of the APR. Prior to the beginning of each school year, the State Implementation Team in coordination with regional coaches established benchmarks for implementation fidelity and student outcome data. These benchmarks were based on previous year data on the goals and benchmarks.</p> <p>For Student Success, long-term, mid-term, and short-term goals were established by the State Leadership Team and were reflected on the project's logic model. These goals were shared through</p>	3

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how benchmarks are created and shared. • Describe positive recognition processes for achievements. • Describe how data are used to “market” the initiative. 	<p>state meetings and conferences. Goals and benchmarks were shared with the area and regional coaches who then worked with district and school teams to implement activities designed to lead to achievement of the goals and objectives. The State Implementation Team monitored progress on the benchmarks at monthly team meetings.</p> <p><u>Description of positive recognition processes for achievements:</u> Positive recognition processes for achievements were implemented at multiple levels. At state level meetings, state personnel modeled the sharing of success. Regional, district and school teams also shared successes at every meeting. Everyone was encouraged to celebrate progress toward goals. All regional coaches modeled this celebration by asking district and school team members to share successes when they attended state, regional, district, and school meetings. This process of celebrating successes was also used during the monthly regional coach and technical assistance meetings.</p> <p>As the SSIP was developed, the state recognized the excellent work achieved through GraduateFIRST and utilized the GraduateFIRST framework as the basis for the school implementation of Student Success. School teams demonstrating successful implementation were asked to showcase their implementation practices at regional meetings and in February 2018 at the Best Practices Forum. Student Success districts highlighted their implementation efforts during sessions of the quarterly Leadership Launch webinars and at state meetings and conferences. One district team was selected to present at the National Dropout Prevention Conference in 2017.</p> <p><u>Description of how data are used to “market” the initiative:</u> Since its inception, GraduateFIRST successfully supported participating districts and schools in improving graduation rates for students with disabilities. Schools shared improvements with GraduateFIRST ABCs (attendance, behavior, and course performance data). Sharing data at the regional level with GLRS and RESAs resulted in deeper collaboration with School Improvement Specialists. Sharing data at the state level with GaDOE staff members resulted in partnership with the Division for School and District Effectiveness in supporting districts with Focus and Priority schools. Throughout Years 1-5, data were shared at some district board of education meetings and meetings with district administrators as well as with community members and local media.</p> <p>Members of the State Implementation Team and participating district and schools have shared data and information about GraduateFIRST, CCaR, and Student Success at national conferences and</p>	

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		webinars, state conferences and meetings, and at regional meetings. A systemic approach to marketing the initiatives of GraduateFIRST and Student Success have led to alignment with other state initiatives and important connections with other state agencies.	
D(5) Performance Assessment	<p>Participants are instructed in how to provide data to the SPDG Project.</p> <p>Required elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures described for data submission. • Guidance provided to schools/districts. 	<p><u>Procedures described for data submission:</u> Procedures for submitting data were clearly described for all participating district and schools.</p> <p>Data were collected for targeted students and implementation data were collected from each GraduateFIRST school team. For students on the targeted list, data were collected for attendance, behavior, and academic performance. Student data for days absent, in-school and out of school suspensions, and course performance were reported for each grading interval and collected through the Student Information System (SIS). Implementation data were collected and reported in the fall and spring of each year. These data were electronically submitted to the SPDG evaluator. Regional coaches shared information about implementation from their informal pulse checks during the regional coach meetings with the members of the State Implementation Team which includes the state trainer, the area coaches, and the Implementation Fidelity Specialists.</p> <p>Throughout Years 1-5, in the fall and in the spring, school teams assessed their implementation of GraduateFIRST using the GraduateFIRST Implementation Scales. These schools provided evidence and artifacts to support their assessment. They also used the scales to reflect on the next steps needed to reach the Sustaining level on the scale. The assessment data were submitted electronically to the SPDG evaluator. Also, in Years 1-5 for the spring assessment, there was a 20% verification process of the self-assessments and evidence was provided. Data from these assessments were shared with the regional coaches and the State Implementation Team. During Year 6, the GraduateFIRST Implementation Scales were completed once by school teams.</p> <p><u>Guidance provided to schools/districts:</u> Procedures for submitting data were detailed in the GraduateFIRST and Student Success Implementation Manuals. A monthly timeline and guide were provided for district and school teams and leaders to assist participating educators in understanding what data were required and how to submit data.</p> <p>Regional coaches provided training for school administrators and team leaders on the procedures for the submission of data each year. The district coaches and school team leader were responsible for the data collection and the submission of data. The regional coach was available for follow-up and</p>	4

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		<p>support for the timely data submissions. Regional coaches sent emails and prompts for data submission and the SPDG evaluator sent prompts to regional coaches to ensure that data were submitted timely.</p> <p>GaDOE provided training and support for data submission for districts in Student Success. Webinars, individual meetings with district teams, and assistance from the regional teams were provided to assist districts in the completing data submission. A timeline and guidance were developed for district teams to understand what data were required and how to submit these data. The district and school teams were responsible for the data collection and the submission of data. Regional coaches also worked individually with the district teams to ensure successful data submission.</p> <p>Regional coaches submitted data through their Coaching Logs which detailed activities and contacts with district and school teams, district and school administrators, and district coaches and school team leaders. Regional coaches also submitted implementation data from the districts and schools to the SPDG evaluator.</p>	
<p>E(1) Facilitative Administrative Support/ Systems Intervention</p>	<p>Administrators are trained appropriately on the SPDG-supported practices and have knowledge of how to support its implementation.</p> <p>Required elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role/job description of administrators relative to program implementation provided. • Describe how the SPDG trains and supports administrators so that they may in turn support implementers. 	<p><u>Role/job description of administrators relative to program implementation provided.</u> District and school administrators were critical to the success of GraduateFIRST, CCaR, and Student Success. Roles and responsibilities were clearly defined in the GraduateFIRST and Student Success Implementation Manuals. For Student Success, roles and responsibilities were also clearly defined through the quarterly Leadership Launch webinars and in the MOU. The administrators were charged with the responsibility of providing a common vision and clear direction. They were expected to plan and coordinate implementation efforts, communicate implementation efforts with all stakeholders, help develop local capacity for professional development and coaching, and share materials, tools, and resources. Administrators were expected to establish an effective team, identify a district coach or school team leader, provide support and leadership for the process, participate in the analysis of data, review outcome and process data, guide decision-making, monitor implementation, allocate resources including time and personnel, alleviate barriers and celebrate successes.</p> <p><u>Describe how the SPDG trains and supports administrators so that they may in turn support implementers.</u> Upon being accepted into the GraduateFIRST initiative, school administrators and their team leaders participated in the GraduateFIRST Institute. School administrators were trained for three one-hour sessions. They attended sessions related to the role of the administrator, school team leader, and the school team. They were provided information about data collection and reporting, and they learned</p>	<p>4</p>

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		<p>strategies to meet staff and student needs. Administrators were advised how to provide time for planning and implementation. They were given suggestions about how to get the most benefit from coaching services. As needed, regional coaches provided booster sessions for administrators and team leaders and were available to answer questions and address concerns.</p> <p>For Student Success, district leaders participated in initial training and then participated in the quarterly Leadership Launch webinars which focused on various leadership concerns including implementation and sustainability.</p> <p>Administrators new to GraduateFIRST and Student Success received training from their district coach or team leader and their assigned regional coach. As a member of the school team, administrators reviewed the student outcome data monthly and received feedback from the members of the school teams and school staff about adjustments needed in implementation to improve student outcomes. In addition, regional coaches obtained recommendations from administrators about ideas for improvement and suggested ways to support implementers. Annually, administrators completed the Coaching Effectiveness Survey and provided suggestions for improvement and ways to support implementers.</p>	
E(2) Facilitative Administrative Support/ Systems Intervention	<p>Leadership at various education levels (SEA, regional, LEA, school, as appropriate) analyzes feedback regarding barriers and successes and makes the necessary decisions and changes, including revising policies and procedures to alleviate barriers and facilitate implementation</p> <p>Required elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe processes for collecting, analyzing, and utilizing input and data 	<p><u>Description of processes for collecting, analyzing, and utilizing input and data from various levels of the education system to recognize barriers to implementation success (e.g., Describe how communication travels to other levels of the education system when assistance is needed to remove barriers):</u></p> <p>Promoting a coherent and aligned state system to support implementation was a critical component of Student Success. In order to create hospitable environments for implementation of Student Success improvement strategies and associated activities, it was essential that feedback loops be established between each level of the state system. A state infrastructure of linked teams, feedback loops, and communication protocols was created to ensure that practice informs policy and policy informs practice. Communication roles, schedules, and meeting formats were identified for the State Teams (State Leadership Team, the State Implementation Team, and State Implementation Team), regional teams, district teams, and school teams. These linked teams created feedback loops to help with the flow of information from the schools, districts, regions, the State and back again. Each team incorporated the use of a communication protocol which helped to guide the discussions. Included in this protocol were opportunities to discuss successes, barriers to implementation, and feedback needed up and down the linked team structures. This information was shared across all levels of the State infrastructure.</p>	4

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	<p>from various levels of the education system to recognize barriers to implementation success (e.g., Describe how communication travels to other levels of the education system when assistance is needed to remove barriers).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe processes for revising policies and procedures and making other necessary changes. 	<p><u>Describe processes for revising policies and procedures and making other necessary changes.</u></p> <p>Information and data obtained through the linked team structure and feedback loops moved up the feedback loops to a level where action could be taken. Action steps for addressing issues such as state policies and procedures were addressed at the State Leadership Team. Information moved back down the feedback loops to the implementers.</p> <p>These feedback loops and the connections across the GaDOE Divisions have led to changes in processes and procedures. Over the past two years significant improvements were made to state and regional infrastructures to better support districts in implementing and scaling-up evidence-based practices that will improve graduation rates for all students including students with disabilities. The infrastructure components of Governance and Finance focused on the alignment of plans and initiatives at all levels of the state system (e.g. GaDOE, regions, districts, and schools) to reduce duplication, leverage resources, and maximize results for all students. This alignment of plans was essential to ensuring a common focus (e.g. vision, mission, and goals) on improving graduation rates for all students including students with disabilities. The alignment of the SSIP with the ESSA Plan has resulted in collaborative planning, delivery, and monitoring of technical assistance for districts that are supported through the School and District Effectiveness Division and the Division for Special Education Services and Supports through Student Success. This collaborative partnership is more cost effective than providing duplicated supports, and it is expected that it will have a positive impact on districts implementing their improvement activities and achieving their desired outcomes.</p> <p>The State Leadership Collaborative, which was developed by the Superintendent of Schools in FFY 2015 to seamlessly align the implementation efforts of individual GaDOE offices and divisions continued to support the alignment of key GaDOE plans and initiatives. The development of the Leadership Collaborative has placed a strong emphasis on effective implementation of improvement strategies and has led to common strategic planning, blending of resources, and development of strong partnerships that can be leveraged to improve graduation rates and sustain the focus on improving graduation rates over time.</p> <p>Staff from thirteen Federal programs at the GaDOE developed a Comprehensive Needs Assessment (CNA) that removes the requirement for districts to complete multiple assessments to meet the statutory requirements for each individual program. Completing multiple assessments leading to the development of siloed plans has led to frustration for districts, duplicative initiatives, and disconnected results. Districts submitted their FY 2018 Comprehensive Needs Assessment beginning</p>	

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		<p>in July 2017. Special education personnel from the districts participated on the teams to analyze data; identify root causes of low performance; identify program strengths and weaknesses; and identify program needs. Staff responsible for implementing Student Success in districts and schools participated on CNA teams. The new CNA incorporates the first five steps of the Student Success Process and reduces duplication for districts while further aligning district and school improvement initiatives.</p> <p>Staff members from the Divisions for Special Education Services and Supports and the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) have partnered to provide technical assistance, consultation, and direct services regarding the five pre-employment transition services as defined by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). To support this effort, GVRA and the GaDOE implemented a pilot program to add Career Specialists in five districts to support the integration of Assistive Technology and Assistive Work Technology. Three of the five districts were identified to receive intensive technical supports through Student Success.</p> <p>The State applied for and was awarded funding for a new State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) with funding available October 1, 2017. The SPDG focuses on improving the capacity of districts and schools to implement Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS). Lack of MTSS is directly linked to the three barriers to graduation rate (i.e. access to the curriculum, positive school climate, and specially designed instruction) identified through the SSIP process. Members of the SSIP State Implementation Team will serve on the new SPDG Implementation Team to ensure alignment between these major improvement initiatives.</p>	

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