

## **Accountability**

### **Quick Definition**

Accountability means holding key individuals and groups- including schools, districts, educators and students- responsible for student achievement through the systematic collection, analysis, use, and reporting of valid and reliable information. Applying consequences for results-such as incentives, rewards and/or sanctions- also are included as part of an accountability system.

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### Relevancy to Georgia

Education accountability systems are highly complex and involve a range of interconnected design and technical facts from test reliability and validity, to incentives and interventions, to how data are collected, analyzed, and reported. Policymakers must determine, among other things, whose performance should be judged, the level of performance expected, relevant measures of performance, what constitutes satisfactory progress toward established goals, and what consequences will be imposed for superior and adequate performance as well as for failing to measure up.

Since 2001, Georgia has been under the framework of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (also known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB)). NCLB was designed to provide a standard by which schools could be evaluated. Were the schools meeting or maintaining adequate yearly progress (AYP), or were they labeled as “needs improvement,” and for how many years did they have that distinction?

In February 2012, Georgia was one of 11 states to receive a waiver and shift away from the AYP requirements in NCLB and implement new accountability measures and a teacher assessment program. For a further discussion of the waiver process, see the National Perspective section. By granting the waiver, the U.S. DOE (Department of Education) approved Georgia’s new accountability measure: Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI). The CCRPI will measure the extent to which a school, district, and the state are successfully making progress on a specific list of accountability measures.<sup>1</sup> This measurement will then determine which schools are exceeding standards and which need additional support to improve. Georgia’s working definition of a college and career readiness is: “The level of achievement required in order for a student to enroll in two or four year colleges and universities and technical colleges without remediation, fully prepared for college level work or immediately enter the workforce, including the U.S. military, without the need for additional skills training.”<sup>2</sup>

The basis for the CCRPI is the college and career ready indicators for high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools, which are grouped into four categories, as outlined in Table 1. Within each of these categories are a series of indicators that measure the effectiveness of a school. Table 2 shows the detailed indicators of the high school categories.

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<sup>1</sup>Georgia Department of Education.NCLB/Waiver Request Letter to United States Department of Education. September 20, 2011. Atlanta, Ga.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

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<b>Table 1. CCRPI Categories</b>	
<b>High School</b>	<b>Middle School/Elementary School</b>
1. <b>Graduation Rate</b>	1. Content Mastery and Preparation for High School or Middle School
2. <b>Student Attendance</b>	2. Student Attendance
3. <b>Post-High School Readiness</b>	3. Supports and Intervention
4. <b>Content Mastery</b>	4. Career Exploration
Source: Georgia Department of Education. (2011, November 17). Drop-Out Prevention Summit, Atlanta, Ga.	

<b>Table 2. College and Career Ready Performance Index, High School Model Grades 9 - 12</b>
<b>Graduation Rate</b>
<b>Cohort Graduation Rate (%)</b>
<b>Student Attendance</b>
<b>% of graduates completing 3 or more Pathway Courses</b>
<b>% of CTAE Pathway Completers earning a CTAE Industry-Recognized Credential</b>
<b>% of graduated students entering Technical College System of Georgia technical colleges and/or University System of Georgia 2 or 4 year colleges and universities NOT requiring remediation or support courses.</b>
<b>% of graduates earning high school credit(s) for accelerated enrollment via Accel, Dual HOPE Grant, Move On When Ready, Early College, Gateway to College, Articulated Credit, Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate courses</b>
<b>% of graduates earning 2 or more high school credits in the same world language</b>
<b>% of AP exams receiving scores of 3 or higher and/or percent of IB exams receiving scores of 4 or higher</b>
<b>% of tested graduates scoring a minimum of 22 on the ACT (out of 36) or scoring a minimum of 1550 on the SAT (out of 2400)</b>
<b>% of students scoring at meets or exceeds on the Georgia High School Writing Test</b>
<b>Student Attendance Rate (%)</b>
<b>Content Mastery (End of Course Tests in some areas to be Replaced by Common Core Assessments, 2014-15, )</b>
<b>% of students scoring at meets or exceeds on the Ninth Grade Literature End of Course Test</b>
<b>% of students scoring at meets or exceeds on the American Literature End of Course Test</b>
<b>% of students scoring at meets or exceeds on the Mathematics I (transitioning to CCGPS Coordinate Algebra) End of Course Test</b>
<b>% of students scoring at meets or exceeds on the Mathematics II (transitioning to CCGPS Analytic Geometry) End of Course Test</b>
<b>% of students scoring at meets or exceeds on the Physical Science End of Course Test</b>
<b>% of students scoring at meets or exceeds on the Biology End of Course Test</b>
<b>% of students scoring at meets or exceeds on the US History End of Course Test</b>
<b>% of students scoring at meets or exceeds on the Economics End of Course Test</b>
Source: Georgia Department of Education. "Georgia's College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) and ESEA Flexibility." Presented to Superintendents and School Leadership Hosted by the RESAs, February 28 and 29, 2012.

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Each of the four categories will receive a summary score based on the indicators. They will be evaluated through the lens of three outcome areas: achievement, progress, and achievement gap closure. Figure 1 shows the methods by which this data will be processed. These four category scores are combined to generate a school-wide Achievement Score, Progress Score, and Achievement Gap Score. The school-wide scores in the three areas will be weighted to produce the school's **Overall CCRPI Score**. The Achievement Score will carry the greatest weight in determining the Overall Score.

**Figure 1. Details of Each Component Score**

<b>Achievement Score</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scores based on current year data and carry the greatest weight in determining the overall score for schools, districts, and the state.</li></ul>
<b>Progress</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scores based on gap closure at the state-or school-level and used in the CCRPI so lower performing schools can demonstrate movement in a positive direction and higher performing schools can demonstrate commitment to excellence for all populations.</li></ul>
<b>Achievement Gap Closure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scores based on current and prior year data and used in the CCRPI by comparing each school's high-needs learners to the state's non high-needs learners.</li></ul>

Source: Georgia Department of Education "Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Accountability" R3 Summit Presentation. October 24, 2011

Schools will have an opportunity to increase their Overall CCRPI Score by earning bonus points based on a fourth area—Factors for Success indicators (Table 3). These are voluntary indicators, but are considered important for moving from adequate to excellent. Achieving these indicators can add up to three bonus points to a school's Overall CCRPI Score.

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<b>Table 3. Factors For Success</b>	
<b>High School</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. % of graduates completing three credits in the same world language</li> <li>2. % of graduates taking the SAT or ACT</li> <li>3. % of graduates earning credit in a physics course</li> <li>4. % of students in grade nine earning 4 Carnegie Unit Credits in 4 core content areas</li> <li>5. % of graduated students qualifying for the Zell Miller Scholarship as awarded through legislative guidelines managed by the Georgia Student Finance Commission</li> <li>6. School has earned a Georgia Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Program Certification</li> <li>7. School or LEA-defined innovative practice accompanied by documented data supporting improved student achievement</li> </ol>
<b>Middle School</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. % of students in grade eight scoring proficient/advanced on the 21st Century Skills Technology Assessment</li> <li>2. % of students in grades six and seven with a fully documented <i>Fitnessgram</i> assessment</li> <li>3. % of students in grade eight scoring at exceeds in science</li> <li>4. % of students successfully completing three years of courses in the fine arts and/or one world language and/or career exploratory</li> <li>5. % of students in grade eight scoring at exceeds in mathematics</li> <li>6. % of students in grade eight scoring at exceeds in social studies</li> <li>7. % of eighth grade students earning at least one high school credit</li> <li>8. % of eighth grade students scoring at exceeds in reading</li> <li>9. School has earned a Georgia Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Program Certification</li> <li>10. % of students in grades six through eight advancing to above grade level subject acceleration</li> <li>11. School or LEA-defined innovative practice accompanied by documented data supporting improved student achievement</li> </ol>
<b>Elementary School</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. % of students enrolled in world language courses</li> <li>2. % of students enrolled in fine arts courses</li> <li>3. % of students in grades one through five with documented data for the <i>Fitnessgram</i> assessment</li> <li>4. % of students in grade five scoring at exceeds in science</li> <li>5. % of students in grade three scoring at exceeds in mathematics</li> <li>6. % of students in grade five scoring at exceeds in reading</li> <li>7. % of students in grade five scoring at exceeds in social studies</li> <li>8. School has earned a Georgia Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Program Certification</li> <li>9. % of students in grades one through five advancing to above grade level subject acceleration</li> <li>10. School or LEA-defined innovative practice accompanied by documented data supporting improved student achievement</li> </ol>
<p><b>Source: Georgia Department of Education. "Georgia's College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) and ESEA Flexibility." Presented to Superintendents and School Leadership Hosted by the RESAs February 28 and 29, 2012</b></p>	

Finally, the CCRPI has two more ratings that do not factor into the Overall CCRPI score: the Financial Efficiency Rating and the School Climate Rating. The Financial Efficiency Rating will provide information about the impact instructional expenses have on student achievement and CCRPI outcomes. The School Climate Rating will be reflective of the school's environment and

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behavioral indicators, based on survey responses. Both of these ratings will be reported as a star rating ranging from one to five stars.

The CCRPI also includes a flag system to highlight subgroup performance: A green flag indicates the subgroup met both state and subgroup performance targets. A yellow flag with an “S” on it indicates the subgroup met the subgroup target, but not the state target. A yellow flag with an “SG” on it indicates the subgroup met the state target, but not the subgroup target. A red flag indicates that the subgroup did not meet either target. All eight End of Course Tests (EOCT) as well as the graduation rate will be used for disaggregated measurements. Subgroups will include race, Students with Disabilities, Economically Disadvantaged, and Limited English Proficient. Each subgroup, for instance “Economically Disadvantaged,” will have nine flags, one for each of the eight EOCTs and one for the graduation rate. These performance targets will replace the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) under AYP.

Another change will be the elimination of the Needs Improvement Status. Schools will now be categorized Reward, Priority, Focus, and Alert. The first three categories were required by the US DOE to receive a waiver, but Georgia took another step to ensure that achievement gaps will be closed by creating the Alert Schools category. The Alert School measure is significant because it will give more detailed information for each subgroup than has previously been available. Table 4 gives a detailed description of all four categories.

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Table 4.School Categories

Reward Schools	Priority Schools	Focus Schools	Alert Schools
<p><b>Definition:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 ways to be identified:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Highest Performing</li> <li>○ Highest Progress</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Based on minimum n size = 30</li> <li>• Based on 2011 composite of:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CRCT: Reading, ELA, Math</li> <li>○ CRCT-M: Reading, ELA, Math</li> <li>○ GAA: ELA, Math</li> <li>○ EOCT: 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Lit/Comp, American Lit, Math I, Math II, Algebra, Geometry</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Highest Performing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5% of Title I schools</li> <li>• Highest performance for the “All Students” group over 3 years</li> <li>• High schools with the highest graduation rates</li> <li>• May not be identified as a Priority School or a Focus School</li> </ul> <p><b>Highest Progress</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10% of Title I schools</li> <li>• Highest progress in performance for the “All Students” group over 3 years</li> <li>• High schools that are making the most progress in increasing graduation rates</li> <li>• May not be identified as a Priority School or a Focus School</li> </ul>	<p><b>Definition:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 ways to be identified:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ SIG School</li> <li>○ Grad rate less than 60% over 2 years</li> <li>○ Achievement of the “All Students” group and a lack of progress on achievement over 3 years</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Based on minimum n size = 30</li> <li>• Based on 2011 composite of :                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CRCT: All Subjects</li> <li>○ CRCT-M: All Subjects</li> <li>○ GAA: All Subjects</li> <li>○ EOCT: All Subjects</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 5% of Title I schools – lowest achieving</li> </ul>	<p><b>Definition:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 ways to be identified:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Grad rate less than 60% over 2 years and not identified as a Priority School</li> <li>○ Largest within-school gaps between highest achieving subgroup** and the lowest achieving subgroup</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Based on minimum n size = 30</li> <li>• Based on 2011 composite of :                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CRCT: All Subjects</li> <li>○ CRCT-M: All Subjects</li> <li>○ GAA: All Subjects</li> <li>○ EOCT: All Subjects</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 10% of Title I schools</li> </ul>	<p><b>Definition:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 ways to be identified:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Graduation Alert</li> <li>○ Subgroup Alert</li> <li>○ Subject Alert</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Based on minimum n size = TBD</li> <li>• Title I and Non-Title I schools</li> <li>• Based on 9 ESEA subgroups</li> <li>• <b>Graduation Alert:</b> graduation rate is below 3 standard deviations from the mean of the state’s subgroups’ graduation rate</li> <li>• <b>Subgroup Alert:</b> achievement rate is below 3 standard deviations from the mean of the state’s subgroups’ meets and exceeds rate</li> <li>• <b>Subject Alert:</b> subject achievement is below 3 standard deviations from the mean of the state’s meets and exceeds rate for each subject</li> <li>• Based on 2011 composite of :                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ CRCT: All Subjects</li> <li>○ CRCT-M: All Subjects</li> <li>○ GAA: All Subjects</li> <li>○ EOCT: All Subjects</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Does not include Priority Schools and Focus Schools</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reward Schools initially identified in September 2012</li> <li>• Reward Schools designations will replace Distinguished Schools</li> <li>• Reward Schools will be identified annually</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority Schools will be identified in April 2012 and will be served for 3 years</li> <li>• Supports and interventions will begin in June 2012</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus Schools will be identified in April 2012 and will be served for 3 years</li> <li>• Supports and interventions will begin in June 2012</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alert Schools will be initially identified in April 2012</li> <li>• Alert Schools will be identified annually</li> <li>• Supports and interventions will begin in June 2012</li> </ul>

Source: Georgia Department of Education. Press Release, February 9, 2012.

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Supports and interventions for poorly performing schools will still be made, but the Supplemental Educational Services (SES)—implemented under NCLB will be replaced by Flexible Learning Programs (FLP) which are constructed by Local Educational Agencies (LEAs). The state of Georgia is confident that “these new programs will improve the quality of service across the state, especially in rural districts, and provide more opportunities for parental involvement and input from local school boards about the types of interventions that are most appropriate for the schools in their communities.”<sup>3</sup> The local school districts must submit a plan and budget which will be approved by the GaDOE. GaDOE will then monitor the program and evaluate the results. Conversely, the Highest Performing and High Progress Title 1 schools will be recognized each year at the Annual Title Programs Conference and “receive a monetary reward equal to Georgia’s total reward allotment divided by the total number of reward schools.”<sup>4</sup>

These are significant changes that will hopefully bring about significant results. CCRPI will still be repeatedly examined and minor changes are expected to be made such as adding new Factors For Success and determining the weighted scale to calculate the Overall Score. The Georgia Department of Education is working diligently to make CCRPI the premiere accountability system in the country. CCRPI will continue to be developed and refined through 2012 and submit the refined plan to the U.S. DOE in March 2013. CCRPI will be implemented in Fall 2013 and become Georgia’s Single Statewide Accountability System.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>U.S. Department of Education. ESEA Flexibility Request. February 6, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Georgia Department of Education. “Georgia’s College and Career Ready Performance Index (CCRPI) and ESEA Flexibility.” Presented to Superintendents and School Leadership Hosted by the RESAs, February 28 and 29, 2012.

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### The National Perspective

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was designed to provide a standard by which schools could be evaluated. Were the schools meeting or maintaining adequate yearly progress (AYP), or were they labeled as “needs improvement”, and for how many years did they have that distinction?

However, the law was due to be reauthorized in 2007 and, as of Spring 2012, is being debated in Congress. Meanwhile, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) has moved forward with new reforms such as Race to the Top and the Investing in Innovation Grants. These programs are arguably more advanced and reform minded than the requirements under NCLB. However, states struggle to implement them due to constraints placed on them by the now outdated NCLB.<sup>6</sup> For example, any school that does not make AYP faces an increasing set of sanctions. By 2014, all schools are required to have 100% proficiency otherwise; they will be labeled as a “failing” school.

In light of the challenge on gaining bi-partisan agreement to re-authorize the bill, the current strategy appears to be for the U.S. DOE to generate waivers to incrementally change different parts of the bill. The first set of waivers applied directly to the AYP requirements specified by NCLB. However, in order to qualify for waivers, states must engage in “serious state-led efforts to close achievement gaps, promote rigorous accountability, and ensure that all students are on track to graduate college and career ready.”<sup>7</sup> Though the waivers are designed to set aside the AYP standards required by NCLB, they continue to require an accountability system for schools and districts.

States receiving the waivers were exempt from several federal regulations, allowing them to create their own standards. Granted, many regulations still exist, and the federal government must approve any changes. However, states are now taking a larger role. Georgia and 32 other states that already have a waiver are well ahead of the curve in regard to innovative accountability measures. Figure 2 shows the states that have received a waiver highlighted in green.

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<sup>6</sup>Institute for a Competitive Workforce. (2011, October 24). *Waivers: What's at Stake*. Retrieved 29 2011, October , from U.S. Chamber of Commerce: <http://icw.uschamber.com/newsletter-article/waivers-what%E2%80%99s-stake>

<sup>7</sup> Ibid



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this could dissuade high-quality teachers from going to poor performing schools—schools that need them the most. This proposal continues the debate among those in the education community about who should be held accountable for poor student performance: teachers, administrators, curriculum, or the students themselves.

Another unique aspect comes from the Kentucky plan. Each Priority (lowest performing) school is assigned an Education Recovery Leader to work with the principal and Education Recovery Specialists to work with teachers to build skills and capacities to improve student achievement.”<sup>10</sup> While the federal government has some authority, states are trying various methods to achieve success. In the future, states can learn from each other—what works and what doesn’t when it comes to accountability and turning schools around.

While many states are preparing for this transition, others are not as enthusiastic. California is a state that is not just hesitant or unprepared, but hostile to the idea of applying for a waiver from the U.S. DOE. State officials don’t approve of the compromise that takes place in order to be relieved from NLCB regulations, “citing its objections to the Obama administration's requirements of states that want that flexibility.”<sup>11</sup> Lawmakers are reaching out to Secretary Duncan in hopes of finding a “third option” regarding the federal education mandates. Neither the status quo of NCLB nor the strings attached to the waiver are desirable for California. California DOE spokesman Paul Hefner said it is impractical for the state to revamp its accountability system while it is in the process of creating new tests and adopting the Common Core standards. Federal officials have yet to respond to California’s unique request, but have said previously that all states not receiving a waiver will be held accountable to current law.

Some rural states have balked at the waiver requirements involving intervening in low-performing schools as well as developing a teacher evaluation system. Neither of these actions would prove beneficial to schools in these states, some argue. In a joint letter, Maine and New Hampshire’s DOE Commissioners wrote Secretary Duncan and insisted these requirements would be difficult if not impossible for many communities with schools that are hard to staff.<sup>12</sup> Other hesitant states including Nebraska and Montana, both rural, view the waiver process as trading one set of federal regulations for another. There are financial costs to making these changes and officials in some states don’t believe they are in a position to transform their state’s education system. At this point they may be assuming that Congressional action may occur in the next few years to alter the most onerous parts of NCLB. These states will be watching closely to the outcomes in other states that are moving forward in the process.

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<sup>10</sup>The Education Trust. “Kentucky NCLB Waiver Summary: Accountability.” February, 2012.

<sup>11</sup>Cavanagh, Sean; McNeil, Michele. “Calif. Seeks Its Own Version of an NCLB Waiver.” Ed. Week. February 29, 2012

<sup>12</sup>Barry, Virginia M.; Bowen, Stephen L. Retrieved March 14, 2012: <http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/campaign-k-12/ESEA-flex-letter-PR-blog.pdf>

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### **Research Tells Us**

A common criticism of NLCB is that it is too rigid and solely based on standardized tests. Internationally, many countries include supplemental methods that don't rely as heavily on standardized testing. For instance, there is evidence from England that introducing

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comprehensive on-site inspections in the U.S. could be beneficial to accountability standards.<sup>13</sup> The inspection department is its own entity—independent of the Department of Education. The department reports its findings directly to parliament. Most of the inspections are contracted out to private organizations which “promote both quality assurance and better value,” according to those involved.<sup>14</sup> Trained professionals judge the schools on twenty-seven variables such as:

- “The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being,”
- “The effectiveness of care, guidance, and support, and,”
- “The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement.”

Inspections last one to two days, and a group of inspectors reviews all determinations. Schools are rated from best to worst: “Outstanding,” “Good,” “Satisfactory,” and “Inadequate.” An example of the effects of these inspections is Peterhouse Primary School. After being rated as “Inadequate” by the inspectors, the school came together to focus on the variables that needed most improvement, according to the inspectors. Peterhouse improved rapidly, taking only 14 months to boost its rating substantially. Schools that are lagging in certain areas took an average of 20 months and required three or four monitoring visits before reaching satisfactory or better effectiveness.<sup>15</sup> This is better than similar counterparts in the U.S., where 70 percent of schools identified for corrective action in 2005–06 were still identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring three years later.<sup>16</sup> In a report that examined the success England is having with this, the author suggests “that inspections offer a way to make much more nuanced judgments about school performance, provide richer information to parents and the public, offer better formative feedback to schools, inform much more targeted improvement and interventions for low-performing schools, and accelerate timelines for school improvement.”

Most often when accountability standards are discussed it is in terms of the effect it has on student achievement outcomes. A 2007 study investigated the effects certain sanctions had on teachers’ efforts and practices. The researchers looked at several schools in the Chicago school system. Schools that didn’t meet accountability standards were put on probation and required to work with outside agencies to improve their performance. The first finding was that putting a school on probation caught teachers’ attention and focused them on the goals of their school.<sup>17</sup> This enhanced focus led to increased effort: a majority of respondents reported spending more time on teaching activities, strategically targeting students who were below the target level, and

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<sup>13</sup>Jerald, Craig D. “On Her Majesty’s School Inspection Service.” 2012. *Education Sector*.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>England’s Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills. “The Annual Report of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Education, Children’s Services and Skills” 2010.

<sup>16</sup>U.S. DOE. “Report to Congress on the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, State-Reported Data for School Years 2003-04 to 2007 -08.” March 2011.

<sup>17</sup>Finnigan, Fara S; Gross, Betheny. “Do Accountability Policy Sanctions Influence Teacher Motivation? Lessons from Chicago’s Low-Performing Schools.” *American Educational Research Journal*. Vol. 44, No. 3 September 2007.

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collaborated with colleagues around reading instruction. Teachers also changed their instructional practice. A majority of respondents reported changing course content, using new teaching methods, and increasing time devoted to test preparation. While efforts and best practices initially seemed to improve, if years passed and a school was unable to exit probation, negative outcomes started to appear. The unintended consequence of this policy is that it can have a negative effect on teacher morale.<sup>18</sup> The authors concluded, “Many teachers in our study experienced low morale at both the individual and collective levels, resulting from feelings of being devalued and from a perspective that they, as individuals, or their collective voice as teachers did not matter.”<sup>19</sup> They go on to describe teachers’ reactions saying: “Given that these schools had already been on probation for several years during our first visit, discouragement was initially evident, and seemed to worsen by the second or third time we met with these respondents. In summary, teachers in these schools that remained on probation in many cases articulated being worn down, and we saw this deepen during the course of this study.”<sup>20</sup>

It is possible that these long term morale problems dwarf any gains made by teachers making the extra effort at the outset of the probation announcement. The authors conclude that there are two policy actions that could help the morale problem that occurs in these situations. First, not only should pressure be applied to the teachers to improve, but a proportional amount of support should be as well. Second, unlike NCLB which provides “tailored” interventions and strategies for schools at the fifth year of failing, this help should be provided much sooner to take advantage of the teachers’ enthusiasm to do better, rather than deal with the deteriorating morale of some of the teachers in this study.

### For More Information

- **Georgia Department of Education--[www.gadoe.org](http://www.gadoe.org)**

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

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The Georgia Department of Education has a wealth of resources about that state accountability system that are accessible on their website.

➤ **Governor's Office of Student Achievement--[www.gaosa.org](http://www.gaosa.org)**

Education stakeholders can access school and system accountability profiles as well as education performance data from the website of the Governor's office of Student Achievement.

➤ **Education Commission of the States--[www.ecs.org](http://www.ecs.org)**

An interstate compact with the mission of facilitating the exchange of information, ideas, and experiences among state policymakers and education leaders, the Education Commission of the States (ECS) maintains an extensive website with a wealth of information about policy topics including accountability.