

Introduction

Describe the LEA

The Georgia Department of Education operates three state schools for the deaf and blind: 1. The Atlanta Area School for the Deaf in Clarkston; 2. the Georgia School for the Deaf in Cave Springs, and; 3. the Georgia Academy for the Blind in Macon. The State Schools District is managed by the Georgia Department of Education. The State Superintendent of Schools serves as the local superintendent, and the State Board of Education serves as the local board of education. The State Schools are funded through Appropriations from the Georgia General Assembly and does not receive FTE funds. Public Law 94-142, the Individuals Disabilities Education Act, requires states to provide a free appropriate education to all handicapped students in the least restrictive environment possible. Placement at the one of the State schools is considered appropriate and necessary if it has been determined that the child's needs cannot be met by the local school system.

The Atlanta Area School for the Deaf (AASD) specializes in providing appropriate educational programs for students with hearing impairments, including students with multiple disabilities. AASD also serves as a resource center on deafness and offers training and technical assistance to parents, public school programs, community groups, and other agencies. AASD is a state-operated day school established for children who are deaf and hard of hearing. AASD is located in Clarkston, Georgia. AASD opened in 1972 with two buildings and approximately 80 students in preschool, elementary, and middle school. In 1978, a high school program was added with the first graduating class in 1983. Currently AASD has five building with 188 students in preschool through high school. All students attending AASD are referred from their local school system. Consequently, AASD has a varied student body including students ages 3 through 21 coming from a large catchment area inclusive of students from rural districts as well as from urban Atlanta. AASD was first accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) and the Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD) in 1988.

The Georgia School for the Deaf (GSD) is the State's only residential school for deaf and hard of hearing students. All students attending GSD are referred from school systems throughout the State of Georgia, and include students ages 3 – 21 from very diversified backgrounds including ethnicity, religion, and socio-economic factors. The Georgia School for the Deaf specializes in providing appropriate educational programs for students with hearing impairments, both in the regular and the special needs setting. Students at GSD are also provided the unique opportunity for socialization with their peers and deaf adults in the residential setting. This opportunity to be immersed in an ASL-rich environment 24/5 provides benefits that cannot be duplicated outside

of this school. GSD also serves as a community center for resources on deafness and ASL, and participates in the community through work opportunities as well as service projects.

The Georgia Academy for the Blind (GAB) is one of three state schools in Georgia. Located in Macon, it is the only residential school serving students with visual impairments and

students with additional disabilities in Georgia. Approximately 64% of students are residential, with the remaining students commuting daily from area school systems. The campus program

offers a safe and stimulating learning environment, providing high quality instruction for students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade in the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards, as well as the Expanded Core Curriculum for Students with Visual

Impairments (ECC). Low vision evaluations, assistive technology assessments, professional learning classes for vision educators, and a technology loan program are supports offered through the Smokey Powell Assistive Technology Center. Smokey Powell outreach vision consultants also provide onsite location support to teachers, families, and the student. Additional outreach services are offered through Short Course Weekends and Summer Programs, focusing on the ECC and are available to students throughout the state. The GAB is home to two programs serving students with visual impairments throughout the state: the Georgia Instructional Materials Center and Georgia Parent Infant Network for Educational Services.

Provide LEA Equity Belief Statement

It is our belief that all students, including economically-disadvantaged and minority students, should have access and equitable opportunities to high quality instruction. The State Schools District is committed to providing impartial and fair educational opportunities for all of our students. We believe that it is critical that students are served by highly qualified and effective

teachers, administrators, and support personnel who are knowledgeable about the unique educational needs of students with visual impairments, multiple disabilities and/or are deaf or hard of hearing. It is our continued goal to provide highly qualified teachers for all our students. With focused efforts on the following:

- The teacher's instructional experience
- The teacher's ability to meet the diverse learning needs of each student
- Understanding that class size is integral to providing high quality instruction.
- The need for all staff to communicate fluently in American Sign Language at the two schools for the deaf.

- The need for double certification (content and Deaf Education and/or Visual Impairment).

Annual Needs Assessment Including Required Equity Components

II.1 Provide a summary of how the needs assessment is conducted.

The State Schools District conducts an annual needs assessment that provides a comprehensive analysis of student, school, and system performance. The needs assessment focuses on student achievement, including student access to the general curriculum and achievement gaps between student subgroups based on gender, race/ethnicity, disability, and economic background. In addition, the needs assessment addresses the hiring and retention of highly qualified instructional staff and administrators.

Needs Assessment feedback is offered through the use of surveys. Links to the on-line edition of the surveys are distributed through e-mail, school website, postcard mailings, and multiple newsletter announcements to teachers, paraprofessionals, students, and parents. Students will be provided class time to complete the surveys. Community partners will be provided with hard copies of the survey to complete. Stakeholder representatives will participate in planning and prioritizing needs. Annual meetings will be held to review the needs assessment data with stakeholders and seek additional input after the data has been analyzed. These stakeholder representatives, as well as parent partners at the Regional Parent Meetings, will have the opportunity to review the needs assessment data at the annual review meeting held at each State School. Stakeholders include administrators, students, teachers, parents, School Council, Leadership Team, DOE personnel, community and business leaders and representatives of higher education.

II.2 Identify data sources used

Documentation/Data sources used to assess the State Schools

- School Improvement Plan
- Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) reports, Georgia Assessment of Performance on School Standards (GAPSS) reports, Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD) reports
- State Schools District's CORE Leadership meeting minutes
- Certification records
- Informal surveys as needed throughout the year
- Professional learning records
- Student assessment data

- Performance evaluations
- Letters of intent
- Teacher retention data
- Schoolwide Plan
- Technology Plan
- Teacher certification records
- Teacher experience data
- Retention data
- IEP compliance data.
- Survey data
- Title I Parent Input for School Quality and Improvement survey
- Equity Surveys for leaders, teachers, paraprofessionals, and community leaders
- After School Program

II.3 Briefly summarize findings for:

The State School district currently has the following vacancies available.

6 Special Education Teachers

1 Speech Language Pathologist

1 School Psychologist

1 School Social Worker

1 Physical Therapist

2 Interpreters

1 Nurse

1 Orientation/Mobility Therapist

2 Administrators

In additional to vacancies in the following staffing areas: Food Service, Custodial, Technology, Program Specialist and Residential Coordinators.

Our LEA recruitment needs for Special Education teachers in our schools for the deaf/hard of hearing are teachers certified in content area, Deaf Ed, Special Education and fluent in sign language. For our State school for the blind, our recruitment needs are Teachers certified in Content area, Special Ed, and Visual Impairment certification. To meet the recruitment needs we contract with another agencies to use our site for certification training in this low incidence field. We will advocate recruiting from this pool when they are ready. We utilize Metro RESA and Middle Georgia RESA for programs initiated for Georgia teachers already certified in special education to add the visual impairment endorsement. To fill positions we reached out to universities with qualified programs and advertised in applicable professional publications and sites to identify quality applicants. We also participate in both in and out-of-state educational job fairs as needed and when budgets can support these endeavors. We post job announcements through the Department of Education, and TeachGeorgia.org. Our local school webpage posts job announcements, shares information about the schools and the surrounding area. It also provides important links to the Georgia PSC website, GACE website, and Ga DOE website. Contact information is provided for the school principal, the professional learning coordinator, and to our human resource personnel tech. Through advertising, contacts with feeder colleges, internship opportunities, and support for staff members who pursue certification, the State Schools District strives to obtain highly qualified teachers for all teaching assignments

For the State Schools District we find most challenging for recruitment is finding qualified applicants particularly for the schools for the deaf and hard of hearing, HS courses because of the dual certification. HS math because of the complexity of the content, elementary because of our need of native like signers. Although we require a high level of sign language for all grade levels, typically the older students have a better ability to code switch and fill in gaps in educators do not have native like sign skills. Elementary students and students with lower cognitive ability need our most fluent signers to model appropriate language and to be able to clearly convey to instruction. Also, we struggle to find teachers who can work with our students who have behavior needs.

Out of 106 Teacher Positions, we only have 6 vacancies currently. We strive to retain qualified teachers through various support methods. Staff Attendance is at a 95-97% rate. We have a positive climate among teachers and leaders. TKES and Performance evaluations along with letters of intent are used to support retention decisions.

Pertinent information is gathered annually from both the School Principal and the personnel department. Information sources include the following:

- Letters of intent (filled out each spring by all teachers)
- End of the year interviews/evaluations
- Mentoring surveys

It is important to note that teachers at the State Schools District do not sign annual contracts for employment, as they are considered state employees. However, teachers are asked each spring to respond to an intent survey and to submit a letter of intent. The survey gauges teachers' intentions regarding their desire to return to teach for the upcoming school year.

Strategies to assist retention efforts include but are not limited to the following:

- Providing teachers with teacher mentor and Department Head's support. This will especially target the larger number of teachers at the 0-3 years of experience range.
- Providing support to teachers in the areas of instruction and becoming highly qualified.
- Having a supportive and highly involved administrative staff.
- Providing technology support to all teachers.
- Availability of numerous and varied instructional materials to both support and enhance teaching.
- Instructional Coaches in the areas of Math, Literacy, and Special Needs that work closely with instructional staff in planning lessons and modeling lessons
 - Providing quality professional learning courses on campus that focus on the needs of students.
 - Making available to staff numerous mini-professional development activities that they can participate in weekly and throughout the year on a variety of topics, all aimed at improving student achievement and improving teacher quality.
 - Opportunities for interested staff to assume leadership responsibilities and experiences that help them prepare for true leadership roles within the school:
 - Department Heads
 - Instructional Support Staff
 - Committee Chairs Teacher Mentor Program

- Providing instructional support to teachers new to the profession or school.
- Providing a safe environment for teachers new to the profession to be able to openly discuss concerns/problems they are facing. Providing a culture of coaching PBIS committee provides positive support to the staff

The hiring and scheduling practices at the State Schools will be used to assure that highly qualified teachers are placed in core academic classes. The District will implement the following procedures for analyzing data, identifying deficiencies and designating the appropriate solutions for assigning highly qualified teachers.

Hiring: The plan is to communicate the necessity for accurate data to all staff that enter data into Certified/Classified Personnel Information (CPI) transmission reporting. CPI transmission report is HiQ2 report will be used to identify gaps in highly qualified content areas. HiQ2 is an online educator inventory system used to determine if an educator meets the Federal definition of “highly qualified” when placed in a teaching assignment. The system is also used to gather data to report to US Department of Education.

Verify course codes and certification codes. The principals, HR Personnel Representatives, Title II Coordinators and other staff designee will coordinate efforts to review data submission, examine recruiting and retaining options to increase highly qualified teachers in core academic classes and identify appropriate solutions. The annual HiQ principal training will provide emphasis on hiring and appropriate staff placement to ensure State Schools meet HiQ requirements.

Recruit:

Principals will broaden recruiting efforts to reach a wider audience, and target institutions of high educations that specialize in the category of need. Principals and professional learning coordinators will document remediation plans for provisional teachers to become highly qualified during the required period of time. Title II, Part A funds will be utilized to support teacher assessment needs in addition to course work reimbursement where funds are available and applicable.

Retain:

The State schools will continue to have supplemental mentoring programs for new teacher and inexperienced teachers. New teachers and/or inexperienced teachers are provided peer coaching and other mentoring initiatives.

Professional development plans are identified through student assessment data and developed to progress the student academic achievement goals.

Parents

Parent will be notified of their Right to Know and request information on the qualifications of teachers and paraprofessionals. This information is disseminated through the Annual Title I Conference, the student handbook, school website posting, in addition letters mailed home. Principals will notify parents of students who are being taught by a teacher that is not highly qualified after four consecutive weeks. Principals will attest to the certification and qualifications of their teachers in the HiQ2 system.

100% HiQ Status

Teacher experience

Based on results of the IEP process, student individual goals are matched to teacher strengths. Annually the administrative staff review teacher qualifications. Administrators, Title II coordinators look to ensure equitable experience across schools grade levels.

Our goal as a district is to make certain each classroom will be staffed with a teacher who is Highly Qualified, or is working diligently to become HiQ in that area. Inexperienced teachers will be paired with mentors who are experienced, and will lend their expertise to that classroom. Departments (ES, MS, HS) will be balanced as much as possible between experienced and less experienced teachers, given the difficulties of recruiting and retaining Highly Qualified teachers for our schools, who have content, Special education certification, Deaf Ed/Visual Impairment certification and for the schools for the deaf be fluent in American Sign Language (ASL).

As previously noted, hiring experienced and highly qualified teachers can be challenging and not always obtainable, due to the specialized nature of the services provided. In order to ensure that all students receive the most effective instructional services possible, given the variability of experience and certification preparation level, every teacher is provided with the following:

- Support from our Coach and Assistant Principal

- Participation in our mentoring program (as qualified)
- Training related to Best Practices, Standards Based Classroom, classroom management, behavior, use of effective instructional strategies, classroom assessment, data interpretation
- Weekly review of lesson plans with feedback
- Modeling of instructional practices
- Opportunities to observe highly qualified, effective teachers
- Participation in Department and Content Groups

Inexperienced and struggling teachers are provided the support and training (described above) to acquire the skills needed to be effective in the classroom.

The data and results gained from the numerous methods of evaluation assist in identifying inexperienced and/or ineffective teachers and assists leadership staff in their efforts to not place students with a teacher that is inexperienced and/or ineffective two years in a row.

The Leadership Team, comprised of teachers and other internal stakeholders (instructional coaches, testing coordinator, counselor, social worker, student services coordinator and school improvement specialist), work to collect and analyze the data . Very thorough needs assessments have been completed for the purpose of GAPSS review, SACS Accreditation, the updating of our School Improvement Plan as a Priority School (quarterly reviews) and one Alert school, the writing of our Title I schoolwide plan (annually), and the writing of our School Improvement Plans (2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15), now also recorded and delineated into individual tasks in the Indistar platform.

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g. Class Size

(3) Class Size

Class size is at or below the State of Georgia's class size requirement for IDEA regulations. Annually principals review schedules and students assessment to ensure class sizes support student achievement.

II.4 List Prioritized Needs

Increase the number of highly qualified to 100% by the end of the 2015-2016 school year 2.
Increase ability of teachers to meet the diverse needs of students

3. Recruit and retain highly qualified teachers
4. Equity of Stakeholder Involvement

Annual Needs Assessment Including Required Equity Components

III.1 Identify Stakeholder groups (internal and external)

The State Schools District will include each stakeholder group in the annual needs assessment and planning process annually. Stakeholders include administrators, students, teachers, staff, parents, School Council, Leadership Team, DOE personnel community representatives, add business leaders and representatives of higher education. Those whom wish to participate are able to attend any of the announced informational sessions. In addition Needs Assessment feedback is offered through the use of surveys. Links to the on-line edition of the surveys are distributed through e-mail, school website, postcard mailings, and multiple newsletter announcements to teachers, paraprofessionals, students, and parents. Students will be provided class time to complete the surveys. Community partners were provided with hard copies of the survey to complete. Annual meetings will be held to review the needs assessment data with stakeholders and seek additional input after the data has been analyzed. These stakeholder representatives, as well as parent partners at the Regional Parent Meetings, will have the opportunity to review the needs assessment data at the annual review meeting held at each State School.

- School Personnel, DOE Personnel (principals, teachers, paraprofessionals, other relevant school personnel) - Email communication during month of April for May invitation.
- Parents -Various methods of communication will be utilized. Postcards will be mailed, newsletters, announcements, website postings and email communication during month of April for May invitation.
- Community and business leaders/Representatives of High Education- Various methods of communication will be utilized. Postcards mailed and/or phone, email invitations.

III.2 Describe how internal and external stakeholders are involved in the planning process to:

The State Schools District conducts an annual needs assessment that provides a comprehensive analysis of student, school, and system performance. The needs assessment focuses on student achievement, including student access to the general curriculum and achievement gaps between

student subgroups based on gender, race/ethnicity, disability, and economic background. In addition, the needs assessment addresses the hiring and retention of highly qualified instructional staff and administrators.

Needs Assessment feedback is offered through the use of surveys. Links to the on-line edition of the surveys are distributed through e-mail, school website, postcard mailings, and multiple newsletter announcements to teachers, paraprofessionals, students, and parents. Students will be provided class time to complete the surveys. Community partners will be provided with hard copies of the survey to complete. Stakeholder representatives will participate in planning and prioritizing needs. Annual meetings will be held to review the needs assessment data with stakeholders and seek additional input after the data has been analyzed. These stakeholder representatives, as well as parent partners at the Regional Parent Meetings, will have the opportunity to review the needs assessment data at the annual review meeting held at each State School. Stakeholders include administrators, students, teachers, parents, School Council, Leadership Team, DOE personnel, community and business leaders and representatives of higher education.

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- Equity Surveys for leaders, teachers, paraprofessionals, and community leaders
- After School Program

b. Prioritize needs

External and internal stakeholder participation was integral to this planning process. State Schools District focuses on teacher quality and effectiveness, retention of highly qualified and effective teachers, increased student achievement and meeting the diverse needs of our students when prioritizing our needs. Stakeholder representatives participated in planning and prioritizing needs and contributed to the equity plan. These stakeholder representatives, as well as parent partners, have the opportunity for input at many regional Parent Meetings, such as on Registration Day, Transition Parent meetings, Regional Statewide Stakeholder meetings, State Schools Parent Engagement Conference and school level Annual Title I Conference. Also because we serve students from the entire state of Georgia we work towards to goal of utilizing technology to provide parents the access and ability to communicate and participate in stakeholder meetings. Stakeholders have the opportunity to participate via email groupings, newsletters communication and survey feedback posts from our webpages. The equity plan will be revised as needed based on input and feedback.

The needs assessment focuses on student achievement, including student access to the general curriculum and achievement gaps between student subgroups based on gender, race/ethnicity, disability, and economic background.

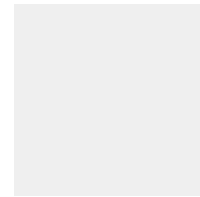
Identify actions or strategies contributed to equity plan.

Improved remediation plans for all non-highly qualified and NNT certificate holders

- * Use of both formative and summative assessments
- * Development of our mentoring program
- * Use of Walk-Thru format for providing evaluation information of teacher effectiveness
- * Development of leadership opportunities for staff

- * Development of Data Teams to review both test results and student work and to aid in decision making regarding curriculum and instruction
- * Developing year long plan for professional learning
- * Developing and providing staff with study materials related to required GACE assessments
- * Improved recruitment efforts to include more job postings, job information and links on our website
- * Professional learning activities addressing differentiation in the classroom

Highly Qualified Educator Equity



System Name: State Schools | Fiscal Year : 2016

IV.1 Provide the teacher HiQ Percentage for the % current year

IV.2 Provide the paraprofessional HiQ % Percentage for the current year

Describe how a remediation plan is developed in accordance with the guidelines in Section V of the Title II, Part A Handbook for each non-highly qualified teacher and paraprofessional.

b. Describe the monitoring process to ensure each non-HiQ teacher and paraprofessional is implementing the remediation plan and making progress toward HiQ status.

Remediation plans for non-highly qualified teachers, non –HiQ paraprofessionals and core academic teachers who do not hold a clear renewable certificate are developed and updated with the advice and assistance of the professional learning coordinator, the principal and the teacher’s HiQ mentor. Remediation plans will be regularly monitored by the principal and documentation of monitoring will be maintained on the remediation document. Teachers provide updates on their progress toward complying with the requirements of the remediation plan and documentation of the required steps to achieve HiQ status or clear renewable certification. Progress is noted by the principal on the remediation plan at regular intervals. As certificates are renewed and HiQ status is achieved, teachers provide copies to the principal to update certification files.

IV.4

a. Describe how a remediation plan is developed in accordance with the guidelines in Section V of the Title II, Part A Handbook for each teacher who does not hold a clear renewable certificate.

b. Describe the monitoring process to ensure each teacher who does not hold a clear renewable certificate is implementing the remediation plan and making progress toward obtaining a clear renewable certificate.

At the initial meeting, certification and GACE assessment requirements leading to becoming a highly qualified are discussed, and the plan is written based on time and achievement requirements. The remediation plan is then signed by the teacher and the Principal. These plans are kept on file by the Professional Learning Coordinator.

Documentation that must be provided to the Principal includes but is not limited to the following:

- acceptance letter into an approved college/university program
- transcript of courses taken
- copy of GACE admission ticket
- copy of GACE score report

Updates from the Professional Standards Commission and GACE information are emailed to teachers throughout the year.

IV.5 Describe how LEA monitors HiQ assignment of teachers based on student demographics and diverse needs of students.

Our district is not the typical school district in that we do not serve students in a concentrated area, rather we serve students from the entire state of Georgia. Students are referred to a State School based on their IEP. The district does not necessarily monitor assignment of teachers based on student demographics and diverse needs of student. What we do is strive to ensure that each school is able to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers to meet the diverse needs of our student population based on demographics from across the state. The LEA supports this initiative by utilizing Title II A funds to support recruitment and meeting the diverse needs of students initiatives.

Teacher Experience and Effectiveness Equity

V.1 Describe how the LEA assesses teacher effectiveness

Teacher effectiveness is monitored closely through the following means:

- Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES the Georgia Department of Education teacher evaluation program).
- Lesson plans
- Observations and/or Walk-Thru
- Informal assessments of student work
- Schoolwide testing
- STAR Math and Reading
- Failure Free Reading
- Fairview
- Jerry L. Johns Basic Reading Inventory
- Benchmark testing
- End of Course Tests
- State mandated testing (CRCT, GHSGT, GHSWT)
- Georgia Alternate Assessment
- Key Math
- High/Scope Child Observation Record: Language and Literacy
- Kendall Conversation Proficiency Levels
- French Stages of Literacy Development Checklist
- French Early Reading Checklist/French Reading Checklist
- MacArthur Communicative Development Inventory
- Jerry L. Johns Basic Reading Inventory

- NWEA test results
- Benchmark testing

V.2 Describe how the LEA plans to address any identified inequities in teacher experience across schools and classrooms in the system and within its schools and programs.

Based on results of the IEP process, student individual goals are matched to teacher strengths. The State Schools District has established a comprehensive mentoring program to address the

equity issue for newly hired teachers. This program will provide new teachers with specialized training prior to preplanning days. These teachers are then mentored throughout the school year by an experienced teacher. Each classroom will be staffed with a teacher who is HiQ, or is working diligently to become HiQ in that area. Teacher observations and evaluations will determine future placement of ineffective teachers as well as specific additional training they may need to become more effective.

Since the State Schools District is a special education facility, all teachers are required to have dual certification (special education field and content area/s) and visual signed communication

proficiency. As previously noted, hiring experienced and highly qualified teachers can be challenging and not always obtainable, due to the specialized nature of the services provided. In order to ensure that all students receive the most effective instructional services possible, given the variability of experience and certification preparation level, every teacher is provided with the following:

- Support from Teacher Coaches, specifically in the areas of Reading, Math, and English Language Arts
- Participation in our mentoring program
- Training related to Best Practices, Standards Based Classroom, classroom management, behavior, use of effective instructional strategies, classroom assessment, data interpretation , differentiation
- Weekly review of lesson plans with feedback
- Modeling of instructional practices
- Opportunities to observe highly qualified, effective teachers
- Shared planning time

- Participation in Data Teams and Content Groups

V.3 Describe how the LEA plans to address any identified inequities in teacher effectiveness within its schools and programs.

With the implementation of Department Heads, they can monitor groups which are equally assigned to qualified teachers.

Yes, we are consistently monitoring student progress and teacher effectiveness. Through:

- TKES
- Professional learning logs
- Experience
- Class Size Certification
- Observations
- Conferencing with staff

Teachers are provided numerous professional development opportunities and mentoring. Teachers that are documented as ineffective may not be asked to return the following year. Documentation is clearly noted in TKES evaluation in addition to other mentoring meetings.

V.4 Describe the procedure to ensure that no student will receive an inexperienced, ineffective teacher two years in a row.

Inexperienced and struggling teachers at the State Schools District are provided the support and training (described above) to acquire the skills needed to be effective in the classroom. Classroom Analysis of Teacher Keys Effectiveness System (TKES the Georgia Department of Education teacher evaluation program) was used on a schoolwide basis for Georgia School for the Deaf (GSD) and Atlanta Area School for the Deaf (AASD). The TKES evaluation system will now be fully implemented also at Georgia Academy for the Blind for the 2014-2015 school year. The data and results gained from the numerous strands of this evaluation assist in identifying inexperienced and/or ineffective teachers and assists leadership staff in their efforts to not place students with a teacher that is inexperienced and/or ineffective two years in a row.

VI.1 Describe how the LEA plans to address identified inequities in class sizes across schools in the system and within its schools.

State Schools District follows teacher to student ratios determined by the State of Georgia for deaf and hard of hearing students and/or students with visual impairments. Our schools are special education facilities with identified requirements that we must follow.

VII.1 Describe the process the system uses to assess teacher ability to differentiate instruction based on diverse needs of their student population.

Professional learning data base is maintained by the principal to track and document teacher participation in training to meet the diverse needs of our students. This database includes all training resources:

- Instructional Planning
- Instructional Strategies
- Differentiation
- Bilingual Instruction
- Thinking Maps
- Technology in the Classroom
- Writing Aviator
- Fairview Methods (ASL/English bridging and vocabulary)
- On-site professional learning courses and activities
- Off-campus trainings, workshops, and professional learning courses through other agencies
- GPS trainings offered through DOE and RESA
- Attendance at state and national conferences
- College/university coursework
- * ASLPI (American Sign Language Proficiency Interview) Evaluation

Teachers are assessed using TKES (the Georgia Department of Education teacher evaluation program). Data is collected throughout the year through class observations, individual meetings with teachers, and through the monitoring of

written lesson plans. This information is used in determining professional learning activities needed by identified staff in meeting the diverse needs of our students. This information also assists us in planning for needed professional learning to meet the diverse needs of students each school year.

Retention of Highly Qualified, Effective Teachers

VIII.1 Describe the teacher retention program that includes specific plans for schools and/or programs that have been identified with retention needs.

We have three schools in the State Schools District. We don't have a retention program need. Our need is Recruitment based. We find once we can find teachers to meet our specialized school needs, we provide a supportive, nurturing environment for both students and staff that has enabled us to keep staff for a longer period of time.

Pertinent information is gathered annually to:

- Provide support to teachers in the areas of instruction and becoming highly qualified
- Having a supportive and highly involved administrative staff
- Providing technology support to all teachers
- Availability of numerous and varied instructional materials to both support and enhance teaching
- Instructional Coaches in the areas of Math, Literacy, and Special Needs that work closely with instructional staff in planning lessons and modeling lessons
- Providing quality professional learning courses on campus that focus on the needs of students
- Making available to staff numerous mini-professional development activities that they can participate in weekly and throughout the year on a variety of topics, all aimed at improving student achievement and improving teacher quality
- Opportunities for interested staff to assume leadership responsibilities and experiences that help them prepare for true leadership roles within the school:
 - * Department Heads
 - * Instructional Support Staff

* Committee Chairs

• Teacher Mentor Program

* Providing instructional support to teachers new to the profession

* Providing a safe environment for teachers new to the profession to be able to openly discuss concerns/problems they are facing

• Providing a culture of coaching

VIII.2 Describe how Title II-A or other appropriate funds are used to support retention efforts.

Not applicable for 2016

Recruitment and Placement of Highly Qualified, Effective Teachers

IX.1 Describe how the system plans for recruitment and placement of highly qualified, effective teachers to improve or maintain equivalent teacher experience at all grade levels and all content areas.

Administration determines the number of teachers needed annually. The determined number of teachers is based on the following considerations:

- the anticipated number of students to be served
- cognitive levels of students
- class size
- content area class coverage needed.

The State Schools District is diligent in its efforts of recruitment and placement of highly qualified staff for all classes. However, this is a challenge considering that teachers are required to hold dual certification (content field/s and appropriate special education field/s) and be proficient in visual signed communication (American Sign Language or ASL) or visual impairments. The State Schools District has developed close professional relationships with Dr. Susan Easterbrooks of Georgia State University and with Dr. Nanci Scheetz of Valdosta State University. Partnerships have enabled the State Schools District to provide quality practicum experiences at various levels for students in Deaf Education programs as well as to provide opportunities to pursue Visual Impairment endorsement. By providing these students with

meaningful classroom observations and educational interactions with our students and staff we introduce future educators to our needs and hiring opportunities.

This has proved to be one of most successful avenues the schools has cultivated to improve equivalent teacher opportunity experience at all grade levels and content areas.

IX.2 Describe how Title II-A or other appropriate funds are used to support recruitment efforts.

Not applicable for 2016

Summary of Impact for the Fiscal year 2015 selected Equity Indicator(s)

X.1 Prepare a brief Summary of Impact that describes the actions taken to reach "target" and the LEA's evidence of success in reaching "target".

The actions taken to reach "target" include steps taken to reach Highly Qualified Teacher equity as well as support for new inexperienced teachers. State Schools District follows the

recruitment process described elsewhere in this report. Because of the small numbers of students at each level, we have very few areas in which we have options to maintain equivalent teacher experience at all grade levels and all content levels because there is only one teacher. Newer teachers are paired with more experienced teachers in similar grade bands or content areas when possible. Professional Learning efforts are coordinated with the school Professional Learning coordinator in conjunction with the principals and Title II coordinator to increase and impact equity. Teachers that are not highly qualified are put on a progress tracking remediation plan. Supplemental resource materials are purchased to help teachers with course work. GACE assessment registration fees are paid to help offset the cost to reach Highly Qualified status. Monthly meetings were scheduled with Professional Learning coordinator and teacher to track progress and provide mentoring support. In addition, teachers reaching Highly Qualified status are paid a incentive stipend when reaching the Highly Qualified status.

We have several professional development course opportunities that we offer in-house as well as off campus, for example: Visualizing and Verbalizing: The Visualizing and Verbalizing for Language Comprehension and Thinking® (V/V®) program, created by Nanci Bell, which helps struggling readers develop the sensory-cognitive function of concept imagery. Unlike most reading and comprehension programs, V/V instruction directly applies concept imagery to the comprehension and expression of both oral and written language, as well as the development of critical thinking skills. Students in the V/V program move through a series of steps to learn the process for creating an imaged gestalt, then integrate that imagery with language to strengthen their comprehension and critical thinking.

Write From the Beginning and Beyond: Write from the Beginning... and Beyond is a developmental, vertically aligned writing program for students in kindergarten through the eighth grade level. The program is organized by the following: laying the foundation, building the structure, developing the structure, and extending the proficiency. The training is designed to provide information to teachers regarding 1) the components of Write from the Beginning... and Beyond; 2) the characteristics and writing goals for students in K – 8th grade; 3) the essential criteria for all modes of writing as well as how to use mini lessons to address them; and 4) ideas for using Thinking Journals for writing across the curriculum. Pre-requisite – teacher must have completed initial Thinking Maps training

CCGPS: Common Core Georgia Performance Standards. CCGPS –is a hands-on approach to curriculum planning. Staff will develop units using the standards and concepts of a content area. Staff will be able to understand that curriculum organization affects student learning

and the quality of assessment influences the quality of instruction and learning. Staff will be able to develop units related to their classroom and be able to implement best practices into their everyday teaching.

LLPI (staff already assigned to this group): This course prepares teachers to work in bilingual instruction using ASL and English as the languages of instruction. The goal of the course is for in-service teachers to explore the rationale, theories, goals and practical applications of a comprehensive learner-centered bilingual curriculum. It includes in-depth

examination of strategies and application of bilingual education in the classroom with Deaf students. Bilingual development, as well as development in ASL and English respectively, will be examined as integral components of a bilingual education program. As much of the class lecture and discussion will take place in both ASL and English as the languages of instruction and communication, knowledge of ASL and English are essential.

X.2 Prepare a brief summary describing the LEA’s Evidence of Success. What data SUPPORTS THE RATING OF “target”? Or if the LEA did not reach “target,” what prevented the LEA from doing so?

Overall most of the ratings are "Adequate"; however we feel strongly that we could very well be on the verge of "Target" in several categories. State Schools is a unique district in which students travel from across the state to attend two residential programs (Macon and Cave Springs) as well as one day school (Clarkston). Serving a unique population of students who are deaf/hard of

hearing or visually impaired can be a challenge to Highly Qualified teacher equity in addition to stakeholder involvement. To meet the challenge, teachers and administration attended a wide variety of classes, seminars, webinars, and conferences. Topics and organizations included: autism, transition, CCRPI, SACS, IEPs, School Counselors State Conference, GCASE, GAEL, After School Program, GLISI, website management, Parent Engagement State Conference, VI Consortia, Technology Drive In, Functional Vision Evals, and SPED Forum. We believe our professional programs were successful. Teachers and paraprofessionals have had a multiplicity of opportunities to attend professional learning in areas of school need (from the SIP) as well as individual growth. Our goals are: to improve quality/vision of Professional Learning

plan; better documentation of PL; and require documentation that it is needed for Individual Growth Plan or School Improvement Plan. Improvement of American Sign Language teacher

evaluations scores has been documented to ensure teachers are communicating standard language skills across the school. Special emphasis is placed on deaf and hard-of-hearing learners who use two languages, ASL and English, as the languages of instruction. We annually review experience, credentials, and effectiveness of on teachers to ensure equity.

Equity Indicator Selected for Fiscal year 2016 Focus

Identify at least one equity indicator that will be a focus for movement to "target"

Identify at least one equity indicator that will be a focus for movement to "target"

Recruitment and placement of highly qualified, effective teachers

XI.1.B Provide a statement identifying the Actions/Strategies/Interventions or Programs for the selected equity i
Annual participation in state and national conferences provides administrative staff many opportunities to meet with students from numerous education programs throughout the United States and to share information about the State Schools District and opportunities for employment with them.

We also participate in both in and out-of-state educational job fairs as needed and when budgets can support these endeavors.

We post job announcements through the Department of Education website and placed an advertisement for teachers on various websites for deaf/hard of hearing and visual impairment associations that is viewed by not only administrators but by teachers, and students currently or recently graduated from education programs throughout the country.

We also post job announcements through Simplicity which enables us to reach out to numerous college/university programs across the country with programs in deaf education.

A webpage shares information about the schools and our local surrounding areas. Our links also provides important links to the Georgia PSC website, GACE website, and Ga. DOE website.

Identify at least one equity indicator that will be a focus for movement to "target"

Teacher preparation and ability to meet diverse needs of students

**XI.2.B Provide a statement identifying the Actions/Strategies/Interventions or Programs for the selected e
The State Schools District tracks and documents teacher participation in training to meet
the diverse needs of our students. This data includes:**

- On-site professional learning courses and activities
- Off-campus training, workshops, and professional learning courses through other agencies
- CCGPS training offered through DOE and RESA
- State and national conferences attended
- College/university coursework

Teachers have had training on meeting diverse student needs, job-embedded professional learning continues in this area as well. Professional Learning on bilingualism, differentiation, research-based instructional strategies, Thinking Maps, Writing Aviator and technology have all been provided and closely monitored for fidelity.

Students who attend a state School are evaluated through the IEP process, and individual student goals are addressed via this process. Equitable access to experienced and effective teachers is not easily addressed due to our small number of students and teachers at each grade level. Each teacher is unique to his/her grade level and/or subject area. Teachers are matched to classrooms assignments dependent upon their HiQ qualifications. All teachers who do not meet HiQ in their area are involved in the consultative model or a remediation plan in order to meet the HiQ requirement. These teachers are assigned a mentor who is HiQ in their area. They meet regularly with the mentor to discuss planning, practices, and procedures for their classrooms, as well as planning for being able to attain HiQ status . Even with these limitations, every effort will be

made to assign teachers and schedule students so that students will not receive an inexperienced or ineffective teacher 2 years in a row. Ineffective teachers will be identified by the end of the year evaluations based on classroom observations. In addition to meet the needs of our deaf and hard of hearing students. Students are offered and American Sign Language classes and teachers are all evaluated their ability to communicate American Sign Language on the ASLPI proficiency evaluation tool.ourselves on matching the best jobs with the best people. Assessing a teachers communication skill level is important part of improving academic achievement, to do this, we need to better understand their skill level and abilities to make sure that they are indeed matched at the level proficiency required for the job of communicating to students who are deaf and hard of hearing.