

Educationary

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EDUCATIONAL ACRONYMS

A

AACTE	American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
AASA	American Association of School Administrators
AASD	Atlanta Area School for the Deaf
ACA	American Counseling Association
ACE	American Council on Education
ACT	American College Testing
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
AEAH	(Georgia) Alliance of Education Agency Heads
AECT	Association for Educational Communications and Technology
AERA	American Educational Research Association
AFT	American Federation of Teachers
AMO	Annual Measurable Objective
AP	Advanced Placement
ARCHE	Atlanta Regional Council for Higher Education
ASCA	American School Counselor Association
ASCD	Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
ASL	American Sign Language
ASP	After School Program
AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress

B

BD	Behavior Disorder
BOE	Board of Education

C

CAP	Corrective Action Plan
CBA	Curriculum Based Assessment
CC	Childcare
CCR&R	(Georgia) Child Care Resource and Referral Agency
CCSSO	Council of Chief State School Officers
CDA	Child Development Associate
CEU	Continuing Education Unit
CEISMC	Center for Education Integrating Science, Mathematics and Computing
CIS	Communities in Schools
CNA	Comprehensive Needs Assessment
CPIR	Certified Personnel Information Report
CQT	(Georgia) Committee on Quality Teaching
CRCT	(Georgia) Criterion-Referenced Competency Test
CT	Career and Technology
CYCC	(Georgia) Children and Youth Coordinating Council

D

D/B	Deaf/Blind
DECAL	(Georgia) Department of Early Care and Learning (Bright From the Start)
DFCS	(Georgia) Department of Family and Children Services
DOE	(Georgia) Department of Education
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
DHR	(Georgia) Department of Human Resources

DJJ	(Georgia) Department of Juvenile Justice	GACCRRA	Georgia Child Care Resource and Referral Agency
DOT	(Georgia) Department of Transportation	GACTE	Georgia Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
E			
EBD	Emotional and Behavioral Disorder	GaDOE	Georgia Department of Education
ECC	(Georgia) Education Coordinating Council	GAE	Georgia Association of Educators
ECE	Early Childhood Education	GAEA	Georgia Art Education Association
ECS	Education Commission of the States	GAEL	Georgia Association of Educational Leaders
EIP	Early Intervention Program	GAESP	Georgia Association of Elementary School Principals
ELL	English Language Learners	GAIC	Georgia Afterschool Investment Council
EOCT	End-of-Course Test	GAICTE	Georgia Association of Independent Colleges of Teacher Education
ERIC	Education Resources Information Center	GAMEIS	Georgia Association of Managers of Educational Information Systems
ESEA	Elementary and Secondary Education Act	GAMSP	Georgia Association of Middle School Principals
ESL	English as a Second Language	GASBO	Georgia Association of School Business Officials
ESOL	English to Speakers of Other Languages	GASCD	Georgia Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
ETS	Educational Testing Service	GASP	Georgia Association of School Psychologists
F			
FAPE	Free and Appropriate Public Education	GASSP	Georgia Association of Secondary School Principals
FRL	Free and Reduced Lunch	GATAPP	Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program
FTE	Full-time Equivalent	GATE	Georgia Association of Teacher Educators
FY	Fiscal Year	GBPI	Georgia Budget and Policy Institute
G			
GAA	Georgia Alternate Assessment	G-CASE	Georgia Council of Administrators of Special Education
GACE	Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators	GCTM	Georgia Council of Teachers of Mathematics
GACIS	Georgia Association of Curriculum and Instructional Supervisors	GDITT	Georgia Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism
GACCE	Georgia Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives		

K

KIPP Knowledge is Power Program
K-12 Kindergarten - 12th Grade

L

LBOE Local Board of Education
LD Learning Disability
LEA Local Education Agency
LEP Limited English Proficient
LRE Least Restrictive Environment

M

MGWA (Georgia) Middle Grades Writing Assessment
MOD Modification
MoID Moderate Intellectual Disability

N

NAEP National Assessment of Educational Progress
NAESP National Association of Elementary School Principals
NAEYC National Association for the Education of Young Children
NASBE National Association of State Boards of Education
NASSP National Association of Secondary School Principals
NBC National Board Certification
NBCC National Board for Certified Counselors
NBCT National Board Certified Teachers
NBPTS National Board of Professional Teaching Standards
NCATE National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education
NCES National Center for Education Statistics

NCLB No Child Left Behind Act
NCTQ National Council on Teacher Quality
NEA National Education Association
NGA National Governor's Association
NGSP Next Generation Schools Project
NHSA National Head Start Association
NICHD National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
NIH National Institutes of Health
NRT Norm-Referenced Test
NSBA National School Boards Association
NSBP National School Breakfast Program
NSF National Science Foundation
NSLP National School Lunch Program
NSPRA National School Public Relations Association

O

O.C.G.A. Official Code of Georgia
OERI Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education
OME Office of Migrant Education
OPB Office of Planning and Budget
OSEP Office of Special Education Programs
OSS Out-Of-School Suspension

P

PAGE Professional Association of Georgia Educators
PDP Professional Development Plan
PDK Phi Delta Kappan
PEN Public Education Network
PLC Performance Learning Center

PRISM	Partnership for Reform in Science and Mathematics	SERVE	Southeastern Regional Vision for Education
PSAT	Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test	SIS	Student Information System
PSC	Professional Standards Commission	SREB	Southern Regional Education Board
PSO	Postsecondary Options Program	SRC	Southern Regional Council
PTA	Parent Teacher Association	SST	Student Support Team
PTO	Parent Teacher Organization	STAR	Student Teacher Achievement Recognition
PTSA	Parent-Teacher-Student Association	STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
		SWD	Students with Disabilities

Q

QBE	Quality Basic Education
QCC	Quality Core Curriculum

R

RBOC	RESA Board of Control
REP	Remedial Education Program
RESA	Regional Educational Service Agency

S

STW	School to Work
SACS	Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
SAPA	Student Assistance Professionals Association
SSAS	(Georgia's) Single Statewide Accountability System
SBD	Severe Behavior Disorder
SBOE	State Board of Education
SDU	Staff Development Unit
SEA	State Education Agency
SED	Severely Emotionally Disturbed
SEDL	Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
SEF	Southern Education Foundation

T

TAS	Targeted Assistance School
TCSG	Technical College System of Georgia
TCT	Teacher Certification Test
TESOL	Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
TFA	Teach for America
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TOTY	Teacher of the Year
TRS	Teachers Retirement System
TSS	Teacher Support Specialist

U

USCO	Unsafe School Choice Option
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V

VO-TECH	Vocational Technology
VOC ED	Vocational Education

EDUCATIONARY:

A DICTIONARY OF EDUCATIONAL TERMS

A

A+ Education Reform Act of 2000 (House Bill 1187): Education legislation drafted by Governor Roy Barnes that took effect in April 2000. The law lowered class sizes, developed an accountability framework with state criterion-referenced tests as the measurement system, created school councils, and implemented early intervention programs.

Ability Grouping: A strategy for organizing instruction by placing students of similar academic abilities together for instruction. Sometimes referred to as tracking.

ACCEL Program: Created in 2004, Georgia's Accel program replaced Georgia's Postsecondary Options Program. Funded by the Georgia Lottery and administered by the Georgia Student Finance Commission, the Accel Program allows high school juniors and seniors to pursue postsecondary study at approved public and private colleges and technical colleges while receiving dual high school and college credit for courses successfully completed.

Acceleration: In education, a strategy that enables a student to complete a course in less than the traditional time.

Accountability: Holding key individuals and groups responsible for student achievement through the systematic collection, analysis, use, and reporting of valid and reliable information. Accountability systems assume that educators, policymakers and others know how to act on the information to improve education.

Accountability Profile: In Georgia, a publicly disseminated report that provides a summary of a school's and local educational agency's (LEA's) performance as defined by the Single Statewide Accountability System (SSAS) and included in the State Report Card.

Accreditation: Official recognition that an individual or institution meets required standards. In education, the goal of accreditation is to ensure that education providers and personnel meet acceptable levels of quality. Accreditation of teachers is usually referred to as licensing or certification and is carried out by a state licensing board. Schools are typically accredited in two ways: by voluntary regional

accrediting associations (such as the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) and by state governments which are legally responsible for public education.

Achievement Gap: Persistent differences in achievement among different types of students as indicated by scores on standardized tests, teacher grades, and other data. The gaps most frequently referred to in education are those separating economically disadvantaged students and students of color from less disadvantaged students.

Achievement Test: Standardized test that measures a student's knowledge in specific academic areas such as reading, language, mathematics, social studies, and/or science.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP): A set of annual academic performance benchmarks that states, school districts, schools, and subpopulations of students must achieve. Adequate yearly progress is the minimum level of improvement that states, school districts, and schools must achieve each year according to federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Workbook: Document that is officially known as the Consolidated State Application Accountability Workbook. Each state must annually submit to the United States Department of Education (US ED) its workbook describing how AYP determinations will be calculated and how the state will comply with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Adequacy: An approach to school funding based on the provision of sufficient funds for schools to teach all students to state and district proficiency standards.

Advanced Placement (AP): An academic program administered by the College Board through which college-level courses are offered by trained high school teachers in the regular high school setting. Students enrolling in AP courses may take a nationally standardized exam and, based on their performance, earn college credit. The program currently includes 37 courses and exams across 22 subject areas.

After School Programs: Programs established by schools and community organizations to provide safe places and constructive activities for students whose parents cannot be at home after school.

Alternative Education: Educational programs historically serving diverse populations of students including those whose academic, social, political or religious values diverge from the mainstream as well as those who were unsuccessful within the regular public school system. Alternative educational settings typically serve two groups of students: those who would be considered “at risk” or who simply have not flourished in a traditional setting, and those with disciplinary problems or disruptive behavior.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Wide-ranging federal law passed in 1990 that prohibits the discrimination against an individual on the basis of disability.

Annual Measurable Objective (AMO): A measurement used to determine compliance with the federal No Child Left Behind Act. States must develop annual measurable objectives (AMOs) that will determine if a school, district, or the state as a whole is making adequate yearly progress toward the goal of having all students proficient in English/language arts and mathematics by 2013-14.

Assessment: An exercise that seeks to measure an individual’s skills or knowledge in a subject area. Different assessment instruments include achievement tests, minimum competency tests, developmental screening tests, aptitude tests, observation instruments, performance tasks, and authentic assessments.

At-Risk Student: A term applied to students who have not been adequately served by social service or educational systems and who are at risk of educational failure due to lack of services, negative life events, physical or mental challenges, or other factors.

Authentic Assessment: A type of evaluation that requires an individual to perform a task rather than select an answer from a ready-made list. Also referred to as performance assessment.

B

Balanced Calendar: A modified school calendar that reduces the traditional long summer break by including frequent, longer breaks throughout the school year. The balanced calendar features 180 days of instruction but balances the frequency of in-session days with days on break.

Basic Skills: The traditional building blocks of a curriculum and of a child’s future success. Most commonly associated with explicit instruction in early elementary language arts and mathematics, basic skills include the ability to read, write, and compute.

Below Grade Level: Classification of the performance of a student who scores below a designated achievement level on a standardized test for his/her grade level. Below grade level students are eligible for early intervention programs or remediation.

Benchmark: A detailed description of a specific level of performance expected of students at particular ages, grades, or developmental levels. As standards against which performance can be measured, benchmarks are often used as checkpoints to monitor student progress in meeting performance goals within and across grade levels.

Bilingual Education: The use of two or more languages for instruction. In the United States, students in most bilingual classes or programs are those who have not acquired full use of the English language, so they are taught academic content in their native language while continuing to learn English.

Bill: In Georgia, proposed legislation considered by the General Assembly. A bill may be general or local and may propose changes or amendments to the current law or create an entirely new law. A bill introduced in year one of the biennial session, the first session after the November elections, has two years to pass both bodies and become law. Bills may be introduced in either year but only when the General Assembly is in session. Bills are numbered consecutively as they are entered over the two-year period.

Block Scheduling: A reconfiguration of the school day that increases the length of the traditional class period and decreases the number of class periods a day. For example, a 4x4 block schedule allows students to take four 90-minute classes a day and complete them in a semester rather than a full year.

Blue Ribbon Schools Program: A national program established by the U.S. Department of Education in 1982 to honor outstanding public and private schools across the country and share information on the best practices among schools.

Business/Education Partnerships: Coalitions formed by private businesses and schools or districts for the purpose of strengthening school-based programs, supporting achievement, and building cooperative relationships.

C

Carnegie Unit: A measurement used in most high schools to determine how much coursework a student has completed. Developed in the early 1900s to set norms for curriculum and course time in public schools across the country, these are named after the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching which first suggested the practice. In Georgia, students need at least 23 Carnegie units to graduate.

Certificate of Performance: A certificate granted to Georgia students who do not pass the Georgia High School Graduation Test but meet all other graduation requirements. Students who leave school with a certificate of performance may take the graduation test again as many times as necessary to qualify for a high school diploma.

Charter District: A local school system in which all public schools are charter schools. Under the provisions of Georgia Senate Bill 39, the Georgia Charter Systems Act, an entire school system can convert to charter status. As a charter district, an entire school system is released from some state education regulations in exchange for greater accountability for results. Also see charter school.

Charter School: A school run independently of the traditional public school system but receiving public funding, and often run by groups such as teachers, parents, or foundations. Charter schools are exempt from many state and local rules, policies and regulations, but they must be approved by local and state boards of education.

Class Rank: The relative position of a student in his or her graduating class. Class rank is determined by Grade Point Average (GPA) as computed by the local school or school system.

College Board: A nonprofit organization that assists students in moving from secondary education into higher education. The College Board is composed of colleges, universities, and other agencies and associations that provide services to secondary and post-secondary students. Programs administered by the College Board include the SAT and the Advanced Placement program.

Communities in Schools (CIS): A community-based organization that helps children succeed in school and prepare for life. Through partnerships with schools, public officials, businesses, parents and the community, the organization provides numerous services to prevent children from dropping out of school.

Community College: A two-year institution also referred to as a junior college. Community colleges generally offer two types of curricula: transfer, or the first two years of work for a bachelor's degree, and terminal, vocational training for employment.

Comprehensive School Health Program: An organized set of policies, procedures, and activities designed to protect and promote the health and well-being of students and staff. It has traditionally included health services, health education, and an emphasis on a healthy school environment.

Content Standards: Broad statements of what students should know and be able to do in a specific content area.

Coordinated School Health Programs: A model developed by the Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion to connect health and education. The program consists of eight interactive components: health education, physical education, health services, nutrition services, health promotion for staff, counseling and psychological services, healthy school environment, and parent/community involvement.

Comprehensive School Reform (CSR): One of many educational improvement efforts that stemmed from the 1983 report *A Nation at Risk*. CSR focuses on improvements schoolwide, encompassing everything from curriculum to school management. CSR is also referred to as "schoolwide" or "whole school" reform.

Cooperative Learning: An instructional method in which students of all performance levels work together in small groups toward a group goal.

Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT): Tests administered to Georgia students to evaluate their acquisition of the skills and knowledge prescribed by the state curriculum. In grades one through eight, CRCTs are administered in reading, math, and language arts. In grades three through eight, CRCTs are also administered in science and social studies. Reading and math test scores are used in considering the promotion of students in grades three, five and eight. Georgia also uses the CRCTs as the AYP assessment tool for the elementary and middle school grades.

Criterion-Referenced Test (CRT): A standardized test that is aligned with a state's academic standards and thus intended primarily to measure students' performance with respect to those standards rather than to the performance of their peers nationally.

Critical Thinking: Mental process of acquiring information and evaluating it to reach a logical conclusion.

Curriculum: The content of an instructional program.

Curriculum Based Assessment (CBA): An assessment that relates directly to a specific curriculum taught within a classroom and evaluates a student's mastery of that curriculum. The Georgia High School Graduation Test is an example of a CBA.

D

Data-Driven Decision Making: A process of making decisions about curriculum, instruction, and school improvement based on the analysis of classroom data, standardized test data, and/or other school data.

Decentralization: The transfer of school policy-making and decision-making authority from the federal to state level, from the state level to districts or local schools, or from local districts to individual schools.

Developmentally Appropriate Education: Curriculum and instruction that is in accord with the physical and mental development of the student. Developmentally appropriate education is especially important for young children because their physical and mental abilities change quickly and vary greatly from child to child.

Diagnostic Test: A test designed to determine the specific learning needs of an individual student. Diagnostic tests are often used to identify areas in which additional intervention or instruction is needed.

Differentiated Instruction: The use of several different learning experiences within one lesson to meet students' varied needs or learning styles. Also referred to as individualized or customized instruction.

Digital Divide: A term first coined by the 1999 U.S. Department of Commerce report *Falling Through the Net* to describe gaps in access to technology among various populations. More recently, rather than referring solely to the presence or absence of technology, the digital divide refers to the disparity in how technology is used in schools.

Disaggregated Data: Data that is analyzed and reported by subgroups of students. For instance, rather than reporting the overall achievement of all students, disaggregated data might present student achievement scores by gender, race, age, and language proficiency.

Distance Learning: Delivery of instruction via multimedia computers, satellite, or teleconferencing when the teacher is in one place and the students in another.

Dropouts: Students who leave high school before receiving a diploma.

Dropout Rate: A calculation determined by student records of those who leave school in any given year for reasons including marriage, expulsion, financial hardship, employment, incarceration, low achievement or school failure, and military service.

Drug-Free School Zones: A defined geographic area around a school (typically 1,000 feet) within which there are often increased enforcement efforts and penalties for drug-law violations. Drug-free school zones were originally created by the U.S. Congress and state legislatures in the 1980s.

E

E-Learning: Use of technology, especially computers, to enhance education and learning. This technique is commonly associated with distance-learning.

E-Rate: Short for education rate, the E-rate is a program administered by the Federal Communications Commission that provides discounted telecommunications services and related equipment for the nation's K-12 schools and public libraries. The FCC began awarding E-rate aid in 1998. The level of discount is based on the percentage of students eligible for participation the National School Lunch Program or other federally approved alternative mechanisms.

Early Intervention Program (EIP): Program administered by the Georgia Department of Education that is designed to serve students in kindergarten through fifth grade who are at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level. The purpose of the Early Intervention Program is to provide additional instructional resources to help these students obtain the necessary academic skills to reach grade level performance in the shortest possible time.

Education for Handicapped Children Act (EHA): Federal law enacted in 1975 that required all public schools accepting federal funds to provide equal access to a free and appropriate education for children with physical and mental disabilities. The law was revised in 1990 to become the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Eighth Grade Writing Assessment (EGWA): One of four state-mandated writing tests administered to Georgia public school students. The Georgia Grade 8 Writing Assessment is a test of expository and persuasive writing.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA): The foremost federal education law that describes federal requirements for the nation's public schools, most of which receive some form of aid under the statute. First enacted in 1965 under President Lyndon B. Johnson, ESEA is revised every five to seven years. The original Act authorized Title I, Safe and Drug Free Schools, and Title VII programs. The latest revision, passed by Congress in 2001 and signed into law by the Bush administration in 2002, is known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD): A broad category commonly used in educational settings to group a range of mental or emotional difficulties of children and adolescents that can impact the ability to learn. EBDs may include anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorders, autism, and other conditions.

End-of-Course Tests (EOCT): Assessments in core subjects that are typically administered to students upon the completion of a course. In Georgia, the A+ Educational Reform Act of 2000 mandated that the state adopt end-of-course assessments in grades 9 through 12 for core subjects. The End-of-Course Assessment program is comprised of eight content area assessments administered to any student enrolled in and/or receiving credit for an EOCT course. Performance on the EOCT determines 15 percent of a student's final course grade.

English Immersion: Instruction for bilingual students that is entirely in English. Teachers deliver lessons in simplified English so students can learn English and other academic subjects.

English Language Learner (ELL): A student whose first language is other than English and whose command of English is limited. Usually such students receive bilingual education or English-as-a-second-language services. Also referred to as limited-English-proficient student.

English as a Second Language (ESL): Classes or support programs for students whose native language is not English.

English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL): In Georgia, a state funded instructional program for eligible English Language Learners (ELLs) in grades K-12. The ESOL program provides eligible Local Education Agencies subgrants to offer supplemental services for ELLs.

Enhanced Georgia High School Graduation Test (EGHSGT): A version of the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHS GT) that is enhanced for English/language arts and mathematics content areas. Created to comply with the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and used in making AYP determinations at school, district, and state levels.

Enrichment: Programs intended to supplement the regular academic curriculum to keep students interested in learning.

Equalization Grants: State funding to provide additional assistance to the poorer school districts. Equalization funding aims to reduce the disparities in money raised through local tax dollars between the wealthiest and poorest school districts in the state.

Equity: Fairness or justice, usually referring to the equitable distribution of something valued. In the education field, this term refers to the fair distribution of funding, technology, facilities, services, and equal education opportunities for all students including students with disabilities, students with limited proficiency in English, and students in high-poverty schools.

Evaluation: The process of making judgments about the level of student or teacher understanding or performance.

F

Family Connection: Family Connection is the largest statewide network of community collaboratives in the nation focused on improving results for children and families. In Georgia, Family Connection was created in 1991 as a public/private partnership. Each collaborative serves as the local decision-making body for its community and develops and implements a plan with strategies to improve results in one or more of five areas: healthy children, children ready for school, children succeeding in school, strong families, and self-sufficient families.

Formative Assessment: An evaluation tool used to guide and monitor the progress of student learning during instruction. Formative assessments diagnose skill and knowledge gaps, measure progress, and evaluate instruction.

Four by Four (4x4) Schedule: A type of block, or alternative, scheduling used in some secondary schools in place of the traditional 50-minute class periods. Students take four 90-minute classes a day, with course changes every 45 days (four times a school year).

Free/Reduced Price Lunch: Part of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. Established in 1946, NSLP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals. Families with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals for which students can be charged no more than 40 cents. For the 2007-2008 school year, 130 percent of the poverty level is \$26,845 for a family of four; 185 percent is \$38,203.

Full-Time Equivalent (FTE): A way to measure a student's enrollment at an educational institution. In general, one student is equal to one FTE. FTE is used as the primary method of allocating state funds to local school systems.

G

Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA): An assessment administered to exceptional students in compliance with the mandates of NCLB and IDEA, federal laws requiring that all students, including those with significant cognitive disabilities, are assessed for their progress toward meeting academic standards. Recently redesigned, the new GAA is a portfolio of student work that allows participants to showcase the achievement and progress they have made in knowledge and skills aligned to the state's curriculum. Each teacher determines the alternate achievement standard (i.e., expectation) for each student based on the learning characteristics and needs of the student.

Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators™ (GACE™) program: The educator assessment program for Georgia, which is administered by National Evaluation Systems, Inc. Newly aligned with state and national standards for educator preparation, the GACE became a requirement for Georgia educator certification beginning September 1, 2006.

Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE): The state agency charged with the fiscal and administrative management of certain aspects of K-12 public education, including the implementation of federal and state mandates. Such management is subject to supervision and oversight by the State Board of Education.

Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT): The capstone assessment administered to all high school students in Georgia. All students seeking a Georgia high school diploma must pass the GHSGT in four content areas: mathematics, language arts, science and social studies. Students take the tests for the first time in the 11th grade, and those who do not pass on the first attempt of the tests are given multiple opportunities to retake before the spring of the 12th grade.

Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT): One of the four state-mandated writing assessments administered to Georgia's public school students. Students must pass the GHSWT in order to earn a regular education diploma. Students are asked to produce a response to one on-demand persuasive writing prompt. The test is administered three times a year, allowing students multiple opportunities to pass the test before the end of the 12th grade.

Georgia Kindergarten Assessment Program-Revised (GKAP-R): A test administered to kindergarten students in Georgia to determine whether they are ready for first grade. Students are evaluated in the areas of literacy, mathematics, and social/emotional development in one-on-one, small group, and large group instructional settings throughout the year.

Georgia Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (GKIDS): A new kindergarten assessment for Georgia public school students that is being field tested during the 2007-08 school year. The goal of the assessment program is to provide ongoing diagnostic information about kindergarten students' developing skills in language arts, math, science, social studies, social/emotional development, and approaches to learning. GKIDS will serve both a formative and summative role in assessing kindergarten students. GKIDS will be fully operational in the 2008-09 school year.

Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education (GPEE): Founded in 1990 by the Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the Georgia Economic Developers Association, the Partnership consists of business, education, community, and government leaders who share a vision of improved education. Working to be Georgia's foremost change agent in education, the non-profit, non-partisan organization takes lead roles in efforts to shape policy and reform education. The mission of the Partnership is to inform and influence Georgia leaders through research and non-partisan advocacy to impact education policies and practices for the improvement of student achievement.

Georgia Performance Standards (GPS): The state's instructional curriculum which replaced the Quality Core Curriculum in 2004. A phased-in implementation began in 2004 and will be completed by 2012. Performance standards go into much greater depth than the content standards used in the previous curriculum. The performance standard incorporates the content standard which simply tells the teacher what a student is expected to know, and expands upon it by providing three additional items: suggested tasks, sample student work, and teacher commentary on that work.

Georgia Schools of Excellence Program: Statewide program that works in conjunction with the Blue Ribbon Schools Program. The program recognizes outstanding Georgia public and private schools and nominates them for the national program.

Georgia Special Needs Scholarship (GSNS): A scholarship program for special education students created by Senate Bill 10 (SB10) during the 2007 Georgia General Assembly. The Georgia Special Needs Scholarship provides eligible special education students with the opportunity to attend another public or an approved private school through the issuance of a state-funded voucher.

Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program (GTAPP): A classroom-based teacher preparation option for individuals who have the basic qualifications to teach early childhood, middle-grades, or secondary education but have not completed a teacher preparation program. The program is not intended to replace regular college teacher education programs. It is an alternative option for individuals who hold a bachelor's degree or higher from an accredited institute, but did not complete teacher education preparation requirements as part of their degree programs.

General Educational Development (GED) exam: A high school equivalency test first developed in 1942. Passage of the exam allows adults to earn a GED diploma (sometimes called an equivalency certificate) that certifies they have skills and knowledge equivalent to those of a high school graduate. The program is administered by the Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials of the American Council on Education.

Gifted Student: A student who demonstrates a high degree of intellectual and/or creative ability, exhibits an exceptionally high degree of motivation, and/or excels in specific academic fields and needs special instruction and/or special ancillary services to achieve at levels commensurate with his or her abilities.

Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA or OSA): Formerly known as the Office of Education Accountability (OEA), GOSA was established to improve student achievement and school completion in Georgia. The OSA produces annual accountability report cards for K-12 public schools and postsecondary education institutions. In addition, OSA provides objective analysis and communication of statewide data and policy support to the Governor.

Grade Inflation: An increase in students' grades without an accompanying increase in their academic achievement.

H

Head Start: A federally-sponsored comprehensive child development program serving children from birth to age 5, pregnant women, and families. Established in 1965, Head Start and Early Head Start are intended to foster the healthy development of low-income children to help them succeed in school. Head Start grantee and delegate agencies offer a range of individualized services in the areas of education and early childhood development, dental and mental health, nutrition, and parent involvement.

Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally (HOPE): Georgia's unique scholarship program that rewards students with financial assistance in degree, diploma, and certificate programs at eligible Georgia public and private colleges and universities and public technical colleges. Established in 1993 and funded through the Georgia Lottery.

Heterogeneous Grouping: Intentionally mixing students of varying talents and needs in the same classroom (the opposite of homogeneous grouping).

High Stakes Test: An assessment used to determine which individual students get rewards, honors, or sanctions. High-stakes tests may include college entrance examinations and exams that students must pass to be promoted to the next grade. Tests affecting the status of schools, such as those on which a given percentage of students must receive a passing grade, are also considered high stakes. Examples of high-stakes tests for Georgia students include the 3rd, 5th, and 8th grade CRCT and the GHSGT.

Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS): Set of cognitive skills beyond the basic acquisition and memorization of facts. This broad term includes the following: critical thinking, creative thinking, problem solving, decision making, and reasoning.

Highly Qualified Teacher: According to the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, a teacher who has obtained full state teacher certification or has passed the state teacher licensing examination and holds a license to teach in the state; holds a minimum of a bachelor's degree; and has demonstrated subject area competence in each of the academic subjects in which he or she teaches. NCLB law required all teachers working in a public school to be highly qualified by the 2005-06 school year.

Home Schooling: The practice of parents teaching their children at home rather than sending them to public school. Methods of home schooling vary widely, ranging from following an established online curriculum to unstructured or student-driven learning. In Georgia, home school programs are governed by specific state laws and regulations.

Homogeneous Grouping: A way to organize students with similar ability levels in the same class (the opposite of heterogeneous grouping).

HOUSSE (High, Objective, Uniform State Standard of Evaluation): An alternative method to assessing teacher subject matter competency. HOUSSE allows current teachers to demonstrate subject matter competency and Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) requirements through a combination of proven teaching experience, professional development, and knowledge in the subject acquired over time through working in the field.

Illiteracy: The condition of being unable to read. Historically, individuals were considered illiterate if they could not sign their names. More recently, the definition has been expanded so that literacy tests now measure an individual's ability to perform everyday tasks such as reading a newspaper or understanding a bus schedule.

Inclusion: The practice of educating all children in the same classroom including children with physical, mental, and developmental disabilities. Inclusion classes often employ a paraprofessional assistant in addition to the classroom teacher. Also known as mainstreaming.

Independent School: A private school that is not part of a school system and is funded by tuition and private grants. It must hold a nonprofit status and be accredited by a state or regional education association.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP): A plan developed by a special education student's parents and teachers that outlines the student's program of study and the particular education services the child receives.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): A landmark federal law renamed in 1997, but originally passed as the Education for Handicapped Children Act (EHA) of 1975. The law requires public schools receiving federal funds to provide a free and appropriate public education to all school-aged children ages three through 21.

Intelligence Quotient (IQ) Test: An assessment that measures an individual's current educational aptitude or IQ. Intelligence tests involve several different types of activities measuring language-based reasoning, visual-spatial reasoning, problem solving, and logic. IQ test results typically use percentile ranking to compare one student's performance to a large group of students of the same age.

International Baccalaureate (IB): A program of rigorous coursework and examinations based on an internationally developed curriculum and administered by the International Baccalaureate Organization. Similar to Advanced Placement courses, completed IB coursework often can be used to earn college credits.

Intersessions: The breaks between sessions in year-round (alternative calendar) schools. Intersessions can provide additional time for remediation and enrichment and allow students who fall behind to receive additional instruction.

Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS): An assessment used to fulfill a Georgia law mandating that a nationally norm-referenced test be administered annually to students in grades 3, 5, and 8. The ITBS allows for a national comparison as students across the country use this assessment.

L

Learning Disability (LD): A condition that interferes with a student's ability to learn. Often found in children of normal intelligence, learning disabilities may lead to a student's difficulty in listening, speaking, writing, spelling, or performing mathematical calculations.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): The educational placement for students with disabilities that is as close to the regular classroom as feasible. Required by the federal IDEA law, LRE means that students with disabilities should be educated with children who are nondisabled. It mandates that special classes, separate schooling or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular education environment should occur only if the nature or severity of the disabilities is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Lexile: A standard score that matches a student's reading ability with difficulty of text material. A Lexile can be interpreted as the level of book that a student can read with 75% comprehension. Also referred to as the Lexile Score or Lexile Measure.

Limited English Proficient (LEP) Student: A student whose first language is other than English and who has not yet mastered English. Also referred to as English language learner.

Local Education Agency (LEA): A local school system pursuant to local board of education control and management.

M

Magnet School: A school with strong emphasis in a particular subject area (i.e. music, science, drama, math). Students may be selected for admission through an application process rather than being assigned based on residence.

Mainstreaming: The practice of placing students with disabilities into regular classrooms. Also referred to as inclusion.

Master Teacher Certification Program: A program enacted by the 2005 Georgia General Assembly and administered by the Professional Standards Commission (PSC). The program's purpose is to provide statewide recognition to Georgia public school Clear Renewable certified teachers with three years' experience who consistently demonstrate excellence in the classroom that is linked to gains in student achievement.

Media Center: A school library and technology resource center.

Medium-Stakes Test: An assessment for which a reward or consequence is determined by the outcome. These tests do not carry the gravity of high-stakes tests. In Georgia, End-of-Course-Tests are considered medium-stakes tests.

Merit Pay: Any of a number of plans to pay teachers on the basis of their demonstrated competence in teaching rather than on their number of years in the profession. Also referred to as performance pay.

Migrant Education Program: A national program that provides supplemental educational services to eligible migrant children in the United States. The Migrant Education Program is designed to support high-quality and comprehensive educational programs for migratory children to help reduce the educational disruptions and other problems that result from repeated moves.

Multicultural Education: An educational philosophy and curriculum that incorporates content knowledge and exposure to material outside that of the Western European tradition. Some multicultural education models highlight subjects from diverse cultural, ethnic, racial, and gender perspectives; others represent an immersion in one culture, ethnicity, or race.

N

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): A national testing program administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education and referred to as the "Nation's Report Card." Since 1969, NAEP tests have been administered periodically in reading, math, science, writing, history, and geography. The primary NAEP assessment allows for regional and state-by-state comparisons of the reading and mathematics attainment of 4th and 8th grade students.

National Board Certification (NBC): Rigorous program for classroom teachers administered by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards that includes performance-based assessments and peer review. Some state and local school systems reward National Board Certified teachers with additional pay. Teachers voluntarily apply for national certification which complements but does not replace state licensing.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS): Nonprofit organization created in 1987 to advance education reform and establish high standards for teachers. NBPTS administers the National Board Certification program to assess and certify teachers in accordance with these standards.

Next Generation School Project (NGSP): An initiative of the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education (GPPE). NGSP is a grassroots effort that encourages local communities to organize themselves to dramatically improve their local schools. Participating schools receive grants to provide the necessary resources for innovations.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act: Federal law passed in 2001 that is the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The far-reaching legislation includes a number of measures designed to foster gains in student achievement and to hold states and schools more accountable for student progress. NCLB includes federal mandates for annual student testing, academic progress, and teacher quality.

Norm-Referenced Test (NRT): A standardized test designed primarily to compare the performance of students with that of their peers nationally. Such tests do not generally measure how students perform in relation to a state's own academic standards.

O

Out-of-Field Teaching: Practice in which teachers are assigned to teach subjects outside of their training or certification area.

P

Parent Teacher Association (PTA): At the national level, a nonprofit organization of parents, teachers, students, and others that encourages parental and public involvement in the schools, advocates for children, and assists parents in developing parenting skills. Schools often organize their own PTAs at the local level.

Parochial School: A school that is associated with a church or other religious institution and not supported with public funds.

Per-Pupil Expenditures: Money spent on each student in a given school district. Because public schools are financed in part by local property taxes, there is a disparity in per-pupil expenditures across the state.

Performance-Based Assessment: An assessment that requires students to apply knowledge and skills rather than recall and results in tangible products or observable performances. Examples include writing an essay or conducting a science experiment. Also referred to as authentic assessment or performance task.

Performance Level: A range of scores that defines a specific level of performance as articulated in the Performance Level Descriptors. When assessed on a state-mandated assessment, each student receives a scale score and a performance level designation (e.g., does not meet standard, meets standard, or exceeds standard).

Performance Level Descriptor: Verbal statement describing each performance level in terms of what a student has learned and can do. In Georgia, these statements are available for each state-mandated assessment in each content area and grade level where applicable.

Performance Pay: Any of a number of plans to pay teachers on the basis of their demonstrated competence in teaching, rather than on their number of years in the profession. Also referred to as merit pay.

Performance Standards: Standards that provide clear expectations for assessment, instruction and student work. Performance standards incorporate content standards, but expand upon them by providing suggested sample tasks, sample student work, and teacher commentary.

Postsecondary Options Program (PSO): See ACCEL Program.

Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT): The Preliminary SAT is a standardized test that provides firsthand practice for the SAT Reasoning Test. Student taking the PSAT are also given the chance to enter National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) scholarship programs. Since 1997, state funds have paid for PSAT administration to all tenth grade students in Georgia's public schools.

Praxis Testing Series: Academic and subject-area skills assessments that are used by some states for their teacher licensing and certification process. The Praxis testing program was required in Georgia for teacher candidates until September 2006 when it was replaced by the Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators™ (GACE™) program. See GACE Program.

Privatization: Transfer of the management of public schools to private or for-profit education organizations. Privatization emphasizes typical business-oriented concepts such as customer satisfaction and managerial autonomy in running schools.

Professional Development: Learning experiences and continued education that enable teachers and school personnel to enhance and refine knowledge and skills. Professional development activities may range from formal courses and seminars to teacher mentoring and collaboration.

Professional Standards Commission (PSC): The agency responsible for certifying teachers, school personnel, and administrators in Georgia.

Q

Quality Basic Education (QBE) Act: Educational reform legislation enacted in Georgia in 1985 under the tenure of Governor Joe Frank Harris. QBE established new state mandates for such things as school funding, educational programs, a state curriculum, and teacher certification and salary.

Quality Core Curriculum (QCC): Georgia's previously mandated state curriculum, which was established by the 1985 Quality Basic Education Act. The law required that the state maintain a Quality Core Curriculum. In 2002, an audit concluded that the QCC lacked depth, could not be covered in a reasonable amount of time, and did not meet national standards. QCC was replaced in 2004 by the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS).

R

Regional Education Service Agency (RESA): State agency established to improve the effectiveness of educational programs and services to districts and schools. Under the authorization of the Department of Education, Georgia's 16 RESAs provide leadership development, strategic planning, school improvement planning, and other services to local schools.

Remedial Education Program (REP): An instructional program in Georgia designed for students in grades 9-12 who have identified deficiencies in critical content areas. This program provides individualized basic skills instruction in the areas of reading, mathematics, and writing. All REP teachers must meet certification requirements as defined by the Professional Standards Commission and be fully qualified to teach reading, writing, or mathematics.

Resolution: In the Georgia General Assembly, a legislative proposal used to express the opinion or will of one or both houses. Resolutions are similar to bills and may or may not have the force of law, depending on the subject matter and intent of the General Assembly. A resolution does not require a governor's signature unless it is a joint resolution. Resolutions are also used to propose constitutional amendments which become law when passed in a statewide referendum.

Restructuring: The implementation of new organizational patterns or styles of leadership and management to bring about renewed, more effective schools. Under NCLB provisions, schools that fail to make Adequate Yearly Progress for two, three, or four years in a row are required to restructure and develop improvement plans, offer school choice, and provide supplemental educational services.

Retention: End-of-year policy that prevents the promotion of students with failing grades to the next grade level.

Rubric: A method used to evaluate an assessment. Rubrics designate specific descriptions of performance of a given task at several different levels of quality. Often used to evaluate student performance on specific tasks.

S

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT): Standardized test taken by college-bound students to gain admission to college. Administered by the College Board, the SAT tests students' verbal and mathematical reasoning ability.

Scholastic Aptitude Test II (SAT II): Subject tests administered by the College Board to measure knowledge in high school subject areas such as biology, calculus and American history. The SAT IIs are required for admission to some colleges and universities.

School Board: Legislative body of citizens who are elected locally by their fellow citizens to administer and oversee the local public school system.

School Choice: Any proposal that allows children to attend schools outside their local district boundaries. Such schools may be other public institutions, including charter schools, private schools, or parochial schools.

School Council: A local school advisory body comprised of the school principal, two teachers, two parents or guardians, and two members of the business community. School councils provide advice and recommendations to the principal and the local board of education regarding a variety of issues including student achievement goals, curriculum and instruction, school and community communications, and local school board policies. In Georgia, the 2000 A+ Education Reform Act required every school to establish a school council.

School Improvement Plan: A document developed by a school and approved by the local education agency to serve as a blueprint for guiding the school's continuous improvement and progress toward identified student achievement objectives and targets.

School Readiness: The cognitive, social, and emotional state of a child that ensures he/she enters kindergarten prepared to learn.

School Resource Officer (SRO): A law enforcement officer placed in a school who serves as a resource for students, parents, teachers, and administrators regarding legal issues. The SRO investigates crimes that occur on school property and serves as a link to other agencies that provide preventive and counseling services.

School-to-Work: Programs ranging from on-the-job training to classes taught by local community colleges designed to prepare non-college-bound students to enter the job market.

School Within a School: A special program, charter school, or magnet school that is housed within a regular school. Schools within schools allow districts to experiment with innovative programs and teaching methods using existing facilities. Also referred to as small learning communities (SLC).

Seamlessness: The philosophy of developing one integrated education system from kindergarten through postsecondary. The concept depends on communication and cooperation between local school districts, higher education institutions, and the workforce.

Section 504: A section of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that is designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal funds from the U.S. Department of Education.

Single Statewide Accountability System (SSAS): Georgia's statewide accountability system defined by OSA and adopted by the State Board of Education. The SSAS merges both federal and state education laws that relate to K-12 school accountability for student academic performance.

Site-Based Decision Making: A system of school governance by which most decisions, including staffing and spending decisions, are made at the level of the individual school rather than at district or other agency level. This method shifts authority from centralized bureaucracies to local individual establishments. Also referred to as school-based management.

Smart Start Georgia: A public/private partnership that works to improve the quality of early care and education for all children ages birth through five. Established in 1999 as the Georgia Early Learning Initiative (GELI), the program works to develop and implement a long-term plan to increase school readiness in Georgia with the aim of having every child in Georgia ready to succeed in school by the time they enter kindergarten.

Social Promotion: The practice of promoting students to the next grade whether or not they have accomplished the academic goals of their current grade. Georgia law mandated the discontinuation of social promotion in 3rd, 5th, and 8th grades beginning in the 2003-04 school year.

Special Education: Educational programs designed to serve children with mental and physical disabilities. These programs are tailored to the needs of each student through individualized education plans which outline the services needed for students to reach their educational goals. Though special education programs have traditionally been administered in separate classrooms, the services are increasingly offered in regular classrooms.

Special Needs Student: A student who, because of physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional disabilities, requires special instructional assistance to be successful.

Staff Development: See professional development.

Standards: Specific criteria for what students are expected to learn and be able to do. Curriculum standards drive daily classroom instruction for teachers and students. In Georgia, the state standards are referred to as Georgia Performance Standards.

Standards-Based Instruction: Instruction that is directed toward student mastery of defined standards.

Standardized Test: An assessment that is administered and scored under uniform (standardized) conditions. Such tests are typically taken by many students and results are evaluated against standard levels of performance.

State Board of Education (SBOE): The constitutional authority which defines education policy for the public K-12 education agencies in Georgia.

State Educational Agency (SEA): The Georgia State Board of Education. The State Superintendent of Schools implements the administrative functions on behalf of the Georgia State Board of Education.

State Report Card: A report, often issued annually, detailing the performance of a school on any number of indicators including achievement, attendance, and teacher quality. The federal No Child Left Behind Act mandated that states furnish annual report cards showing a range of information, including student achievement data broken down by subgroup and information on the performance of school districts. In Georgia, these reports are produced by the Office of Student Achievement and issued for the state, local districts, and individual schools.

State Superintendent of Schools: Elected individual who oversees Georgia's K-12 public schools and serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Georgia Department of Education.

Student Mobility: The frequent movement of students from one school to another for reasons other than grade promotion. Situations resulting in high student mobility may include homelessness or migratory, agricultural employment.

Student Record: An annual record that provides cumulative information about a student for the school year such as education history and demographics. This information contains system, school, and student level data that can be used for both state and system reporting and analysis.

Student Support Team (SST): A group of educators at a school who meet to discuss the academic and behavioral difficulties of specific students. Administered by the Georgia Department of Education, the SST program is a problem-solving process in every Georgia school. Its purpose is to find ways around roadblocks to success for any student referred to it.

Student with Disabilities (SWD): Refers to a child evaluated as having mental retardation, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, an other health impairment, a specific learning disability, or deaf-blindness and who needs special education and related services.

Supplemental Educational Services (SES): A provision of the No Child Left Behind law, supplemental educational services are additional academic instruction designed to increase the academic achievement of students in schools that have not met state targets for annually increasing student achievement for three or more years.

Summative Assessment: An evaluation tool generally used at the end of an assignment, unit, project, or at the end of the course. Typically used to assign students a course grade or to certify student mastery of intended learning outcomes for the Georgia Performance Standards.

T

Teacher Certification: The process by which individuals receive state permission and qualification to teach in a public school. Many teaching certificates are highly specialized by subject, grade levels, or specifics such as counseling or the ability to teach students with disabilities. In Georgia, the Professional Standards Commission oversees teacher licensure and certification and establishes minimum requirements for certification. Also referred to as teacher licensure.

Teacher Evaluations: Methods of assessing teachers' success in improving student achievement. Evaluations may include portfolios, observations, data, and other evidence of student achievement.

Teacher Licensure: See teacher certification.

Technical Education: Instruction that prepares a student for employment immediately upon the completion of high school. Such programs range from carpentry to computer-aided design and cosmetology to medical technician programs. Also referred to as career and technical education.

Title I: The largest federal aid program for elementary and secondary schools. The Title I program provides money to school systems based on the number of low-income families in each district. Support may be awarded for school-wide programs or for targeted assistance programs.

Title II: A federally funded program that provides assistance to state and local educational agencies and institutions of higher education with teacher education programs. Title II funds programs that aim to improve teaching and learning, reform teacher preparation and certification standards, and develop better performance based assessment and professional development strategies.

Title VI: Part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance, including public schools. Title VI prohibits the denial of equal access to education to students with limited proficiency in English.

Title VII: A federal program designed to improve the English proficiency of bilingual students.

Title IX: Federal law barring gender discrimination in education facilities that receive federal funds. Most Title IX implementation cases involve sex equity in athletic programs.

Total Quality Management (TQM): A school-management concept adopted from the business world with a strong focus on client satisfaction and decision-making techniques that encourage workers to seek continual improvement in the organization.

Tracking: A term commonly used to refer to ability grouping, the practice of dividing students for instruction based on their perceived abilities. In education, many students have traditionally been assigned a particular “track” (college-bound, general, vocational, or remedial) and provided corresponding curriculum and instruction.

Transition Plan: Plan separate from a student’s Individualized Education Plan that documents goals for a student to aid him or her in making the transition from school to work.

U

Unsafe School Choice Option (USCO): This federal mandate, part of the No Child Left Behind Act, requires that each state receiving federal education funds establish and implement a statewide policy requiring that a student who attends a persistently dangerous public school, as well as a student who becomes the victim of a violent criminal offense while in or on the grounds of any public school that he or she attends, be allowed to attend a safe public school.

V

Vocational Education: Instruction that prepares a student for employment immediately after the completion of high school. Although traditionally associated with auto-shop or carpentry courses, vocational education programs frequently include a strong academic component and teach such cutting-edge skills as computer-aided design and robotics.

Voucher: A state allocation of money given to parents to allow their children to attend a school of the parent’s choice, either public or private. During the 2007 session of the Georgia State Legislature, Georgia’s first voucher program was created. The Georgia Special Needs Scholarship Program (created by Senate Bill 10) is a voucher program for special education students.

Y

Year-Round Schooling: A modified school calendar that offers short breaks throughout the academic year rather than the traditional summer vacation. Schools may use a year-round schedule for a variety of reasons including staggering schedules to relieve crowding. Some believe that shorter breaks between school terms will help students better retain material.

Z

Zero Tolerance: Policies that mandate predetermined consequences or punishments for a specific offense regardless of the circumstances surrounding it.

Several sources were used in compiling this set of educational definitions, including:

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