Reconsidering Special Education Funding in Georgia

By
Tom Parrish and Jenifer Harr

AMERICAN INSTITUTES FOR RESEARCH®

June 2005

This policy brief was commissioned by Project WINS of Kennesaw State University with funding provided by the Georgia Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities

The GCDD is funded by the Administration on Developmental Disabilities, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C.

Introduction

From 2000 to 2005, the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (DD Council) funded Project WINS (Winning Ideas Network for Schools), which was implemented in a network of elementary, middle and high schools throughout the state. Its mission was to provide funding, technical assistance, teacher training, and parent support toward including students with special needs in the regular classroom. One of the strategies was to enhance the capacity of schools to provide co-teaching and collaborative teaching in classrooms so that students with special needs would have the support of a general education, content-trained teacher, and the expertise of a special education teacher who could make modifications and adaptations to the curriculum and classroom environment. Student outcome data showed that when students with disabilities were co-taught in the general education curriculum and classroom, their participation rates in the regular testing program increased each year, their ability to meet or exceed the state's benchmark for passing the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test and Georgia Writing Test increased each year, and that the achievement of their general education peers was not compromised.

However, in implementing the project, participating schools found that the Georgia funding formula for special education posed a significant barrier to fostering more inclusive special education practices. Its very detailed and highly regulated structure make it difficult for districts to serve special education students in flexible and integrated settings without incurring what is often a substantial loss in revenues. It became apparent to the Project WINS staff that the requirements of the formula contain disincentives to the delivery of inclusive education and indeed, seem to clash with one of the most fundamental elements of special education law, i.e., individualized education programs designed to address the unique learning needs of each special education student.

Three years into Project WINS, the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) commissioned the National Association of School Boards of Education (NASBE) to determine statewide barriers to inclusion in key policy areas, including accountability, assessment and funding. One of NASBE's findings was that Georgia's special education formula provided significant barriers to inclusion because the formula:

a.) Was complex, unwieldy, rigid and inequitable;

b.) Did not provide the adequate resources; and

c.) Contained financial disincentives for schools to place students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

In the spring of 2004, the GCDD decided to hire a national expert in special education finance to work with a representative group of educational professionals and parents to recommend strategies for removing the state funding barriers. In June of 2004,

the GCDD formed the Special Education Funding Formula Committee that was comprised of education professionals, representatives from the General Assembly, the Department of Education, The Office of Planning and Budget, the Governor's Office, school districts, advocacy organizations, professional associations, and parents. Tom Parrish, of the American Institutes of Research's (AIR) Center for Special Education Finance, was commissioned to facilitate this group. Dr. Parrish has twenty years of experience working on national special education issues in addition to actively consulting with states on improving their funding formula in all areas (e.g. general education, ESOL, special education, etc.). Two other conditions made this a particularly timely endeavor: Governor Perdue formed the QBE Task Force, and the state began to actively implement and become accountable for the achievement of all children under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*.

The committee met for two full days in June 2004, with follow-up meetings in October, 2004, January, and April, 2005. Dr. Parrish worked closely with the committee to receive input regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the current system, and to consider funding alternatives most consistent with the policy environment of Georgia. He also worked with the state DOE and the DES to collect data pertinent to the work of this project.

The recommendations in this report emanate from these data gathering and analysis activities. In June of 2005, Dr. Tom Parrish recommended long term and short term strategies to support schools in their attempt to "increase the percentage of time students with disabilities receive instruction in the general education setting with appropriate supports and accommodations." Since that point, the report has been approved by the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities and is offered to you for consideration.

It is our sincere hope that policymakers in the Governor's Office, the Department of Education, The Office of Planning and Budget, and the General Assembly will use the research and recommendations that emanated from this comprehensive effort toward their work in designing an education funding system that supports a quality education for all Georgia's children.

Tom Seegmuller
Chairperson
Governor's Council on
Developmental Disabilities

Dr. Toni Strieker
Professor, Interim Chair
Department of Special Education
Kennesaw State University

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By Tom Parrish and Jenifer Harr
American Institutes for Research (AIR)
6-8-05

This report is written in response to a request by the Georgia Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (DD Council) to evaluate the state's current approach to special education funding. It contains analyses and observations regarding the current system, as well as recommendations for change. In short, the current system is found to be unnecessarily complex and burdensome, and major recommendations are made regarding the need for simplification, clarity, and ease of administration.

Georgia has a long history of special education provision. The current weighted formula for funding special education was devised approximately twenty years ago. Since that time, modest alterations have been made to the structure of the formula, and relatively minor adjustments to the amounts of funding associated with each weight are made annually.

It appears that the current formula was initially designed to be cost-based, fairly simple, and straightforward. Cost-based simply means that some categories of special education children are more costly to educate on average than others, and that the funding formula should be designed to at least partially reflect these variations in expected cost. Discussions were held about how children with disabilities might be best categorized for funding purposes, and cost estimates were derived based on the estimated costs of serving them. Georgia special education teachers were interviewed in an attempt to derive cost factors such as class size, caseload, and needed travel time for itinerant therapists. Based on these types of service specifications, costs of provision were estimated, and special education funding weights derived.

In an attempt to keep this system fairly simple, special education students were initially placed into four categories (subsequently updated to five). As described by one respondent, "The result of the process was to estimate how much was needed to pay for a teacher of students with severe disabilities, for example, who might only be serving three students, in relation to the cost of a general education teacher with 23 students in a class."

While the antecedents of the state's current approach were clearly based on rational principles, and the special education funding weights derived from this approach made sense at the time, over the years the rational bases for these costs have been lost and have become outdated. As there appears to be no written record of what was done or the exact components from which these weights were derived, there has been no easy way to update them to reflect current practice.

One important element with which the current system seems increasingly at odds is the vastly increased emphasis on integrating special education students into general education classes to the maximum extent appropriate to their needs, as is clearly required by federal special education law. Major concerns expressed about the current formula relate to the fact that many special education providers across the state, and the members of the committee appointed to advise this study, see it as a major obstacle to the realization of best practices.

Also over time, what was initially conceived as a fairly simple and straightforward approach to special education funding has become increasingly convoluted and complex. In addition to being perceived as an obstacle to best special education instructional practice, serious concerns have been voiced regarding understandability and the high cost of maintaining the formula. These concerns relate to the considerable time reported spent on data collection, maintenance, and reporting.

Considering Georgia's current approach against the three major criteria generally used to evaluate all education funding formulas—efficiency, adequacy, and equity—we have concluded that in its current form it is performing poorly on all three. It is very burdensome and costly, and therefore inefficient, to administer. It also appears inadequate overall, and may be especially inappropriate in regard to the students being force fit into the few viable inclusion options funded by the state, and inadequate for students in districts at the bottom quartile of the special education funding distribution. Regarding equity, we see large variations in the amount of funds received per special education student by districts across the state with very little, if any, obvious connection to the types of student characteristics that might be expected to affect the cost of serving them. Thus, the current system is not efficient, and does not result in equitable or uniformly adequate distributions of special education resources throughout the state.

Our major recommendation is that the system be vastly simplified, be made understandable to all, and be made easier to administer. We describe two alternatives to the current system that we believe will provide much greater flexibility in regard to best practice, lead to more appropriate service provision, and foster greater inclusion of special education students into general education classrooms. These funding alternatives should also greatly enhance equity in the distribution of special education funding throughout the state.

The state policy context within which these recommendations are made is complicated by the fact that all public education funding for the state is currently being reviewed. We believe it important that the special education funding approach be in reasonable alignment with the overall system of education funding adopted for the state. If the state as a whole retains the concept of student weights as the centerpiece of its approach to funding, we believe that the special education funding system should incorporate this general orientation as well. Accordingly, our primary recommendation is for a much simplified special education funding system based on student weights differentiated by category of disability.

We also describe census-type approaches to special education funding. However, we believe this would be most worthy of serious consideration if the state adopts a totally revamped approach to education funding overall that is not predicated on a student weighting system. While pupil weighting and census approaches feature some important differences, both are straightforward and easy to understand and administer.

As both of these major recommendations will likely take time to fully consider and implement, we also describe several alterations to the current system that we believe should be made in the short term. As problematic as the current system is, we believe that several short term changes could be implemented fairly quickly, and at relatively low cost, that would make important improvements to the current formula.

Background

For five years, the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities (DD Council) funded Project WINS (Winning Ideas Network for Schools), which was implemented in a network of elementary, middle and high schools throughout the state. Its mission was to provide funding, technical assistance, teacher training, and parent support toward including students with special needs in the regular classroom. One of the strategies was to enhance the capacity of schools to provide co-teaching and collaborative teaching in classrooms so that students with special needs would have the support of a general education, content-trained teacher, and the expertise of a special education teacher who could make modifications and adaptations to the curriculum and classroom environment. The DD Council is now in the process of evaluating that project, but preliminary data show that once included in the regular classroom and exposed to the general education curriculum, students with special needs participated in the regular testing program to a greater degree each year, met the state's benchmark for passing the Criterion-Referenced Competency Test and Georgia Writing Test to a greater degree each year, and that the achievement of their general education peers was not compromised.

However, the Georgia funding formula for special education consistently and repeatedly has been cited as a barrier to fostering more inclusive special education practices through the state. Its very detailed and highly regulated structure make it difficult for districts to serve special education students in more flexible ways and in more integrated settings without incurring what is often a substantial loss in revenues. The most fiscally practical way to include special education students in general education classrooms is to combine special and general education students in the same class with two teachers. However, this is only one mode of inclusion, and will not be the most appropriate form for all students. The existence of virtually only one fiscally viable approach to special education inclusion in the state seems to clash with one of the most fundamental elements of special education law, i.e., individualized education programs designed to address the unique learning needs of each special education student.

In addition, even under this approach for achieving education inclusion in the state, the current formula makes it difficult for schools to fund the two teachers needed to make co-teaching models work without placing a significant number of students with special needs

in the same class. Best practice suggests that for inclusion to be successful it should reflect the unique learning needs of each child. These needs may call for one student or 2-3 children with special needs being grouped in a general education class. However, under the current formula, the major viable fiscal option is for 5-8 special education students, depending on the disability mix of the students involved, to be included together in a single class to provide full fiscal support for a second teacher. While this type of co-teaching model may be appropriate in some instances, it should not be viewed as singularly synonymous with the concept of special education inclusion.

Also, under the current special education funding system, principals and local special education administrators report the need to invest considerable time and professional expertise scheduling buildings, and maneuvering staffing and placement patterns to allow them to maximize their funding so they may assign teachers to co-taught classrooms. It became apparent to the Project WINS staff that the formula contains disincentives to the delivery of inclusive education for the state's special needs students.

Three years into Project WINS, the DD Council commissioned the National Association of School Boards of Education (NASBE) to conduct a research study into these policies and mechanisms to determine what components of the state funding system needed to be changed to better educate all students with special needs. Conducted by Dr. Virginia Roach, the NASBE study (2002) covered an extensive review of documents and numerous interviews with Department of Education (DOE) personnel, local school personnel, State Board members, Office of Planning and Budget (OPB), state legislators, the Division of Exceptional Students (DES), the PTA, and state support systems like Georgia Learning Resource System and Regional Educational Service Agencies.

One of study's findings was that the special education formula did not provide the resources and flexibility necessary for schools to make placement decisions that were in the best educational interests of children with special needs. It also found that the formula was complex, unwieldy, and often counterproductive for providing the staffing support needed for quality education. Building principals found to be successful in providing inclusive education for students with special needs had learned to "game" the system through a variety of creative means. While this "gaming" may have sometimes led to improved instructional services for special education students, e.g. by allowing increased inclusion in the form of co-teaching, even these improvements are sometimes at odds with best instructional practice. In addition, the current system does not appear to foster the equitable distribution of special education resources statewide.

The DD Council then decided to use funds remaining in the WINS contract to hire a national expert in special education finance to work with a representative group of educational professionals and parents. They were asked to determine the problems with the formula and to make recommendations for removing barriers to "increasing the percentage of time students with disabilities receive instruction in the general education setting with appropriate supports and accommodations." Two other conditions made this a particularly timely endeavor: the Governor formed the QBE Task Force, and the state

began to actively implement and become accountable for the achievement of all children under the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*.

The Funding Formula Committee for this project included superintendents and principals, general education and special education teachers, leaders of state professional education associations like Georgia Council of Administrators of Special Education, state legislators who follow education funding and policy, and who were also members of the QBE committee, representatives from the State Advisory Panel, the State Superintendent's Office, the DOE data staff, and DES staff, the Governor's Education Policy Advisor, staff from OPB, and faculty from Kennesaw Sate University, Georgia State, and University of Georgia who either train teachers in collaborative practice or who specialize in school funding issues. Two parents of special needs children were also participants. The expert consultant for this committee, Tom Parrish, of the American Institutes of Research's (AIR) Center for Special Education Finance, has twenty years of experience working on national special education issues in addition to actively consulting with states.

The committee met for two full days in June, with follow-up meetings in October, January, and April. Dr. Parrish worked closely with the committee to receive input regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the current system, and to consider funding alternatives most consistent with the policy environment of Georgia. He also worked with the state DOE and the DES to collect data pertinent to the work of this project. The recommendations included in this report emanate from these data gathering and analysis activities.

Concerns with Current System

In an attempt to make funding recommendations in line with Georgia policy priorities, the committee determined the following principles to be most salient in reconsidering the current funding system: understandability, adequacy, least restrictive environment, and outcome accountability. Equitability, identification neutrality, and political acceptability emerged as other significant issues. The following section discusses concerns with the state's current special education funding system in regard to these policy objectives.

Understandability. There seemed uniform agreement that the current special education funding formula in the state is exceedingly complex. It is very difficult to understand and burdensome to administer. Each special education student has a weight for each segment of the school day (up to six segments), based on the number of segments that the student receives services from a special education teacher and the student's disability category, as shown in the table below.

Table 1. Special Education Weights

Level	Weight	Program/Disability Category
Level I	2.3616	Self-contained specific learning disability (4-6 segments) Self-contained speech-language impairment (4-6 segments)
Level II	2.7629	Mild intellectual disability (1-6 segments)
Level III	3.5162	Emotional and behavior disorder (1-6 segments) Moderately intellectual disability (1-6 segments) Severe intellectual disability (1-6 segments) Resourced specific learning disability (1-3 segments) Resourced speech-language impairment (1-3 segments) Self-contained hearing impairment and deaf (4-6 segments) Self-contained orthopedic disability (4-6 segments) Self-contained other health impairment (4-6 segments)
Level IV	5.6960	Deaf-blind (1-6 segments) Profound intellectual disability (1-6 segments) Visually impairment and blind (1-6 segments) Resourced hearing impairment and deaf (1-3 segments) Resourced orthopedic disability (1-3 segments) Resourced other health impairment (1-3 segments)
Level V	2.4357	Inclusion: Those special education students classified as being in Categories I through IV, whose Individualized Educational Programs specify specially designed instruction or supplementary aids or services in alternative placements, in the least restrictive environment, including the regular classroom and who receive such services from personnel such as paraprofessionals, interpreters, job coaches, and other assistive personnel.

If a student with a specific learning disability (SLD) receives services from a special education teacher for four or more segments (e.g., resource services), the student is assigned a Level I weight for those segments, irrespective of the location of those services. Alternatively, a student with SLD could be assigned a Level III weight for up to three segments and a Level V weight two segments, and a general education weight for one segment.

Further confounding this approach are the minimum and maximum class sizes required to generate sufficient state revenues to fully fund teaching positions class (see Appendix A for class size requirements). For example, there must be at least five special education students in the classroom to generate enough revenue to fully fund a special education teaching position at Level III. However, this number cannot exceed a certain threshold (based on the disability categories of the students). The co-taught setting is even more intricate as there are minimum and maximum class sizes in place for general education classrooms which do not change even with the addition of a second teacher.

This complexity and the potential mix of segments that a student could have creates considerable difficulties for districts when determining how to best categorize, count, and serve students in a way that will ensure sufficient funding. One district reported that its

five program managers, who each work in ten schools, spend a half day in each school in the fall to coordinate how to count special education students. After a trial run of the counts, the managers review the FTE report and recommend changes as needed. This cycle continues until the count "looks good." During this time, the mangers do not hold staff meetings, professional development, or other activities. One district director of curriculum noted that the system is "just too complicated for most people to figure it out. Some people feel like it is just a computer entry task, which of course is not true." The need for training and trial runs and the amount of energy and time that go towards reporting FTE counts reflect the formula's complexity. A simpler approach could free up these resources to provide support to teachers and the students themselves.

It is also unclear what is gained through all this effort. It appears that the original goals relating to this high degree of specificity in counting students was to link funding as closely as possible to actual costs incurred. Instead, it seems to have resulted in an inordinate amount of critical instructional resources being allocated toward the administration of the system, with no obvious gains in regard to linking the funding received by districts to their relative needs for special education services. Rather than enhancing equity and efficiency in the provision of services, the current burdensome system seems to have led to just the opposite result to be described in more detail below.

Adequacy. The QBE (Quality Basic Education) earnings for special education amounted to approximately $794 million in 2003-04, which was supplemented by $233 million in federal IDEA Part B funds.[1] Together, these generated an average of $6,067 per special education student. Given that the QBE earnings reflect both state and local contribution of 5 mills, it appears that QBE earnings and federal revenues support most special education spending in Georgia. However, special education transportation spending as well as some additional local contribution are not included in this amount. Therefore, the resulting special education spending estimate of $6,067 per special education student should be considered as an under-estimate for the state.

Nevertheless, this best estimate of average special education spending we were able to obtain for the state can be compared with the data below for considering special education funding adequacy in Georgia. Table 2 shows average per pupil spending on special education services across the nation and states that participated in the Special Education Expenditure Project (SEEP). These data suggest that the combined special education QBE earnings and federal revenues in Georgia may be inadequate.

[1] QBE earnings for the CCAT Schools are not included in the special education QBE figure. Federal special education appropriations are for IDEA Part B Section 611 and do not include Part B Section 619 preschool grants.

Table 2. Average Per Pupil Spending on Special Education Services for School-Age Students with Disabilities (2003-04 Dollars) Across the Nation and in Selected States Compared to Special Education QBE Earnings and Federal Special Education Revenues in Georgia

Nation	$8,719
Alabama	$5,885
Indiana	$6,754
Kansas	$7,817
Maryland	$11,408
Missouri	$6,232
Rhode Island	$10,314
Wyoming	$10,398
Georgia Estimate	**$6,067**

Source for special education spending estimates: Special Education Expenditure Project (SEEP) studies

Moreover, the minimum and maximum class size requirements may result in situations that do not adequately address the needs of the students. For instance, a general education classroom with a paraprofessional (Level V) would need approximately 3 to 4 special education students in order to generate enough special education funding to fully support the paraprofessional (or 8 students to fully fund a teaching position). This may be inappropriate for a student who needs intensive one-on-one assistance from a paraprofessional to succeed in the general education classroom. While the state formula does not mandate minimums or maximums for a Level V weight, the number of special education students needed to generate enough state special education funds to fully cover the paraprofessional may dissuade districts from providing more intensive services to fewer students. As one committee member states, "The special education [minimum and maximums] were written decades ago when all students were served in special education classrooms. The minimum numbers are not realistic for the [Least Restrictive Environment] models of service (co-teaching, collaboration, and supportive instruction)."

In addition, the formula does not clearly define support for related service providers such as physical therapists. While speech is provided a supplemental weight (which is added to the weight the student generates for that segment), other related services are counted as either a Level V weight (if the student would have been in a general education classroom at the time of the related service) or the student's respective disability weight (if the student would have been in a special education setting at the time of the related service). As the minimum class sizes apply to the second scenario, it may be difficult for related service providers to fully earn their positions when they provide more intensive individualized services. Moreover, related services may not necessarily be provided on the designated count day, resulting in lost state funds for those services. While districts may use their federal special education dollars to support these positions, the funding constraint coupled with the shortage of related service providers nationwide may limit a district's ability to meet student needs.

The rigid and very highly specified nature of the formula, which is much more explicit in its funding of special education teachers than related service providers, may have affected

the mix of these two categories of staff, which appears somewhat different in Georgia than across the country. Table 3 shows ratios of special education students to service providers as reported by Georgia in relation to the nation. The bottom three rows of this table show weighted national average data (with states weighted in accordance with their population), unweighted national average data (treating all states the same), and data from the last independent national study of special education resources (Special Education Expenditure Project). Regardless which national average is used, the ratio of special education students per special education teacher appears lower in Georgia, while the ratio of special education students per related service is higher.

We are aware that there are problems with interpreting these data, as Georgia may not be fully reporting contracted related service providers (although the national data collection form clearly states that they should be counted). They likely reflect reporting idiosyncrasies from other states as well. However, these are the best data we have comparing Georgia staff allocations to the nation, and they suggest a ratio of students to related service providers that is considerably higher than the national average. This evidence supports the possible concern that the failure to specifically include related service staff in the state funding formula is resulting in inadequate provision of special education related services (at least in comparison to standard practice across the nation.)

Table 3: Special Education Personnel Ratios: Georgia and the Nation

	No. of Special Education Students to 1 FTE SE Teacher	No. of Special Education Students to 1 FTE SE Instructional Aide	No. of Special Education Students to 1 FTE Related Service Staff
IDEA Data for Georgia 2002-03[1]	**14.3**	**22.2**	**56.6**
IDEA Data for Nation (weighted) 2002-03[1]	15.2	17.7	31.7
IDEA Data for Nation (unweighted) 2002-03[1]	15.9	20.3	43.9
SEEP Data for Nation, 1999-2000[2]	17.4	31.4	30.4

[1] Source: www.ideadata.org; 2002-03 Child Count (ages 3-21) and 2002-03 Personnel FTE Counts from the *Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.*

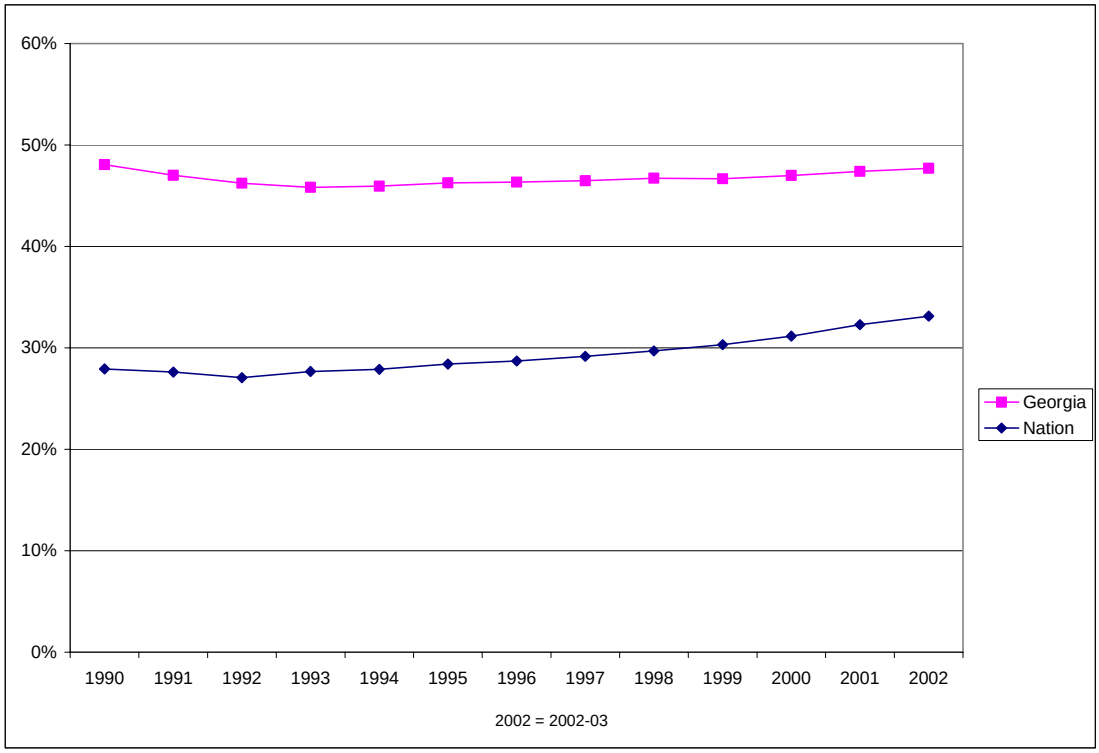
[2] Special Education Expenditure Project, 1999-2000. We do not believe that the information on aides from the IDEA reports is as reliable as SEEP. In general, paraprofessionals tend to be less than full-time, therefore their FTE status may be more difficult to determine. However, for comparative purposes, it may be more appropriate to compare Georgia aide ratios using IDEA data to national aide ratios derived from IDEA data.

NOTE: IDEA instructional aide ratios include teacher aides and interpreters. SEEP instructional aide ratios include instructional and related service aides.

Identification neutrality. As shown in Table 1, the state special education funding formula places a greater weight on certain categories of disability than on others. This raises possible concerns about the greater likelihood of students being disproportionately identified for higher reimbursement categories of disability. In a forthcoming article, Mahitivanichcha and Parrish (2005) explore the fiscal incentives of state funding formulas on special education identification and placement. With respect to special education identification nationwide, they found that Georgia had the second highest proportion of students with disabilities that are generally considered higher cost (47.4

percent to the unweighted national average of 31.2 percent).[2] Exhibit 1 shows that Georgia historically has had a higher percentage of special education students who are identified with disabilities other than SLD or speech/language impairment (SLI). Although disability categories cut across the funding weights (e.g., weights for students with SLD range from 2.3616 to 3.5162), making the association between identification and incentives less clear, it is possible that the Georgia special education funding formula is contributing to a greater likelihood of identifying students in higher cost categories of disability, or those with greater funding weights.[3]

Exhibit 1. Percentage of Total Special Education Population with Disabilities other than Specific Learning Disability and Speech and Language Impairment: Georgia and the Nation, 1990 - 2002



Source: *Annual Reports to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education.

Least restrictive environment. Concerns have also been raised about the disincentives inherent in the funding formula for placing students in general education classrooms and for making greater use of collaborative and co-teaching models. This issue is especially

[2] The analysis in Mahitivanichcha and Parrish's paper treated all disabilities except for speech/language impairment and specific learning disability as higher cost.

[3] Note that if these patterns of assignment to higher cost categories of disability are affected by the current weighted pupil system, a move to a more simplified system based on categories of disability will likely continue this concern. Concerns in regard to possible identification and placement incentives would be neutralized by adoption of a census-based system. However, this approach leads to other concerns, e.g., the possible incentive to under-identify and under-serve special education students.

relevant with the newly reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which re-emphasizes that a state "shall not use a funding mechanism by which the state distributes funds on the basis of the type of setting in which a child is served that will result in the failure to provide a child with a disability a free appropriate public education according to the unique needs of the child as described in the child's [Individualized Education Program]."[4]

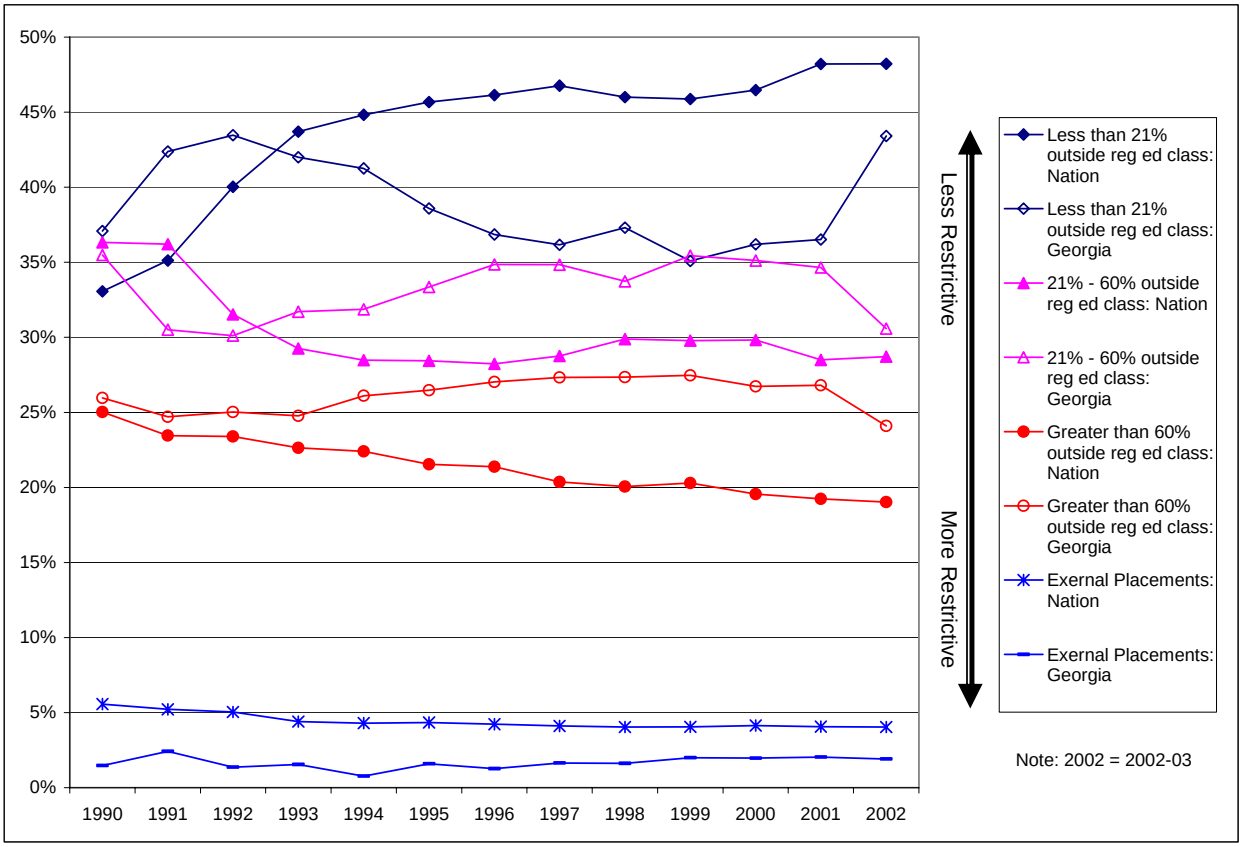
Although the weights are not necessarily linked to the *location* of the services, but rather the number of segments a student receives services from a special education teacher, there still appears to be hindrances to more inclusive settings. For instance, the weight for inclusion is lower than other weights (Level II-IV), requiring 8 special education students in the classroom to fully fund the teaching position. This may deter districts from providing paraprofessional services to smaller groups or one-on-one. Co-taught settings are funded as if they are two separate classes (e.g., general education class and resource room) without changes to the minimum and maximum class size requirements, which may make it difficult for both teachers to fully earn their positions. For instance, elementary co-taught classrooms with students with mild intellectual disabilities would need 6.5 special education students to fully earn the special education teacher. However, the general education teacher needs a minimum of 17 students to earn his or her position, and the addition of 7 special education students to earn the special education teacher would exceed the maximum class size of 23. In fiscally difficult times, districts may look for ways to maximize fully funded positions.

As one administrator noted in the NASBE report, "On 'count day' we move students to make up the counts we need. The system forces schools to do things that are inappropriate for children because that is how we get paid" (Roach, 2002:27). Maneuvering the system to maximize state funds may have serious implications for reporting FTE counts as well as for the actual practice of serving students.

In fact, as shown in Exhibit 2, Georgia lags behind the national average of students who are placed in the general education classroom (i.e., less than 21 percent of their time outside the general education classroom). Although the gap narrowed significantly in 2002-03, Georgia's long-standing trend of a higher proportion of students in more restrictive placements in regular schools may, at least partly, be attributable to the special education funding formula.

[4] Conference Report on H.R. 1350, *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004*, Section 612a(5)B(i).

Exhibit 2. Percentage of the Total Special Education Population (age 6-21) by Educational Environment: Nation and Georgia, 1990 – 2002



Source: *Annual Reports to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education.
Note: Lines of the same color represent the same educational placement; the national average is represented by solid data points and Georgia is represented by hollow data points.

Mahitivanichcha and Parrish (2005) found that in 2000-01, 28.7 percent of Georgia's special education population was in restrictive placements,[5] making it the 9th highest state in regards to restrictive placements. As of 2002-03, the state's rank dropped to 15, as its proportion of students in these settings declined to 24.7 percent. The combined effort of DES (which required that districts select LRE as one of three goals), Project WINS, the DOE project WINNING TEAMS, and the Georgia State University LRE Project may have contributed to this shift in placements. While the state seems to have made strides recently, it is too early to determine if this trend will continue, allowing the state to become more in line with the national average.

Inequities. The current special education funding system also appears to result in substantial inequities (see Table 4).[6] For Fiscal Year 2004, in terms of QBE earnings per

[5] The analysis in Mahitivanichcha and Parrish's paper defined restrictive placements as 60 percent outside the general education classroom, public separate facilities, private separate facilities, public residential facilities, private residential facilities, and home/hospital.
[6] Special education QBE earnings used in this analysis include earnings for Categories I – V, Special Education Itinerant, and Special Education Supplemental Speech.

special education student, the highest funded district received nearly four times the amount received by the lowest. Some of these variations may be explained by genuine differences in student need and the services provided. However, given the complexity of the FTE reporting system, some districts may be maximizing the funding independent of student need, while others have not learned how to navigate the many complexities of this counting and reporting system.

Of added concern is the fact that on average these funding variations do not appear to relate to possible correlates of special education severity such as the percentage of students in special education or in poverty. For instance, the district with the highest earning amount per special education student also had an unusually high percentage of special education students. As the percentage of students in special education increases, it would generally be expected that an increased number of less severe students are being identified. While the relative need for special education services might also be expected to be related to poverty, the districts with the lowest and the highest earning amounts per student both show levels of student poverty that far exceeded the statewide average of 46 percent.

However, one clear pattern emerges with the percentage of special education students identified as having SLD or SLI. Districts with the lowest earning amounts demonstrate a much higher proportion of students with these disabilities in comparison to the statewide average, showing the expected link between the distribution by disability category and funding levels. This relationship is expected because students with SLI or SLD are, on average, less expensive to serve (Chambers, Shkolnik, and Pérez, 2003). However, it also raises possible questions about extreme variations in identification patterns and whether they may be influenced by the formula. As the current formula places higher weights on certain categories of disability, there may be fiscal incentives to identify borderline students into categories of disability where the funding is the highest. For example, it seems unusual that a district with 18 percent of its students in special education, as shown in Table 4, has such a low percentage of these students identified as SLI or SLD.

Table 4. Comparison of Characteristics of Districts with the Lowest and Highest Special Education QBE Earnings per Special Education and Total Enrollment (FY 2004)

	Lowest QBE Earnings per SE Student $2,176	Highest QBE Earnings per SE Student[1] $7,863	Lowest QBE Earnings per All Students $120	Highest QBE Earnings per All Students[1] $1,385	State Average[2] *
Ratio to state average revenue amt	0.46	1.68	0.23	2.64	–
Percent special education	13%	18%	4%	18%	11%
Percent poverty	96%	100%	75%	100%	46%
Percent SLI and SLD	84%	48%	79%	48%	52%

[1] Same district.

[2] State averages are weighted.

* Average special education QBE earnings per special education student: $4,690; average special education QBE earnings per total enrollment: $525.

While these districts at the extremes can be used to illustrate a general concern, they also may be unusual cases. However, these same general patterns also appear when examining special education earnings by the lowest and highest quartiles of districts, each of which represents 45 districts. Again, the average earnings amount per special education student in the highest quartile is more than 50 percent greater than the average earnings amount in the lowest quartile. Per total enrollment, the highest amount is more than double the lowest. A factor one might expect to influence student need, the percentage of students in poverty does not vary substantially across the lowest and highest quartiles of funding.

While the variations in the percentage of the special education population identified as having SLI or SLD have narrowed in comparison to Table 4, the lowest quartiles continue to have a higher proportion of these students than districts in the highest quartile. Again, this raises questions as to whether these variations indicate true differences in the incidence of disability categories or whether they are a product of identification practices that may be influenced by the funding formula.

Table 5. Comparison of Characteristics of Districts in the Lowest and Highest Quartile of Special Education QBE Earnings per Special Education and Total Enrollment (FY 2004)

	Lowest QBE earnings per special education student[1] $3,576	Highest QBE earnings per special education student[1] $5,590	Lowest QBE earnings per total enrollment[1] $359	Highest QBE earnings per total enrollment[1] $745	State Average[2] *
Ratio to state average revenue amt	0.76	1.19	0.68	1.42	–
Percent special education	11%	12%	9%	14%	11%
Percent poverty	62%	56%	60%	60%	46%
Percent SLI and SLD	56%	49%	56%	50%	52%

[1] Quartile averages for earnings per student and percentages of students in special education, poverty, and SLI/SLD are unweighted.
[2] State averages are weighted.
* Average special education QBE earnings per special education student: $4,690; average special education QBE earnings per total enrollment: $525.

Two Special Education Funding Alternatives

As stated at the onset of this report, our major recommendation is to abandon the current, complex method of funding for something far simpler, and easier to understand and administer. Below, we present two long term alternatives we believe the state should consider toward the goals of reducing the current reporting burden, providing greater flexibility in regard to best practice, fostering greater inclusion, and enhancing the adequacy and equity of provision. We recommend simplified pupil weighting if the state chooses to stay with a weighted system for overall education funding. However, if the state moves to a more generic approach to funding overall, we believe that the kind of census-based special education funding approach described below should be given further consideration.

A Simple Pupil Weight System. Including Georgia, one-third of all states have formulas based primarily on pupil weights, whereby funding is allocated based on a "weight" associated with each special education student (which is typically applied against a base amount). The general concept is that these weights will provide more funding (i.e., by virtue of being larger) for special education students who are expected to cost more to serve. These differentials are based on average costs which may not hold true for any one special education student. Funding weights could be differentiated on the basis of student placement, disability category, or some combination of the two (Parrish et al., 2003). Neighboring states such as Kentucky and South Carolina have simple weight formulas based on disability categories (see Appendix B for descriptions of these systems).

While the current funding system in Georgia is based on weights that reflect the student's disability and placement, we find it to be unnecessarily cumbersome and confusing. Even if the state opted to continue this form of segmented counting as the basis for overall education funding, we recommend the weighting system for special education be greatly simplified. For example, special education students might be counted first as general education under the same conditions as any other general education student. This might increase the cost of general education services to the state as all students would now be recognized as entitled to general education funding. Or, the state could simply maintain its current general education funding base and divide it by the increased number of general education students, reducing somewhat the base value of the general education weight for all students.

In addition, each special education student would be counted once under a much simpler pupil weight system based on some well established criterion such as the student's primary category of disability. It would also be possible to count special education students by educational placement (using the placement categories reported to the U.S. Department of Education). Any type of simple weighting approach would need to be based on some criterion that could be easily counted. The goal would be to eliminate the complicated practice of attempting to account for special education students by individual segments of the day, which results in so much complexity and creates barriers to appropriate and individually designed general education inclusion.

The educational placement approach would rely more upon the amount of time outside a general education setting, which may be a more flexible and appropriate way to consider service delivery. In both the disability and placement approaches, the reporting system is already established as these counts are required yearly by the federal government. If placement were used as the basis for the weights, these weights might be based on estimated costs by type of placement or might be constructed so as to associate higher funding weights with greater degrees of inclusion.

In considering the value of the weights, the Special Education Expenditure Project (SEEP) produced national estimates on spending on special education students by disability and placement category, as well as the average spending on a general education student with no special needs. The ratio of these spending amounts could be used as the basis for the weights, as shown in Table 6 for disability categories.

Table 6. Special Education Weights based on Ratio of Total Spending on Special Education Students to Spending on General Education Students, by Disability

Average Spending on General Education (GE) Student with No Special Needs	$6,556		
Average Total Spending on a Special Education Student by Disability		SE Supplement In Relation to GE Spending	Example Supplemental Weight for Georgia
Specific Learning Disability	$10,558	.61	1.36
Speech and Language Impairment	$10,958	.67	1.49
Other Health Impairment	$13,229	1.02	2.27
Emotional Disturbance	$14,147	1.16	2.58
Orthopedic Impairment	$14,993	129	2.87
Mental Retardation	$15,040	1.29	2.87
Hearing Impairment/Deafness	$15,992	1.44	3.20
Traumatic Brain Injury	$16,542	1.52	3.38
Autism	$18,790	1.87	4.15
Visual Impairment/Blindness	$18,811	1.87	4.15
Multiple Disabilities	$20,095	2.07	N/A

Source: National Special Education Expenditure Project, 1999-2000
Note: Spending ratio for developmentally delayed and deaf-blind are not reported due to small sample size. The December 2003 disability file contained counts on for mild intellectual disability, moderate intellectual disability, severe intellectual disability, and profound intellectual disability. To align with SEEP disability weights, these disability categories are subsumed under the mental retardation weight. The SEEP weight for multiple disabilities was not used in this example because multiple disabilities are not reported as a disability category in the state disability file.

If special education students were to receive general education funding first in Georgia, just like any other student, the supplemental special education weights could be derived from the SEEP ratios shown above. These supplemental weights for Georgia are based on the differentials reflected in the SEEP special education supplemental amounts by disability, and are calculated to meet the possible policy goal of equaling what the state currently allocates for special education. For example, the supplemental special education weight for a student with a specific learning disability would be 1.36. Such a simple weighting system would hold the state's funding of special education constant, but would result in considerable redistribution across districts. Without further adjustment to the general education weights, it would also increase the cost of general education because all special education students would generate funding, i.e., being counted as a general education student first with special education funding only received as a supplement.

While under the current system some districts receive three to four times the amount received by other districts per special education student, the disparity in allocations under this simpler type of approach would be substantially reduced. Our simulations of this approach show that the highest amount per special education student would be no more than 1.6 times the lowest amount across all districts. Thus, variations in special education revenues would be less pronounced across districts and increasingly be based on variance in the expected cost of special education.

Table 7 shows the characteristics of districts in quartiles with the lowest and highest amounts per special education student and total enrollment under this approach, which has the effect of raising the lower amounts and moderating the higher amounts (see Table

5 for comparison of the current system). Another notable difference is the stronger association of higher earnings with higher poverty levels. Whereas the highest and lowest quartiles in the current system appear to vary little from one another in this respect, under a simpler pupil weight approach based on disability categories, the highest quartile of districts (e.g., the most money per special education student) shows a poverty rate of 70 percent, considerably higher than the rate of 45 percent for the lowest quartile. Given the expected relationship between special education need and poverty, this relationship is more in line with what would be expected.

Table 7. Simulation of Disability Pupil Weights Approach: Comparison of Characteristics of Districts in the Lowest and Highest Quartile of Special Education PROJECTED QBE Earnings per Special Education and Total Enrollment (FY 2004)

	Lowest QBE earnings per special education student $4,338	Highest QBE earnings per special education student $5,212	Lowest QBE earnings per total enrollment $411	Highest QBE earnings per total enrollment $730	State Average[1] *
Ratio to state average revenue amt	0.92	1.11	0.78	1.39	–
Percent special education[2]	11%	11%	9%	15%	11%
Percent poverty[2]	45%	70%	49%	63%	46%
Percent SLI and SLD[2]	63%	40%	58%	45%	52%

[1] State averages are weighted.
[2] Quartile averages for percentage of students in special education, poverty, and SLI/SLD are unweighted.
* Average special education QBE earnings per special education student: $4,690; average special education QBE earnings per total enrollment: $525.
Note: In calculating per pupil amounts, the projected earnings were divided by the count of all disability categories, although students with deaf-blindness and developmental delay were not included in deriving earnings (due to no associated weights).

In addition to equity and efficiency gains, this type of approach also creates a unique weight for autism and traumatic brain injury, which are not specifically addressed in the current formula. If such a simplified system was implemented, consideration would need to be given to how to generate funding for students with deaf-blindness and developmental delay, two disability categories which lack SEEP spending ratios due to small sample sizes.

Alternatively, weights could be based on educational placement categories using SEEP expenditure information, as shown in Appendix C. Under this type of approach, the issues described above would still apply. However, because possible fiscal incentives in relation to placement (i.e., to place students into more restrictive, higher cost settings with higher funding weights) is of substantially greater concern than possible incentives associated with category of disability (i.e., to place students in more highly weighted categories of disability), weights based on category of disability are recommended.

The SEEP expenditure ratios shown in Table 6 are simply differences in average spending across the nation by category of disability in relation to that spent on the

average general education student. They do not necessarily represent what should be spent in the sense of an independent determination of what is appropriate or adequate. Furthermore, the supplemental weights developed for this report reflect the current QBE earnings for special education in a given year. In other words, they simply redistribute the present level of state special education aid. The state may choose to maintain the weights in the subsequent years to be applied to the QBE base amount to drive the overall funding, or the state may set an arbitrary funding level annually which would then be distributed to the districts based on the number of students in each disability category.

A preferable approach, but one likely to be more costly for the state, would be to develop a clearly defined and well understood definition of the supplemental cost of special education. Special education funding weights unique to Georgia and the total state allocation would be based on this rationally determined definition of special education adequacy. Such a determination for Georgia would be based on current professional judgment in regard to adequate resources needed to support special education students given the educational outcomes expected from them as specified by the state. Examples of this type of process are found in work conducted by the authors in the states of Wyoming (Parrish et al., 2002) and New York (Chambers et al., 2004).

A further concern regarding any type of weighting system, simple or complex, is related to possible incentives. Under disability-based weights the concern is possible over-identification for the higher weighted categories of disability. For weights based on placement, there is the possible concern of fostering more restrictive placements (as the most inclusive setting has the lowest weight using SEEP spending ratios). When considering possible weights under this approach, the issues regarding the need for weights based on an estimate of true costs rather than average spending, as described above, also apply. This type of process for deriving rational special education funding weights described above could also allow the state to more carefully consider placing a higher premium on inclusive settings to facilitate placements in the least restrictive environment.

Census-based formula. Systems that distribute funding based on total enrollment (both special and general education students) in a district—rather than on the counts of special education students or the types of services they receive—are known as census-based or population-based formulas. For example, under a state census-based funding system, districts with identical enrollments receive the same special education aid regardless of the number of students placed in special education, the disabilities of these students, where they are placed, or how they are served. Census-based systems move away from special education identification or placement to rely on factors clearly beyond district control such as total enrollment, and sometimes poverty. According to the Center for Special Education Finance (CSEF) 1999-2000 survey, Alabama, Alaska, California, Connecticut, Idaho, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Vermont have implemented various forms of census-based special education funding systems.

A shift to census-based funding has also occurred at the federal level. Prior to Fiscal Year 2000, federal funds were allocated on a flat amount per special education student (up to 12 percent of the relevant-age population in each state). In other words, every state generally received the same amount for every special education student identified. Since then, however, federal funds in excess of $4.9 billion are distributed based on the total age-relevant residential population of the state, with and without disabilities (85 percent of the funds), and the relative degree of poverty in the state (15 percent).[7] This change was made, in part, out of concern for escalating special education enrollments nationally. The poverty component was added due to evidence of a relationship between the need for special education services and poverty.

While the concept of allocating funds on the basis of total enrollment is straightforward, the same issues described above pertain when considering the total amount of state special funding to be distributed. The state could choose to distribute the same amount of funding it currently distributes. If this approach was taken for the 2003-04 QBE earnings amount ($794 million), the amount would be $525 per student (total enrollment) across all districts. That is, irrespective of how many special education students are in a district, all districts would receive $525 per total enrollment (both general and special education students). If the distribution was modified by a poverty measure, as is done with the federal formula, the range would be $463 to $616 per total enrollment. By design, the census approach would produce differing amounts per special education student: districts with higher percentage special education would receive fewer funds per special education student than those with lower percentages.[8] Movement to this approach would likely have greater redistribution effects across districts than the simple weighting approach described above.

As funding under a census approach is based solely on total enrollment (and potentially poverty), there may be concerns that such a system would not account for variability in student need. In other words, some districts may have more students with severe disabilities than others. Therefore, especially under this kind of approach, the state should consider a contingency fund to which eligible districts with an unusual incidence of high-cost students could apply. The criteria for eligibility should be clear and unambiguous, and the funds should be utilized in relatively rare instances. The burden of proof would be on the requesting district to demonstrate that the resources they are providing their students do not exceed what is needed and that they indeed are confronted with circumstances driving their costs to exceed their special education allocation. Such factors could be due to higher rates of special education incidence above the state

[7] The IDEA Amendments of 1997 (P.L. 105-17) established that funding would continue to be based on the same child-count formula until appropriations reached approximately $4.9 billion. The new formula, which went into effect in FY 2000, is based on total residential population in the age group for which the state guarantees a free and appropriate education (FAPE) (85 percent of the allocation) and the number of students in poverty in the age group for which the state guarantees FAPE (15 percent of the allocation). It applies to new monies in excess of the $4.9 appropriation for the base year of FY 1999, subject to certain limitations.

[8] Amount per special education student would range from $2,321 to $13,542, if the distribution was based entirely on a census approach. Under an 85% census/15%poverty approach, the amount per special education student would range from $2,580 to $14,776.

average, more "severe" and high cost students, or an inability to hire staff, forcing them to contract for staff at substantially higher rates.

Considerations in the Implementation of Change

As moving to a simpler pupil weight or census-based system would sometimes result in substantial changes in the special education funding received by individual districts, we believe that some form of gradual phase-in of a revamped special education funding system for the state would be needed. For example, a step commonly taken by states implementing major education funding reform is to hold districts "harmless" over a specified phase-in period. In essence, this means that districts would not lose funding over that received in the year prior to the implementation, or base year, and that the phase-in of new funding would take place over some specified period, e.g., three years. In other words, the phase-out of counting special education FTE by segments to determine funding would be immediate, but changes in the funding amounts would be implemented over a period of time. Because no districts lose money over the phase-in period and others gradually gain, it is likely that there will be a cost to the state in implementing formula change using a phased in approach, even if the base funding rationale for the system stays largely the same.

Appendix D provides an example of possible implementation of simpler disability weights over a three year period by district. In the first year of implementation (2004-05), districts would either receive what was allocated in the base year (i.e., the year prior to the change), or they will receive the base year amount plus one-third of the increase in funding generated through the proposed funding approach. Under this simulation, the total state revenue fund in the first year would be approximately $806 million, $12 million higher than the base year allocation as districts would be held "harmless." In the second year, districts would continue to receive what they were allocated in the base year, or the base year allocation plus two-thirds of their funding increase. By the third year, the funding increases resulting from the new approach would be fully implemented. It is important to note that the simulations in Appendix D assume zero inflation over time and do not reflect any changes that may occur in the composition of the special education population. In other words, a district which may not have generated any increases in funding in the first year may experience changes in the distribution of disabilities resulting in an increase in funding the following year.

As mentioned, the simulation of the simpler disability weight approach presented here simply redistributes the current level of funding in the state. How this system should be executed in future years requires more consideration. Ideally, the state would determine adequate levels of resources for special education students, which would then drive unique supplemental weights and overall funding level. In absence of this, the state could apply supplemental weights suggested in this report to the QBE base amount to derive the overall funding. Another approach would be to establish an overall funding amount in advance and distribute those funds according to the SEEP ratios.

Short-term Changes

At the same time we believe the system needs substantial change, we realize that this often takes time. Therefore, in the section below, we describe several alterations to the current system that we believe should be made in the short term. It is the belief of the authors of this report, as well as the committee appointed to advise this study, that these changes could be implemented fairly quickly, at relatively low cost, and would constitute important short-term improvements to the current formula.

Three suggested short-term changes to help ameliorate such issues as the disincentive for inclusionary practices found in the current formula are briefly presented below. Note that despite considerable deliberation, time, and effort spent by the committee on possible short term patches to the current system, we do not spend a great deal of time on these alternatives in this report. The main reason is that each of the recommended changes generally add more detail, specificity, and complexity onto a system that is far too burdened with these characteristics already. As very few people across the state fully understand the current formula, and even those who do generally agree that it is far too complex and is badly in need of change, we did not want attention on these possible short-term changes to deflect from our overall recommendation that the current system needs to be made much simpler. With this caveat in mind, we recommend the first two changes listed below be made right away, and that the third be given serious consideration.

Increase maximum class size for co-taught settings. As mentioned, the maximum general education class size for segments co-taught by two teachers is the same as for a general education classroom with a single teacher (e.g., a maximum of 23 for grades 1 – 3). This maximum imposes restrictions on each teacher's ability to fully earn their position (as each need to fulfill the minimum requirements), and such fiscal constraints may be doing a disservice to inclusionary practices. We believe the presence of two teachers merits an adjustment to the overall maximum general education class size, just as the formula permits increases to the special education maximums with the use of paraprofessionals.

An even simpler alternative may be to officially acknowledge and sanction what some districts are likely doing already, i.e., counting general and special education classes separately for funding, but combining them for instruction. This would lead to co-teaching without the fiscal penalties associated with current maximum class sizes.

Establish weights for autism and traumatic brain injury disability categories. Students with autism or traumatic brain injury are not recognized in the current FTE weights. Generally, the practice has been to count these students under "other health impairment," which could be a Level III weight (if a student receives services for 4 – 6 segments) or a Level IV weight (if a student receives special education services for 1 – 3 segments). However, as expenditures for these two omitted disability categories are among the

highest (see Table 6), they should have their own weight to appropriately reflect their intensive service needs.[9]

Appropriately capture related services. The current formula does not explicitly capture related services, with certain exceptions for speech therapy, which may contribute to the higher staffing ratios for these personnel as shown in Table 3. Also, restricting the reporting to services that are provided only on count day may not be reasonable, particularly when an itinerant provider may have a caseload that spans several schools which are visited on different days. Students receiving related services on other days of the week will not be counted for those services. This may have especially serious implications for small districts. On the other hand, increasing the number of count days would seem to exacerbate, rather than relieve, the current over-burden in regard to special education data collection. Perhaps the supplements granted for speech therapy in regard to counting should be extended to other related services. An additional option is to allow more flexibility regarding the count for smaller districts in more sparsely populated areas.

Conclusion

The state committee convened to support this study cited "understandability" as the top priority in restructuring the state's current special education funding formula. While the interim solutions above may address some of the weaknesses of the current formula, they do not resolve the formula's unwieldy and complicated nature. The primary recommendation coming from this report is that a much simpler, more understandable, and less burdensome system be adopted to replace the current system for allocating special education funds in the state. If the state stays with a pupil weight system for education funding overall, we recommend a substantially simplified weighting approach to special education funding based on category of disability. If the state decides on more sweeping changes for funding overall, we recommend a census-based formula to special education funding be given more serious consideration.

[9] Under the Level III weight (4-6 segments of special education service), a student classified with an "other health impairment" (OHI) and receiving 4 or 5 segments of special education service could generate less funds as students with OHI with a Level IV weight (1-3 segments of special education service).

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Appendix A
State Class Size Requirements

Code: IEC

160-5-1-.08 CLASS SIZE.

(1) **DEFINITIONS.**

(a) **Individual Class Size Funding Ratio** – The number of students needed to earn state funds, calculated on the base amount, to pay for a single class in each of the QBE formula programs.

(b) **Maximum Individual Class Size** – Maximum number of students that may be taught by a teacher in a class segment.

(c) **Gifted Resource Class Delivery Model** – Classes for gifted students that emphasize interdisciplinary enrichment. Although the curriculum has academic content, the instruction focuses on thinking skills, problem solving, research and communication skills, and creative productivity. (Example: Elementary Pull-Out Enrichment Class)

(d) **Gifted Advanced Content Delivery Model** – Achievement-grouped advanced classes in academic content areas. The curriculum is differentiated in content, pacing, process-skills emphasis, and expectation of student achievement to provide challenge for gifted learners. (Examples: middle school Algebra I; Honors/AP/IB courses)

(e) **Resource Delivery Model** – Instruction for students with disabilities outside the regular classroom for three or fewer segments of the instructional day.

(f) **Self-Contained Delivery Model** – Instruction for students with disabilities in one area of exceptionality for four or more segments of the instructional day.

(g) **Areas of Exceptionality** – Areas of exceptionality with maximum class sizes are as follows.

1. S/L: Speech-Language Impairment
2. D/HH: Deaf/Hard of Hearing
3. LD: Specific Learning Disability
4. EBD: Emotional and Behavioral Disorder
5. MID: Mild Intellectual Disability
6. SID: Severe Intellectual Disability
7. MOID: Moderate Intellectual Disability
8. OI: Orthopedic Impairment
9. PID: Profound Intellectual Disability
10. VI: Visual Impairment
11. DB: Deaf-Blind
12. SED: Severe, Emotional and Behavioral Disorder
13: SDD: Significant Developmental Delay

(h) **Early Intervention Program (EIP)** – Program to serve students in grades K through 5 who are at risk of not reaching or maintaining academic grade level to obtain the necessary skills to reach grade-level performance in the shortest possible time as specified in Rule 160-4-2-.17 Early Intervention Program.

(i) **Remedial Education Program** – an instructional program designed for students in grades 9-12 who have identified deficiencies in reading, writing, and math as identified by Rule 160-4-5-.01 Remedial Education

(j) **Physical Classroom** — The maximum class size for grades K-3 is applicable to the physical classroom. The physical classroom is the space used for the purposes of instruction to students. By way of example, to have more than twenty-one students in a K-3 classroom will require a divider, temporary or permanent. Whether the partition is temporary or permanent, the system shall obtain the approval of the fire marshal.

(k) **Instructional Extension** – a state-funded instructional program beyond the regular school day to address the academic needs of low-performing students. Included in this group are students with disabilities as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1975 and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

(2) **REQUIREMENTS.**

(a) Local boards of education and schools shall comply with maximum class sizes and schedules listed in Appendices A-F.

(b) Paraprofessionals may be used to reduce teacher/pupil ratio only as provided in the appendices. Local boards of education shall ensure that state funds earned for paraprofessionals in kindergarten shall be used to provide paraprofessional services to all kindergarten classes.

(c) A school shall not count for FTE purposes any class that exceeds the maximum class size as provided in the appendices.

(i) A school shall count vocational labs and remedial classes that exceed maximum class size only as regular classes, provided they do not exceed the maximum regular class size.

(d) The number of students taught by a teacher at any time after the first 15 school days of a school year may not exceed the maximum such number unless authorization for a specific larger number is requested of the State Board, along with the educational justification for granting the requested exemption, and the State Board has approved said request.

(e) Local boards of education not complying with maximum class size requirements shall be subject to a loss of funding for the entire class or program that is out of compliance.

(f) The maximum class size for the kindergarten and primary grades programs is defined as the number of students in a physical classroom.

(g) For the 2003-2004 and 2004 –2005 school years, compliance with maximum class size requirements shall be determined by the system average for applicable programs and grades. Individual class size for such programs and grades shall not exceed the applicable maximum system average by more than two students.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-151(b); 20-2-152(a); 20-2-153; 20-2-154; 20-2-182(g), (h).

Adopted: August 12, 2004 **Effective: September 2, 2004**

APPENDIX A

Regular and Vocational Programs

	FUNDING CLASS SIZE	MAXIMUM INDIVIDUAL CLASS SIZE*			MAXIMUM SYSTEM AVERAGE CLASS SIZE		
		02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	03-04	04-05
Regular Kindergarten	15	19	20	20	18	18	18
With full-time paraprofessional	15	22	22	22	18	20	20
Regular Grades 1-3							
No paraprofessional	17	22	23	23	21	21	21
With full-time paraprofessional	17	24	23	23	21	21	21
Grades 4-5 (English, Math, Science, Social Studies)	23	30	32	32	28	30	30
Grades 6-8 (Middle Grades – English and Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies)	23	30	32	32	28	30	30
Grades 6-8 (Middle Schools - All academic classes as defined in Rule 160-4-2-.05 Middle School Program Criteria)	20	30	32	32	28	30	30
Fine Arts Grades K-3	NA	33	33	33	33	33	33
Fine Arts and Foreign Language instructional programs							
Grades 4-5	NA	33	33	33	33	33	33
Grades 6-8	NA	33	33	33	33	33	33
Grades 4-8							
All other (see exceptions)	23	33	33	33	33	33	33
Grades 9-12 English, Math, Social Studies, Foreign Language	23	30	32	32	28	30	30
Grades 9-12 Science	23	28	28	30	28	28	28
Grades 9-12							

All other (see exceptions)	23	35	35	35	35	35	35
Vocational labs	20	28	28	28	28	28	28
Remedial (grades 9-12)							
No paraprofessional	15	18	18	18	18	18	18
With full-time paraprofessional	15	24	24	24	24	24	24

Exceptions to the Maximum Individual Class Size for grades K-12 shall be as follows:

	COURSE	MAXIMUM INDIVIDUAL CLASS SIZE
(i)	Typing/Keyboarding	35
(ii)	Instrumental Music (e.g., band, orchestra)	100
(iii)	Choral Music (e.g., mixed chorus)	80
(iv)	Physical Education	
	No paraprofessional	40
	With full-time paraprofessional (Elementary schools)	54
(v)	Co-op Supervision	56

* Defined as class size by full-time equivalent reporting segment.

APPENDIX B

Student with Disabilities

Service Delivery Models shall be resource (R) or self-contained (SC).

CLASS GROUP/ EXCEPTION PROGRAM		FUNDING CLASS SIZE	MAXIMUM INDIVIDUAL CLASS SIZE *	**	EXCEPTION TO MAXIMUM 2 SEGMENTS PER DAY PER TEACHER WITH A PARA-PROFESSIONAL
1.	GROUP I				
(i)	S/L-SC	8	11	15	+1
(ii)	LD-SC	8	12	16	+1
2.	GROUP II				
(i)	MID-SC	6.5	10	13	+1
(ii)	MID-R	6.5	10	13	+1
3.	GROUP III				
(i)	SID-SC	5	NA	7	+1
(ii)	D/HH	5	6	8	+1
(iii)	S/L-R	5	7	NA	NA
(iv)	BD-R	5	7	10	+1
(v)	LD-R	5	8	10	+1
(vi)	BD-SC	5	8	11	+1
(vii)	MOID-SC	5	NA	11	+1
(viii)	OI-SC	5	NA	11	0
4.	GROUP IV				
(i)	D/HH	3	3	4	+1
(ii)	VI-R	3	3	4	+1
(iii)	OI-R	3	4	5	+1
(iv)	VI(DB)-SC	3	NA	6	+1
(v)	PID-SC	3	NA	6	0
5.	GROUP V	8	NA	NA	NA

NOTE: Each paraprofessional is the equivalent to 1/3 teacher and affects individual class size proportionately. Various teacher/paraprofessional models shall be averaged independently.
NOTE: If students from different exceptionalities programs are within the same segment, the maximum class size shall be determined by the program with the smallest class size.
NOTE: Middle school and high school students served in a departmental model shall have

an individual maximum class size of seven without a paraprofessional and ten with a paraprofessional, provided the number of students of any one exceptionality within the class does not exceed the individual maximum class size for that exceptionality.

EXCEPTION TO INDIVIDUAL MAXIMUM CLASS SIZE: The individual maximum class size with a paraprofessional may be increased as noted for two segments per day per teacher for the remainder of the school year. Maximum teacher/pupil ratio without a paraprofessional may not be increased. (See also Rule 160-4-7)

* No paraprofessional ** With paraprofessional

APPENDIX C

Gifted and Alternative Programs

CLASS/GROUP EXCEPTION PROGRAM	FUNDING CLASS SIZE	MAXIMUM INDIVIDUAL CLASS SIZE					
		99-00	00-01	01-02	02-03	03-04	04-05
1. GIFTED							
(i) Elementary Resource (K-5)	12	17	17	17	17	17	17
(ii) Middle School Resource and Advanced Content (6-8)	12	21	21	21	21	21	21
(iii) High School Resource and Advanced Content (9-12)	12	21	21	21	21	21	21
2. ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS							
No paraprofessional	15	NA	18	18	18	18	18
With full-time paraprofessional	15	NA	24	24	24	24	24

APPENDIX D

English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

	FUNDING CLASS SIZE *	MAXIMUM INDIVIDUAL CLASS SIZE *	**
K-3	7	9	11
4-8	7	11	14
9-12	7	13	18

*No paraprofessional
**With full-time paraprofessional

APPENDIX E

Early Intervention Program (EIP)

Self-Contained and Pull-out* Models

	Funding Size	Maximum Class Size
Kindergarten	11	14
Grades 1-3	11	14
Grades 4-5	11	14

Self-contained classes may be multi-grade-level classes as long as the class size does not exceed the maximum class size.

Augmented Class Model – Kindergarten*

A state certified early childhood/elementary teacher will work for a minimum of one segment (45 minutes) with no more than 14 Early Intervention Program students.

FUNDING
CLASS SIZE

						MAXIMUM SYSTEM AVERAGE CLASS SIZE	
		02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	03-04	04-05
15	Maximum Class Size Regular Kindergarten	19	20	20	18	18	18
	Maximum Class Size with full-time paraprofessional	22	22	22	18	20	20

A maximum of 14 EIP students may be in an augmented-class.

Augmented Class Model – Grades 1-3*

A state certified early childhood/elementary teacher will work for a minimum of one segment (45 minutes) with no more than 14 Early Intervention Program students.

FUNDING
CLASS SIZE

						MAXIMUM SYSTEM AVERAGE CLASS SIZE	
		02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	03-04	04-05
17	Maximum Class Size	22	23	23	21	21	21
	Maximum Class Size with full-time paraprofessional	24	23	23	21	21	21

A maximum of 14 EIP students may be in an augmented class.

Augmented Class Model – Grades 4-5*
A state certified early childhood/elementary teacher will work for a minimum of one segment (50 minutes) with no more than 14 Early Intervention Program students.

FUNDING CLASS SIZE		MAXIMUM SYSTEM AVERAGE CLASS SIZE					
		02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	03-04	04-05
23	Maximum Class Size	30	32	32	28	30	30

A maximum of 14 EIP students may be in an augmented class.

*Under the augmented and pull-out models, students will be counted as regular segments and EIP segments to the extent necessary to equal the total number of segments served by the teacher, but not to exceed 90 segments for kindergarten, 102 segments for grades 1-3, and 138 segments for grades 4-5.

Reduced Class Model – Kindergarten

EIP Students	Non-EIP Students	Maximum Total in Class
1	14	15
2	13	15
3	11	14
4	10	14
5	9	14
6	7	13
7	6	13
8	5	13
9	3	12
10	2	12
11	1	12

A full-time paraprofessional may be used in kindergarten models to increase class size by 2 students. The 2 additional students may be either EIP or regular students.

Reduced Class Model – Grades 1-3**

EIP Students	Non-EIP Students	Maximum Total in Class
1	16	17
2	14	16
3	13	16
4	12	16
5	10	15

6	8	14
7	7	14
8	5	13
9	4	13
10	2	12

Reduced Class Model – Grades 4-5**

EIP Students	Non-EIP Students	Maximum Total in Class
1	22	23
2	20	22
3	18	21
4	16	20
5	14	19
6	12	18
7	10	17
8	8	16
9	6	15
10	4	14
11	2	13
12	1	13

**Paraprofessionals may not be used to reduce teacher/student ratio in grades 1-5.

Reading Recovery
The Reading Recovery Program may be used as a model for the Early Intervention Program.

Funding Size	Maximum Class Size
11	14

Students served by Reading Recovery may be counted for one segment of EIP instruction for the entire year.

APPENDIX F
Instructional Extension

	Funding Size	Maximum Individual Class Size	System Average Class Size
After-school, Saturday, Summer, and inter-session programs	15	18	18

Appendix B
Descriptions of Selected State Pupil Weight Systems

The following descriptions are excerpts from:

Parrish, T., Harr, J., Anthony, A. Merickel, & Esra, P. (2003). *State Special Education Finance Systems, 1999-2000, Part I.* Palo Alto, CA: American Institutes for Research, Center for Special Education Finance.

KENTUCKY

Kentucky uses a weighted pupil formula to distribute special education funds, which is integrated into the general aid formula. All students generate money for a school district based on average daily attendance (ADA). Students with disabilities, ages 5 through 20, generate an exceptional child add-on based on categories of disability. The exceptional child add-on is multiplied by the base amount awarded for ADA (determined annually by the Division of Finance, based on available funds). For the 1994–95 school year, the exceptional child add-ons were as follows:

- Functional Mental Disability, Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired, Emotional Behavior Disabled, Deaf-Blind, Autistic, Traumatic Brain Injured, and Multiply Disabled 2.350
- Mild Mentally Disabled, Orthopedically Impaired, Other Health Impaired, Specific Learning Disabled, and 5-year-old Developmentally Delayed children 1.170
- Speech or Language Disabled Only 0.240

SOUTH CAROLINA
(1994-95 SURVEY RESPONSE UPDATED; NCES[10])

South Carolina administers a weighted pupil formula to distribute special education aid that is tied to general education funding. A base student cost is established annually by the General Assembly with weights for special education students and for vocational programs. Also, kindergarten, primary, and high school students are weighted more heavily than are elementary pupils. Weights for special education are as follows:

- Educable mentally disabled and Learning disabled 1.74
- Trainable mentally disabled, Emotionally disabled, and Orthopedically disabled 2.04
- Visually disabled and Hearing disabled 2.57

[10] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. *Public School Finance Programs of the United States and Canada: 1998-99.* NCES 2001-309; Compilers John Dayton, C. Thomas Holmes, and Catherine C. Sielke of The University of Georgia and Anne L. Jefferson of the University of Ottawa. William J. Fowler, Jr., Project Officer. Washington, DC: 2001.

- Speech disabled 1.90
- Homebound 2.10
- Autism 2.57

The formula also establishes maximum class sizes and specifies that 85 percent of funds be spent on the category of pupils generating those funds. A special appropriation from the legislature is made annually for programs for trainable and profoundly mentally retarded. Another program is in place for early intervention for preschool-age children with disabilities.

Appendix C
Special Education Weights based on Ratio of Total Spending on Special Education Students to Spending on General Education Students, by Placement

Average Spending on General Education Student with No Special Needs	$6,556		
Average Total Spending on a Special Education Student by Placement		SE Supplement in Relation to GE Spending	Example Supplemental Weight for GA
Up to 20% Outside of Reg Ed Classroom	$9,251	0.41	1.14
20%- 60% Outside of Reg Ed Classroom	$11,466	0.75	2.09
More Than 60% Outside of Reg Ed Classroom	$14,814	1.26	3.51
Special School[1]	$23,313	2.56	7.14
Externally Placed/Nonpublic Schools[2]	$24,473	2.73	7.61

[1] In calculating the Georgia supplemental weight, this category includes students who receive special education/related services in a public separate or residential facility.

[2] In calculating the Georgia supplemental weight, his category includes students who receive special education/related services in a private separate or private residential facility.

NOTE: Students receiving special education services in home/hospitals or correctional facilities are not reflected in these ratios. This group numbered 259 students in the Georgia December 2003 child count file.

Appendix D
Simulation of Simple Pupil Weights based on Disability Categories and Possible Three Year Implementation

The table below presents projected district-level QBE earnings based on a simple pupil weight system based on disability categories, using 2003-04 as the base year (FY2004). Columns E – G show the amounts earned by district over a three-year implementation period, in which all districts would be held "harmless." In other words, no district would receive less than what was received in the base year. Districts gaining funds under the new approach would received one-third of the increase in addition to the base year amount in Year 1 (Column E). In Year 2, the districts would receive the base year appropriation plus two-thirds of the increase experienced under the new approach (Column F). In Year 3, districts would receive the base year appropriation in addition to the entire increase.

It is important to note that these simulations assume zero inflation and no change in student demographics (e.g., counts by disability category).

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	Projected Total SE Earnings 2004-05	**Actual Total SE Earnings (Base Year) 2003-04**	**% Difference**	**$ Increase Over Base Year**	**1st Year Implementation: Districts will get base year appropriation, plus one-third of increase**	**2nd Year Implementation: Districts will get base year appropriation, plus two-thirds of increase**	**3rd Year Implementation: Districts will get base year appropriation, plus 100% of increase**
Georgia*	**$793,684,543**	**$793,684,543**	**-**	**-**	**$806,410,486**	**$819,136,429**	**$832,248,007**
Appling County	$2,435,479	**$2,323,083**	4.8%	$112,396	$2,360,174	$2,397,264	$2,435,479
Atkinson County	$933,423	**$692,215**	34.8%	$241,208	$771,814	$851,412	$933,423
Atlanta City	$21,010,088	**$20,535,530**	2.3%	$474,558	$20,692,134	$20,848,739	$21,010,088
Bacon County	$1,035,500	**$1,103,666**	-6.2%	-$68,166	$1,103,666	$1,103,666	$1,103,666
Baker County	$299,412	**$487,523**	-38.6%	-$188,111	$487,523	$487,523	$487,523
Baldwin County	$4,953,202	**$5,865,150**	-15.5%	-$911,948	$5,865,150	$5,865,150	$5,865,150
Banks County	$1,436,936	**$1,640,220**	-12.4%	-$203,284	$1,640,220	$1,640,220	$1,640,220
Barrow County	$6,316,534	**$5,879,823**	7.4%	$436,711	$6,023,938	$6,168,053	$6,316,534
Bartow County	$8,129,141	**$9,049,864**	-10.2%	-$920,723	$9,049,864	$9,049,864	$9,049,864
Ben Hill County	$2,299,463	**$1,582,399**	45.3%	$717,064	$1,819,030	$2,055,661	$2,299,463
Berrien County	$1,653,219	**$1,267,957**	30.4%	$385,262	$1,395,093	$1,522,230	$1,653,219
Bibb County	$12,826,812	**$12,428,105**	3.2%	$398,707	$12,559,678	$12,691,252	$12,826,812
Bleckley County	$1,537,139	**$1,645,401**	-6.6%	-$108,262	$1,645,401	$1,645,401	$1,645,401
Brantley County	$1,824,475	**$1,484,506**	22.9%	$339,969	$1,596,696	$1,708,885	$1,824,475
Bremen City	$778,876	**$871,812**	-10.7%	-$92,936	$871,812	$871,812	$871,812
Brooks County	$1,375,826	**$1,068,434**	28.8%	$307,392	$1,169,873	$1,271,313	$1,375,826
Bryan County	$2,290,041	**$1,942,056**	17.9%	$347,985	$2,056,891	$2,171,726	$2,290,041
Buford City	$1,057,779	**$913,841**	15.8%	$143,938	$961,341	$1,008,840	$1,057,779
Bulloch County	$5,806,671	**$5,152,737**	12.7%	$653,934	$5,368,535	$5,584,333	$5,806,671
Burke County	$2,144,916	**$1,642,209**	30.6%	$502,707	$1,808,102	$1,973,996	$2,144,916
Butts County	$1,873,821	**$1,543,652**	21.4%	$330,169	$1,652,608	$1,761,564	$1,873,821
Calhoun City	$1,211,753	**$1,131,125**	7.1%	$80,628	$1,157,732	$1,184,340	$1,211,753
Calhoun County	$502,576	**$501,456**	0.2%	$1,120	$501,826	$502,195	$502,576
Camden County	$4,493,101	**$4,422,337**	1.6%	$70,764	$4,445,689	$4,469,041	$4,493,101

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	Projected Total SE Earnings 2004-05	**Actual Total SE Earnings (Base Year) 2003-04**	**% Difference**	**$ Increase Over Base Year**	**1st Year Implementation: Districts will get base year appropriation, plus one-third of increase**	**2nd Year Implementation: Districts will get base year appropriation, plus two-thirds of increase**	**3rd Year Implementation: Districts will get base year appropriation, plus 100% of increase**
Candler County	$1,018,218	**$1,232,816**	-17.4%	-$214,598	$1,232,816	$1,232,816	$1,232,816
Carroll County	$8,806,721	**$7,928,168**	11.1%	$878,553	$8,218,091	$8,508,013	$8,806,721
Carrollton City	$2,079,329	**$1,738,035**	19.6%	$341,294	$1,850,662	$1,963,289	$2,079,329
Cartersville City	$1,632,658	**$1,500,149**	8.8%	$132,509	$1,543,877	$1,587,605	$1,632,658
Catoosa County	$5,584,506	**$5,519,994**	1.2%	$64,512	$5,541,283	$5,562,572	$5,584,506
Charlton County	$1,081,047	**$847,071**	27.6%	$233,976	$924,283	$1,001,495	$1,081,047
Chatham County	$17,165,730	**$18,462,637**	-7.0%	-$1,296,907	$18,462,637	$18,462,637	$18,462,637
Chattahoochee County	$303,992	**$285,166**	6.6%	$18,826	$291,379	$297,591	$303,992
Chattooga County	$2,717,713	**$2,701,604**	0.6%	$16,109	$2,706,920	$2,712,236	$2,717,713
Cherokee County	$14,217,525	**$15,558,840**	-8.6%	-$1,341,315	$15,558,840	$15,558,840	$15,558,840
Chickamauga City	$358,544	**$336,078**	6.7%	$22,466	$343,492	$350,906	$358,544
Clarke County	$8,641,920	**$8,863,506**	-2.5%	-$221,586	$8,863,506	$8,863,506	$8,863,506
Clay County	$151,528	**$84,447**	79.4%	$67,081	$106,584	$128,720	$151,528
Clayton County	$24,653,416	**$22,912,317**	7.6%	$1,741,099	$23,486,880	$24,061,442	$24,653,416
Clinch County	$1,119,098	**$1,111,100**	0.7%	$7,998	$1,113,739	$1,116,379	$1,119,098
Cobb County	$52,625,138	**$61,260,324**	-14.1%	-$8,635,186	$61,260,324	$61,260,324	$61,260,324
Coffee County	$4,310,445	**$3,803,793**	13.3%	$506,652	$3,970,988	$4,138,183	$4,310,445
Colquitt County	$5,170,525	**$4,644,060**	11.3%	$526,465	$4,817,793	$4,991,527	$5,170,525
Columbia County	$8,287,279	**$7,282,748**	13.8%	$1,004,531	$7,614,243	$7,945,739	$8,287,279
Commerce City	$1,161,261	**$1,005,261**	15.5%	$156,000	$1,056,741	$1,108,221	$1,161,261
Cook County	$1,371,297	**$956,154**	43.4%	$415,143	$1,093,151	$1,230,148	$1,371,297
Coweta County	$11,126,485	**$11,842,609**	-6.0%	-$716,124	$11,842,609	$11,842,609	$11,842,609
Crawford County	$1,602,831	**$1,251,516**	28.1%	$351,315	$1,367,450	$1,483,384	$1,602,831
Crisp County	$2,253,968	**$2,021,853**	11.5%	$232,115	$2,098,451	$2,175,049	$2,253,968
Dade County	$1,257,248	**$1,256,836**	0.0%	$412	$1,256,972	$1,257,108	$1,257,248
Dalton City	$2,944,926	**$3,125,138**	-5.8%	-$180,212	$3,125,138	$3,125,138	$3,125,138
Dawson County	$1,414,189	**$2,621,665**	-46.1%	-$1,207,476	$2,621,665	$2,621,665	$2,621,665
DeKalb County	$40,305,223	**$45,778,275**	-12.0%	-$5,473,052	$45,778,275	$45,778,275	$45,778,275
Decatur City	$1,205,507	**$1,436,659**	-16.1%	-$231,152	$1,436,659	$1,436,659	$1,436,659
Decatur County	$3,058,403	**$3,598,477**	-15.0%	-$540,074	$3,598,477	$3,598,477	$3,598,477
Dodge County	$2,006,037	**$1,832,453**	9.5%	$173,584	$1,889,736	$1,947,019	$2,006,037
Dooly County	$647,493	**$442,907**	46.2%	$204,586	$510,420	$577,934	$647,493
Dougherty County	$9,352,138	**$8,028,834**	16.5%	$1,323,304	$8,465,524	$8,902,214	$9,352,138
Douglas County	$9,655,349	**$9,532,728**	1.3%	$122,621	$9,573,193	$9,613,658	$9,655,349
Dublin City	$2,183,175	**$2,988,024**	-26.9%	-$804,849	$2,988,024	$2,988,024	$2,988,024
Early County	$1,878,819	**$1,486,825**	26.4%	$391,994	$1,616,183	$1,745,541	$1,878,819
Echols County	$313,987	**$275,255**	14.1%	$38,732	$288,036	$300,818	$313,987
Effingham County	$5,367,287	**$4,614,862**	16.3%	$752,425	$4,863,162	$5,111,463	$5,367,287
Elbert County	$2,016,656	**$1,799,036**	12.1%	$217,620	$1,870,851	$1,942,665	$2,016,656
Emanuel County	$3,679,817	**$3,128,748**	17.6%	$551,069	$3,310,601	$3,492,454	$3,679,817
Evans County	$1,389,516	**$1,266,273**	9.7%	$123,243	$1,306,943	$1,347,613	$1,389,516
Fannin County	$1,630,784	**$1,760,109**	-7.3%	-$129,325	$1,760,109	$1,760,109	$1,760,109
Fayette County	$9,732,128	**$10,921,488**	-10.9%	-$1,189,360	$10,921,488	$10,921,488	$10,921,488
Floyd County	$6,619,382	**$6,905,973**	-4.1%	-$286,591	$6,905,973	$6,905,973	$6,905,973

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	Projected Total SE Earnings 2004-05	**Actual Total SE Earnings (Base Year) 2003-04**	**% Difference**	**$ Increase Over Base Year**	**1st Year Implementation: Districts will get base year appropriation, plus one-third of increase**	**2nd Year Implementation: Districts will get base year appropriation, plus two-thirds of increase**	**3rd Year Implementation: Districts will get base year appropriation, plus 100% of increase**
Forsyth County	$10,971,105	**$10,211,340**	7.4%	$759,765	$10,462,062	$10,712,785	$10,971,105
Franklin County	$2,556,711	**$2,742,545**	-6.8%	-$185,834	$2,742,545	$2,742,545	$2,742,545
Fulton County	$30,853,663	**$33,292,666**	-7.3%	-$2,439,003	$33,292,666	$33,292,666	$33,292,666
Gainesville City	$1,278,330	**$1,094,801**	16.8%	$183,529	$1,155,365	$1,215,930	$1,278,330
Gilmer County	$2,097,703	**$1,909,680**	9.8%	$188,023	$1,971,728	$2,033,775	$2,097,703
Glascock County	$352,038	**$350,496**	0.4%	$1,542	$351,005	$351,514	$352,038
Glynn County	$7,361,508	**$6,397,874**	15.1%	$963,634	$6,715,873	$7,033,873	$7,361,508
Gordon County	$3,944,405	**$3,581,552**	10.1%	$362,853	$3,701,293	$3,821,035	$3,944,405
Grady County	$2,187,340	**$1,940,283**	12.7%	$247,057	$2,021,812	$2,103,340	$2,187,340
Greene County	$1,255,270	**$1,779,354**	-29.5%	-$524,084	$1,779,354	$1,779,354	$1,779,354
Gwinnett County	$64,035,210	**$68,100,909**	-6.0%	-$4,065,699	$68,100,909	$68,100,909	$68,100,909
Habersham County	$3,329,237	**$3,408,741**	-2.3%	-$79,504	$3,408,741	$3,408,741	$3,408,741
Hall County	$10,067,717	**$9,765,361**	3.1%	$302,356	$9,865,138	$9,964,916	$10,067,717
Hancock County	$1,157,982	**$934,975**	23.9%	$223,007	$1,008,567	$1,082,160	$1,157,982
Haralson County	$2,735,879	**$2,443,206**	12.0%	$292,673	$2,539,788	$2,636,370	$2,735,879
Harris County	$1,389,776	**$1,097,501**	26.6%	$292,275	$1,193,952	$1,290,403	$1,389,776
Hart County	$1,805,111	**$1,980,288**	-8.8%	-$175,177	$1,980,288	$1,980,288	$1,980,288
Heard County	$939,305	**$1,035,873**	-9.3%	-$96,568	$1,035,873	$1,035,873	$1,035,873
Henry County	$15,170,052	**$15,279,625**	-0.7%	-$109,573	$15,279,625	$15,279,625	$15,279,625
Houston County	$13,812,132	**$13,093,049**	5.5%	$719,083	$13,330,346	$13,567,644	$13,812,132
Irwin County	$1,363,645	**$1,338,095**	1.9%	$25,550	$1,346,527	$1,354,958	$1,363,645
Jackson County	$3,809,795	**$3,594,663**	6.0%	$215,132	$3,665,656	$3,736,650	$3,809,795
Jasper County	$1,489,511	**$1,654,779**	-10.0%	-$165,268	$1,654,779	$1,654,779	$1,654,779
Jeff Davis County	$1,402,998	**$1,081,979**	29.7%	$321,019	$1,187,915	$1,293,851	$1,402,998
Jefferson City	$783,041	**$1,029,055**	-23.9%	-$246,014	$1,029,055	$1,029,055	$1,029,055
Jefferson County	$2,089,739	**$1,410,606**	48.1%	$679,133	$1,634,720	$1,858,834	$2,089,739
Jenkins County	$1,110,405	**$874,163**	27.0%	$236,242	$952,123	$1,030,083	$1,110,405
Johnson County	$922,388	**$732,932**	25.8%	$189,456	$795,452	$857,973	$922,388
Jones County	$2,821,039	**$2,475,803**	13.9%	$345,236	$2,589,731	$2,703,659	$2,821,039
Lamar County	$1,154,442	**$1,019,954**	13.2%	$134,488	$1,064,335	$1,108,716	$1,154,442
Lanier County	$886,991	**$953,362**	-7.0%	-$66,371	$953,362	$953,362	$953,362
Laurens County	$3,021,080	**$3,118,012**	-3.1%	-$96,932	$3,118,012	$3,118,012	$3,118,012
Lee County	$1,895,840	**$1,923,468**	-1.4%	-$27,628	$1,923,468	$1,923,468	$1,923,468
Liberty County	$6,140,698	**$4,771,944**	28.7%	$1,368,754	$5,223,633	$5,675,321	$6,140,698
Lincoln County	$792,410	**$1,174,118**	-32.5%	-$381,708	$1,174,118	$1,174,118	$1,174,118
Long County	$763,833	**$701,910**	8.8%	$61,923	$722,345	$742,779	$763,833
Lowndes County	$5,553,014	**$5,679,865**	-2.2%	-$126,851	$5,679,865	$5,679,865	$5,679,865
Lumpkin County	$1,843,578	**$1,753,813**	5.1%	$89,765	$1,783,436	$1,813,058	$1,843,578
Macon County	$954,609	**$698,707**	36.6%	$255,902	$783,155	$867,602	$954,609
Madison County	$3,210,086	**$3,172,565**	1.2%	$37,521	$3,184,947	$3,197,329	$3,210,086
Marietta City	$4,341,209	**$4,744,350**	-8.5%	-$403,141	$4,744,350	$4,744,350	$4,744,350
Marion County	$774,868	**$622,430**	24.5%	$152,438	$672,735	$723,039	$774,868
McDuffie County	$2,442,089	**$2,355,307**	3.7%	$86,782	$2,383,945	$2,412,583	$2,442,089
McIntosh County	$590,859	**$686,182**	-13.9%	-$95,323	$686,182	$686,182	$686,182
Meriwether County	$4,250,271	**$4,321,403**	-1.6%	-$71,132	$4,321,403	$4,321,403	$4,321,403

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	Projected Total SE Earnings 2004-05	**Actual Total SE Earnings (Base Year) 2003-04**	**% Difference**	**$ Increase Over Base Year**	**1st Year Implementation: Districts will get base year appropriation, plus one-third of increase**	**2nd Year Implementation: Districts will get base year appropriation, plus two-thirds of increase**	**3rd Year Implementation: Districts will get base year appropriation, plus 100% of increase**
Miller County	$697,465	**$738,472**	-5.6%	-$41,007	$738,472	$738,472	$738,472
Mitchell County	$1,710,426	**$1,286,599**	32.9%	$423,827	$1,426,462	$1,566,324	$1,710,426
Monroe County	$2,460,464	**$2,125,620**	15.8%	$334,844	$2,236,119	$2,346,617	$2,460,464
Montgomery County	$638,176	**$615,767**	3.6%	$22,409	$623,162	$630,557	$638,176
Morgan County	$1,738,638	**$1,985,918**	-12.5%	-$247,280	$1,985,918	$1,985,918	$1,985,918
Murray County	$3,628,805	**$3,590,393**	1.1%	$38,412	$3,603,069	$3,615,745	$3,628,805
Muscogee County	$19,643,736	**$20,218,998**	-2.8%	-$575,262	$20,218,998	$20,218,998	$20,218,998
Newton County	$9,598,871	**$9,018,211**	6.4%	$580,660	$9,209,829	$9,401,447	$9,598,871
Oconee County	$2,396,490	**$2,311,803**	3.7%	$84,687	$2,339,750	$2,367,697	$2,396,490
Oglethorpe County	$1,299,567	**$1,481,380**	-12.3%	-$181,813	$1,481,380	$1,481,380	$1,481,380
Paulding County	$10,416,111	**$10,097,817**	3.2%	$318,294	$10,202,854	$10,307,891	$10,416,111
Peach County	$2,472,957	**$2,005,739**	23.3%	$467,218	$2,159,921	$2,314,103	$2,472,957
Pelham City	$1,201,967	**$950,734**	26.4%	$251,233	$1,033,641	$1,116,548	$1,201,967
Pickens County	$2,219,248	**$2,077,204**	6.8%	$142,044	$2,124,079	$2,170,953	$2,219,248
Pierce County	$2,045,338	**$1,797,114**	13.8%	$248,224	$1,879,028	$1,960,942	$2,045,338
Pike County	$1,378,064	**$1,425,036**	-3.3%	-$46,972	$1,425,036	$1,425,036	$1,425,036
Polk County	$4,861,796	**$4,690,926**	3.6%	$170,870	$4,747,313	$4,803,700	$4,861,796
Pulaski County	$1,103,222	**$1,035,590**	6.5%	$67,632	$1,057,908	$1,080,227	$1,103,222
Putnam County	$1,783,977	**$1,951,543**	-8.6%	-$167,566	$1,951,543	$1,951,543	$1,951,543
Quitman County	$151,528	**$76,160**	99.0%	$75,368	$101,031	$125,903	$151,528
Rabun County	$1,396,491	**$1,334,015**	4.7%	$62,476	$1,354,632	$1,375,249	$1,396,491
Randolph County	$771,381	**$763,670**	1.0%	$7,711	$766,215	$768,759	$771,381
Richmond County	$17,602,251	**$14,728,262**	19.5%	$2,873,989	$15,676,678	$16,625,095	$17,602,251
Rockdale County	$6,469,780	**$6,572,290**	-1.6%	-$102,510	$6,572,290	$6,572,290	$6,572,290
Rome City	$2,842,224	**$2,798,921**	1.5%	$43,303	$2,813,211	$2,827,501	$2,842,224
Schley County	$438,030	**$296,473**	47.7%	$141,557	$343,187	$389,901	$438,030
Screven County	$2,126,541	**$1,932,804**	10.0%	$193,737	$1,996,737	$2,060,670	$2,126,541
Seminole County	$1,025,454	**$1,010,671**	1.5%	$14,783	$1,015,549	$1,020,428	$1,025,454
Social Circle City	$808,911	**$807,224**	0.2%	$1,687	$807,781	$808,338	$808,911
Spalding County	$7,242,774	**$6,765,101**	7.1%	$477,673	$6,922,733	$7,080,365	$7,242,774
Stephens County	$2,482,847	**$2,673,027**	-7.1%	-$190,180	$2,673,027	$2,673,027	$2,673,027
Stewart County	$417,105	**$432,676**	-3.6%	-$15,571	$432,676	$432,676	$432,676
Sumter County	$2,381,968	**$2,293,636**	3.9%	$88,332	$2,322,785	$2,351,935	$2,381,968
Talbot County	$549,425	**$266,933**	105.8%	$282,492	$360,155	$453,377	$549,425
Taliaferro County	$178,491	**$98,880**	80.5%	$79,611	$125,152	$151,424	$178,491
Tattnall County	$1,757,742	**$1,737,485**	1.2%	$20,257	$1,744,170	$1,750,855	$1,757,742
Taylor County	$786,268	**$609,864**	28.9%	$176,404	$668,077	$726,291	$786,268
Telfair County	$1,150,694	**$1,467,766**	-21.6%	-$317,072	$1,467,766	$1,467,766	$1,467,766
Terrell County	$953,151	**$517,114**	84.3%	$436,037	$661,006	$804,899	$953,151
Thomas County	$3,814,427	**$4,198,930**	-9.2%	-$384,503	$4,198,930	$4,198,930	$4,198,930
Thomaston-Upson County	$3,041,954	**$2,773,338**	9.7%	$268,616	$2,861,981	$2,950,624	$3,041,954
Thomasville City	$1,674,613	**$1,693,578**	-1.1%	-$18,965	$1,693,578	$1,693,578	$1,693,578
Tift County	$4,228,981	**$2,969,533**	42.4%	$1,259,448	$3,385,151	$3,800,769	$4,228,981
Toombs County	$1,837,800	**$1,632,637**	12.6%	$205,163	$1,700,341	$1,768,045	$1,837,800
Towns County	$548,175	**$708,883**	-22.7%	-$160,708	$708,883	$708,883	$708,883

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Treutlen County	$714,642	**$588,296**	21.5%	$126,346	$629,990	$671,685	$714,642
Trion City	$465,931	**$594,557**	-21.6%	-$128,626	$594,557	$594,557	$594,557
Troup County	$6,145,330	**$5,252,326**	17.0%	$893,004	$5,547,017	$5,841,709	$6,145,330
Turner County	$1,173,390	**$838,927**	39.9%	$334,463	$949,300	$1,059,672	$1,173,390
Twiggs County	$928,426	**$792,926**	17.1%	$135,500	$837,641	$882,356	$928,426
Union County	$2,136,952	**$2,319,496**	-7.9%	-$182,544	$2,319,496	$2,319,496	$2,319,496
Valdosta City	$4,179,843	**$3,546,187**	17.9%	$633,656	$3,755,293	$3,964,400	$4,179,843
Vidalia City	$837,853	**$938,432**	-10.7%	-$100,579	$938,432	$938,432	$938,432
Walker County	$5,792,720	**$5,605,865**	3.3%	$186,855	$5,667,527	$5,729,189	$5,792,720
Walton County	$6,107,956	**$7,177,465**	-14.9%	-$1,069,509	$7,177,465	$7,177,465	$7,177,465
Ware County	$4,103,012	**$4,247,282**	-3.4%	-$144,270	$4,247,282	$4,247,282	$4,247,282
Warren County	$315,184	**$245,896**	28.2%	$69,288	$268,761	$291,626	$315,184
Washington County	$2,111,289	**$1,899,206**	11.2%	$212,083	$1,969,194	$2,039,181	$2,111,289
Wayne County	$3,096,714	**$2,626,693**	17.9%	$470,021	$2,781,800	$2,936,907	$3,096,714
Webster County	$70,585	**$49,719**	42.0%	$20,866	$56,605	$63,490	$70,585
Wheeler County	$662,329	**$557,939**	18.7%	$104,390	$592,388	$626,836	$662,329
White County	$2,100,566	**$2,204,532**	-4.7%	-$103,966	$2,204,532	$2,204,532	$2,204,532
Whitfield County	$6,120,761	**$5,962,192**	2.7%	$158,569	$6,014,520	$6,066,848	$6,120,761
Wilcox County	$713,497	**$670,621**	6.4%	$42,876	$684,770	$698,919	$713,497
Wilkes County	$1,176,929	**$830,952**	41.6%	$345,977	$945,125	$1,059,297	$1,176,929
Wilkinson County	$1,216,646	**$1,141,956**	6.5%	$74,690	$1,166,604	$1,191,251	$1,216,646
Worth County	$1,505,335	**$1,572,847**	-4.3%	-$67,512	$1,572,847	$1,572,847	$1,572,847

*Georgia total excludes CCAT, state schools, and Departments of Corrections, Human Resources, Juvenile Justice, and Labor.

Special Education Funding Formula Task Force
Georgia Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities
Kennesaw State University

Tom Parrish, Executive Director, Center for Special Education Finance. American Institute for Research

Debbie Anderson, Representative from Parents and Partners in Policy Making

Geneice McCoy, Representative from Parents and Partners in Policy Making

Pat Nobbie, Deputy Director of the Georgia Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities

Eric Jacobson, Executive Director of the Georgia Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities

Toni Strieker, Professor and Director of Project WINS, Department of Special Education, Kennesaw State University

Melissa Hughes, Department of Educational Policy and Special Education, Georgia State University

Ben Scafidi, Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor

Phil Pickens, Director of the Division of Exceptional Students (Former), Georgia Department of Education

Marlene Bryar, Director of the Division of Exceptional Students, Georgia Department of Education

Victor Morgan, State Advisory Panel, Governor' s Commission on QBE, Assistant Superintendent of Bartow County Schools

Gail Wilkins, Bartow County Inclusion Specialist

Leslie Lipson, Atty. Georgia Advocacy Office

Rep. Kathy Ashe, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education

Rep. Jeanette Jamieson, Governor's Commission on QBE

Sen. Brian Kemp, Governor's Commission on QBE

Allene Magill, Executive Director of the Professional Association of Georgia Educators

Stuart Bennet, Deputy State School Superintendent

Alan White, Superintendent of Butts County Schools, Representative o f the Georgia School Superintendents Association

Sherry Ellison, Special Education Teacher

Glorious Jones, Special Education Teacher

Ronald Cloud, Parent Representative of Bibb County Schools and Project Bridges

Martez Hill, Policy Director of the Georgia Department of Education

Peggy West, Director of the Division for Exceptional Students, Muscogee County School District

Catherine C. Sielke, Associate Professor of Education, University of Georgia

Rae Ann Gerhardt, Georgia Council of Administrators of Special Education, Coordinator of Special Education Programs, Fulton County School District

Orval Porter, Superintendent of Dalton County School District