



THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE *of* STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

RESTARTING SCHOOL

Updates, Resources, and News

SEPTEMBER, 2020

Dear Friends, Partners and Colleagues,

The past six months have been particularly challenging for educators, students and parents who are taking on new roles, responsibilities and practices. This spring left many students without devices and/or internet access. The Governor's Office of Student Achievement team has been working with partner state agencies and providers to ensure that students, educators, and parents have connectivity and devices during these COVID-19 months of digital and hybrid learning.

With no playbook to reference when schools closed in March, we witnessed the outpouring of support to provide students with the tools they needed to continue school. We heard many stories about ways educators met the challenge to continue student learning. Teachers spent evenings making copies of homework assignments and driving them to students' homes. Parents without internet access traveled to school parking lots to use their school's WI-FI for their children's assignments and digital learning.

Today, as schools reopen in some form – in person, virtual or hybrid – we know that funding through federal CARES Act and GEER allocations will help students with devices and connectivity. Private providers are also making special rates available for connections and offering grants. That is all good news for students, their families and educators who are currently struggling. However, we are cognizant that this assistance is temporary.

Now, more than ever, we see the inequities in education due to the lack of high-speed internet throughout Georgia. The pandemic has brought new and elevated attention to our state's digital divide. When we return to a "new normal," I am

hopeful that we do not lose sight of the fact that internet connectivity is critical to education delivery – from young children to adults.

Georgia is blessed to have leaders who understand the importance of broadband connections to the last mile and high-speed internet. I am confident that we will collectively continue to work on these issues. That is all good news.

Blessings to all and stay safe,

Joy Hawkins

Executive Director



TIME IS RUNNING OUT – FOR YOU TO BE COUNTED

Only 61% of all Georgians Have Completed the National Census. Georgia Needs You – Make sure your community receives the national funding it needs.

Complete the Census Today! Get more information by [clicking here](#).

Governor Brian P. Kemp, and First Lady Marty Kemp, send a heartfelt "Thank You" message to all of Georgia's teachers.



Governor Brian P. Kemp has announced the State of Georgia's first allocation of Governors Emergency Education Relief (GEER) funding, set aside by the CARES Act, to support initiatives across all levels of education in Georgia. Here are the areas outlined in the [Governor's press release](#):

- Supporting Student Connectivity - \$29.3 million
- Mental Health and Student Support Services - \$11.5 million
- eCampus Initiative for Technical College System of Georgia - \$10.4 million
- Georgia Independent College Association COVID-19 Relief - \$10 million
- Bolstering the "Construction Ready" Program - \$3.3 million
- Department of Early Care and Learning SOLVE Program - \$17-19 million



More information on the \$411 million in CARES Act funding to Georgia school districts including the allocation amounts and school districts can be found on [the Georgia Department of Education site](#).

The Hunt Institute is keeping track state-by-state of [Governors Emergency Education Relief \(GEER\) funding](#), set aside by the CARES Act, to support initiatives across all levels of education, including links to each state's GEER Funding application.

Are there student families in your area who may need assistance with connectivity?

Check out the two assistance programs being offered by Comcast and T-Mobile.

We've included them at the top of the [GOSA homepage](#) under Student Connectivity Assistance.



Student Connectivity Assistance
[Comcast Internet Essentials](#)
[T-Mobile for Education](#)

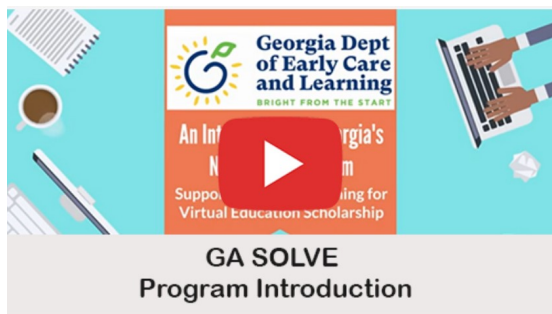
[K-12 Learning Pods Across the State](#)

[Georgia K-12 School Restart Guide](#)

Online Learning Resources - [Click here](#)

Do you know a working family who is struggling with their school's virtual learning model? Here are two resources you can pass along to those families:

[The Georgia SOLVE Program](#): Providing scholarships for families with students enrolled in a Georgia public school system offering only a virtual learning model or a school system with 50% or less in-person learning opportunities, SOLVE



Scholarships support working families with children ages 5-12 (kindergarten through grade 6) by paying for care, supervision, and support during the school day while students are engaged in virtual learning.

[The YMCA Campus Connection Program:](#) At Y Campus Connection, students in kindergarten through sixth grade throughout metro Atlanta will be supported in completing their remote learning while also staying active and enjoying fun activities throughout the day, and after their virtual school day is complete.



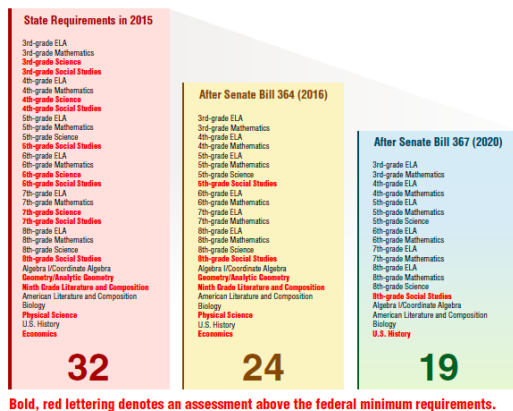
There was tremendous disappointment this year, when the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) announced that it would be forced to cancel the 2020 Governor's Honors Program due to the Pandemic. This was the first time in the program's 57-year history that a cancellation decision had to be made.



Our GHP Leadership Team partnered with our site host (Berry College) last month to ship a very special care package to each rising senior finalist recognizing their inclusion as alumni of the Governor's Honors Program. Each received: an official GHP 2020 T-shirt, a special GHP finalist certificate, the GHP 2020 lanyard that each finalist would have received upon arrival back in June, a GHP decal, and two items from Berry College.

GOSA has formed a GHP Alumni Steering Committee, and they are currently working on ideas to honor all 2020 GHP finalists with a GHP Day at the State Capitol (in a post COVID-19 environment) and possible ways to supplement the program with private fundraising.

In keeping with Senate Bill 367, which was signed into law in July, Georgia has eliminated half of the Georgia Milestones End-of-Course tests required of high school students.



Georgia has now seen the largest reduction in standardized testing in state history, going from 32 state-required assessments in 2015 to 19 beginning this school year. SB 367 also removed the fifth-grade social studies Georgia Milestones assessment, reducing Georgia elementary-school testing to the federal minimum.

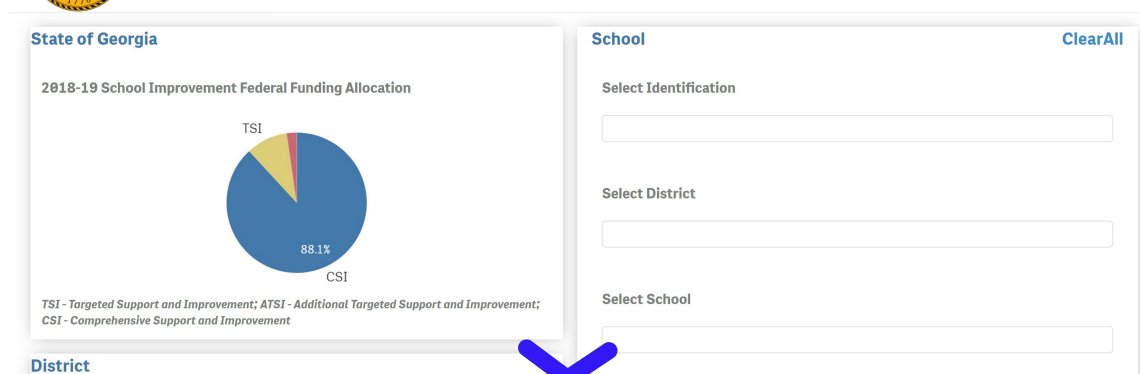
Read the [full Georgia Department of Education release here](#).



This Friday, GOSA will present, the Governor's School Leadership Academy (GSLA) Friday Spotlight. Each Friday we'll be highlighting an important aspect or partner of the GSLA program on our [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) platforms.

The [GSLA programs](#) offer significant positive impact for educators in all phases of their careers – from induction to school and district leadership. GSLA provides high-quality, selective statewide educational leadership preparation and support designed to develop high-capacity school leaders across Georgia.

The Governor's Office of Student Achievement has updated the data available to researchers, educators, community leaders and parents on one of our Data Dashboards. The [School Improvement Funding Report](#) – which gives information about this grant which is awarded to support implementation of school improvement plans required by the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).



The Innovation Fund Foundation unveils its new social platforms:

<https://www.facebook.com/innovationfundfoundation>

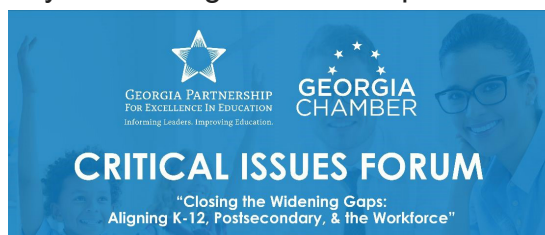
<https://twitter.com/InnovationFund2>



**Innovation Fund
FOUNDATION**

The [Innovation Fund Foundation](https://www.innovationfundfoundation.org/) (IFF) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit foundation which supports the work of the Governor's Office of Student Achievement. The IFF invests in innovative partnerships and initiatives to ignite student achievement.

Did you miss this recent webinar co-hosted by The Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education with the Georgia Chamber of Commerce? Click the link to watch the Critical Issues Forum - "[Closing the Widening Gaps: Aligning K-12, Postsecondary, & the Workforce.](#)"



This month's [featured Georgia Storyteller](#) - Atlanta-based storyteller Josie Bailey:

Math is the only language that's shared by everyone on the planet—and the story of math can be told through song. Atlanta-based storyteller Josie Bailey presents "[Multiplication Goes hip-hop](#)," which uses catchy rhythms and tunes to present the times tables, making the "Funky Fives," "Sassy Sixes," and more accessible and fun for children of all ages.

The Get Georgia Reading Campaign created the “[Georgia Storytellers Series](#)” and we appreciate them, and this wonderful project!

Teachers and parents, are you looking for some great free educational resources? Check out the exciting [materials offered by the Georgia Aquarium](#). They include nine gallery webcams, 233 Animal Guides, Deep Sea learning videos complete with study guides, coloring pages, activity sheets and just for teachers – free lesson plans and class resources.



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