

2013

# Roll-out and Early Implementation of CCGPS

Analysis of the *CCGPS Supports Inventory  
Survey*



# **Roll-out and Early Implementation of CCGPS**

Analysis of the CCGPS Supports Inventory Survey

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Governor's Office of Student Achievement

2013

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The Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) produced this report as a part of Georgia's statewide evaluation of Race to the Top. GOSA strives to increase student achievement and school completion across Georgia through meaningful, transparent, and objective analysis and communication of statewide data. In addition, GOSA provides policy support to the Governor and, ultimately, to the citizens of Georgia through:

- An education scoreboard that forthrightly indicates the effectiveness of Georgia's education institutions, from Pre-K through college;
- Research initiatives on education programs in Georgia and corresponding findings to inform policy, budget, and legislative efforts;
- Thorough analysis and straightforward communication of education data to stakeholders;
- Audits of academic programs to ensure that education institutions are fiscally responsible with state funds and faithful to performance accountability requirements; and
- Collaborative work with the Alliance of Education Agency Heads (AEAH) to improve education statewide.

For more information on GOSA's statewide evaluation of Race to the Top implementation in Georgia, please visit [gosa.georgia.gov/statewide-evaluation](https://gosa.georgia.gov/statewide-evaluation).

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Georgia's Race to the Top (RT3) plan charges the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) with the statewide evaluation of the grant. This report evaluates the fidelity of implementation of one of the initiatives, the roll-out and early implementation of Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS), during the 2011-12 and 2012-2013 school years.

In July 2010, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) adopted the *Common Core State Standards*, a set of common English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics performance standards. These standards establish clear expectations for learning in ELA and mathematics for students across the country. The National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) developed and continue to lead the *Common Core State Standards*. By adopting the *Common Core State Standards*, the developers and proponents believe American students will be better prepared for college and career and more competitive with their peers in other states and abroad. As stated by the Common Core State Standards Initiative, "to date, 45 other states, the District of Columbia (D.C.), and two territories, along with the Department of Defense Education Activity, have formally adopted the standards."<sup>1</sup>

In an effort to learn more about Georgia's early implementation of Georgia's version of the standards, GOSA administered the *CCGPS Supports Inventory Survey* in November 2012. The survey had two purposes. First, gain a better understanding of how GaDOE, Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) are supporting educators as they transition to CCGPS. And second, obtain feedback on GaDOE's leadership and support during the early phases of CCGPS implementation.

GOSA administered the survey to curriculum directors and leaders in every LEA across the state and Math Mentors and ELA Specialists from every RESA. Responses from 179 LEAs gave a response rate of 92%. Responses from at least one ELA Specialist and Math Mentor in almost every RESA gave a 97% response rate.

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<sup>1</sup> "In the States," Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2012, 16 May 2013  
<<http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>>.

The survey has five sections:

- I. Satisfaction and usage of state resources
- II. Instructional materials and resources
- III. District supports for educators
- IV. Teacher understanding of CCGPS
- V. Areas of promise and improvement

The purpose of this report is to provide stakeholders with a thorough understanding of the types of support services and materials that have been offered to educators since 2011. Readers should come away with a strong understanding of the availability of supports to prepare teachers for implementing CCGPS during the 2012-2013 school year. In addition, readers should gain insight into how curriculum leaders across the state perceive GaDOE's support and leadership throughout the early implementation period. Finally, this report starts the larger conversation around teacher understanding and readiness to implement the standards.

## **MAIN FINDINGS**

This report is organized based on the format of the survey. The findings are presented below in the order that they are discussed in the report.

### ***Teacher understanding of CCGPS***

- Teachers understood the implementation of the standards but did not have as clear an understanding about how the ELA literacy standards impacted other subjects. (p. 12)
- Teachers knew how to access support materials. (p. 13)
- Teachers understood how assessments were changing. (p. 14)
- Respondents were divided on whether teachers implemented CCGPS with confidence (p. 15)

### ***Perception of GaDOE supports***

- Respondents preferred mathematics supports over English Language Arts (ELA) supports. (p. 16)
- Summer Academies appeared successful. (p. 18)

- GaDOE and GPB webinars provided cost-effective and standardized training. However, many respondents found that the trainings did not sufficiently engage or meet the needs of educators. (p. 23)
- GaDOE’s instructional support materials provided a good starting point for instructional planning and preparation; however, many of the materials seemed not cohesive, too long, and sometimes inaccurate. (p. 29)

### ***Perception of GaDOE’s roll-out of CCGPS***

- GaDOE was very supportive. (p. 32)
- Sometimes, educators did not receive information or guidance in a timely or convenient fashion. (p. 32)

### ***Instructional support materials used statewide***

- In most cases, educators used instructional support materials developed by GaDOE and did not access materials from RESA websites. In rare instances, providers tracked usage of materials. (p.35)
- The major findings regarding each type of instructional support material are listed. (p. 38)
  - Educators utilized curriculum exemplars most often.
  - GaDOE most likely developed the curriculum supports used by educators.
  - Educators utilized textbooks least often.
  - Educators were least likely to access instructional support materials from their RESA’s website.
  - Providers rarely tracked usage of instructional support materials across the state.
  - Educators were least likely to use instructional support materials developed by another Georgia LEA or RESA, another state, or an LEA from outside of Georgia.

### ***Training methods used statewide***

- Most often, administrators and select instructional staff received training. RESAs delivered most of the training, and providers used training to share information on CCGPS. (p. 43)
- The major findings regarding each type of training method are listed. (p. 47)
  - The training methods discussed in the *CCGPS Supports Inventory Survey* aligned well with the training methods being used across the state.
  - In most cases, in-person training methods occurred at local levels.
  - It was rare that providers used online course or tools to train educators.
  - Providers usually trained administrators.
  - Training primarily provided information about CCGPS.
  - RESAs delivered most of the localized training.

### **GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Respondents provided open-ended comments throughout the survey. These comments contextualized their responses to survey statements and often exposed areas where they thought service delivery needed improvement. Generally, respondents either discussed ***gaps*** in service delivery or ***opportunities*** to strengthen service delivery. Simply put, gaps provide examples of support that respondents perceived as being absent, and opportunities provide examples of support that respondents experienced but thought needed improvement. Here is a summary of the gaps and opportunities along with the page numbers where more detailed information on each gap and opportunity can be found.

#### ***Gaps in service delivery***

GaDOE and/or other appropriate agencies should assess the actual level of need relative to these gaps and then develop supports to address them. Based on their experience with early implementation of CCGPS, respondents perceived the following gaps in service delivery.

- Educators needed more support with assessing teacher practice. (p. 54)
- New assessments caused anxiety because teachers did not know what to expect. (p. 55)

- Some of GaDOE’s instructional support materials lacked critical information. (p. 57)
- Non-RT3 partner districts needed more guidance and support. (p. 58)
- Educators noted an absence of CCGPS information and resources tailored to parents. (p. 59)

***Opportunities to strengthen existing service delivery***

Based on their experience with early implementation of CCGPS, respondents suggested that state agencies make the following improvements.

- Create more opportunities for face-to-face training. (p. 61)
- Make supports more “teacher-friendly.” (p. 62)
- Increase access to GaDOE staff. (p. 64)
- Increase opportunities for best practice sharing. (p. 65)

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# TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

Common Core Georgia Performance Standards	CCGPS
Council of Chief State School Officers	CCSSO
English Language Arts	ELA
GaDOE Online Assessment System	OAS
Georgia Department of Education	GaDOE or the Department
Georgia Performance Standards	GPS
Georgia Public Broadcasting	GPB
Governor’s Office of Student Achievement	GOSA
Local Education Agency	LEA
Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers	PARCC
Race to the Top	RT3
Regional Education Service Agency	RESA

# INTRODUCTION

In August 2010, the US Department of Education awarded Georgia, along with nine other states, Race to the Top (RT3) grants in the second phase of the program.<sup>2</sup> Georgia received \$400M over four years to implement a robust statewide education reform strategy. The strategy includes implementing statewide common standards for English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics and developing a statewide longitudinal data system. The plan also includes instituting a comprehensive educator evaluation system and turning around persistently low achieving schools.<sup>3</sup> Twenty-six local school districts, and several state agencies and nonprofit organizations, partnered to implement Georgia's plan. Although the majority of the reform work takes place within the partnering districts, the plan includes opportunities for other districts to benefit from some of the resources as well. One of the primary ways that every LEA will be touched by RT3 is through the implementation of the Common Core Georgia Performance Standards (CCGPS). CCGPS is Georgia's version of *Common Core State Standards*.

The *Common Core State Standards* Initiative is a state-led effort to establish clear expectations for learning in ELA and mathematics for students across the country. The *Common Core State Standards* aim to support college and career readiness by ensuring that "students, no matter where they live, are well prepared with the skills and knowledge necessary to collaborate and compete with their peers in the United States and abroad."<sup>4</sup> To date, every state and territory, with the exclusion of Alaska, Minnesota, Nebraska, Puerto Rico, and Texas, adopted the standards.<sup>5</sup>

Years of student performance data show that American students perform below their international peers in many of the world's other developed nations. Also, many American students graduate from high school unprepared for the rigor of college and

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<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Press Office, "Nine States and the District of Columbia Win Second Round Race to the Top Grants," press release, [ED.gov](http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/nine-states-and-district-columbia-win-second-round-race-top-grants), 24 Aug. 2010, 16 May 2013  
<<http://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/nine-states-and-district-columbia-win-second-round-race-top-grants>>.

<sup>3</sup> "Georgia's Race to the Top (RT3) Plan," [Georgia Department of Education](http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/Race-to-the-Top/Pages/default.aspx), 2011, 16 May 2013  
<<http://www.doe.k12.ga.us/Race-to-the-Top/Pages/default.aspx>>.

<sup>4</sup> "Frequently Asked Questions," [Common Core State Standards Initiative](http://www.corestandards.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions), 2012, 16 May 2013  
<<http://www.corestandards.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions>>.

<sup>5</sup> "In the States," [Common Core State Standards Initiative](http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states), 2012, 16 May 2013  
<<http://www.corestandards.org/in-the-states>>.

career success. Research shows that “among 30 developed countries, the United States is ranked 25<sup>th</sup> in math and 21<sup>st</sup> in science. When the comparison is restricted to students in the top 5 percent, the United States ranks last.”<sup>6</sup> The developers and supporters of the *Common Core State Standards* assert that these standards remedy this challenge.

In order to effectively transition to the *Common Core State Standards*, many states will need to make large-scale changes to policies and systems that govern their P-20 educational systems. Achieve and US Education Delivery Institute encouraged states to examine their alignment of instructional materials and teacher preparation, evaluation, and licensing programs. These organizations also recommended that states assess their readiness to support new assessments.<sup>7</sup> The Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) is charged with the task of evaluating the fidelity of implementation and the effectiveness of the Georgia’s transition to and implementation of CCGPS, Georgia’s version of *Common Core State Standards*. This is the first evaluation report to discuss the work being done within this reform area.

In order to understand the impact of Georgia’s transition to CCGPS on student learning, one needs to examine how the standards are being used in classrooms. CCGPS does not dictate how teachers should teach, nor do they dictate the instructional materials that are expected to be used. Performance standards are “what” students are expected to learn. Curriculum is “how” students are taught.<sup>8</sup>

Although CCGPS is not a curriculum, the standards are the basis for summative assessments. The *Common Core State Standards* increases the rigor, scope, and depth of what students are expected to learn. Experts say that many teachers will need to adjust their strategies and approach to help students do well on these assessments.<sup>9</sup> Teachers need a strong understanding of the standards, as well effective training and useful instructional support materials to transition to the new standards with confidence.

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<sup>6</sup> Cathy J. Lassiter, "Meeting the Challenge of Rigorous Expectations in the Common Core." [Navigating Implementation of the Common Core State Standards](#) (The Leadership and Learning Center, 2011) 92.

<sup>7</sup> [Implementing Common Core State Standards and Assessments: A Workbook for State and District Leaders](#), Publication (Achieve and US Education Delivery Institute, 2012) 1.7.

<sup>8</sup> [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (Atlanta: Georgia Department of Education, 2012) 3.

<sup>9</sup> Cathy J. Lassiter, "Meeting the Challenge of Rigorous Expectations in the Common Core.," [Navigating Implementation of the Common Core State Standards](#) (The Leadership and Learning Center, 2011) 106.

Stakeholders need a better understanding of the landscape of support services that exists across the state before investigating the specific ways CCGPS implementation affected educators. GOSA developed and administered the *CCGPS Supports Inventory Survey* to collect feedback from state and local officials about the supports provided to educators.

The purpose of this report is to give GaDOE, the Governor's Office, the members of the General Assembly, educators, parents and other stakeholders a thorough understanding of the types of CCGPS support services and materials that teachers used since 2011. Readers will gain insight into how curriculum leaders across the state perceive GaDOE's support and leadership throughout the early implementation period. Finally, this report starts the larger conversation around teacher understanding and readiness to implement the standards.

The report is organized as follows. First, background on the *Common Core State Standards* movement and how Georgia chose to implement its version of the standards is provided. Next the survey and the methodology for the report are discussed. Once the foundation for this study has been established, the bulk of the report discusses the results in detail.

The results section follows the same organizational structure as the *CCGPS Supports Inventory Survey*, with a few exceptions. First, an overview of the curriculum leaders' impression of their educators' understanding of CCGPS is discussed. Although this section comes later in the survey, it is discussed early in the results section of the report to contextualize the findings. Next, the curriculum leaders' perception of GaDOE's support and early implementation of CCGPS is discussed. That is followed by a detailed explanation of the training methods and types of instructional supports being made available to educators. Finally, drawing from the feedback from respondents, the report concludes with a discussion of several perceived gaps and opportunities to strengthen service delivery.

In some cases, GOSA requested follow-up information from GaDOE curriculum staff to clarify comments from respondents. Therefore, feedback from GaDOE, most often to explain the rationale for certain decisions, is interspersed throughout the report as well.

The feedback in this report will be useful to inform future program planning and implementation.

# COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS MOVEMENT

The National Governors Association (NGA) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) led the development of the *Common Core State Standards*. As stated by the developers, “the federal government was not involved in the development of the standards,” and states adopted the standards on a voluntary basis.<sup>10</sup> States started adopting the standards as early as June 2010. Georgia adopted them in July 2010.

Under the guidance of the NGA and CCSSO, a diverse group of stakeholders, including educators, content specialists, and parents, worked together to design the standards. They used evidence-based practices, as well as standards of high rigor from other states and countries, to develop the *Common Core State standards*.

The NGA and CCSSO permitted states to personalize their standards by adding up to 15% of additional standards. This allowed states to represent the unique needs of their students. However, states had to agree that at least 85% of their mathematics and English Language arts (ELA) standards would remain consistent with the *Common Core State Standards*.<sup>11</sup> After conducting a crosswalk of the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) with the *Common Core State Standards*, GaDOE found that 81% of Georgia’s ELA standards matched with Common Core.<sup>12</sup> Ninety percent of Georgia’s mathematics standards matched with Common Core.<sup>13</sup> Georgia’s experience with implementing GPS provided a strong foundation for Georgia’s transition to CCGPS. State officials explain in Georgia’s RT3 application that adopting the *Common Core State Standards* was a logical next step in its efforts to improve state standards and curriculum.

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<sup>10</sup> “Frequently Asked Questions,” *Common Core State Standards Initiative*, 2012, 16 May 2013 <<http://www.corestandards.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions>>.

<sup>11</sup> John Kendall and Susan Ryan, “Opportunity and Challenge: The 15% Rule,” *National Association of State Boards of Education’s State Education Standard* (2012): 29, *National Association of State Boards of Education*, 19 Sept. 2012, 17 May 2013 <<http://www.nasbe.org/wp-content/uploads/Opportunity-Challenge-the-15-Rule1.pdf>>.

<sup>12</sup> *Georgia State Board Report: English Language Arts Findings*, Rep. (Atlanta: Georgia State Board of Education, 2010) 2.

<sup>13</sup> *Georgia State Board Report: Mathematics Findings*, Rep. (Atlanta: Georgia State Board of Education, 2010) 2.

## CCGPS IMPLEMENTATION

GaDOE decided to take on an aggressive timeline for implementing CCGPS. As shown in the table below, the Department decided to implement the new standards in every ELA and mathematics classroom across the state during the 2012-2013 school year.

**Table 1: GaDOE plan for CCGPS implementation**

<b>Adoption</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Georgia State Board of Education adopted CCGPS on July 8, 2010.</li></ul>
<b>Awareness</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• March - August 2011: In-person meetings with school and LEA administrators</li><li>• September 2011: Georgia Public Broadcasting (GPB) statewide orientation video</li><li>• August - December 2011: Grade-level webinars focused on overarching ELA and mathematics principles</li><li>• 2011-2012: Presentations at over 85 conferences and meetings</li></ul>
<b>Pre-implementation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• January - May 2012: Grade-level sessions live-streamed via GPB</li><li>• May 2012: Sample unit frameworks for each grade level posted to CCGPS website (<a href="http://www.georgiastandards.org">www.georgiastandards.org</a>)</li><li>• Summer 2012: Face-to-face training by RESA ELA Specialists and Math Mentors during ELA and mathematics summer academies</li></ul>
<b>Year 1 implementation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• May 2012: March 2013 - Unit-by-Unit Webinar Series</li><li>• July 2013: Revised sample unit frameworks posted to CCGPS website</li></ul>
<b>Ongoing support</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Various mechanisms for communication, including newsletters, wiki pages, and social media</li><li>• Professional learning and technical support from RESA and GaDOE</li></ul>

Georgia's RT3 application proposed an expedited transition to CCGPS. State officials made this decision because the state already had a streamlined process for adoption,

the strength of GPS provided a good starting point, and few gaps existed among GPS and future standards.<sup>14</sup>

GaDOE curriculum staff stated that they provided LEAs with a “blueprint” for implementing CCGPS. The Department led the transition from GPS to CCGPS across the state by providing communication, training and support.

**Communication.** Georgia’s RT3 plan charged GaDOE with communicating the overall vision and plan for the transition through various means. In 2011, GaDOE staff facilitated face-to-face meetings with RESA directors and staff, and with district and school administrators to orient them to this work. Following these meetings, GaDOE partnered with GPB to record a comprehensive overview of the CCGPS project. The overview aired on September 21, 2011, to an audience of educators, parents, policymakers and other interested stakeholders. GaDOE continued to use virtual presentations through webinars and live-streaming to promote CCGPS and communicate with stakeholders across the state. As an added benefit, GaDOE and GPB websites made these virtual presentations available to all education stakeholders at any time.

**Training.** For the most part, GaDOE used virtual presentations to train district and school administrators and teachers on CCGPS. Learning from the conversion to GPS, GaDOE recognized a need to ensure that all stakeholders received consistent information. Several GaDOE curriculum staff said teachers needed, “The same message, from the same voice.” Therefore, GaDOE decided the most effective and feasible way to achieve this goal was through web-based training tools.

Training began in fall 2011. In the first phase, teachers across the state learned about the specific changes and implications surrounding CCGPS through subject- and grade-specific webinars. Then, in January through May 2012, GaDOE developed and provided over 50 additional CCGPS training sessions. GPB hosted these sessions. The sessions delved deeper into the specific curriculum changes teachers could expect as they transitioned from GPS to CCGPS. These two-hour professional learning sessions were also subject- and grade-specific.

GaDOE also used Georgia’s RT3 grant to support staff at each of the RESAs. The RESA staff provided ongoing support and technical assistance to their local districts related

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<sup>14</sup> Office of the Governor and Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), [Georgia’s Race to the Top Application](#), Race to the Top proposal, 19 Jan. 2010.

to CCGPS implementation. These staff members are the ELA Specialists and Math Mentors who took the *CCGPS Supports Inventory Survey*.

**Support.** In addition to communication and training, GaDOE provided instructional support resources to support a successful transition to CCGPS. The Department developed a variety of tools and resources to help administrators and teachers, including:

- Sample instructional units in mathematics and ELA for grades K-12
- Mathematics and ELA teacher guides for grades K-12
- Mathematics and ELA curriculum maps for grades K-12
- Instructional activities to supplement the new literacy integration standards for social studies/history, science, and technical subjects

GaDOE is developing new STEM courses and working with Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).<sup>15</sup> PARCC is charged with developing common assessments to compliment the *Common Core State Standards*. This work is a component of GaDOE's RT3 scope-of-work.

## **CCGPS IMPACT**

According to GaDOE, transitioning to CCGPS should have the following effect on the state.<sup>16</sup>

### ***Benefits to students***

- Rigorous knowledge and skills needed to succeed in college and/or careers.
- Consistent expectations across states, regardless of whether they decide to go to school at Georgia Tech or UCLA, or find a job in Georgia, Maine or Indiana.
- Relevant content and application of knowledge through higher-order skills.

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<sup>15</sup> PARCC is a 22-state consortium working together to develop next-generation K-12 assessments in English and math. Visit the PARCC website for more information: <http://www.parcconline.org/>

<sup>16</sup> Frequently Asked Questions (Atlanta: Georgia Department of Education, 2012) 1-4.

***Benefits to educators***

- Clear, focused expectations that assist them in being on the same page and working together with students and parents for shared goals.
- A common-sense next step that is aligned to Georgia Performance Standards (GPS).

***Benefits to taxpayers***

- Long-term potential savings on textbooks and instructional resources that come with consistent materials developed throughout the country.

The next section of the report provides an overview of the methodology for this study.

# METHODOLOGY

## STATEWIDE SURVEY

GOSA administered the *CCGPS Supports Inventory Survey* on November 14, 2012, two or three months into the school year for most respondents, using Survey Monkey. The survey targeted curriculum directors, leaders and specialists in every LEA and RESA in the state. The majority of LEA staff identified themselves as being either an assistant or associate superintendent or a curriculum director. ELA Specialists and Math Mentors from every RESA and three members of GaDOE's curriculum department took the survey as well.

GOSA did not incentivize respondents to participate but informed respondents that their feedback would be used to help inform ongoing program planning related to CCGPS implementation. GOSA and GaDOE staff followed up with non-responders by sending e-mails and making phone calls, with a goal of achieving a 100% response rate.

The *CCGPS Supports Inventory Survey* has five sections:

- I. Satisfaction and usage of state resources
- II. Instructional materials and resources
- III. District supports for educators
- IV. Teacher understanding of CCGPS
- V. Areas of promise and improvement

Section I asked respondents to rate GaDOE's supports to educators. Supports included instructional materials that the Department created to aid educators in understanding and implementing CCGPS and training efforts, which included webinars, GPB sessions and summer academies. Section II asked respondents to report the types of instructional supports, like curriculum exemplars, formative assessments and textbooks that educators had access to in that LEA or RESA. Section III asked respondents to state the types of training methods, like webinars or job-embedded training used by educators in that LEA or RESA. Section IV asked respondents to rate the educators' level of understanding and readiness to implement CCGPS in that LEA or RESA. The last section, Section V, asked respondents to suggest components of the roll-out and ongoing implementation of CCGPS, that offer promise for replication or scaling up. It

also asked the respondents to offer suggestions for improving ongoing implementation and to share lessons learned for future initiatives.

GOSA used valid and reliable tools, as well as evidence- and research-based practices to develop the *CCGPS Supports Inventory Survey*. These tools included:

- An end-of-course survey being used by a well-respected thought leader and RT3 partner<sup>17</sup>;
- Checklist to help states with *Common Core State Standards* implementation developed by the National Association of Elementary School Principals<sup>18</sup>; and
- Materials from Achieve, Education First, and U.S. Education Delivery Institute also informed GOSA's survey development.<sup>19 20</sup>

GaDOE curriculum and RT3 staff, as well as the Executive Director of Georgia Association of Curriculum and Instructional Supervisors (GACIS), a state education professional association, vetted the survey questions.

## **DATA PRESENTATION**

Data are presented throughout the report in charts, tables and direct quotes. For ease of discussion purposes, GOSA rounded the percentages throughout the report to the nearest whole number. Additionally, GOSA presented question texts and/or scales in an abbreviated manner when data results are presented in charts or tables. All results from the survey are shown, along with the full text for questions and open-ended responses, in the Appendix.

The next section discusses the results and findings from the survey.

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<sup>17</sup> Center for Education Integrating Science, Mathematics, and Computing (CEISMC), [End of Course Survey](#), Survey, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta.

<sup>18</sup> National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), "Common Core Implementation Checklist," [The Communicator](#) 35 (May 2012), [National Association of Elementary School Principals \(NAESP\)](#), May 2012, Nov. 2012 <<http://www.naesp.org/communicator-may-2012/common-core-implementation-checklist-principals>>.

<sup>19</sup> Achieve and Education First, [A Strong State Role in Common Core State Standards Implementation: Rubric and Self-Assessment Tool](#), Informational material, Mar. 2012.

<sup>20</sup> [Implementing Common Core State Standards and Assessments: A Workbook for State and District Leaders](#) (Achieve and US Education Delivery Institute, 2012)

# FINDINGS

GOSA asked representatives from 195 LEAs, which included several charter schools that are considered LEAs, to complete the survey. Ninety-two percent, or staff from 179 LEAs, responded to the survey. There was a 97% response rate from the 16 RESAs, meaning that at least one ELA Specialist and Math Mentor in almost every RESA provided responses.

The *CCGPS Supports Inventory Survey* yielded important findings that should help LEAs and GaDOE improve future CCGPS implementation. The main findings from the responses to survey questions and open-ended comments fell into five categories.

- I. Teacher understanding of CCGPS
- II. Perception of GaDOE supports
- III. Perception of GaDOE's roll-out of CCGPS
- IV. Instructional support materials utilized across the state
- V. Training methods utilized across the state

## Teacher understanding of CCGPS

Overall, respondents agreed that teachers across the state had a clear understanding of CCGPS and exhibited full engagement and commitment to implementing the standards. Regardless of teachers' commitment, respondents expressed mixed feelings as it related to teachers' confidence with implementing the new standards. The survey did not give respondents an opportunity to explain their responses through open-ended comments. But, respondents commented in other sections of the survey, which provided insight into their perception of teacher understanding and readiness to transition to CCGPS. These comments often implied that the transition to CCGPS gave teachers great concern.

*Main finding: Teachers understood the implementation of the standards but did not have as clear an understanding about how the ELA literacy standards impacted other subjects.*

Table 2 provides respondents' ratings on the three statements related to teacher understanding of CCGPS.

**Table 2: Perception of teachers' understanding of CCGPS**

Teachers in my district(s) have a clear understanding of...	Strongly Disagree and Disagree	Strongly Agree and Agree	Don't Know
How the standards are being implemented by content areas and grade span.	18% (45)	80% (199)	2% (4)
The new curriculum framework that outlines the scope and sequence for teaching new standards.	17% (41)	81% (201)	2% (6)
The implications that implementing ELA CCGPS Literacy Standards have on other subjects, like science, social studies, and technical subjects.	28% (69)	65% (162)	7% (17)
		Answered question	248
		Skipped question	25

As shown in Table 2, respondents overwhelmingly agreed or strongly agreed that teachers understood various elements of CCGPS. The statements with the highest level of agreement dealt with teachers’ understanding of CCGPS implementation and new curriculum framework. Respondents disagreed the most on whether teachers clearly understood what implementing ELA CCGPS literacy standards meant for other subjects. GaDOE introduced the literacy standards in discussions during the awareness year but did not focus on them during the early implementation years. Instead, GaDOE placed precedence on communicating the instructional shifts inherent to ELA and mathematics instruction. At the time of this survey, many teachers did not have significant experience with the literacy standards.

*Main finding: Teachers knew how to access support materials.*

As shown in Table 3, respondents overwhelmingly agreed or strongly agreed that teachers in the state knew how to find and access instructional materials and resources.

**Table 3: Perception of teachers’ ability to access resources**

Teachers in my district(s)...	Strongly Disagree and Disagree	Strongly Agree and Agree	Don’t Know
Know where to find or how to access instructional materials and resources that are aligned to CCGPS.	7% (17)	90% (224)	3% (7)
	Answered question		248
	Skipped question		25

Several of the comments from respondents suggested something different. Several respondents claimed teachers faced significant challenges when trying to access information and resources to aid them with implementation.

It is imperative that state agencies, like GaDOE, continue to include feedback from teachers in the ongoing assessment and monitoring of CCGPS implementation. Feedback from teachers will help state and local education agencies better understand if they need to expand opportunities for access to instructional materials and strengthen resources going forward.

Main finding: Teachers understood how assessments were changing.

As shown in Table 4, 84% of respondents said that teachers across the state understood assessments were changing.

**Table 4: Perception of teachers' understanding that assessments were changing**

Teachers in my district(s)...	Strongly Disagree and Disagree	Strongly Agree and Agree	Don't Know
Have a clear understanding that assessments are changing based on CCGPS.	15% (39)	84% (207)	1% (2)
	Answered question		248
	Skipped question		25

Although over 80% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that teachers understood assessments were changing, some respondents commented that teachers did not have a clear understanding of *how* assessments were changing.

Main finding: Respondents were divided on whether teachers implemented CCGPS with confidence.

Table 5 discusses respondents' perceptions of teacher confidence and support for CCGPS.

**Table 5: Perceptions of teachers' confidence and support for CCGPS**

Overall, teachers in my district(s)...	Strongly Disagree and Disagree	Strongly Agree and Agree	Don't Know
Feel confident about implementing CCGPS.	46% (114)	46% (124)	4% (10)
Are fully engaged and committed to implementing CCGPS.	16% (39)	81% (201)	3% (8)
Answered question			248
Skipped question			25

The same percentage of respondents, 46%, said teachers approached CCGPS implementation with confidence as those who said teachers did not. Open-ended comments substantiated claims that not all teachers carried out CCGPS with confidence. Several comments portrayed CCGPS implementation as overwhelming to teachers and explained that many teachers approached CCGPS implementation with trepidation.

## Perception of GaDOE supports

Respondents appreciated GaDOE's efforts to support educators with implementing CCGPS. Unlike when Georgia implemented GPS, GaDOE did not use the "train-the-trainer" method, which pleased many respondents. Still, respondents found faults with GaDOE's instructional materials and its preferred training method of webinars.

Main Finding: Respondents preferred mathematics supports over English Language Arts (ELA) supports.

GaDOE created instructional support materials and provided training in both mathematics and ELA. Although the Department provided the same kinds of support in both subjects, feedback from respondents indicated that the quality of the products differed. Higher rates of agreement on mathematics survey statements and a higher number of positive comments about mathematics support implied a greater degree of satisfaction with mathematics support than ELA. Specifically, respondents replied favorably about:

- **Instructional materials.** Comments portrayed the units and frameworks for mathematics as stronger, more useful, and more accurate, especially at the elementary and middle school levels, than those created for ELA.
- **Roll-out.** Several respondents preferred the mathematics department's roll-out of the mathematics standards over the roll-out used by the ELA department. But, GaDOE curriculum reported that both departments used identical roll-out approaches. The difference in opinion shows, despite both departments using the same approach, respondents perceived the mathematics department roll-out as more effective.
- **Webinars.** Comments suggested that the math webinars were more focused on how to implement the standards or as one respondent said, "More explicit as to what to teach and how to teach content."

*"The [math] webinars enable teachers throughout the state to access the training and information for selected content. The unit by unit webinars provide an overview of the units that can lay the foundations for teachers to continue to collaborate to plan adequately to implement the units."*

Instability in leadership in GaDOE’s ELA department affected several respondents’ impression of the ELA supports. One respondent said, “It hasn’t helped that we have had 3 different people working with ELA. We need consistency.” Several respondents shared this sentiment. GaDOE explained that staff resignations, most often due to family obligations, caused the turnover. At the time of reporting, GaDOE staffed all leadership positions within the ELA department.

Most of the concern about ELA related to the instructional support materials. Respondents faulted the materials for not being “teacher-friendly” because:

- The length and number of tasks in each unit;
- Difficult-to-acquire texts often formed the basis for many units; and
- Some texts were controversial or inappropriate for the grade level.

Several respondents expressed frustration with trying to locate texts due to broken websites and books being out of print. The difficulty of acquiring texts led one respondent to offer the following recommendation, “The book specificity of the ELA

sample units created confusion. Suggesting several texts or a theme rather than [specific] texts may have helped teachers’ understanding that the standards did not have to be text specific.”

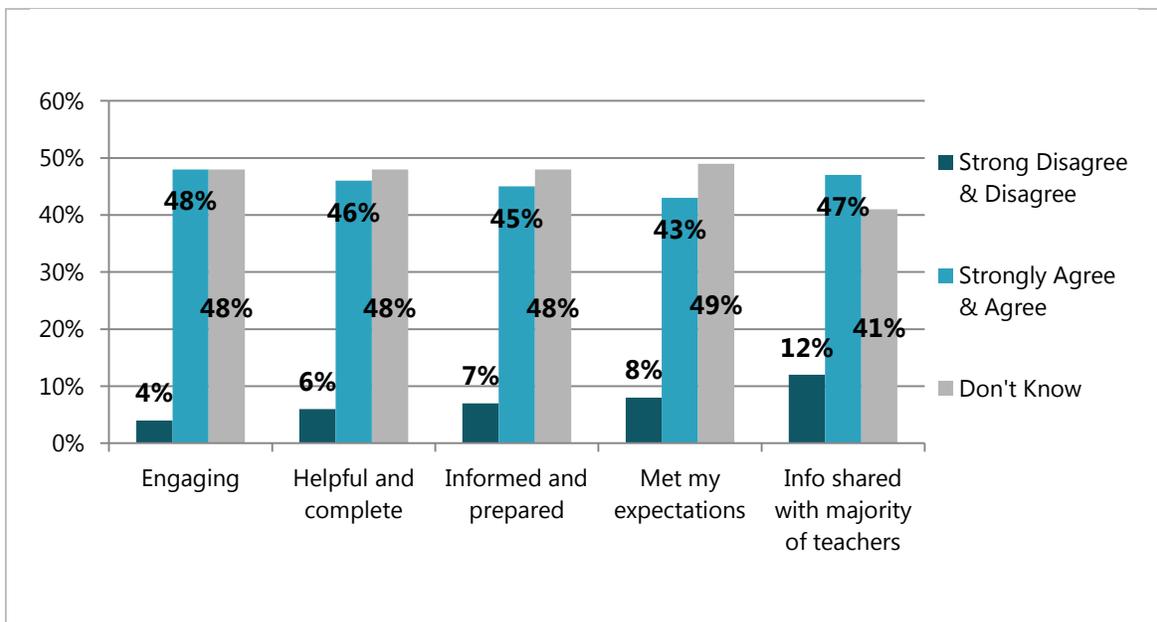
*“It would be helpful for ELA to focus their professional learning on specific topics such as close reads, differentiation, text complexity, etc. We were not able to use the state units because we were not able to purchase the texts. It would have been helpful for them to have created informational or literacy units based around concepts and strategies instead of a text. This way we would have been able to use the units with the text we had in our district.”*

Respondents also expressed that the ELA units and frameworks were more disjointed or disorganized than those developed for mathematics. For example, one respondent explained that GaDOE numbered some of the ELA frameworks. This led some teachers and districts to believe that GaDOE expected them to teach the frameworks in sequence. The respondent went on to share how teaching these frameworks in sequence “was totally inappropriate” in many cases. This disorganization confused teachers and led LEAs and RESAs to spend a significant amount of time revising the materials before educators could use them.

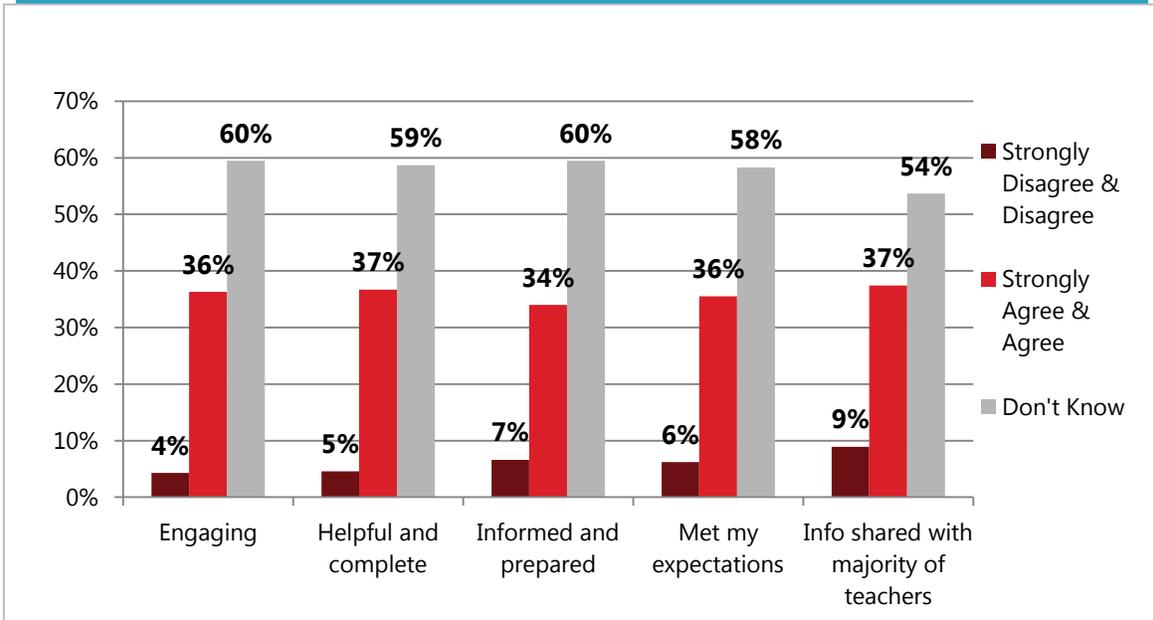
*Main Finding: Summer Academies appeared successful.*

Respondents overwhelmingly expressed through their open-ended comments a need for more opportunities for face-to-face training. The summer academies were GaDOE’s approach to providing this kind of training. The comments indicated that educators who attended the academies found them to be among the most valuable trainings that GaDOE provided. However, a large percentage of the respondents were not knowledgeable of the academies. Figures 1 and 2 compare the perceptions of the mathematics and ELA summer academies.

**Figure 1: Perceptions of Math Summer Academies**



**Figure 2: Perceptions of ELA Summer Academies**



As demonstrated in Figures 1 and 2, a large percentage of respondents abstained from rating their level of agreement to the statements on summer academies. This pattern was even more pronounced for the ELA summer academies.

Summer academies could not accommodate every educator in the state. This might explain the high percentage of “Don’t Know” responses to survey statements. GaDOE, working in partnership with other agencies like the Georgia Council of Teachers of Mathematics (GCTM), provided opportunities for 3,000 educators in the K-10 grade level sessions in mathematics and 1,300 educators in ELA. Once educators filled all the slots in a particular location, GaDOE established waiting lists.

Almost 50% of respondents claimed they did not know if the mathematics summer academies were engaging or helpful and complete. They also did not know if the academies were informative and good preparation for teachers or if the academies met their expectations. A significant portion of respondents, 41%, said they did not know whether the information from the academies had been communicated to the majority of their teachers. It is possible respondents were not familiar with the quality of the academies but more certain that participants disseminated information with those who did not attend. This might explain the lower percentage of “Don’t know” responses for this statement.

More respondents reported that they were unfamiliar with the ELA summer academies. Almost 60% of respondents marked “Don’t Know” in reference to ELA summer academies being engaging, helpful and complete, informative and good preparation for teachers and for meeting their expectations. Fifty-four percent of respondents shared that they did not know if participants communicated information from the summer academy with the majority of their teachers. The same assumption can be

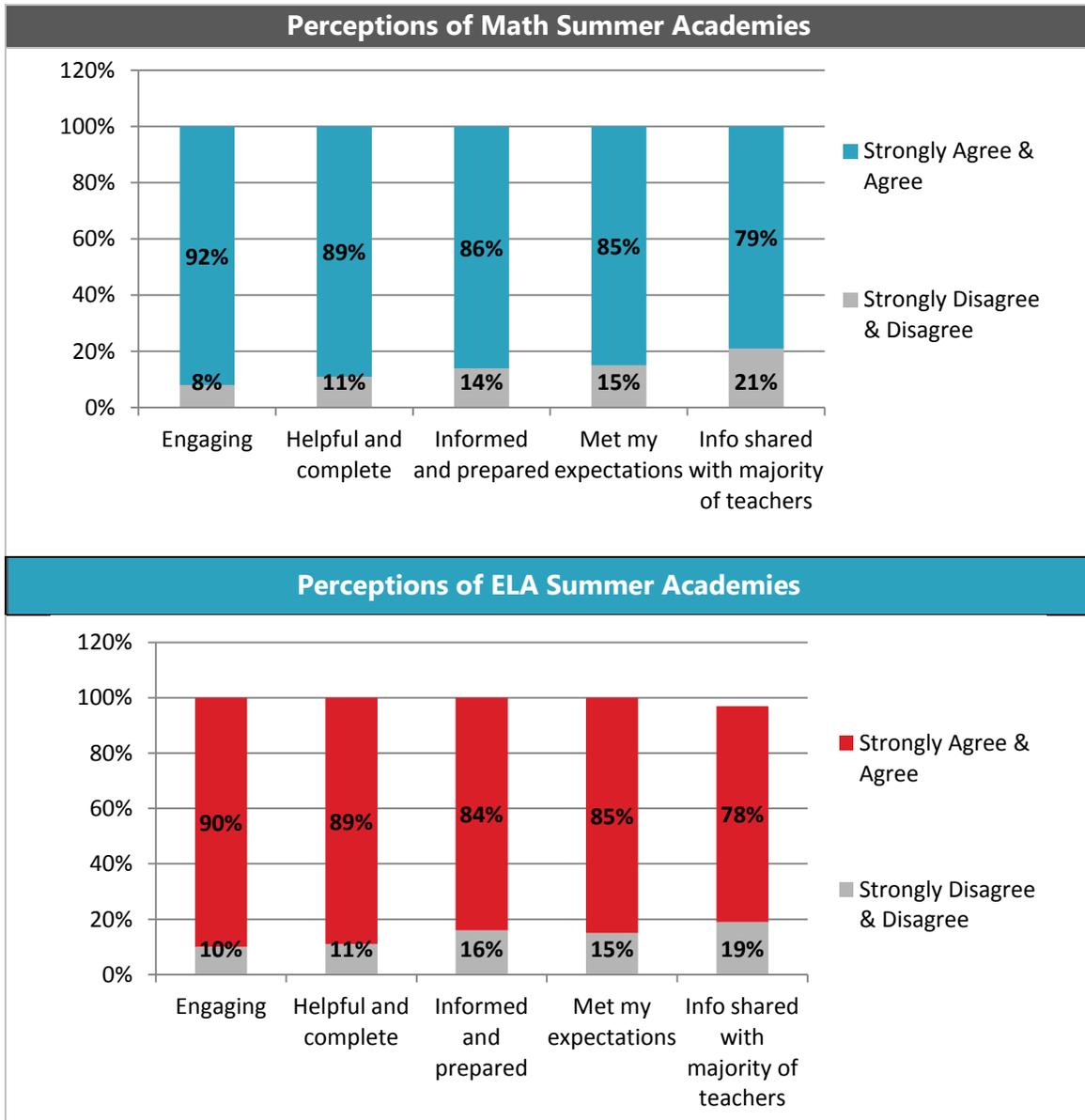
*"The Math Summer Academy concept was a great idea. It brought teachers together, regionally, which gave teachers an opportunity to network within and outside the school districts."*

made of the difference in responses about overall quality of the ELA summer academies and whether participants disseminated information, as was made for mathematics summer academies.

Of the remaining group of participants who were informed enough to rate the summer academies, the vast majority were satisfied. Excluding the “Don’t Know” responses from the total number of responses lends a clearer understanding of how the more informed respondents felt about the

summer academies. Figure 3 displays how respondents that were able to rate their level of agreement responded.

**Figure 3: Perceptions of Summer Academies excluding “Don’t Know” responses**



As shown in Figure 3, 85-86% of the respondents (excluding those that responded “Don’t Know”) agreed or strongly agreed with survey statements about the mathematics and ELA summer academies. Respondents agreed the most (92% for mathematics and 90% for ELA) on summer academies engaging participants. Respondents disagreed the most (21% for mathematics and 19% for ELA) on participants sharing information from the academies being shared with the majority of teachers.

Overall, the summer academies allowed GaDOE, while partnering with RESAs, to provide face-to-face training. One respondent expressed satisfaction with the summer academies by saying, "Summer Academies, with live, face-to-face presentations and interaction and networking are always very valuable, more than staring at a computer at a webinar, even though it is convenient." Participant evaluations administered after the summer academies also revealed that the summer academies were well-received and "quite successful in ensuring that teachers were prepared for the 2012-2013 initial CCGPS implementation year."

To the respondents' disappointment, the summer academies did not have the ability to serve a large majority of Georgia's educators. Many respondents gave reasons to explain why teachers in their LEAs or RESAs did not attend the summer academies. These reasons include costs, inconvenient location, filling up too quickly, or too short of notice to take advantage of the opportunity. However, according to GaDOE curriculum staff, they informed district ELA and mathematics supervisors of the summer academies via curriculum newsletters and webinars beginning in February 2012. GaDOE made summer academies available to 3,000 educators for the mathematics sessions and 1,300 educators for the ELA sessions. Various locations across the state hosted these sessions. According to GaDOE curriculum staff estimates, almost half of the registered attendees did not attend the academies.

*"I appreciated the low cost of the Academies, and the feedback from our teachers was that the content was excellent. However, because of the relatively late notice we received, we did not have as many teachers able to participate as I had hoped."*

Main Finding: GaDOE and GPB webinars provided cost-effective and standardized training. However, many respondents found that the trainings did not sufficiently engage or meet the needs of educators.

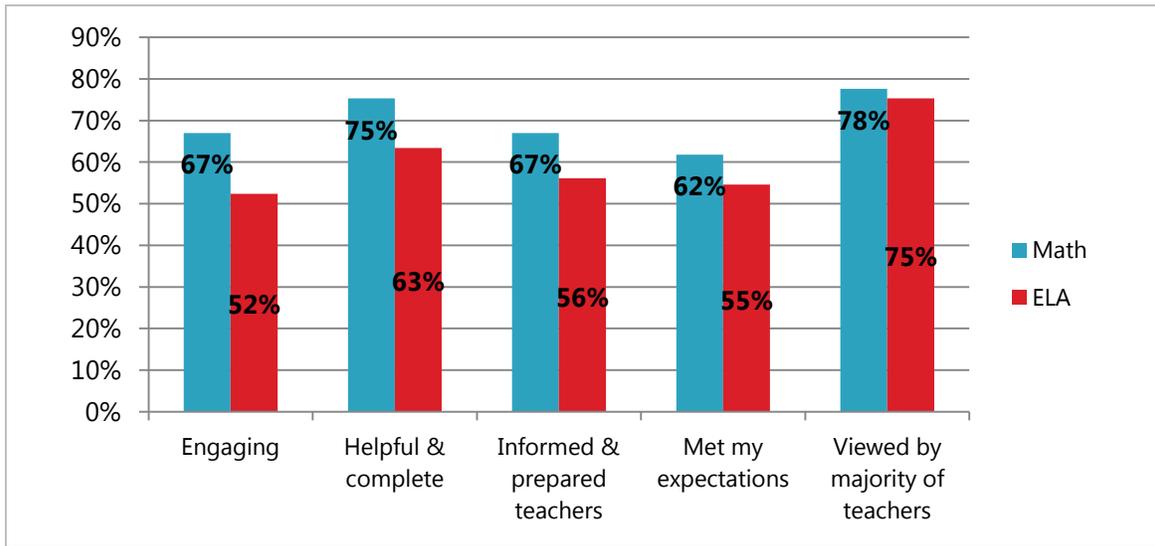
*“A number of factors were considered prior to deciding on video and webinar formats. This digital format ensured a consistent message to all educators impacted by the CCGPS implementation and offers a means to sustain professional learning for the future.”*

Several respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the “train-the-trainer” model that GaDOE used when rolling out GPS several years ago. As a result, the respondents appreciated GaDOE’s attempt to provide consistent information to educators across the state through the use of webinars. Technology like live streaming and video conferencing allowed GaDOE to reach every teacher in the state. The technology also allowed for the training sessions to be recorded and archived, which made them accessible to educators even after the webinars first aired. GaDOE curriculum staff and several respondents shared thought archiving training sessions was beneficial and is

a practice that should be continued.

Based on their ratings of the survey statements, GaDOE’s training efforts in both mathematics and ELA satisfied most respondents. Figure 4 compares the percentage of respondents that agreed or strongly agreed with the mathematics statements to those that agreed or strongly agreed with the ELA statements.

**Figure 4: Positive perception of GaDOE webinars and GPB sessions**



The results displayed in Figure 4 support the earlier conclusion of respondents being more satisfied with the mathematics training efforts than ELA. Respondents agreed the most common area of agreement was that the majority of their teachers viewed the sessions. This characteristic had the highest level of agreement for both mathematics and ELA web-based trainings. “Met my expectations” was the characteristic with the lowest percentage of “agree” and “strongly agree” ratings for mathematics training. “Engaging” was the characteristic with the lowest percentage of “agree” and “strongly agree” ratings for ELA training. It is also important to note a large majority of respondents agreed both mathematics and ELA web-based sessions were “helpful and complete.” This characteristic had the second highest percentage of “agree” and “strongly agree” ratings.

A noticeable amount of respondents replied to the statements on mathematics and ELA web-based training activities by saying “Don’t Know.” In general, six to seven percent of respondents said that they did not know how to respond to the statements on mathematics trainings. Almost 10% of respondents indicated that they did not know if the majority of their teachers viewed the mathematics webinars and GPB sessions. Over 10% of respondents answered “Don’t Know” for the statements on ELA training activities. Almost 14% did not know if their teachers viewed the ELA webinars and GPB training activities.

Figure 5 breaks down respondents’ perception of the characteristics with the most disagreement.

Figure 5: Perception of characteristics of math and ELA web-based training with lowest level of agreement

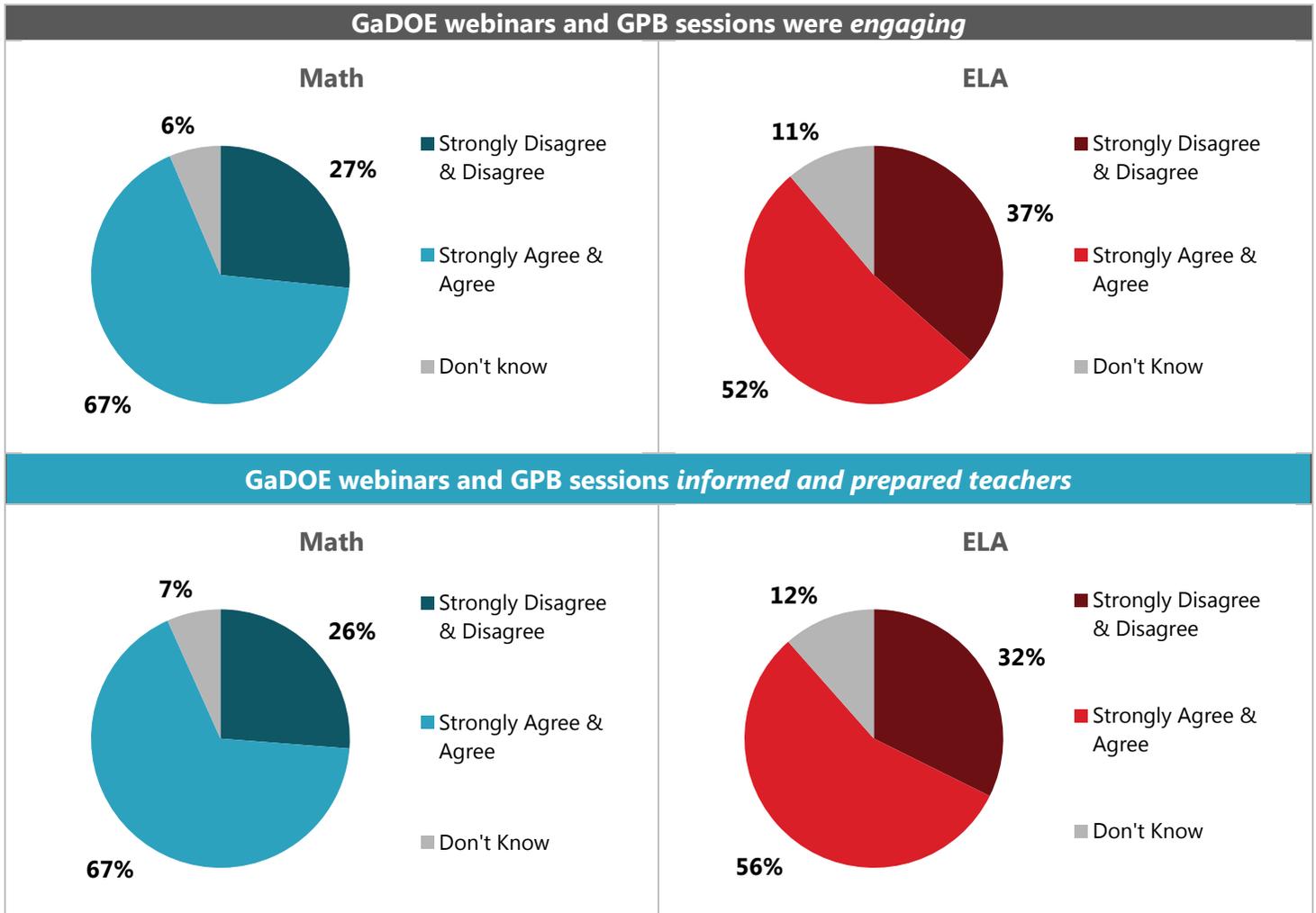
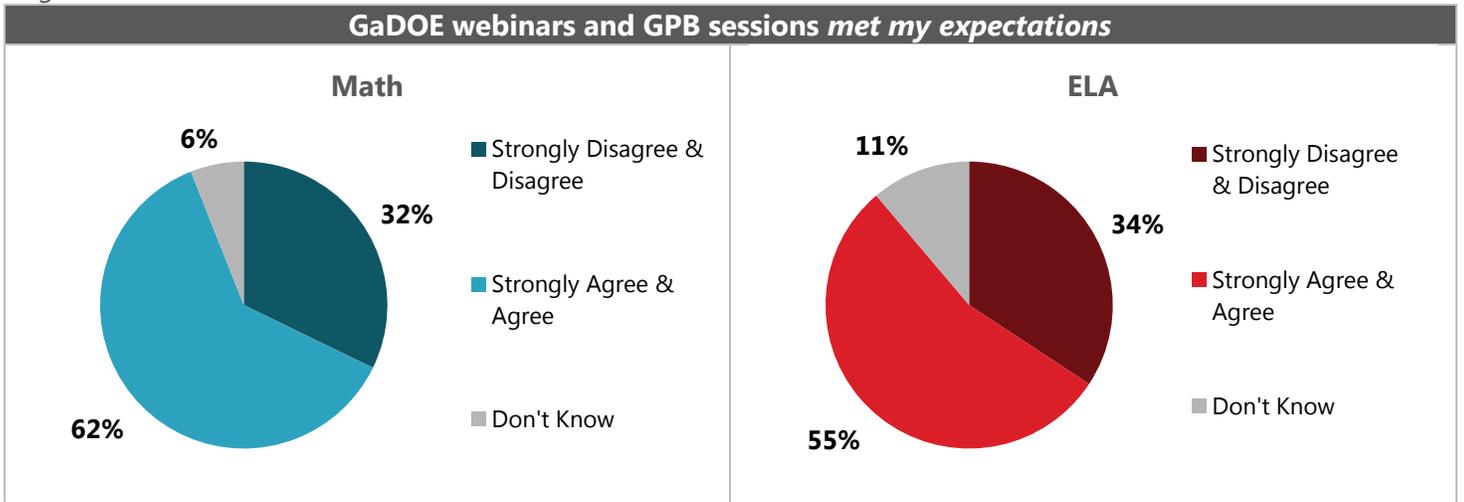


Figure 5 continued



As shown in Figure 5, approximately one-fourth of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that mathematics webinars and GPB sessions engaged respondents, informed and prepared teachers, or met respondents' expectations. About one-third of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with these statements as it related to ELA web-based training activities.

The majority of respondents neglected to comment. About 25% of respondents commented on these sessions on a voluntary basis. Some of their comments overlapped with the characteristics that respondents gave the highest percentage of "disagree" and "strongly disagree" ratings.

### GPB SESSIONS BETTER THAN GaDOE WEBINARS

A large number of comments focused on how educators perceived the earlier GaDOE webinars as weaker than the later GPB webinars, which undermined buy-in for later webinars and videos. As previously mentioned, GaDOE aired grade-level webinars during fall 2011. After a review of the PowerPoint presentations and archived sessions, GOSA gleaned the following purposes from the sessions.

**Table 6: Description of fall 2011 GaDOE Webinars**

Mathematics	ELA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One grade-level webinar for every grade K-8 and two sessions for high school</li> <li>• Webinars took place from October - November 2011</li> <li>• The webinars explained how to use CCGPS <i>Standards of Mathematical Practices</i> during the 2011-2012 school year while using GPS content.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three webinars for each grade level grouping - K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12</li> <li>• Webinars took place from October - November 2011</li> <li>• The purpose of the first webinar was to provide an overview of CCGPS and facts about implementation. The second webinar focused on text complexity, and the final webinar focused on integrated learning.</li> </ul>

Grade-specific training sessions for both mathematics and ELA followed the fall webinars. These sessions were aired using GPB live streaming technology and took place between January and March 2012. These sessions discussed the standards in detail.

GaDOE curriculum staff shared that the caliber of the training sessions improved over time. The Department adjusted the sessions along the way based on feedback from the field. Comments from respondents indicated that the quality of the earlier webinars gave educators a negative view of the overall training sessions and challenged buy-in for the later sessions. One respondent said, “We had a hard time getting teachers to buy-in on the quality and necessity of watching future webinars when the first ones weren't very good--cutsie, giggly, etc.” Another respondent said, “Training got better but only after teachers and others lost trust.” Many respondents acknowledged that some of the later webinars contained useful information, but they were not sure how many teachers actually viewed them.

**FORMAT OF WEBINARS AND GPB SESSIONS POSED CHALLENGES**

Respondents also shared that the format of the webinars made it difficult to sustain teachers’ interest. Some found the training activities boring and lacking in-depth, useful information. Respondents wanted GaDOE to create more opportunities for face-to-face training and better use modeling and exemplars in conjunction with the webinars.

Many of them also shared that the webinars posed an inconvenience to teachers. A few respondents said that the webinars were too long and, “only 10 to 15 minutes of the webinars were useful.” Another critique was GaDOE held the webinars “at very inconvenient times,” which required teachers to be pulled out of the classroom to participate. One respondent offered, “The training activities needed to have been broken up into smaller time segments more fitting to teacher planning times lengths.”

## **WEBINARS LACKED CRITICAL INFORMATION**

Respondents thought webinars offered a solid history of CCGPS and provided background on the standards, but teachers would have benefitted from more in-depth, specific information about implementing the standards in their classrooms. Some respondents encouraged GaDOE to consider refining their approach to supporting educators with CCGPS so the majority of resources would focus on demonstrating how educators should deliver instruction. Respondents suggested incorporating video clips of actual teachers delivering instruction aligned to CCGPS. Several respondents also spoke highly of the mathematics demonstration lessons and claimed educators would benefit from similar trainings in other subjects.

GaDOE curriculum staff shared that two projects are underway that involve classroom teachers and students being videotaped for this purpose. GaDOE ELA team developed and published a series of webcasts for all grade levels. These webcasts spotlighted teachers and students in the development of the learning process and resulting student work. GaDOE mathematics team collaborated with GPB to record three mathematics classrooms engaged in formative assessment lessons introduced through the Mathematics Design Collaborative. GaDOE also shared that 21 Georgia teachers are being filmed for the School Improvement Network – Exemplary Teacher Project – PD 360. The videos being filmed by the School Improvement Network will be available for those districts who subscribe to PD360.

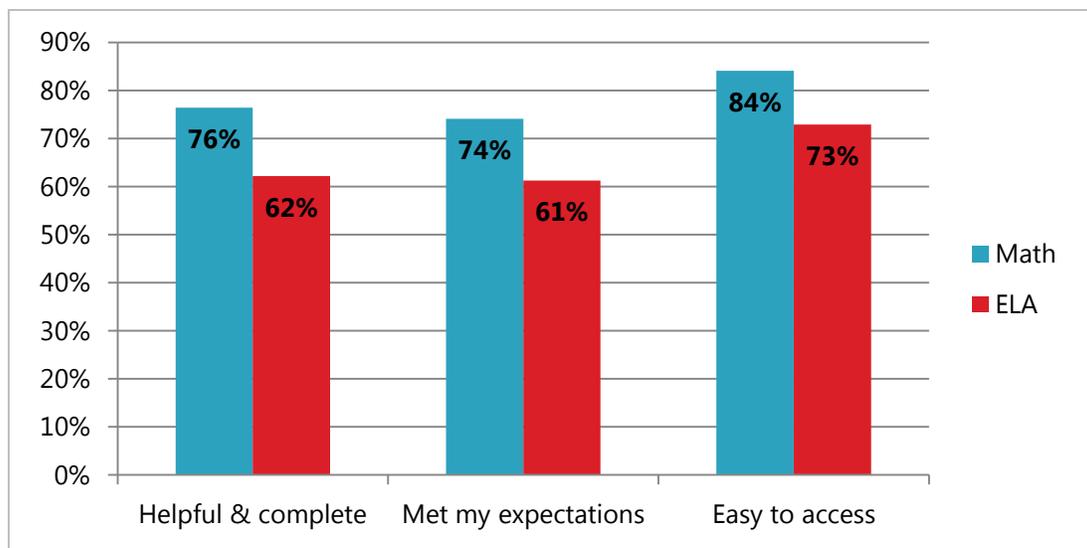
*“The webinars served more as an introductory piece to the CCGPS. After viewing the webinars, teachers seemed to have a better understanding of basic information like the format of the standards, history, etc. However, there was little to no assistance on interpreting the standards or implementing them.”*

Main Finding: GaDOE's instructional support materials provided a good starting point for instructional planning and preparation; however, many of the materials seemed not cohesive, too long, and sometimes inaccurate.

GaDOE created a variety of curriculum exemplars, including frameworks, units and sequencing guides. Based on the comments from the respondents, it appears educators relied on these materials to aid instructional planning.

Similar to the responses about GaDOE's training activities; GaDOE's instructional support materials generally satisfied respondents. Figure 6 compares the percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the statements on GaDOE's instructional support materials for mathematics and ELA.

**Figure 6: Positive perceptions of GaDOE instructional support materials**



Again, respondents were more satisfied with GaDOE's instructional support materials for mathematics than ELA. The characteristic with the highest level of agreement, in both subjects, was "ease of access." "Met my expectations" was the characteristic with the lowest level of agreement for both subjects.

Eighty-four percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the instructional support materials for mathematics being easy to access. Seventy-three percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the ELA instructional support materials being easy to access. Other findings from the survey overwhelmingly show that

educators across the state used curriculum exemplars, and the majority of them accessed the exemplars from GaDOE’s website.

Again, the majority of respondents chose not to comment on GaDOE’s instructional supports. Twenty to twenty-five percent of the respondents commented on their perception of the training. A number of the comments focused on the difficulty educators experienced when trying to locate resources. Many respondents shared that resources for CCGPS, which might include materials other than GaDOE’s frameworks, existed on various websites. This made it difficult and time-consuming to access materials as needed.

*“We appreciate the state frameworks and associated units. We understand that they aren't perfect; but we believe they are our current best estimate of the rigor of the new standards.”*

Seventy-six percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed GaDOE’s instructional support materials for mathematics were helpful and complete. Sixty-two percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed GaDOE’s instructional support materials for ELA were helpful and complete. Several respondents shared that the instructional support materials provided a helpful starting point for further planning. They claimed the materials provided strong contextual information, which helped educators better understand the history and philosophy supporting CCGPS. Specifically, respondents stated they liked the scope-and-sequence documents, year-at-a-glance documents, exemplars in writing in each grade level, and the math frameworks.

### **GaDOE INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT MATERIALS DID NOT MEET ALL RESPONDENTS’ EXPECTATIONS**

Ratings on survey statements and open-ended comments suggest the instructional support materials missed the mark to some degree and did not fully meet respondents’ expectations. As stated, “met my expectations” had the lowest agreement ratings of the three statements.

The 20-25% of respondents who made comments repeatedly mentioned how the instructional materials could not be used “as is” and required significant revisions before educators could use them. One respondent argued that more direct communication about the materials could have better tempered local educators’ expectations. This respondent said, “We were prepared to teach them how they were and found out very quickly that much work needed to go into them and the time to do that was absent.” Respondents explained that some units were inaccurate, disjointed,

not completely aligned with CCGPS, and required significant unpacking to understand what needed to be taught. It should be noted that according to national experts, the *Common Core State Standards* need significant “unwrapping,” a term often used interchangeably with unpacking. Many resource materials exist to help guide educators through the process of unwrapping the standards, like Maryann Wiggs’ chapter in *Navigating the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards*.<sup>21</sup> Larry Ainsworth defines the process of unwrapping the standards in his book *“Unwrapping” the Standards: A Simple Process to Make Standards Manageable*. He says,

*“Unwrapping’ the standards means to identify the concepts and skills found in both the **standards** (the general statements of learning outcomes - what students need to know and be able to do) and the **indicators** (the grade-specific learning outcomes). It means to examine the standards and the grade-specific indicators listed beneath them to determine exactly what students need to (1) **know** (the concepts or content) and (2) **be able to do** (the skills) through a (3) **particular context** (what educators will use to teach students the concepts and skills).”<sup>22</sup>*

Another common frustration shared by respondents stemmed from the instructional support materials not providing enough information or insight about assessments.

GaDOE curriculum staff used feedback from the transition to GPS to develop the approach to providing instructional support materials for CCGPS. GaDOE curriculum staff worked with master teachers from across the state to develop unit frameworks. These frameworks went through a month-long vetting period before being published on the CCGPS website at [www.georgiastandards.org](http://www.georgiastandards.org). State content advisory councils and RESA content specialists vetted the materials. GaDOE curriculum staff acknowledged that some of the units need revision. GaDOE is compiling feedback on the units and will revise and re-publish the frameworks during summer 2013 for use in Georgia’s second year of CCGPS implementation.

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<sup>21</sup> Maryann D. Wiggs, “The Powerful Influence of the Learning Progressions in Planning for Instruction and Assessment,” *Navigating the English Language Arts Common Core State Standards* (Englewood, CO: The Leadership and Learning Center, 2011) 5-10.

<sup>22</sup> Larry Ainsworth, “Chapter One,” *“Unwrapping” the standards: A simple process to make standards manageable* (Denver, CO: Advanced Learning P, 2003) 5.

## Perception of GaDOE’s roll-out of CCGPS

The survey did not ask respondents to rate their level of satisfaction with GaDOE’s roll-out of CCGPS. Still, the comments highlight the opinions of Georgia’s early implementation of CCGPS.

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*Main Finding: GaDOE was very supportive.*

Several respondents expressed gratitude to the Department for their ongoing support throughout this process. One respondent exclaimed, “So much more supportive than the GPS implementation!” Many respondents applauded GaDOE’s efforts, recognizing the magnitude and difficulty associated with implementing CCGPS across the state. Respondents implied through their comments that GaDOE staff tried their best.

*“At the time, I believe GaDOE did the very best job they could to get information out to every educator in the state. The curriculum specialists took very bold and courageous steps - hats off!”*

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*Main Finding: Sometimes, educators did not receive information or guidance in a timely or convenient fashion.*

Many respondents desired a longer transition period. This comment illustrates a common opinion among the respondents, “I think the pace of roll-out was too fast, especially after the planned roll-out of the GPS. My teachers are working long hours to implement and they are frustrated. I still have to

assure teachers that we are not going to learn this curriculum to only start a new one in 2 years.”

This comment suggests that the state did not have a transition plan. However, several public documents, including Georgia’s RT3 application and scope of work, explained the plan and timeline for implementing the standards. Georgia’s RT3 application shows how state officials planned to take on an aggressive timeline for implementing CCGPS.

The numerous reform initiatives taking place overwhelmed many educators. Having to administer new standards, prepare for new assessments, and in some cases, move to a new educator evaluation system, along with all the other educator responsibilities, created a lot of anxiety and stress. Therefore, delays in providing information, guidance and support challenged implementation in many LEAs across the state. In some cases, LEAs waited until GaDOE released their instructional support materials, which postponed planning at the district and school levels. One respondent said, "I think some were waiting for the state to tell them what to do, which was more of an issue in ELA than in math. Local districts should have been more informed about the need to create their own units instead of waiting for the DOE." However, GaDOE curriculum staff believed that they were transparent about the resources available at the state level.

As stated by GaDOE curriculum staff, the Department made LEAs aware of the Department's roll-out and implementation plan during the 2010-2011 school year, which they considered the "awareness year." Also, a GaDOE curriculum staffer claimed, "many LEAs quite effectively used the summer months – a time when most professional learning is provided – to build units around the provided frameworks."

Despite GaDOE's attempt at communicating with LEAs early on, several respondents faulted the Department for not giving local leaders adequate time or information to prepare for GaDOE training sessions. Several respondents blamed not being able to ensure teachers maximized GaDOE's webinars and other training opportunities on GaDOE failing to notify LEA and RESA leaders in advance of the topics being discussed in training. Respondents recommended GaDOE train LEA leaders in advance of school-level staff. One respondent said, "Timing of training has been challenging. It has placed districts in a reactionary mode. District-level personnel and district trainers need an opportunity to be trained prior to the launch of webinars, GPB videos, etc. to the schools." Respondents also recommended GaDOE give LEA leadership advanced notice of the topics covered in the webinars. As one respondent pointed out, "A preview guide to the GPTV broadcasts would have been helpful."

*"One thing that I think is a problem--early on, everyone acted as if the shift to the CCGPS wouldn't be a big deal. I think that was a mistake. These instructional shifts are huge--and I think that local districts and teachers would have been better prepared to make them had they not be led to believe that we would be 'fine'."*

Several other respondents expressed frustration with having to visit multiple sites to access CCGPS resources. One respondent urged, “Do not send us to multiple locations to unravel information; pick one landing for providing CCGPS info and route all information to the one site.” Respondents asked for a “one stop shop” for CCGPS information and resources.

## Instructional support materials used statewide

The survey asked respondents to state which instructional support materials educators in their LEA or RESA used to implement CCGPS. They selected from the list shown in Table 7 or gave one of their own.

**Table 7: List of instructional support materials**

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIAL	DESCRIPTION
<b>Curriculum exemplars</b>	Sample units, sample lesson plans, or other examples demonstrating how to implement the standards
<b>Formative assessments</b>	Formative, benchmark, or interim assessments used to inform educators about student progress on the new standards
<b>Textbooks</b>	Textbooks fully aligned to CCGPS and selected specifically to support CCGPS implementation
<b>Supplemental resources</b>	Supplemental resources fully aligned to CCGPS and selected specifically to support CCGPS implementation
<b>Digital materials</b>	Materials and lessons fully aligned to CCGPS and selected specifically to support CCGPS implementation
<b>Other instructional materials or resources</b>	Additional resources you provided not captured in the previous categories

Forty percent of the respondents said that they offered “other” instructional materials or resources, beyond those listed in the survey. Most respondents discussed how LEAs

offered professional learning opportunities and professional learning communities, curriculum exemplars, supplemental resources, digital learning and online tools, and technical assistance from RESAs.

Main Finding: In most cases, educators used instructional support materials developed by GaDOE and did not access materials from RESA websites. In rare instances, providers tracked usage of materials.

Table 8 provides a snapshot of the instructional support materials being offered across the state.

**Table 8: Snapshot of instructional support materials**

<b>Instructional support material</b>	<b>% offered</b>	<b>Access methods <i>Most and least likely</i></b>	<b>% tracked usage and most used method for tracking</b>	<b>Developers <i>Most and least likely</i></b>
<b>Curriculum exemplars</b>	95%	Most likely: GaDOE website (83%)	23%	Most likely: GaDOE (81%)
		Least likely: Other (19%)	Most used method: staff observations	Least likely: Other (12%)
<b>Formative assessments</b>	80%	Most likely: GaDOE website (49%)	45%	Most likely: District (69%)
		Least likely: RESA website (17%)	Most used method: online tracking	Least likely: Another Georgia LEA or RESA (9%)
<b>Supplemental resources</b>	71%	Most likely: "Other" - most often staff distributed hard copies (50%)	37%	Most likely: GaDOE (51%)
		Least likely: RESA website (18%)	Most used method: staff observations	Least likely: Another state or an LEA from outside of Georgia (11%)

Table 8 continued

<b>Digital materials</b>	60%	Most likely: GaDOE website (47%)	33%	Most likely: GaDOE (54%)
		Least likely: RESA website (20%)	Most used method: online tracking	Least likely: Another Georgia LEA or RESA (15%)
<b>Other</b>	40%	Most likely: "Other" - most often staff distributed hard copies (52%)	42%	Most likely: "Other" - most often vendors, consultants and partners (46%)
		Least likely: RESA website (16%)	Most used method: online tracking	Least likely: Another Georgia LEA or RESA (10%)
<b>Textbooks</b>	30%	Most likely: "Other" - most often staff distributed hard copies (65%)	30%	Most likely: "Other" - most often by vendor or consultant (56%)
		Least likely: RESA website (15%)	Most used method: staff observations	Least likely: Another state or an LEA from outside of Georgia (5%)

The data provided in Table 8 suggests the following.

- Educators utilized curriculum exemplars most often.** Almost every respondent reported that educators used curriculum exemplars. Since the majority of respondents accessed curriculum exemplars from GaDOE’s website, one can assume educators generally used the curriculum exemplars developed or shared by the Department. Considering that educators rely on curriculum exemplars, it is important that these materials are accurate and useful.
- GaDOE most likely developed the curriculum supports used by educators.** In addition to curriculum exemplars, the majority of respondents attested to

educators using supplemental resources and digital materials developed by GaDOE.

- **Educators utilized textbooks least often.** A relatively low percentage (30%) of respondents indicated that educators used textbooks fully aligned to, and selected with the sole purpose of supporting, CCGPS implementation. Several respondents mentioned the LEA textbook selection processes to explain the low textbook usage. Also, textbooks aligned to *Common Core State Standards* are in development and not widely available.
- **Educators were least likely to access instructional support materials from a RESA website.** Although RESAs were within the top three developers of curriculum exemplars and other instructional support materials, respondents said educators were less likely to use RESA websites to access instructional support materials than other websites or means of access. Therefore, further investigation by RESAs and GaDOE to determine if RESAs should improve online access to the instructional support materials is needed.
- **Providers rarely tracked usage of instructional support materials across the state.** Less than 50% of the respondents indicated tracking usage of instructional support materials. Formative assessments were the most tracked instructional support material and curriculum exemplars were the least tracked material.
- **Educators were least likely to use instructional support materials developed by another Georgia LEA or RESA, another state, or an LEA from outside of Georgia.** With the exception of curriculum exemplars, respondents consistently reported that educators did not use instructional support materials developed by external LEAs or RESAs. However, several comments from respondents suggested interest in more resource sharing within the state and with other states, like New York and Ohio. Likewise, a GaDOE curriculum staffer identified resource sharing among LEAs in the state as an area within CCGPS implementation in need of improvement. Therefore, GaDOE and other state agencies should further investigate how GaDOE, LEAs or RESAs can promote, share, or collaborate to use instructional support materials developed externally.

Major findings regarding each instructional support material

### **CURRICULUM EXEMPLARS**

Curriculum exemplars were the most utilized instructional support material as indicated by 95% of respondents. Educators most often accessed curriculum exemplars through (1) GaDOE website (83%); (2) online data sharing tools (57%); and (3) LEA websites (41%). Also, educators accessed instructional support materials from local staff, vendors, consultants or partners.

Although educators used curriculum exemplars the most providers rarely tracked this resource. Tracking of these materials usually took place by staff observation and monitoring during classroom visits and professional learning sessions. GaDOE (81%), LEA (56%), or the LEA's RESA (37%) most likely developed curriculum exemplars. Other developers were vendors, consultants and partners like Pearson, Lissa Pijanowski, Ed. D. from the Leadership and Learning Center, and the Georgia Charter Schools Association. School-based staff also developed curriculum exemplars. In rare instances, national organizations like PARCC and LearnZillion or states like Tennessee, North Carolina and New York developed curriculum exemplars.

#### *Practices from the field: **Getting a head start***

Some LEAs and RESAs were proactive in preparation for CCGPS implementation. Early preparation included training and, as in this example, curriculum planning and preparation.

*"We have spent the past two years meeting with representative groups of teachers. We used the state frameworks to create our own mathematics and ELA units. We still have work to do to finish out this school year and we will spend a great deal of time next year in revising our units. However, this has been a very powerful process and a necessary process towards CCGPS implementation."*

- Rural district

*Practices from the field:*  
***Building in time for local curriculum planning and preparation***

Some LEAs learned early on that GaDOE’s curriculum exemplars would require refinement. This district made time before the school year started to bring together local leaders to plan and prepare, which put them at an advantage once school started.

*“We implemented a CCGPS Institute during June 2012 with select teachers in our district to work on assessments and unit revisions/refinement--this was a great jump start for our system--however, we only had the first nine weeks available at the time of the training and needed more time to plan for the 2012-2013 school year. We have completed this additional planning through use of subs.”*

*- Small city, Race to the Top partner district*

## **FORMATIVE ASSESSMENTS**

Formative assessments were the second most used instructional support material as indicated by 80% of respondents. Educators most often accessed formative assessments through (1) GaDOE website (49%); (2) online data sharing tools (40%); and other ways (38%). Also, educators accessed formative assessments from local staff, vendors, consultants or partners.

Providers most often tracked formative assessment use. Almost half of the respondents tracked the usage of this resource. Respondents most often tracked usage of formative assessments online through local data management systems like Data Director or GaDOE’s Online Assessment System (OAS). Educators typically used formative assessments developed by LEAs (69%), GaDOE (47%), and other developers (22%). Other developers included vendors, consultants or partners such as Thinkgate, Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), and school-based staff. Several respondents commented on the formative assessments in OAS. They found the assessment items inadequate and thought educators needed more support with both formative and summative assessments.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

Seventy-one percent of respondents shared that educators used supplemental resources. Most often, school-level staff distributed physical copies of supplemental resources or made available in school buildings. Educators also accessed supplemental resources from GaDOE’s website (45%) and other online sources, or via a locally shared network drive (33%).

In most cases, providers did not track usage of supplemental resources. Thirty-seven percent of the respondents said providers tracked usage of

supplemental resources. Staff monitoring and observation during classroom visits and professional learning was the primary method for tracking usage of these resources. The top three developers of supplemental resources were GaDOE (51%), LEAs (49%), and other developers (37%). Other developers include publishers and other vendors or consultants.

## **DIGITAL MATERIALS**

Sixty percent of the respondents said that educators used digital materials. Educators primarily accessed digital materials from GaDOE's website (47%), online data sharing tools (40%), or through other means (32%) such as various websites. Respondents referenced Edmodo, UnitedStreaming, LearnZillion, and It's Learning the most.

Thirty-three percent of respondents tracked educators' use of digital materials. Most often, the digital resource tracked participant use for the respondent. GaDOE (54%) and LEAs (42%) most likely developed the digital materials, followed by "other" developers (33%), which included publishing companies, other vendors or consultants.

## **OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS OR RESOURCES**

Forty percent of the respondents attested to educators using instructional materials beyond the five mentioned in the *CCGPS Supports Inventory Survey*. However, the majority of the additional responses fell into one of the five mentioned categories, except for professional learning opportunities. Most of the respondents mentioned professional learning communities or opportunities were offered, followed by supplemental resources, curriculum exemplars, digital/online tools, or some combination of these supports. A few respondents said they offered technical assistance through the RESA.

Educators most often accessed these "other" materials or resources through physical copies distributed by staff (52%) or online data sharing tools (30%) and LEA websites (24%). Forty-two percent of the respondents tracked the usage of these methods. Providers tracked these methods online, through sign-in sheets, or through staff observation and monitoring. Lastly, vendors such as publishing companies, consultants or partners (46%) most often developed these materials. Forty-four percent of respondents said that LEAs developed these materials, and 26% said that RESAs developed these materials.

## **TEXTBOOKS**

Textbooks were the least likely utilized instructional support material. Thirty percent of respondents said that educators were using textbooks aligned to and acquired specifically for CCGPS. Many respondents shared that they follow the local textbook adoption cycle, which could explain why textbooks were not a heavily utilized instructional support material. A few respondents commented on which textbooks they purchased. One respondent purchased aligned Social Studies textbooks for third through fifth grades. Two other respondents purchased high school Coordinate Algebra textbooks.

Nearly 40% of the respondents said that textbook usage was tracked. Usage was primarily tracked by staff observation and monitoring. Textbook publishing companies were the most likely developer.

## Training methods used statewide

The survey asked respondents to state the training methods they used to prepare their educators for implementing CCGPS. They selected from the following list or gave a method of their own.

**Table 9: List of training methods**

TRAINING METHODS	DESCRIPTION
<b>Webinars</b>	Seminars, presentations, etc. that use the web for both visual and audible delivery.
<b>Face-to-face training</b>	Seminars, presentations, workshops, etc. where educators meet in person with the facilitator outside of their classrooms.
<b>Online courses or tools</b>	Software, distance learning technology, websites, etc. that encourage personalized learning through computerized tasks, videos, etc.
<b>Institutes of conferences</b>	Meetings focused specifically on professional development that take place over one or multiple days
<b>Job-embedded professional learning</b>	Primarily school- or classroom-based, is integrated into the workday, and is centered on issues of actual practice
<b>Other methods of training</b>	Any methods of training that are not captured in the stated categories

Less than 6% of the respondents said they offered “other” training methods. The most common examples of the “other” training methods comprised of professional learning communities and the “train-the-trainer” technique. Some educators also came together in monthly meetings to conduct book studies, share best practices, and develop units and other curriculum exemplars. In addition, several respondents also discussed specific trainings that educators attended or planned to attend.

Main Finding: Most often, administrators and select instructional staff received training. RESAs delivered most of the training, and providers used training to share information on CCGPS.

Table 10 provides a snapshot of the training methods offered across the state.

**Table 10: Snapshot of instructional support materials**

<b>Training method</b>	<b>% offered</b>	<b>Participants <i>Most and least likely</i></b>	<b>% tracked usage and most used method for tracking</b>	<b>Purpose <i>Most and least likely</i></b>	<b>Delivered <i>Most and least likely</i></b>
<b>Face-to-face training</b>	91%	Most likely: Administrators (50%)	94%	Most likely: Provide info about CCGPS (93%)	Most likely: RESA (64%)
		Least likely: Other (12%)	Most used method: sign-in sheets	Least likely: Other (5%)	Least likely: Other (6%)
<b>Job-embedded Professional Learning</b>	83.3%	Most likely: ALL teachers ALL subjects (36%)	85%	Most likely: Provide modeling & instructional strategies (80%)	Most likely: School-based instructional coaches (58%)
		Least likely: Other (5%)	Most used method: sign-in sheets	Least likely: Other (7%)	Least likely: GaDOE (10%)

Table 10 continued

<b>Institutes or conferences</b>	75%	Most likely: Administrators (47%)	88%	Most likely: Provide info about CCGPS (86%)	Most likely: RESA (64%)
		Least likely: ALL teachers in core content (7%)	Most used method: sign-in sheets	Least likely: Other (8%)	Least likely: Other (4%)
<b>Webinars</b>	67%	Most likely: Administrators (52%)	78%	Most likely: Provide info about CCGPS (92%)	Most likely: tie between GaDOE and LEA (49%)
		Least likely: Select teachers in core content areas (10%)	Most used method: sign-in sheets	Least likely: Other (2%)	Least likely: Other (7%)
<b>Online courses or tools</b>	25%	Most likely: ALL teachers ALL subjects (40%)	66%	Most likely: Provide info about CCGPS (77%)	Most likely: RESA (41%)
		Least likely: Other (13%)	Most used methods: sign-in sheets and online tracking	Least likely: Other (13%)	Least likely: Other (16%)

Table 10 continued

<b>Other methods of training</b>	6%	Most likely: Tie between ALL teachers ALL subjects, select group of teachers ALL subjects, and Other (29%)	79%	Most likely: Explain assessment changes (57%)	Most likely: External experts (50%)
		Least likely: Tie between ALL core content teachers and select group of math and ELA teachers (0%)	Tracked using sign-in sheets	Least likely: Other (29%)	Least likely: Tie between GaDOE, school-based instructional coaches, and teachers (14%)

The data provided in Table 10 suggests:

- **The training methods discussed in the CCGPS Supports Inventory Survey aligned well with the training methods being used across the state.** As stated, very few respondents offered training methods beyond those mentioned in the survey.

Also, the “other” category was commonly the “least likely” response.

- When discussing “other” participants, respondents often mentioned specific staff, like paraprofessionals or science, social studies and CTAE teachers.
- “Other” purposes for training and “other” agencies that delivered training usually fit into one of the existing categories.

Hence, the training methods in the survey are well-aligned to the activities that took place locally and can be used in future assessments of CCGPS implementation.

- **In most cases, in-person training methods occurred at local levels.** Respondents wanted GaDOE to create more opportunities for face-to-face training. However, given the survey responses, LEAs created opportunities for in-person training. More than 90% of respondents said their educators had access to face-to-face training, making it the most utilized method of training.

To further demonstrate the high use of in-person training at local levels, 83% of respondents offered job-embedded training, which also takes place in-person.

- **It was rare that providers used online courses or tools to train educators.** Only 24% of respondents said their educators used online courses or tools for training purposes. One respondent suggested that GaDOE should, “Offer a brief, but powerful online course (4 to 6 modules).” Further investigation on the potential usefulness and interest of a course is needed.

As a part of RT3, CEISMC, a K-12 research and professional development partner housed at Georgia Institute of Technology, is implementing online courses. These courses offer content-specific training to math and science educators. GaDOE and other state agencies should investigate the communication and usage of CEISMC’s training sessions. These agencies should also look into the other online courses or tools being used effectively by LEAs.

- **Providers usually trained administrators.** Providers targeted administrators for half of the training methods: webinars (52%); face-to-face training (50%); and institutes or conferences (47%). However, based on the comments, teachers seemed to be the group most in need of training. Respondents often portrayed teachers as anxious and overwhelmed by the work. The anxiety and tension stemmed from a lack of information or understanding on implementing the standards. Instructional support staff, like instructional coaches, and select math and ELA teachers was the next most likely participants of training.
- **Training primarily provided information about CCGPS.** The *CCGPS Supports Inventory Survey* provided a choice among a variety of specific training purposes. GOSA’s survey design allowed respondents to distinguish training that provided a general overview or contextual information from sessions focused on specific aspects of CCGPS. The predominant purpose of CCGPS training was to give information about CCGPS. It is possible that respondents selected more than one purpose, which could give training methods a combination of purposes in some cases.

Lastly, respondents expressed need for more training and support that models effective instructional practices and assessments aligned to CCGPS in comments and responses to survey statements. As mentioned, GaDOE is engaged in two projects that feature recording exemplary classroom teachers in practice.

GaDOE and other state agencies should monitor this work to determine if additional modeling support is needed.

- **RESAs delivered most of the localized training.** Respondents said RESAs delivered face-to-face training (64%), online courses or tools (41%), and institutes or conferences (64%).

### Major findings on each training method

#### FACE-TO-FACE TRAINING

Face-to-face training was the most utilized training method. Ninety-one percent of respondents said that they offered face-to-face training. Still, respondents overwhelmingly commented on the need for more face-to-face training. Further investigation into the quality and scale of local face-to-face training efforts, and how GaDOE can support and/or augment these efforts, is needed.

RESA content area specialists (64%), district content area specialists (54%), and school-based instructional coaches (50%) most often delivered localized face-to-face training. Aside from “other” providers, like external experts and school-based staff, state content area specialists delivered face-to-face training (25%) the least. Common purposes of face-to-face training included sharing information about CCGPS (94%) and explaining curriculum changes from GPS to CCPGS (90%). Providers also used face-to-face training to explain assessment changes from GPS to CCGPS (82%) and model and discuss instructional strategies (82%). Though not as common, providers used this training method to explain implications for other subjects (64%) or provide differentiated training based on educator need (62%).

Administrators (50%), instructional support staff (49%),

#### Practice from the field: **Using RESAs**

RESAs understand the unique needs of the districts they serve and are well-positioned to provide individualized support. Respondents overwhelmingly expressed an interest in engaging with RESAs more. They also proposed that GaDOE partner with RESAs to provide more face-to-face training. This “practice from the field” serves as an example of how some LEAs are establishing strong partnerships with their RESA to implement CCGPS.

*“We have consistently used our RESA for help with CCGPS implementation and have monthly scheduled visits with Math and Literacy consultants from RESA. Our district is participating in the Math District Collaboration (MDC) and the Literacy District Collaboration (LDC).”*

*- Rural, Race to the Top partner district*

and all mathematics and ELA teachers (39%) most often took part in face-to-face training. Select groups of teachers, across all subjects or in core content subjects only, were least likely to participate. Sixty-three percent of the respondents required participation for those who engaged in face-to-face training. The vast majority of respondents (94%) tracked participation, and they usually used sign-in sheets.

## **JOB-EMBEDDED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

Job-embedded professional learning was the second most utilized training method. Eighty-three percent of respondents said LEAs or RESAs offered job-embedded professional learning. School-based instructional coaches (58%), RESA content area specialists (45%), and district content area specialists (42%) mostly delivered this method of training. Less than 10% of the respondents said that state content area specialists provided job-embedded professional learning to educators.

In most cases, all teachers in all subjects (36%), instructional support staff (27%), and administrators (25%) received job-embedded professional learning. Required attendance was the norm. Eighty-five percent of respondents said that they tracked participation in job-embedded professional learning, usually with sign-in sheets.

Given the nature of job-embedded professional learning, it was not surprising that its primary purpose was to model and provide instructional strategies to deliver the new standards (80%). In addition, providers often gave information about CCGPS (68%) and explained curriculum changes from GPS to CCGPS (64%) during job-embedded professional learning.

## **INSTITUTES AND CONFERENCES**

Seventy-five percent of respondents said LEAs or RESAs offered institutes or conferences to educators. Attendees typically gained information about CCGPS (86%) and learned about curriculum changes from GPS to CCGPS (81%) at institutes and conferences. Institutes and conferences also provided opportunities for modeling and discussions on instructional strategies to deliver the new standards (79%). LEAs or RESAs also used institutes or conferences to create curriculum exemplars and/or assessments. RESA content area specialists (64%), external experts (50%), and state content area specialists (48%) generally hosted and/or presented at institutes or conferences. Several respondents mentioned the GACIS conferences. One respondent exclaimed, "The training in Athens by the GAEL affiliate, GACIS, was the best training that we participated in this entire year! Even though it was not directly overseen by

GaDOE, it was well organized so that the participants could see the progression of thought as well as how everything fit together. "

Mostly administrators (47%), instructional support staff (46%), and select groups of math and ELA teachers (35%) attended institutes and conferences. Responses to survey statements indicated opportunities to send all teachers to institutes or conferences were rare. Almost half of the respondents did not require attendance at institutes or conferences. Participation at institutes or conferences was the most heavily tracked training method. Eighty-eight percent of participants tracked participation, usually with sign-in sheets.

## **WEBINARS**

Webinars caused more controversy than any other training method. According to respondents, the number of webinars state and local agencies expected teachers to view caused frustration and burn-out. Several respondents said teachers were, "webinarred out."

However, webinars provided a convenient and cost-effective approach to communicating consistent messages, which is one of the reasons why GaDOE used them so often.

At the local level, curriculum leaders used training methods that provided more personal contact, like face-to-face and job-embedded training. Webinars ranked fourth among the training methods used by respondents. A little over a third of respondents said they offered webinars. District content area specialists (49%), state content area specialists (49%), and RESA content area specialists (48%) used webinars to deliver training the most.

In most cases, state and local agencies used webinars to disseminate information on CCGPS (92%) and explain curriculum changes from GPS to CCGPS (87%). Education agencies also used webinars for modeling and discussing instructional strategies to effectively deliver the new standards (77%). Administrators (52%) most often took part in the webinars, followed by, instructional support staff (50%), and all math and ELA teachers (44%). Agencies rarely used webinars to communicate with select groups of teachers in core content subjects (10%) or select groups of teachers across all subjects (14%).

The survey asked respondents if they required participation in webinar training. Seventy-three percent of the respondents required participation in webinars.

*Practice from the field:*

### **Using Wikispaces**

Wikispaces are free online resources for storing and sharing data. Wikispaces are used by educators across the state. GaDOE has wikispaces for sharing important information regarding math and ELA. Respondents found the math wikispaces to be very useful. Online data sharing tools were one of the main ways that educators accessed instructional support materials.

*"The wiki spaces in our county have proven very helpful. We also offer sharing sessions across the county where teachers just meet to share ideas."*

*- Rural district*

Responses to survey statements also suggested that LEAs and RESAs generally had strong mechanisms for tracking participation. Seventy-eight percent of respondents tracked participation in webinars. The most common tracking method was sign-in sheets. However, further investigation into the quality of participation is needed. Many respondents admitted to being unsure of how many teachers actually took part or paid enough attention in the state webinars to gain all the benefits.

### **ONLINE COURSES OR TOOLS**

Most of the respondents did not offer online courses or tools. Only 25% of them offered this training method. RESA content area specialists (41%), district content area specialists (34%), and external experts like consultants and vendors (33%) most likely of offered online courses and tools. However, respondents often commented on their educators using School Improvement Network (PD 360 and Common Core 360) products.

Respondents targeted all teachers in all subjects (40%), instructional support staff (38%), and administrators (35%). Of all the training methods, respondents used online courses or tools to reach all teachers in all subjects the most. This finding suggests that online courses or tools are a manageable mechanism for reaching a broad audience. Most respondents (49%) did not require participation in the online courses or tools. This could mean teachers used these tools voluntarily.

Sixty-six percent of the respondents said providers tracked participation in online courses and tools. The providers typically tracked participation using sign-in sheets or online tracking mechanisms.

Respondents were least likely to offer online courses or tools. Only 25% of them said that they offered this training method. Many of the 25% shared that they

used products offered by the School Improvement Network (PD 360 and Common Core 360).

For respondents that offered online courses or tools, the primary audiences were all teachers in all subjects (40%), instructional support staff (38%), and administrators (35%). Of the training methods, online courses or tools were the method most targeted at all teachers in all subjects, which might mean that online courses or tools are a manageable mechanism for reaching a broad audience. Most respondents (49%) said that participating in the online courses or tools was not required, which might indicate that teachers were voluntarily using these tools.

Online courses and tools were most likely offered by RESA content area specialists (41%), district content area specialists (34%), and external experts like consultants and vendors (33%). Sixty-six percent of the respondents said that the providers tracked participation in online courses and tools. The providers typically tracked participation using sign-in sheets or online tracking mechanisms.

## **INSTITUTES AND CONFERENCES**

Seventy-five percent of respondents said that the LEAs or RESAs offered institutes or conferences to educators. Institutes and conferences were typically used to provide information about CCGPS (86%), explain curriculum changes from GPS to CCGPS (81%), and provide modeling or instructional strategies to deliver the new standards (79%). Several respondents said that the LEAs or RESAs also used institutes or conferences to create curriculum exemplars and/or assessments. Institutes or conferences were generally facilitated by RESA content area specialists (64%), external experts (50%), and state content area specialists (48%). Several respondents mentioned that educators participated in GACIS conferences. One respondent shared, "The training in Athens by the GAEL affiliate, GACIS, was the best training that we participated in this entire year! Even though it was not directly overseen by GaDOE, it was well organized so that the participants could see the progression of thought as well as how everything fit together."

Mostly administrators (47%), instructional support staff (46%), and select groups of math and ELA teachers (35%) attended institutes and conferences. Responses to survey statements indicated opportunities to send all teachers to institutes or conferences were rare. Almost half of the respondents said that participants were not required to attend the institutes or conferences. Participation at institutes or conferences was the most heavily tracked training method. Eighty-eight percent of participants said that they tracked participation, usually with sign-in sheets.

## **JOB-EMBEDDED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING**

Job-embedded professional learning was the second most utilized training method. Eighty-three percent of respondents said that the LEAs or RESAs offered job-embedded professional learning. This method was mostly delivered by school-based instructional coaches (58%), RESA content area specialists (45%), and district content area specialists (42%). Less than 10% of the respondents said that state content area specialists provided job-embedded professional learning to educators.

Job-embedded professional learning was most frequently delivered to all teachers in all subjects (36%), instructional support staff (27%), and administrators (25%). Participants were usually required to attend job-embedded professional learning. Eighty-five percent of respondents said that they tracked participation in job-embedded professional learning, usually with sign-in sheets.

Given the nature of job-embedded professional learning, it was not surprising that the primary purpose for this method of training was to model and provide instructional strategies to deliver the new standards (80%). This training method was also often used to provide information about CCGPS (68%) and explain curriculum changes from GPS to CCGPS (64%).

## **OTHER METHODS OF TRAINING**

As stated, 6% of the respondents said they provided training methods outside of those mentioned in the survey. Generally, these methods included professional learning communities and redelivered training using the “train-the-trainer” technique. The primary participants were all teachers in all subjects (29%), select groups of teachers across all subjects (29%), and other staff (29%).

Fifty-seven percent of the respondents required

### *Practices from the field:* **Sharing local best practices**

Educators benefit from seeing real-life examples of excellent instruction. Findings from the CCGPS Supports Inventory Survey support this concept. Respondents overwhelmingly asked for additional opportunities for modeling of successful instructional practices. Modeling and best practice sharing can be facilitated at a local level, like in this example, where a district allowed a successful teacher to share her best practices with other teachers in the district.

*“Another successful practice employed by our system was bringing in classroom teacher from system already implementing the CCGPS to have her share a unit of instruction she developed and model how she introduces it to her class.”*

*- Small city district*

attendance. Seventy-nine percent of respondents had a mechanism for tracking participation, typically sign-in sheets.

These training methods served many purposes. At least 50% of the respondents used “other” methods to explain assessment changes from GPS to CCGPS (57%), provide information about CCGPS (50%), explain curriculum changes from GPS to CCGPS (50%), and/or provide modeling and instructional strategies to deliver the new standards (50%).

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### Summary

The findings from the survey highlight some of the ways that LEAs, RESAs, and the GaDOE prepared educators to implement CCGPS. Across the state, educators used curriculum exemplars, formative assessments, and supplemental resources as well as provided face-to-face training and job-embedded professional learning to support a successful transition to CCGPS. However, comments from some respondents suggested that there was room for improvement. The next section discusses potential gaps and opportunities.

# GAPS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Through analysis of the findings from the *CCGPS Supports Inventory Survey*, GOSA identified several common themes that present opportunities for state agencies to improve CCGPS implementation. Generally, respondents discussed **gaps** in service delivery or **opportunities** to strengthen service delivery. Gaps related to specific aspects of training, instructional support materials, or general support that respondents perceived as absent from 2012-2013 CCGPS implementation. On the contrary, opportunities were instances where respondents recommended ways that GaDOE or other state agencies could improve existing service delivery. GOSA used respondent comments to propose recommendations for how GaDOE and other state agencies can strengthen programming.

## Gaps

Respondents perceived five gaps in service delivery. GaDOE and/or other appropriate agencies should conduct an assessment to gauge the actual level of need relative to these perceived gaps and then develop proper supports to address them.

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*Gap: Educators needed more support with assessing teacher practice.*

Several respondents expressed a need for additional support with evaluating teachers' ability to effectively deliver CCGPS. Specifically, they indicated that administrators needed more training on evaluating teachers. One respondent also suggested that teachers needed common student performance benchmarks to better understand the depth of material that they must teach.

Georgia's transition to CCGPS intends to "prepare students for success in college and/or the 21st century workplace."<sup>23</sup> To determine the impact of education reforms, for example, the impact of CCGPS on student achievement, one must first understand the quality of instruction that students receive. Education researcher Andrew Porter discusses the importance of understanding

*"Administrators need a specific list of what to look for in classrooms as evidence of implementation of CCGPS."*

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<sup>23</sup> Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), "Common Core Georgia Performance Standards," Common Core Georgia Performance Standards, 2011, Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), 1 Aug. 2012 <<https://www.georgiastandards.org/Common-Core/Pages/default.aspx>> .

the alignment between the performance standards, which outline what students are expected to learn, and the actual instruction that is delivered.<sup>24</sup> In order to effectively assess the impact of CCGPS on student learning, teacher practice must be monitored and measured.

GaDOE should make sure that administrators, instructional staff, and policymakers have guidance and tools to more effectively monitor and measure teacher practice, particularly as it relates to the implementation of CCGPS. There are two state efforts that may help educators with assessing teacher practice.

- First, Georgia is implementing a new educator evaluation system, Teacher Keys Education System (TKES), which will help educators evaluate teacher performance in a comprehensive and objective manner. GaDOE, in partnership with regional and local education agencies, should ensure that local education leaders understand how TKES can be used to assess implementation of CCGPS. This is especially important for non-RT3 partner districts, which might not have as much experience with the system.
- Second, GOSA started collecting feedback on teacher practice as a part of the statewide evaluation of CCGPS implementation. GOSA's administered a survey to a random sample of nearly 3,000 teachers in April 2013. The purpose of this survey was to collect self-reported data from teachers on how they are changing practice to best implement CCGPS. The report is expected to be distributed in August 2013. This data will highlight areas where teachers are effectively addressing the demands of CCGPS, as well as areas where more attention and support are needed.

Gap: New assessments caused anxiety because teachers did not know what to expect.

Respondents consistently shared frustrations with the lack of available information on assessments. Georgia is member of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). PARCC is charged with developing new assessments aligned to the *Common Core State Standards*. The expected implementation period for these assessments is the 2014-2015 school year.

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<sup>24</sup> A. C. Porter, "Measuring the Content of Instruction: Uses in Research and Practice," *Educational Researcher* 31 (2002): 3-14.

Part of anxiety experienced by teachers stemmed from them feeling unprepared to effectively get students ready for the new format and rigor of the assessments. Feedback from the respondents suggested that part of the frustration came from teachers not being able to base instructional and curriculum planning on the new assessments. A phrase used several times was “begin with the end in mind.” The new

*“Our system embraces Understanding by Design wherein we begin with the end in mind. If DOE could have offered more information about what PARC(C) assessments will look like, systems would have been able to develop units and common assessments for CCGPS well in advance.”*

assessments will not be used for at least two years, and PARCC is still actively engaged in planning and development.<sup>25</sup> Georgia is one of the states on PARCC’s governing board and has access to the most up-to-date information.

Respondents acknowledged that teachers had access to some sample assessment items but wanted more. Respondents also found the resources within GaDOE’s Online Assessment System (OAS) inadequate. GaDOE’s OAS is a repository for students and parents to access information about student achievement expectations. Educators use OAS to access sample and formative test items aligned to the

state curriculum. A few respondents said that OAS included outdated items and needed more items better aligned to CCGPS and the new assessments.

Specific assessment needs expressed by respondents included:

- Consistent statewide formative assessments;
- More guidance and information on the differences and similarities between the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) levels associated with the assessment items;
- Rubrics for assessing performance tasks; and
- More prompt information about the transition to new assessments.

Overall, GaDOE should follow-up with local curriculum staff, as well as GaDOE departments involved in the development of the PARCC assessments, to find areas where collaboration can improve communication about the implementation of new

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<sup>25</sup> "About PARCC," Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, 20 Mar. 2013 <<http://www.parcconline.org/about-parcc>>.

assessments. Specifically, GaDOE should determine if opportunities exist to improve the guidance that school-based staff receives related to DOK and performance tasks.

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*Gap: Some of GaDOE's instructional support materials lacked critical information.*

Many of the respondents provided very specific feedback on how some of GaDOE's instructional support materials missed the mark on providing useful and relevant information on certain standards. The following quotes highlight these gaps.

- "It would also be beneficial to start with an actual reading and explanation of what is expected with each standard. Interpretations vary when individuals are unpacking. Some of the vocabulary in the standards is vague or confusing."
- "The teachers need more details about ways to use manipulatives and ways to reach struggling learners with these concepts."
- "More work / information on how to move from the basal reader in K-5. Also, how to implement a scope and sequence for K-5 reading."
- "However, the quality of ELA was poor and our district ended up researching things such as text complexity ourselves and redelivering to teachers on our own using bits and pieces of the webinars and GPBs."
- "Teachers are very frustrated concerning the lack of resources for the units. Sources for manipulatives and foundational building skills lessons that should be included in the units."
- "The K-3 units especially seem to assume that kids are already proficient readers and writers. Structure needs to be added to the frameworks to TEACH kids HOW to read and write before they are expected to apply their reading and writing in a task."
- "Kindergarten Frameworks do not include teaching the basics for reading and writing such as learning to write and recognize letters and words."
- "Though the pedagogy is important, the teachers needed more with regard to the structure of the lessons particularly ELA, lesson planning outline, and specific close read strategies, etc."
- "More in-depth training on the Math Performance Tasks."

Although these examples largely focus on shortcomings in the ELA curriculum exemplars, a few respondents shared frustration with mathematics as well. Those who provided feedback usually made general comments about mathematics teachers struggling to interpret and implement the standards, especially at the high school level.

In sum, respondents spoke in a direct manner about quality of the instructional support materials. Responses to the survey statements show that educators used curriculum exemplars developed by GaDOE to a great extent. Therefore, it is important that GaDOE improve these materials to provide a more useful resource to educators across the state. As mentioned earlier in the report, GaDOE has already been compiling feedback from educators and will be revising the instructional support materials during summer 2013.

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*Gap: Non-RT3 districts needed more guidance and support.*

LEAs took it upon themselves to find creative ways to further support educators, which often required more financial resources. Many districts spoke of the financial burden of trying to adequately prepare their educators. Respondents often mentioned that sending educators to summer academies, using substitutes to relieve teachers during training, and purchasing supplemental resources were potentially worthy, but cost-prohibitive. Respondents from non-RT3 partner districts vocalized the challenges to adequately supporting educators due to limited resources the most.

Several respondents from non-RT3 partner districts felt they were operating without a common, guiding plan for implementation. These respondents believed that RT3 districts were better informed and supported. They also believed that RT3 partner districts had more resources to fund instructional coaches and financially support teachers attending CCGPS-related training. One respondent said, "There seems to be no coherent battle

*"[We need] PL days for teachers to actually work on lessons and units - lack of money limited the training during the summer. Some systems did a great job preparing during the summer, other systems did not. Teachers are attempting to teach the new CCGPS and learn the new content all at the same time. If more systems had RTTT funds, they would be better able to give teachers some release time to prepare for this implementation."*

plan or funding available to do much training, at least for those school systems who are not Race to the Top."

GOSA's analysis of the survey findings identified both RT3 partner and non-partner districts that reported promising practices. These districts varied by size and region. Further investigation into how the state can better support districts with financial limitations is needed. As a part of the evaluation plan for CCGPS implementation, GOSA is exploring the use of case studies. The case studies would investigate LEAs and/or RESAs that have employed successful approaches to implementing CCGPS, as evidenced by teacher effectiveness and positive student outcomes. This research has the potential to help state leaders with making decisions related to sustaining promising practices.

In the meantime, GaDOE can ensure that every district is engaged and informed. GaDOE used a range of communication methods, including newsletters and Wikipages, to engage and inform educators. However, it is possible that these efforts did not serve educators as intended and need changing to improve quality and usage.

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*Gap: Educators noted an absence of CCGPS information and resources tailored to parents.*

Although the variety and breadth of information on CCGPS sometimes overwhelmed educators, several respondents shared that there was a lack materials intended for parents.

A quick internet search provided a number of articles and papers aimed at informing parents about the *Common Core State Standards* and the pending changes. Education Northwest<sup>26</sup>, the National PTA<sup>27</sup>, and The Council of Great City Schools<sup>28</sup> developed materials for parents, showing that national organizations also perceived a need for these kinds of resources. If the state lacks appropriate, parent-tailored resources, then these organizations should see that new resources are created and effectively shared

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<sup>26</sup> Education Northwest, "What Do Parents Need To Know?" [Spotlight on the Common Core State Standards](#) (Mar. 2011): 1-4, [Educationnorthwest.org](#), Mar. 2011, Education Northwest, Feb. 2013 <[http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm\\_send/1106](http://educationnorthwest.org/webfm_send/1106)>.

<sup>27</sup> National PTA, "Parents' Guide to Student Success," [National PTA](#), National PTA, Feb. 2013 <<http://pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2583>>.

<sup>28</sup> Council of the Great City Schools, "Parent Roadmaps to Common Core Standards," [Council of the Great City Schools/ Parent Roadmaps- English Language Arts](#), June 2012, Council of the Great City Schools, Feb. 2013 <<http://www.cgcs.org/domain/36>>.

with parents and families. If the resources exist, then state leaders should make sure that they are maximized.

It is important to note that this study did not explicitly ask respondents to discuss materials developed or used to inform parents. It is possible that GaDOE had resources for parents, and some respondents were not aware of them.

## Opportunities

The following opportunities provide some of the concrete examples of how respondents think GaDOE and other state agencies can improve services to better support educators with CCGPS implementation.

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*Opportunity: create more opportunities for face-to-face training.*

Respondents were clear: Educators prefer face-to-face training and need more of it. Unfortunately, face-to-face training is more resource-intensive than other forms of support. Respondents understood that GaDOE does not have the capacity to travel to every LEA in the state to train educators. Instead, they proposed the following solutions.

- **Let RESAs conduct more training.** The feedback from the survey suggests that some LEAs rely heavily on their RESAs for training and support. Many respondents suggested that GaDOE better utilize the RESAs for training. One respondent went as far to say, "Let RESAs do most of the training. Face-to-face is a much better venue and they [RESAs] know the needs of the particular schools."
- **Use interactive virtual methods.** Advanced technology is available making it possible for people to meet virtually. GaDOE already uses web-based presentation tools like the webinars. However, a few respondents shared that training could be facilitated using other tools that allow better interactive, two-way communication. A respondent suggested, "While the travel involved can be a limiting factor for bringing all ELA Specialists together face-to-face, there are many options for virtual meetings to be conducted. Skype and Google Collab offer free and easy to use tools for virtual communication."
- **Expand summer academies.** As stated earlier in this report, the majority of respondents did not take part in the summer academies. The summer academies did not have the capacity to serve every educator who wanted to attend. However, GaDOE curriculum created waiting lists and notified teachers when openings arose. They also shared that nearly 50% of the teachers who registered did not attend. Despite GaDOE's account of participation issues, many respondents indicated that GaDOE should give earlier notice for the academies. These comments implied that earlier notice would allow more teachers to sign-up before the academies filled-up.

Overall, districts felt the academies needed to be available to more educators. Although there seemed to be a difference in opinion on participation in the summer academies, further investigation into GaDOE's communication and marketing of these sessions is needed. State agencies should investigate ways to scale-up and better use these sessions.

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Opportunity: Make supports more "teacher-friendly."

Overall, the feedback from respondents suggests that the various supports GaDOE provided sometimes caused more work, confusion and frustration than intended. However, the respondents offered several recommendations for how GaDOE can make the support more "teacher-friendly."

- **Increase the effectiveness of the webinars.** As discussed, some respondents felt that the webinars were too long, not substantive enough, and did not capture the audience's attention. Several respondents said that shortening the webinars into 10-15 minute video clips would be more effective. Respondents also said that GaDOE and GPB first aired the webinars at inconvenient times for teachers. They suggested that GaDOE should consider showing webinars at times that are better aligned with teacher planning periods. However, it is

important to note that GaDOE and GPB archived webinars to make them available for viewing as needed.

*"A preview guide to the GPTV broadcasts would have been helpful. In addition, since the webinars were scheduled throughout the day at very "odd" times for teacher viewing, many of our schools watched the recordings. It would have been helpful to provide some supplemental pieces so that school leaders and instructional coaches could utilize them as study groups."*

One respondent suggested that GaDOE create opportunities throughout the webinar to engage the participants in questions and gauge understanding of the concepts being presented. The respondent said, "Consider truly making these interactive by building in formative assessment questions throughout the presentation and asking teachers to provide feedback throughout the webinar." Another respondent asked GaDOE to offer more guidance to districts on how to fully benefit from webinars. Another suggestion was for GaDOE to give LEA leadership guiding questions to facilitate discussion afterward.

Another respondent encouraged GaDOE to give LEAs an advanced preview of the webinars so local leaders could develop approaches to augmenting the webinars.

Lastly, respondents often shared that the webinars provided good starting points yet lacked specific details on how to best implement the standards. Respondents wanted the webinars to be more focused on instructional practices and to include more demonstrations of actual teaching and learning.

- **Streamline communications.** Having to access information about CCGPS from so many sources frustrated educators. One respondent said, "Do not send us to multiple locations to unravel information; pick one landing for providing CCGPS information and route all information to the one site." Educators accessed a variety of websites, including GaDOE, LEAs, vendors, consultants, and other national websites to obtain CCGPS information and support materials.

The number of communications with GaDOE overwhelmed respondents. Numerous webinars, newsletters and updates were frustrating to some staff. One respondent offered the following recommendation: "Also a scrolling feature to the website alerting everyone of new resources and developments would be better than a 4-5 page newsletter each month. Utilizing the array of technology tools available to

increase efficiency of communication and assure that all stakeholders have access to it would certainly make the CCGPS implementation more successful."

*"Also having information posted on so many places is horrific ... how in this world can we be expected to visit the various sites, watch the endless webinars, meet with teachers, and carry out all of our other duties at the same time? It is overwhelming and truly unmanageable."*

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*Opportunity: Increase access to GaDOE staff.*

Educators understand that GaDOE staff members are not able to visit every LEA in the state. However, they would like state staff to make themselves more available to educators across the state. Respondents made two suggestions.

- **Create regional specialist positions.** One respondent said, "Districts need state assigned CCGPS program specialists (similar to the TKES/LKES pilot) to provide another layer of support." GaDOE used regional specialists who worked with every Race to the Top LEA to train and support districts for the new educator evaluation system. The responses to the survey statement indicate that educators rarely access GaDOE content area specialists for direct training, like face-to-face training or job-embedded training. Further investigation into whether LEAs would benefit from additional or on-the-ground CCGPS support from GaDOE is needed.
- **Make visits to at least every RESA.** Since it is unreasonable to expect that existing GaDOE staff visit every LEA, one respondent recommended that, "GaDOE schedule a visit to each RESA." Scheduling visits with each region might increase local educators' access to the Department's staff. Aligning visits with RESAs might increase the effectiveness of GaDOE visits since many respondents appeared to have good relationships with their RESAs.

It is important to note that GaDOE partnered with RESAs to provide the summer academies. The summer academies took place in various locations across the state. In addition, GaDOE used a portion of their RT3 funding to support RESA staff positions, charged with supporting LEAs with CCGPS implementation.

Opportunity: Increase opportunities for best practice sharing.

The last recommendation is for GaDOE to increase opportunities for sharing best practices. Respondents stated that they are interested in learning about the best practices being implemented across the state and in other states. Sharing best practices can range from making it easier to share resources to creating more opportunities for teachers to observe other teachers delivering exemplary instruction.

Further investigation into various methods to share best practices is needed. Methods that should be further investigated are listed below.

*"In addition, a cohort group of district representatives should form a state planning team for CCGPS to allow for cross-sharing, sharing of resources and creation of materials to be used across the district."*

- **Professional learning communities:** Professional learning communities, recommended by leading education research agencies like Learning Forward,<sup>29</sup> offer one venue for sharing best practices. Many of the respondents also shared that professional learning communities are a method of support being offered to educators. GaDOE may be able to collaborate with LEAs that are using professional learning communities to replicate or scale-up promising practices.

- **Lesson studies:** Research for Better Schools (RBS) suggests using lesson study to further the benefits of teacher collaboration. RBS says, "In the lesson study model of ongoing professional learning, teachers learn together, with administrators and specialists, and even with other schools. Participants plan, observe, and refine 'research lessons' designed to make real their long-term goals for student learning and development."<sup>30</sup> RBS also says that lesson study should provide opportunities for teachers to observe and practice teaching lessons. Several respondents said teachers needed lesson study and opportunities to observe excellent practices.

<sup>29</sup> Learning Forward is an international nonprofit organization of learning educators that with the contribution of 40 professional associations and education organizations, developed the Standards for Professional Learning. For more information on Learning Forward and their standards for professional learning, please visit their website: <http://learningforward.org/standards#.UZpRW7Uceup>

<sup>30</sup> Research for Better Schools, "Lesson Study," [RBS.org](http://www.rbs.org), Research for Better Schools, Feb. 2013 <[http://www.rbs.org/lesson\\_study/](http://www.rbs.org/lesson_study/)>.

- **Case studies:** Conducting a case study could help provide context for various conditions related to CCGPS implementation. GOSA is exploring the value of using case studies to better understand successful practices in CCGPS implementation as a part of the statewide evaluation of Race to the Top.

# GOING FORWARD

Expectations for this study, stated in the beginning of the report, highlighted three goals.

- 1) Help readers understand the types of support services and materials that were offered to educators.
- 2) Provide insight into how curriculum leaders across the state perceived GaDOE's support and leadership throughout the early implementation period.
- 3) Initiate the discussion on teacher understanding and readiness to implement CCGPS standards.

Feedback from the *CCGPS Supports Inventory Survey* showed that educators used curriculum exemplars, formative assessments, and supplemental resources. They also received face-to-face training and job-embedded professional learning to support a successful transition to CCGPS. GaDOE is the most common provider of curriculum exemplars, and LEAs and RESAs are the most common providers of face-to-face training and job-embedded learning.

Overall, curriculum leaders felt GaDOE curriculum staff were very supportive and believed that the Department did its best. Still, these leaders shared frustrations with implementation. The respondents believed the timeline was too aggressive and the communication of expectations and guidance needed improvement.

Lastly, respondents felt that their teachers understood how the standards should be implemented and were aware of the changes that stemmed from the transition to CCGPS. However, comments from a number of the respondents indicated that the transition overwhelmed many teachers and many of them struggled with implementation.

Overall, this report begins a larger discussion on what is needed to ensure that Georgia educators fully and effectively make the transition to CCGPS. This report highlights some of the ways that curriculum leaders believe that implementation needs to be improved.

Georgia also needs the voices of those on the front line of this movement, teachers, to round out the ongoing assessment of CCGPS implementation. In spring 2013, GOSA partnered with the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) to administer a

statewide teacher survey. The survey asked teachers across the state to gauge the level of preparedness to effectively implement CCGPS. The survey also collected self-reported data on how instructional practice is changing as a result of CCGPS implementation. With this data, Georgia will be in a better position to fully understand the overall alignment, effectiveness, and initial impact of the transition to CCGPS.