

**Georgia Department of Education
Consolidated Application Clarification Notice**

The Department of Education disburses grant funds to local school districts for programs under No Child Left Behind, Perkins, IDEA, and the state's Professional Development program through the Consolidated Application.

Each program requires local school districts to submit a "plan" or "application" that must be approved by the Georgia Department of Education in order to receive funds.

There is a perception that the Consolidated Application requirements have significantly increased from previous years. The perception may be due in part to the manner in which we are asking all local school districts to address the coordination of all federal programs. In the past many district program coordinators completed the program requirements only for his/her area of responsibility. Now, the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan requires coordination and collaboration across all programs and may require additional efforts on the front end. While the total number of responses an LEA must submit for the "NCLB/IDEA Descriptors is 31, without combining the overlapping components, LEAs would have to respond to 173 components.

There are some specific concerns we need to clarify around the documents to be submitted to the Department, timelines, and the flexibility available to local school districts. The Consolidated Application consists of four parts and some of the confusion is around what must be submitted for each part. The information below explains each part, what must be submitted to the Georgia Department of Education, the flexibility available to LEAs, and the deadline each part must be submitted.

Part One of the Consolidated Application is the Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan commonly referred to as the CLIP. The CLIP is due to the Department by August 31, 2006. The CLIP has three components:

1. The NCLB/IDEA Descriptors - this part consists of the 31 questions that are in the Consolidated Application. LEAs must respond to the questions within the Consolidated Application.
2. The System Profile - this part consists of the data provided by the Department in an Excel Spreadsheet. LEAs may add any data they have at the local level to the spread sheet. LEAs do not have to re-submit this data to the Department. Any data available at the LEA level can be added when it is available. LEAs should analyze this data to determine their strengths, areas for improvement, trends, etc. The analysis should be used to complete the LEA Implementation Plan. The definition of the terms and the data collection method is available on the report card. The report is available at www.gaosa.org. Some LEAs have updated data or additional data therefore, depending on when the data were collected, LEA data may differ from the data included in the System Profile.
3. The LEA Implementation Plan - this part contains the strategies the LEA will use to address its areas needing improvement. LEAs have several choices here. LEAs may upload its own plan as long as its plan addresses, at a minimum, all the components in the Department's template. Secondly, LEAs may use one of the two templates available on the Consolidated Application Website and once completed may upload either template to the Consolidated Application. Lastly, LEAs may use the Implementation Plan available directly in the Consolidated Application.

Part Two of the Consolidated Application is the Attachments commonly referred to as the Attachments Tab. The Attachments Tab is provided so that LEAs may upload charts, additional program justification, and any other information needed by individual programs.

Part Three of the Consolidated Application is the Assurances. The Assurances specify the legal requirements for each program in the Consolidated Application and must be signed off by the Superintendent before funds can be approved for posting in Grants Accounting On-line Reporting System (GAORS). The Assurances are due no later than December 31, 2006.

Part Four of the Consolidated Application is the Budget. The Budget requires the LEA to specify how funds from each program will be spent. The Superintendent must sign off on the budget signifying approval before funds can be approved for posting in GAORS. The Department will approve budgets once the LEA plan has been approved. The budget is due no later than December 31, 2006.

What must LEA's do?

1. Log onto the Consolidated Application.
2. Respond to the 31 "Plan Descriptors" in the Consolidated Application. The LEA may use the rubric and the rubric with sample examples of responses as a guide.
3. Download their "System Profile" Data provided by the Department.
4. Add any additional data available in the LEA.
5. Analyze the data for the LEA – noting areas of strength, areas for improvement, trends, etc.
6. Use the data from the "System Profile" to complete the LEA Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan (commonly referred to as the action plan) requests information on strategies, programs and interventions, etc. to address areas of improvement.
7. Upload the LEA Implementation Plan on the "Attachment Tab". The LEA may use its own template as long as the template addresses all components, may use one of the two templates provided on the Consolidated Application Website, or it may cut and paste its information directly into the Consolidated Application.
8. The "Plan" templates were made available in late March and the "Plan" is due to the Department by August 31, 2006.
9. The Department program managers and program specialists from all programs represented in Consolidated Application will evaluate each application for approval.
10. Once an LEA plan has been approved, the LEA may submit its budget for approval.

What support is available to LEAs?

1. The School Improvement Division has conducted 16 training sessions in collaboration with RESAs.
2. The Title I Division has conducted eight regional writing workshops.
3. The ETTCS are conducting regional meetings on navigating the Consolidated Application Website.
4. The Department has developed a rubric with sample examples LEAs may use as a guide to respond to the "plan descriptors".
5. The Migrant Education Program has developed sample examples and has worked with individual LEAs.
6. Title IV held a workshop for its coordinators and the Consolidated Application Information System Project Manager presented.
7. The Title I Division held several Consolidated Application navigation sessions during its June statewide meeting.
8. The Division for Exceptional Students has conducted workshops.
9. Department staff members are available for additional support upon request.

Hopefully, this provides the clarification many of you needed in order to move forward with developing your Comprehensive LEA Improvement Plan. If you have any questions, please contact Clara Keith at 404-656-4028 or by email at ckeith@doe.k12.ga.us.