

GEORGIA FLEXIBILITY OPTION STRATEGIC WAIVERS SCHOOL SYSTEM/IE²

1

Question: What is SWSS/IE²?

Answer: House Bill 1209 allows local school boards to enter into a performance contract with the Georgia Department of Education for flexibility on Title 20 laws and School Board rules. The Strategic Waiver School System/IE² is one of the performance contracts allowed under HB 1209. This model allows school districts to select specific state statutes and rules to waive.

2

Question: Why is the district pursuing SWSS/IE²?

Answer: During school year 2014-15, stakeholder meetings were held on discussing and obtaining input on each of the Georgia Flexibility Options. After careful examination of the state requirements and community input, the district has concluded that SWSS/IE² is the best option to pursue in order to ensure financial stability.

3

Question: When will the performance contract take effect?

Answer: The SWSS/IE² performance contract will go into effect July 1, 2016.

4

Question: What does flexibility mean?

Answer: HB 1209 uses flexibility from laws and rules as an incentive for districts to enter into a performance contract. Flexibility allows a school to explore and try innovative and creative ways to help improve student performance.

5

Question: How will accountability be measured?

Answer: Accountability for each school is based on the College and Career Readiness Performance Index (CCRPI). A school must grow 3% of the gap between their base year and 100. In order to meet the accountability requirements, a school must meet or exceed 3 out of their 5 year target requirements.

6

Question: Are all schools included in the Performance Contract? How will this affect the Charter Schools?

Answer: The public schools and specialty program schools will be included in the performance contract. Charter Schools will not be included in the contract with the state.

7

Question: How will this impact my child?

Answer: With the SWSS/IE² performance contract and flexibility in place, a school will be able to provide a more customized approach to student learning. All schools will be held to higher performance standards and will be monitored to ensure that the waivers used improve student performance.

8

Question: Should parents be concerned about the flexibility?

Answer: In order to ensure proper use of waivers within the schools, the school board has created policy BDH for the monitoring of waivers. Regulation BDH-R has been created to ensure consistency in use and accountability. Waivers will be monitored continuously to ensure they have a positive effect on student performance.

9

Question: Are there other Georgia districts that have selected SWSS/IE²?

Answer: Yes, three of the longest running SWSS/IE² districts are Forsyth, Gwinnett, and Rabun County schools.

10

Question: What is the timeline of events?

Answer: Below are the major timelines:

- Nov/Dec 2015 – Stakeholder meetings
 - Dec 2015 – Draft application sent to GaDOE/GOSA
 - Jan 2016 – Posting of final draft application on district’s website
 - Feb 2016 – Public Hearing on draft application
 - Mar 2016 – Local Board votes on draft application
 - May 1, 2016 – GaDOE deadline
 - July 1, 2016 – Performance Contract period begins
-

11

Question: How will this impact specialty schools?

Answer: Specialty schools will be part of the performance contract and will have to meet the CCRPI accountability growth targets established within the performance contract.

12

Question: What if a schools is already performing at the top of CCRPI? Do they still have to grow 3%?

Answer: Schools that are performing at the top quartile of the CCRPI scale will only need to remain in the top quartile. The 3% growth formula will not apply.

13

Question: Will the state provide extra funding for SWSS/IE² Systems?

Answer: Districts that enter in a SWSS/IE² performance contract will receive the same funding as a status quo district. While no additional funding is being provided, the waivers can be used to establish financial flexibility that allows the district to use its current resources more effectively and shift funding where it is needed the most.

14

Question: What is the process for a school that wants to take advantage of an approved waiver?

Answer: Schools will fill out a Waiver Request Form (WRF) and submit it to their Executive Director for review. All endorsed WRF will be presented to the School Governance Committee for review and approval. The Local Board will receive yearly reports on the use of waivers and their impact on school performance.

15

Question: How long is the performance contract period for?

Answer: The SWSS/IE² performance contract is for a five year term and can be renewed for an additional five or ten years. The terms of the contract can be amended yearly pending School Board and State Board approval.

16

Question: What happens when there is a new school?

Answer: The SWSS/IE² performance contract allows for amendments to be made. When a new school opens they will be included in the SWSS/IE² performance contract. The first year will be considered their base year for determining their year to year performance targets. The new schools will have the same access to board approved flexibility as the other schools.

17

Question: What happens to a school that experiences a shift in its population or is rezoned?

Answer: If a school experiences significant changes in its student population, the SWSS/IE² performance contract allows for renegotiation of the annual performance targets between the district and the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA).

18

Question: How will the school's annual performance targets be determined?

Answer: Schools are required to meet proficiency or show improvement on the CCRPI. Measure 1: A school shall increase its CCRPI score (without Challenge Points) by 3% of the gap between the baseline year CCRPI score and 100.

OR

Measure 2: A school performing in the top quartile of the state within each grade cluster shall remain at or above the top quartile threshold established in the baseline year.

OR

Measure 3: If a school fails to meet its CCRPI target score, the school will be deemed as meeting its yearly performance target if the school is determined to be “beating the odds” through an analysis that compares the school’s CCRPI to its expected performance as determined by the “beating the odds” model developed in partnership between GOSA and the GaDOE.

19

Question: How will we know if a school achieves its annual performance growth?

Answer: An annual report will be published on the district’s public website once school results are provided by the Georgia Department of Education.