SMART DECISIONS COALITION

2020 RECOMMENDATIONS

Solutions to increase post-secondary enrollment and completion to build Georgia's workforce of the future.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
How do we prepare Georgia to prosper?

The state of Georgia has innumerable assets, including our post-secondary institutions and workforce training, that have supported the state's significant economic success and benefited its citizens and communities. But the labor market is tightening and a war for talent has begun. Employers have numerous job openings with few qualified applicants. The solution to both of these challenges is simple: Produce more skilled workers. However, the path to achieving that objective is complex.

The University System of Georgia (USG) and Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) are becoming more diverse than ever before, enrolling more first-generation, underrepresented, and economically disadvantaged students. This positive shift shows that new groups of individuals are accessing higher education, but that requires new programmatic support and systemic changes to ensure more students successfully enroll, progress, and complete a degree with a clear career path. The result is a qualified workforce for Georgia businesses.

Completing a college degree is a significant accomplishment that leads to improved quality of life and provides opportunity for career growth over time. However, a degree is no longer the end of one's education. As technology advances at a rapid pace, lifelong learning is the new expectation. Disruptions in industries are occurring that have the potential to displace low skilled individuals. Higher education systems must shift to ensure curriculum makes individuals adaptable over the long-term, building confidence in students with every degree to encourage Georgians to continue their education through technical certificates, technical degrees, and when appropriate, a four-year degree. This includes offering more stackable credentials, nanodegrees, and short-term continuing education classes.

State and community leaders must act in order to build and grow the talent pipeline.
This is how we prepare Georgia's workforce of the future:

- Provide state funding so every high school in Georgia has a College Advising Corps adviser to provide strategic career and college advising at the K-12 level.
- Require the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) to be completed to be eligible for the HOPE scholarship.
- Provide funding for schoolwide SAT/ACT Day during the school day for every high school junior.
- Standardization of financial aid letters for Georgia colleges and universities.
- Create statewide last mile grants for post-secondary students.
- Support expansion of USG's nexus degree program.
- Encourage employers to host experience days with high schools to raise awareness of career opportunities.
- Support collaboration among employers, K-12 school districts, and post-secondary institutions to ensure program offerings continue to meet changing job needs.

Georgia's future depends on developing, sustaining, and growing the talent pipeline. These solutions and the ones found throughout this report ultimately enable students, parents, teachers, counselors, policymakers, and community leaders to make smarter decisions about investing in Georgia's long-term economic prosperity.

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ABOUT THE COALITION

Georgia, home to world-class higher education institutions and award winning workforce training, is fortunate to be the number one state in the nation in which to do business. However, not all Georgians have the opportunity to pursue post-secondary education at a technical college, two-year university, or four-year university due to geography, cost, or lack of information. These barriers pose a threat to continued economic prosperity for the state and its citizens.

The Smart Decisions Coalition formed in December 2018 with a single goal:
To eliminate barriers to post secondary success for Georgians, improving college affordability and access, in order to advance Georgia's workforce.

Georgia must prioritize cultivating the next generation of talent by helping Georgians make smarter decisions about their post-secondary options after high school based on their desired career path and their return on investment for the degree pursued. The state's employers are eager for talent, and citizens are yearning for opportunities to improve their quality of life and upward mobility.

Post-secondary institutions must change how students are prepared. Talent must be adaptable over the long-term, evolving with disruptions in industries.

The following recommendations are the result of months of meetings, hours of presentations, and a multitude of outside research. These recommendations represent a variety of policy options that can be pursued individually or in concert with each other at the state and local level in metro Atlanta, hub counties, and rural Georgia to help Georgians make smarter decisions.

The below organizations engaged in the Smart Decisions Coalition:

ABOUT THE COALITION

The Smart Decisions Coalition would like to thank the following organizations who presented to the Coalition:

To fully understand the barriers facing post-secondary students in Georgia, the Smart Decisions Coalition hosted student visits at USG and TCSG institutions across the state. Their voices and perspectives are reflected in the findings and recommendations of the Coalition.

The Smart Decisions Coalition wouldlike to thank students across the state for participating in student visits and discussions.

" STRESSFUL CONFUSING TOUGH HARD EXPENSIVE COMPLEX NOT FOR EVERYONE LIFE CHANGING CHALLENGING RIGOROUS OVERWHELMING "

PREPARING HIGH SCHOOLERS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
The first step in creating the workforce of the future

The college admissions process is complicated and overwhelming for students. First-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students, especially those in rural counties, face additional barriers to post-secondary education in terms of access to information and a post-secondary knowledge base. College and career information is not always accessible to all students, and when it is, it may be found on multiple platforms with complicated terminology that is difficult to decipher.

#1

The average student-to-counselor ratio in the state of Georgia is 484:1.[1]

Students need targeted guidance specific to college and career opportunities if they are to successfully pursue and complete a college education. Once students are accepted at a technical college or university, students still need assistance navigating the admissions process as they are required to take placement exams, finalize financial aid, and register for classes. Many institutions experience "summer melt," where accepted students do not enroll in the fall. This represents a lost opportunity to develop talent and grow our state's workforce.

Beyond providing support to students during post-secondary planning, high schools are also asked to prepare teachers and students for the evolving workforce. New emerging technologies present unique challenges that require individuals to be adaptable, flexible, and possess analytical capabilities.

State leaders and local leaders should implement the following solutions to reduce barriers that K-12 students face on their path to higher education:

1. Statewide College Advising Corps- Every high school in Georgia should have at least one College Advising Corps (CAC) adviser, building college and career awareness and assisting students with the college admissions process and financial aid.

- Utah has reallocated state dollars to provide additional CAC advisers with the goal of having one in every high school by the 2021-2022 school year with additional state funding.

- North Carolina is currently considering legislation that would provide state funding for a CAC adviser in every county.[2]

- This should be implemented through scaling after a few years in concert with CAC and local school districts.

PREPARING HIGH SCHOOLERS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
The first step in creating the workforce of the future

With CAC's existing Georgia network, results are being achieved: In Georgia, nine out of 10 students who met with a CAC adviser applied to at least one college. Students are also 33% more likely to take the SAT/ACT, 30% more likely to apply to 3+ colleges, and 32% more likely to submit the FAFSA.[3]

2. FAFSA Completion- Students should be required to complete the FAFSA in order to receive HOPE funding, with an opt-out option for families that are sure they will not qualify for federal aid. This will allow more students to access federal dollars to help pay for college, decreasing their student debt.

FAFSA Completion Rates[4]

Hub 46%

Rural 48%

Metro Atlanta 56%

3. Schoolwide SAT/ACT Day- State funds should be provided to enable local school districts to adopt a schoolwide SAT/ACT day during the normal school day for all high school juniors. Districts will have flexibility to choose their own date but are encouraged to work with neighboring districts.

- Both Tennessee and South Carolina provide state funds for 11th and 12th graders to take a college entrance exam. Tennessee requires students to take a college entrance exam and the school district chooses the exam. While South Carolina doesn't require a college entrance exam, it offers students a choice of exam to take.

In 2018, only 70% of Georgia high school graduates took the SAT.[5] About the test takers:

- 44% White; 32% African American; 11% Hispanic
- 53% Have parents with a bachelor's degree or above
- 28% Have parents with a high school diploma

STUDENT VOICE

"Georgia students enrolling in college face difficulties completing and filing FAFSA forms. FASFA forms are lengthy, cumbersome, and often so complex that they prevent students from receiving any financial aid, forcing some students to un-enroll in college before they even start."
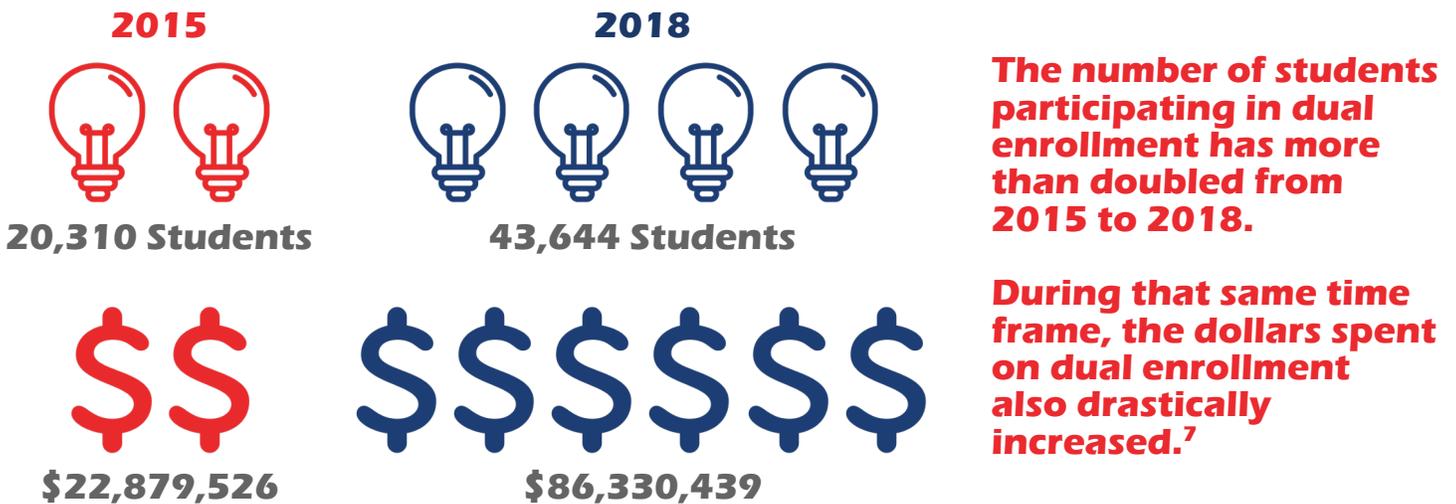
PREPARING HIGH SCHOOLERS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
The first step in creating the workforce of the future

4. Standardize Financial Aid Letters- Financial aid award letters should be standardized for in-state public institutions so parents and students have a clearer understanding of costs and can compare between in-state institutions. Support the University System of Georgia's current "Know More Borrow Less" initiative aimed at reducing barriers to financial aid, improving students' understanding of borrowing, and reducing student debt. This includes, but is not limited to, financial aid packages, FAFSA award letters, and chat bots.

- A national analysis of 11,000 financial aid award letters found that institutions offered students the same unsubsidized loans using 136 different names.[6]

5. Dual Enrollment- Support the implementation of specific and strategic goals for dual enrollment students that will have a future benefit to the student's future post-secondary and career goals. Promote USG's Momentum Year initiative that advises USG enrolled dual enrollment students on their post-secondary path.

2015

20,310 Students

2018

43,644 Students

$22,879,526   **$86,330,439**

The number of students participating in dual enrollment has more than doubled from 2015 to 2018.

During that same time frame, the dollars spent on dual enrollment also drastically increased.[7]

6. Expansion of REACH scholarship- Georgia's REACH scholarship, a public-private partnership, should be expanded to include more communities and students. Rural and low-income students should be prioritized since they often face additional barriers when pursuing post-secondary education.

- REACH scholars are selected as rising 8th graders, matched with mentors and academic coaches, and receive a $10,000 scholarship upon graduation if they meet program requirements.

    7. Achieve Atlanta- Support and provide funding for the expansion and replication of Achieve Atlanta's model which provides financial resources, targeted guidance, and wrap-around supports to qualifying students.

    - 85% of Achieve Atlanta scholars attend in-state post-secondary institutions.

    - 97% of scholars are eligible for the Pell Grant and 95% identify as black or hispanic.[8]

8. Professional Development related to Data & Coding- Prioritize state funds for professional development for high school teachers related to coding, data fluency, and technology utilization in the classroom.

- Promoting lifelong learning begins with providing professional development to teachers. Teachers need additional resources to prepare students to be adaptable and able to withstand evolutions in the economy.
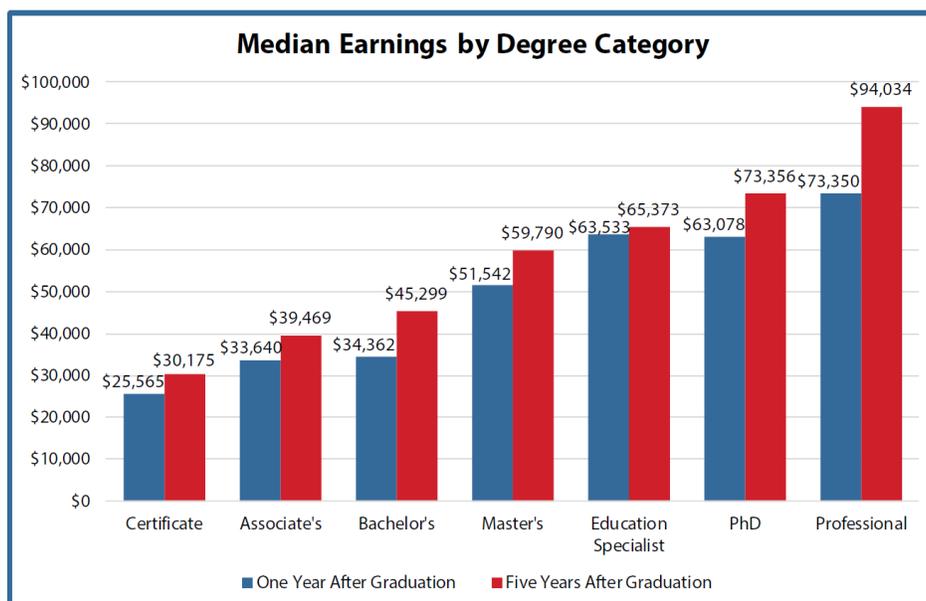
9. K-12 Curriculum- Encourage K-12 curriculum writers to embed data fluency at every grade level. Data fluency is the ability to acquire new knowledge, analyze this data, draw conclusions, and create visualizations that are easy to understand.

10. Critical Thinking Skill Development- Develop programs in high school settings to promote the development of human skills in students like collaboration and problem solving. Students should be equipped to use data, assess options, and identify solutions to solve complex problems.

11. GAfutures Website- Build FAFSA completion into the GAfutures website to streamline information for students and counselors enabling a more transparent process.

12. Interactive Dashboards- Promote the use of tools developed by the Governor's Office of Student Achievement to help parents, students, counselors, and teachers get a more complete understanding of post-secondary paths and institutions. This includes the Higher Learning and Earnings dashboard pictured below.

- Bringing awareness to these resources can aid schools and families in effectively evaluating post-secondary options and calculating the return on investment for their degree.

Median Earnings by Degree Category

Degree Category	One Year After Graduation	Five Years After Graduation
Certificate	$25,565	$30,175
Associate's	$33,640	$39,469
Bachelor's	$34,362	$45,299
Master's	$51,542	$59,790
Education Specialist	$63,533	$65,373
PhD	$63,078	$73,356
Professional	$73,350	$94,034

ENSURING STUDENTS PERSIST & PROGRESS
Cost effective solutions that create long-term results

#2

Enrolling students in classes at a post-secondary institution is a vital and positive step towards earning a credential. However, students still require support once they enroll to ensure they persist and complete their degree. This is especially true because the University System of Georgia (USG) and the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) are becoming more diverse and enrolling more first-generation, underrepresented, and economically disadvantaged students.

Additional advising, personalized interactions, streamlined portals, additional academic assistance, and financial guidance are necessary when supporting students through degree completion. The state of Georgia has invested a great deal in our students through the K-12 system and it is imperative that these students earn a degree or credential that will allow them to contribute to the state's workforce. This will promote economic mobility and result in a stronger, more prosperous state.

The following is a list of recommendations that should be enacted to increase degree completion:

1. Last Mile Completion Grants- Create statewide last mile completion grants for post-secondary students. These could be funded through continued corporate and private giving, as well as interest from lottery reserves or appropriated dollars.

There is less than a 30% likelihood that a college student who drops out for financial reasons will ever complete a degree at the institution.

- Last mile completion grants currently exist at some institutions, but availability of funding depends on the institution, if the grants exist at all.[9]

2. TCSG Last Mile Grants- Support growth of the Technical College System of Georgia's (TCSG) Last Mile Fund through private and public funding to aid students in completing degree programs.

- In 2016, the TCSG Foundation, now the Gretchen K. Corbin Last Mile Fund, began providing assistance for TCSG students who owe $500 or less in direct costs.

ENSURING STUDENTS PERSIST & PROGRESS
Cost effective solutions that create long-term results

3. Strategic Advising- Encourage increased academic and general advising for all students attending post-secondary institutions to support persistence and progression through degree programs. Additional support should be implemented for Pell-eligible and first-generation students. This includes promotion of USG's Momentum Year initiative, which is a suite of strategies to put first-year students on a path to achieve their academic goals.

- Georgia State University (GSU) has implemented more than a dozen strategic programs aimed at improving student success including Freshman Learning Communities, peer tutors, and academic guides. Through these programs, GSU has increased its retention rates, first-year student GPA, and decreased the number of times a student changes his or her major. Also, the most financially disadvantaged students, those who are Pell eligible, are as successful as non-Pell students.[10]

STUDENT VOICE

"Students at institutions across the state often have multiple advisors throughout the course of their college careers, making it difficult to persist through their degree program and obtain career guidance. Students can be mis-advised and enroll in courses that don't count towards their degrees."

4. Flexible Course Offerings- Examine and expand opportunities to deliver programs at accessible locations, including online courses and degree offerings through USG and TCSG programs such as eCore.

5. Lower Textbook Costs- Support USG and TCSG's current initiatives to offer more textbooks online at lower or at no cost to students.

6. Installment Plans- Support institutions in promoting viable installment plans for tuition, housing, and dining charges as permitted by Board of Regents policy at USG institutions, which provides flexibility to students paying housing and dining charges on an installment basis throughout the semester. This would ease up-front costs.

7. Housing- Encourage post-secondary institutions and communities to examine opportunities to improve affordable and safe housing options for students.

8. Childcare and Transportation Assistance for In-Demand Degrees- Provide financial resources for childcare and transportation for HOPE Career Grant programs and streamline those programs to maximize effectiveness. CAPS program funds can be utilized to support this from a childcare perspective.

- With a national dropout rate of over 50%, female student-parents need support finishing their credentials and providing for their families.

- 27% of all students enrolled in technical colleges in Georgia are mothers, 18% being single mothers.[11]

ENSURING STUDENTS PERSIST & PROGRESS
## Cost effective solutions that create long-term results

9. Transportation and Community Partnerships- Promote partnerships between higher education partners and transportation providers to coordinate their activities, increase access, and streamline service delivery.

10. Transit Subsidies for Students- Examine and implement student subsidies for qualified transit and rideshares like Uber and Lyft EDU programs. Post-secondary institutions could provide subsidies as an incentive for attending advising.

11. Utilize Federal Workforce Dollars- Support TCSG's Office of Workforce Development in developing innovative policies and programming for the use of Georgia's WIOA funds that support workforce development efforts in communities across the state.

STUDENT VOICE

"Students on rural and urban campuses alike face difficulties with safe and affordable transportation. Streamlined transportation options would allow post-secondary students to more fully focus on what they learn in class rather than how they will get there."
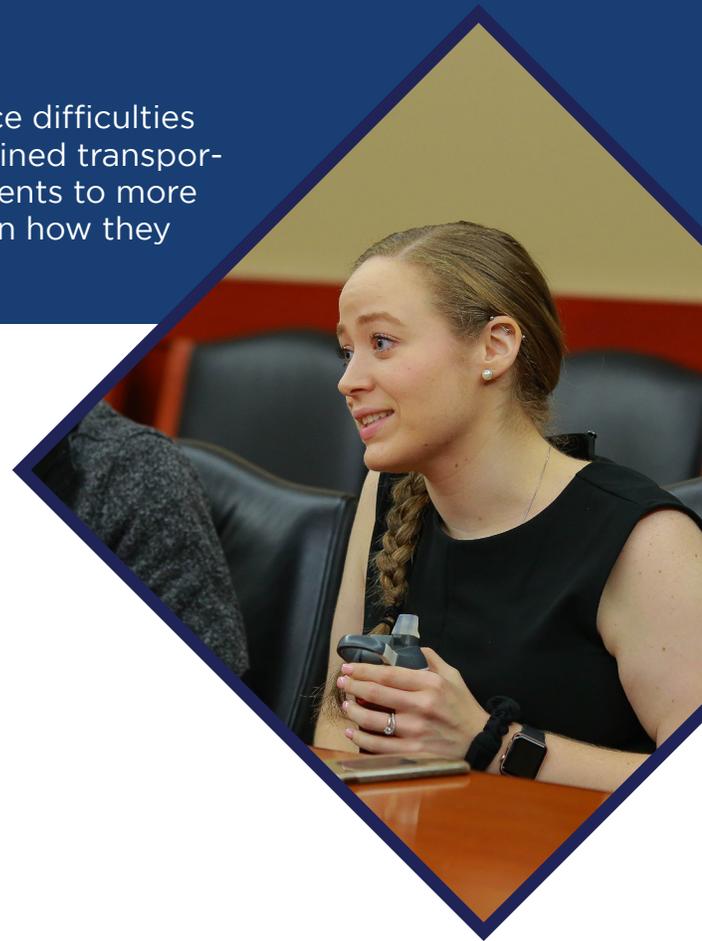
PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE WORKFORCE & LIFELONG LEARNING
Initiatives to improve the quality of Georgia's talent

#3

Enrolling in a college degree program and actually completing it is significant. This gives students the opportunity to provide a steady income to support their families. Long-term, this leads to improved quality of life and enables career growth. However, people's career goals evolve, or industries change, which may require new skills. For some, a degree that allowed them to be successful in one job may not transfer to other occupations.

It is imperative that Georgia has a workforce of the future, equipped with the necessary skills to adapt as the economy evolves and automation becomes more commonplace. Individuals must also be ready to engage in lifelong learning as technology rapidly changes, and the level of information needed to perform a job drastically increases. When individuals have the confidence to continually grow and evolve in their professions, there is increased opportunity for upward mobility resulting in stronger communities across the state.

Strategic, creative, and community-oriented solutions will be essential in order to develop a talent pipeline and will require partnerships among K-12 and higher education partners, community leaders, and the private sector.

State leaders should implement the following recommendations to promote an adaptable, skilled workforce in communities across the state:

STUDENT VOICE

"Georgia's students feel pressure to attend college in hopes of creating financial stability. Many students do not have information about what career outcomes are available for given degree programs. As a result, many students choose their major without considering in-demand careers in the state or potential post-graduation salary outcomes. This leaves many students with degrees, debt and low-paying or no job post-graduation."

1. HOPE Career Grant- Continue to support HOPE Career Grant which provides funding for training in high-demand and critical-shortage career fields. Currently, the HOPE Career Grant can be utilized for 17 career fields and covers 100% of tuition.

2. WorkSource Sector Partnerships- Support WorkSource Sector Partnerships to boost collaboration and assessment of regional industry needs.

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR THE WORKFORCE & LIFELONG LEARNING

Initiatives to improve the quality of Georgia's talent

3. Great Georgia Jobs Initiative- Support and grow the Great Georgia Jobs Initiative by WorkSource Georgia and TCSG to ensure Georgians are aware of the range of employment opportunities available.

4. Nexus Degree- Support USG's expansion of the nexus degree to institutions throughout the state, especially those focused on emerging technologies and healthcare.

- Nexus degree curriculum is developed in concert with industry partners to ensure it aligns with the needs being experienced in the workforce. Curriculum is adaptable as industry needs evolve.

- Nexus degree programs will be extremely impactful in hub counties that serve as job centers around the state.

5. Stackable Credentials and Nanodegrees- Support efforts to increase flexible, short-term continuing education opportunities, enabling individuals to grow in their careers including nanodegrees and stackable credentials.

6. Awareness of Growing Industries- Promote career paths and industry sectors that offer the most opportunity for growth. This requires providing more information to students from teachers, counselors, and the private sector about growing industries.

For example, the cybersecurity industry will experience a workforce gap of 1.8 million people by 2022.[12]

7. Transferable Skills- Support efforts that encourage students to develop transferable skills that can be carried from one job to the next, such as data analysis and problem solving, making them more adaptable in the job market long-term.

8. Internal Training Programs- Encourage employers to promote internal training programs that ensure employees are adaptable and skilled in emerging technologies as industries evolve.
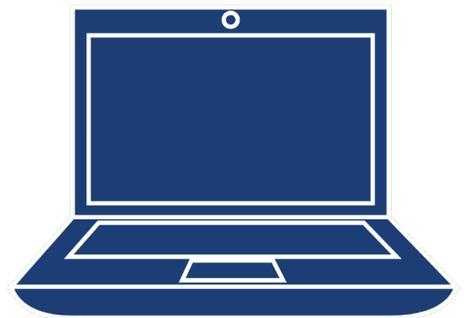
REGIONAL SOLUTIONS
Community-oriented approaches to enable local success

The Smart Decisions Coalition recognizes that different parts of the state are unique, meaning solutions will be implemented differently and programs will be most impactful in specific areas. Metro Atlanta has extreme poverty, but also has numerous employers and philanthropic support. Hub and rural counties have much of same extreme poverty without the level of philanthropic support or number of employers. Metro Atlanta and hub counties both have technical colleges and universities with varying levels of transit. Rural counties have fewer post-secondary institutions and fewer opportunities for rural students to be on a college campus. These differences impact where state and local leaders should direct resources.

The following recommendations are opportunities to remove barriers for students and encourage college completion throughout the state, with distinctions noted for different types of communities:

Atlanta: 11 counties clustered around Atlanta job centers

Hub Counties: 8 counties with job total of more than 65,000 or nexus to a hub county

Rural Counties: 140 other counties

1. SAT/ACT Day- Schoolwide SAT/ACT Day during the school day to lessen transportation barriers and provide an opportunity to take a required test for college entrance.

2. FAFSA Completion- Promote community-wide FAFSA completion events to ensure parents can ask questions, learn the facts, and understand the benefits.

- In Metro Atlanta and hub counties, this would likely occur at the school level or neighborhood level.

- In rural counties, this would likely be a city or county-wide event that could be held in a community center or at the school.

3. Achieve Atlanta- Replication or scaling of Achieve Atlanta's model focused on low-income students.

- Scaling Achieve Atlanta's model would be most feasible in metro Atlanta due to the strong philanthropic support.

- Replication of Achieve Atlanta's model is more challenging in hub and rural counties since there are fewer philanthropic donors. Nevertheless, the need is as great in hub and rural counties as metro Atlanta.

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS
Community-oriented approaches to enable local success

4. Discounted Transit- Support transit discounts or free rides for high school and college students. Students in metro Atlanta and hub counties where transit exists would benefit most.

5. Community & College Transit Plans- Promote the development of transit plans with university and technical college partners in counties where transit already exists.

6. High School and Employer Coordination- Encourage connection of employers and local high schools to fill employment needs. School systems in metro Atlanta, hub counties, and rural counties should have a designated staff person to manage these relationships. This includes hosting experience days for students, offering apprenticeships, internships, and teach externships.

7. College Campus Visits- Create grants for increased school visits to local technical colleges and universities for students across Georgia.

8. Nexus Degree- Support USG's expansion of the nexus degree throughout the state to fit student and employer needs.

9. Higher Education and Employer Coordination- Support collaboration among employers and post-secondary institutions to ensure program offerings continue to meet job needs as industries evolve. This would be impactful in metro Atlanta as well as hub and rural counties.

REGIONAL SOLUTIONS
Community-oriented approaches to enable local success

10. REACH Georgia- Prioritize the REACH scholarship program expansion in rural counties since the school districts are smaller and the effects of the program would be felt quickly.

11. Community Asset Assessment- Support all communities in strategically assessing their needs and strengths in developing a local talent pipeline.

Local Solutions in Progress:

Cario-Grady Chamber of Commerce
The Cario-Grady Chamber of Commerce, located in rural southwest Georgia, used funding from a mini grant to support 30 potential first generation college students enrolled in the 11th and 12th grades at Cario High School. The program, called the Technology in Agriculture, Land, Forest, Wildlife Pathway Initiative, has provided students the opportunity to get real-life, hands-on experience with the drone industry, including careers and earning potential.

Athens-Area Chamber of Commerce
The Athens Area Chamber of Commerce partnered with College Factory, a local college prep nonprofit, to provide SAT/ACT test prep services to high school students in the community. Through the programming, students not only received test prep, but also college and career guidance from college coaches who helped students draw the connection between test prep and their future goals.

Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce
The Greater Dalton Chamber of Commerce used grant funding to support students at schools across Whitfield county. Students received supplemental support for SAT/ACT testing fees, counseling to better understand post-secondary options, and tours to Dalton State College and Georgia Northwestern Technical College. Parent and student events were hosted to explain FAFSA and why post-secondary education matters.

Terrell County Chamber of Commerce
The Terrell County Chamber of Commerce used grant funding to create TERRELLREADY, a four-day, intensive training program preparing students for the workforce and basic job skills taught by instructors at Albany Technical College. Students in the program had access to an exclusive job fair, received a certificate from Albany Technical College, and were all OSHA 10 certified and CPR certified.

HOW THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY CAN ENGAGE
Protecting Georgia's advantage as a top state for business

The Georgia business community and local community leaders have a significant role to play as strong partners with state government and our post-secondary education institutions. Working together, we can develop future generations of talent and a stronger workforce.

- Support the REACH scholarship program by contributing to the statewide foundation.

- Contribute to the foundation of individual USG institutions, the USG Foundation, and the TCSG Foundation to support last mile completion grants for students who are close to graduating, but face financial barriers.

- Partner with TCSG and USG institutions to assess needs, lend expertise, build curriculum, and address gaps in the talent pipeline.

- Engage in WorkSource Sector Partnerships to increase collaboration, embed strategic thinking, and support community growth.

- Provide internal training programs for continuing education for employees.

- Provide financial incentives for employees to further their education through a post-secondary opportunity.

- Host workshops for parents to learn about FAFSA completion and college admission process.

- Offer work-based learning, apprenticeships, and experiential learning opportunities for high school students.

STUDENT VOICE

"Georgia's students understand the importance of experiential work-based learning. Internships are critical for building transferable and soft skills, but students shared they often struggle to find opportunities without guidance and connections from academic advisors, peers, and parents. The business community has an integral role to play in offering opportunities that will build a stronger talent pipeline from post-secondary to career."

HOW LOCAL CHAMBERS & COMMUNITY LEADERS CAN ENGAGE

Building more prosperous communities for tomorrow by acting today

- Support the REACH scholarship by contributing to the local community match requirement.

- Encourage community leaders to serve as mentors to students in the REACH program.

- Support and assist middle and high school administrators as they plan college tours and industry visits so students understand their local college and career options.

- Engage higher education and industry partners in collaborative and strategic thinking efforts to support the community.

- Encourage companies to promote mentorship of middle and high school students by employees.

- Engage in WorkSource Sector partnerships to assess needs and develop relationships with industry.

- Build relationships with K-12 leaders to identify opportunities to bolster the local talent pipeline from the school system to higher education institutions and to careers.

- Encourage transportation and higher education partners to identify opportunities to streamline services to increase access for students.

STUDENT VOICE

"Mentorship opportunities open students' eyes and provide real-world experiences. Students matched with mentors felt more prepared and well equipped to enter life post-graduation."

KEY TERMS & ENTITIES

- **Achieve Atlanta-** Achieve Atlanta is a nonprofit that partners with Atlanta Public Schools (APS), 11 post-secondary institutions, and other nonprofits to help students access, afford, and earn post-secondary credentials. It provides advising support for all APS seniors, a need-based scholarship, and wraparound coaching support once students get to college. Achieve Atlanta employs a data-informed approach to track student progress and set mutual goals with partners on key college access and success indicators.

- **CAPS-** Child and Parent Services is a program administered by Georgia's Department of Early Care and Learning that supports early education goals by assisting low-income families with the cost of child care while they work, go to school or training, or participate in other work-related activities. Eligible families will receive CAPS "scholarships," which ensures access to high-quality child care for CAPS families.

- **College Advising Corps (CAC)-** College Advising Corps works to increase the number of low-income, first-generation college, and underrepresented high school students who enter and complete post-secondary education. CAC's in-school model places well-trained, recent college graduates from our 26 partner universities as full-time college advisers in high schools across the nation. The College Advising Corps is partnered with the University of Georgia and Georgia State University.

- **FAFSA-** The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the federal form students must complete to apply for financial aid for college or grad school.

- **Hub Counties-** Counties with job total of more than 65,000 or has a nexus to a hub center.

- **Last Mile Completion Grant-** Financial assistance for undergraduate students who have exhausted their financial aid and are within two semesters of graduation, removing barriers so students can complete their degree.

- **Nanodegrees-** Project-based programs that can be completed in less than twelve months and demonstrated the mastery of specific skills tailored to an industry.

- **Nexus Degree-** The nexus degree is a completely new degree program created by the University System of Georgia. Nexus degrees are college credentials that emphasize hands-on experiential learning, skilled knowledge, and connections with industry in high-demand career fields. The degree is a 60-credit-hour degree, consisting of 42 credit hours of general education, and 18 credit hours of coursework focusing on the skills and knowledge requirements of high-demand industries. The 18 credit hours create an apprenticeship aspect with curriculum being designed in collaboration with industry experts.

KEY TERMS & ENTITIES

- **Pell Grant-** Pell Grants are federal dollars awarded only to undergraduate students who display exceptional financial need and have not already earned a bachelor's degree. Grants do not have to be re-paid.

- **WIOA-** The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is a federal statute was signed into law in 2014. WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. WIOA funds are distributed from the federal government to state governments to accomplish these objectives.

ENDNOTES

1   "State by State Student to Counselor Ratio Report," National Association for College Admission Counseling and American School Counselor Association, 2014-2015, accessed https://www.schoolcounselor.org/asca/media/asca/Publications/ratioreport.pdf

2   "College Advising Corps Overview Presentation," College Advising Corps, July 30, 2019

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4   "Class of 2018 FAFSA Completion Rate," Georgia Futures, Accessed https://apps.gsfc.org/main/ga411info/FAFSA/ResultsReport.cfm?tab=1

5   "2018 SAT Suite of Assessments Annual Report: Georgia," College Board, accessed https://reports.collegeboard.org/pdf/2018-georgia-sat-suite-assessments-annual-report.pdf

6   "Decoding the Cost of College: The case for transparent financial aid award letters," New America and uAspire, accessed https://www.uaspire.org/BlankSite/media/uaspire/Decoding-the-Cost-of-College.pdf

7   "Student Financial Aid in Georgia Presentation," Georgia Student Finance Commission, January 29, 2019

8   "Achieve Atlanta Overview Presentation," Achieve Atlanta, March 28 2019

9   "Why Georgia State Matters," Georgia State University, 2019

10   "Eliminating Equity Gaps at Georgia State University Presentation," Georgia State University, December 7, 2018

11   "Georgia's Two Generation Approach Presentation," Department of Early Care and Learning, April 25, 2019

12   "The Future of Work Presentation," Deloitte, May 21, 2019

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