

# State of Education in Metro Atlanta Annual Report 2019



**Learn4Life**

Metro Atlanta Regional Education Partnership





# Introduction

Metro Atlanta is a diverse, vibrant region, yet too many students are not reaching the educational outcomes they will need to be successful or contribute to our region’s economic vitality. Our collective responsibility to our students, and to our shared prosperity, is to ensure *all* of our students achieve at high levels.

Over these past two years of our development the data-centric, collaborative focus of Learn4Life is building the foundation for sustained improvement in outcomes for the 600,000 students in the metro region. As a result of this collective focus to scale what is working: more children will now receive free vision tests and glasses, more teachers will gain access to cutting-edge literacy training, more books are incorporated into pediatric care to encourage families to read and learn together, and additional high school students are receiving the support they need to navigate the challenges of applying for and preparing for post-secondary success.

We now have active Change Action Networks in Early Grade Literacy, 8th Grade Math Proficiency, and Post-Secondary Success. Each network has identified an initial set of proven strategies that hold the promise to move our region forward. By continuing to share data, learn from each other, and highlight and invest in practices that are working here today, we believe we can put Atlanta on a trajectory to ensure all of our students learn for today and learn for life.

We look forward to your continued partnership.

## Learn4Life Executive Committee Members

*Ann W. Cramer*

**Ann W. Cramer**  
Consultant,  
Coxe Curry & Associates

*Douglas R. Hooker*

**Douglas R. Hooker**  
Executive Director,  
Atlanta Regional Commission

*Milton J. Little*

**Milton J. Little**  
President & CEO,  
United Way of Greater Atlanta

*Hala Modellmog*

**Hala Modellmog**  
President & CEO,  
Metro Atlanta Chamber

*Alicia Philipp*

**Alicia Philipp**  
President,  
Community Foundation  
for Greater Atlanta

*Ken Zeff*

**Ken Zeff**  
Executive Director,  
Learn4Life





What Is Learn4Life

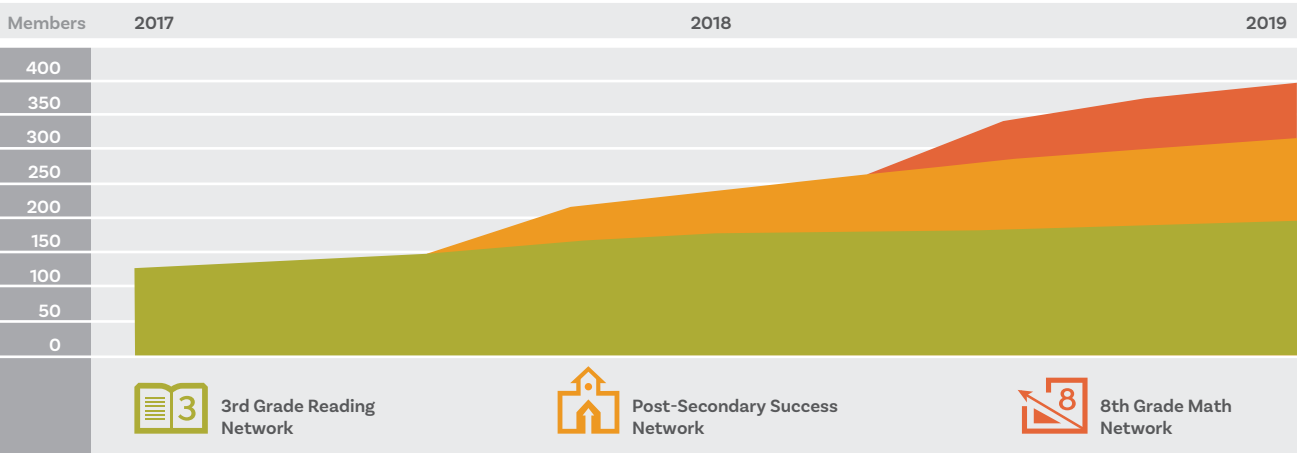


Learn4Life (L4L) is the Metro Atlanta Regional Education Partnership, a collaborative effort that brings together school systems, local communities, business and non-profits to improve education outcomes based on common goals and shared benchmarks.

Learn4Life convenes partners into Change Action Networks that study our local proficiency data and analyze the key factors that impact our metro-wide indicators. These partners then work together to identify strategies that are producing uncommon results within each factor and indicator. Network teams then help to scale these strategies so they reach more students in our region. Several themes define these networks: an emphasis on equitable outcomes for all student subgroups, the use of data to communicate progress and hold each other accountable and focus attention to specific areas of need.

Learn4Life’s Change Action Network membership continues to grow. Hundreds of cross-sector leaders regularly come together in three distinct networks to review data and identify what is working in metro Atlanta.

Change Action Network Membership Growth:



Learn4Life Mission

To ensure that every child in our region becomes a thriving citizen who achieves success in school, career and life.

- **Create a shared understanding:** collect and analyze data to measure metro Atlanta’s progress against cradle-to-career indicators and indicate where additional focus is needed.
- **Convene partners:** engage education, business and community partners, along with families and students, in aligning efforts, resources and voice.
- **Amplify bright spots:** through data-driven analysis, identify bright spots and work to create conditions to take them to scale.
- **Build trust, momentum and learning:** forge strong relationships – and a learning mindset – between individuals and organizations through intentional interactions.

Leadership & Support

Leadership Council

Community

Kim Anderson, Principal,  
K.E. Anderson Consulting  
Mindy Binderman, Executive Director, GEEARS  
Dr. Steve Dolinger, President,  
Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education  
Milton Little, President and CEO\*,  
United Way of Greater Atlanta  
Aníbal Torres, Executive Director,  
Latin American Association



Higher education

Dr. Glen Cannon, President,  
Gwinnett Technical College  
Dr. Tim Hynes, President,  
Clayton State University  
Claire E. Sterk, President,  
Emory University  
Dr. David A. Thomas, President,  
Morehouse College



Business

Ann Cramer, Senior Consultant\*,  
Coxe Curry & Associates  
Kevin Greiner, President and CEO, Gas South  
Anne Kaiser, Vice President,  
Community and Economic  
Development, Georgia Power  
Dan Kaufman, President and CEO,  
Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce  
Jenna Kelly, President and CEO,  
Atlanta Division SunTrust Bank  
Hala Modellmog, President and CEO\*,  
Metro Atlanta Chamber  
Sylvia Russell, Former President†, AT&T Georgia  
David Scheible, Advising Partner†,  
Clayton, Dubilier and Rice  
Henry Walker, Chairman,  
Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP



Pre-K – 12 education

Dr. Meria Carstarphen, Superintendent,  
Atlanta Public Schools  
Dr. David Dude, Superintendent,  
City Schools of Decatur  
Dr. R. Stephen Green, Superintendent,  
DeKalb County School District  
Dr. Morcease J. Beasley, Superintendent,  
Clayton County Public Schools  
Chris Ragsdale, Superintendent,  
Cobb County School District  
Dr. Grant Rivera, Superintendent,  
Marietta City Schools  
Alvin Wilbanks, CEO and Superintendent,  
Gwinnett County Public Schools



Philanthropic

Kappy deButts, Executive Director,  
The Zeist Foundation  
Dena Kimball, Executive Director,  
The Kendeda Fund  
Alicia Philipp, President\*,  
Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta  
Teresa Rivero, Senior Program Officer, Gates Foundation



Government

Doug Hooker, Executive Director\*,  
Atlanta Regional Commission  
Dennis Lockhart,  
Former President and CEO†,  
Federal Reserve Bank of America

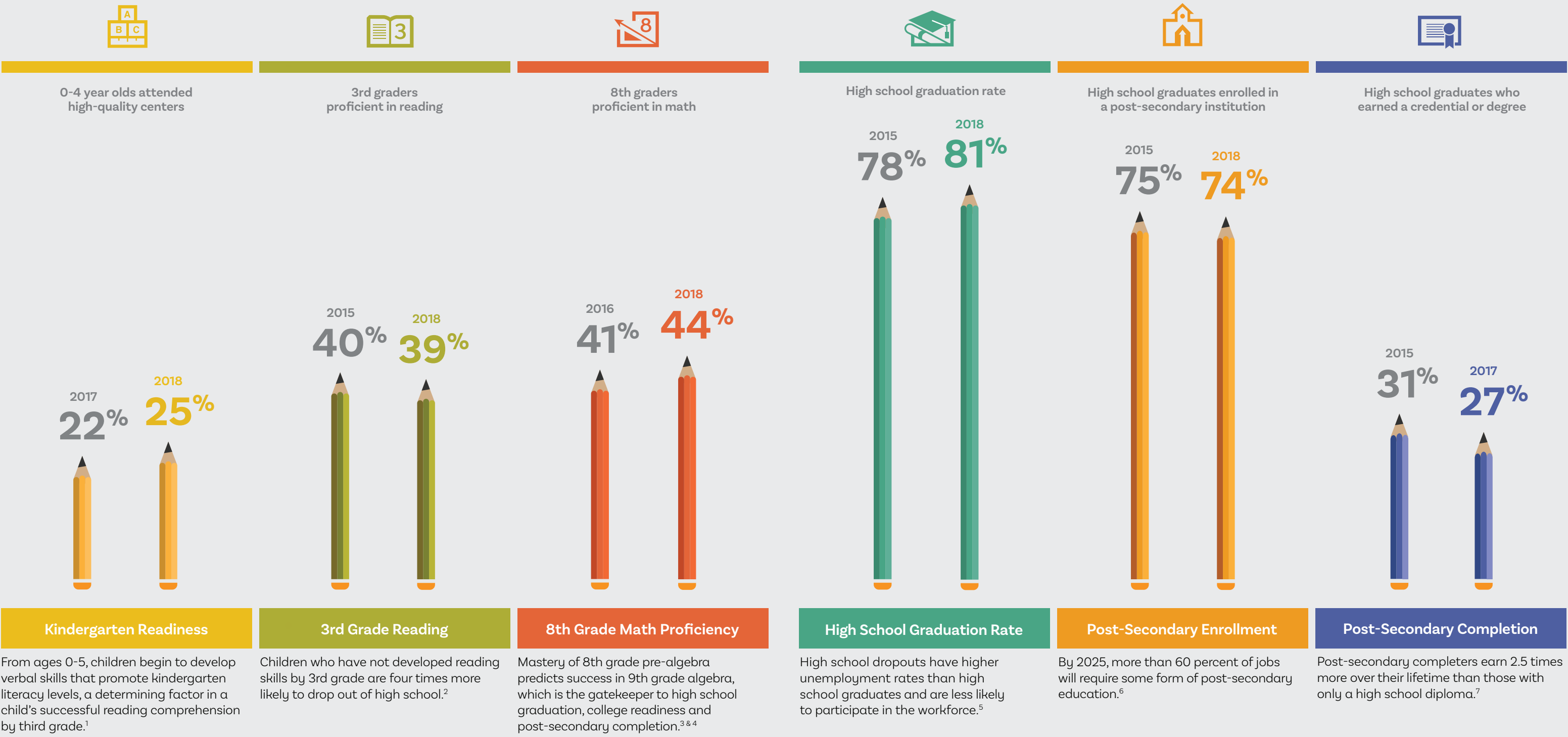


\* Indicates Executive Committee members. The Executive Committee is made up of established nonprofit organizations with a shared commitment to strengthening our region.

† Indicates Executive Champions. Executive Champions are senior members of the metro Atlanta business community who bring their leadership and influence to support the Learn4Life vision.

# Key Indicators for Collective Impact in the Metro Atlanta Region

The Learn4Life Leadership Council identified these six key indicators to continuously measure our students' progress along the cradle-to-career continuum. There is important progress to be noted. Metro Atlanta's school districts increased both 8th grade math proficiency and high school graduation rates by 3% in the 2017-2018 school year.

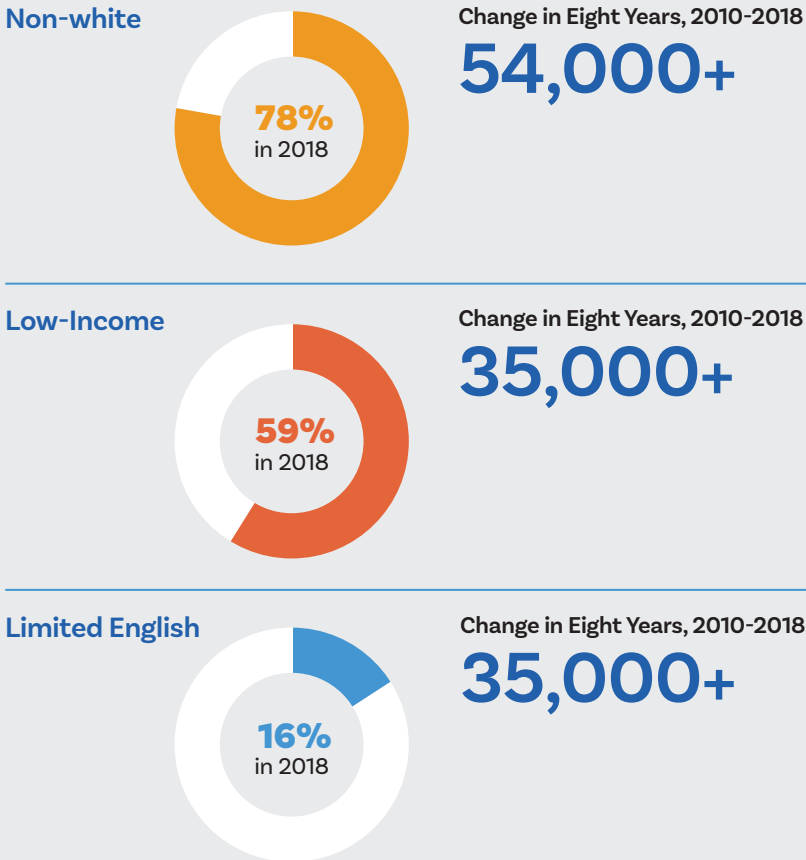
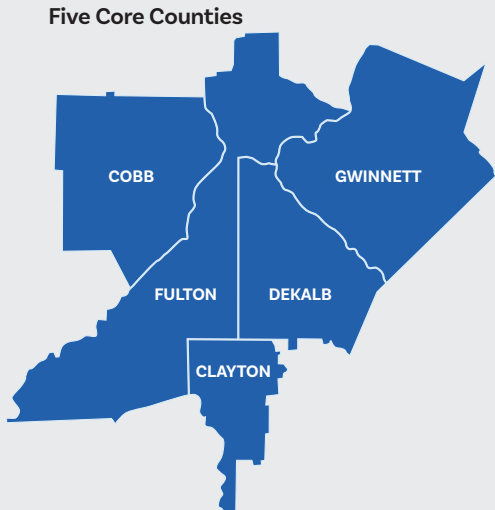




# Understanding the Metro Atlanta Region

Atlanta metro is growing quickly, and our demographics are changing. Many of our students experience poverty. They come from diverse backgrounds and are more likely than before to speak different languages at home. To achieve improved results, we must focus relentlessly on what works. We must move toward an educational framework marked by an emphasis on equity, data-driven decision making and strategic collaboration.

- The metro area includes the school districts of:
- Atlanta Public Schools
  - Clayton County Schools
  - City Schools of Decatur
  - Cobb County Schools
  - DeKalb County Schools
  - Fulton County Schools
  - Gwinnett County Schools
  - Marietta City Schools



Source: The Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA), 2010-2011 & 2017-2018, Enrollment by Subgroup Programs; Georgia Department of Education, FTE Enrollment by Grade Level(PK-12). Aggregated full-time equivalency (FTE) enrollment counts for school systems.

# Kindergarten Readiness



**25%** of demand for quality-rated early learning programs could be addressed by current supply.

**Core Indicator**

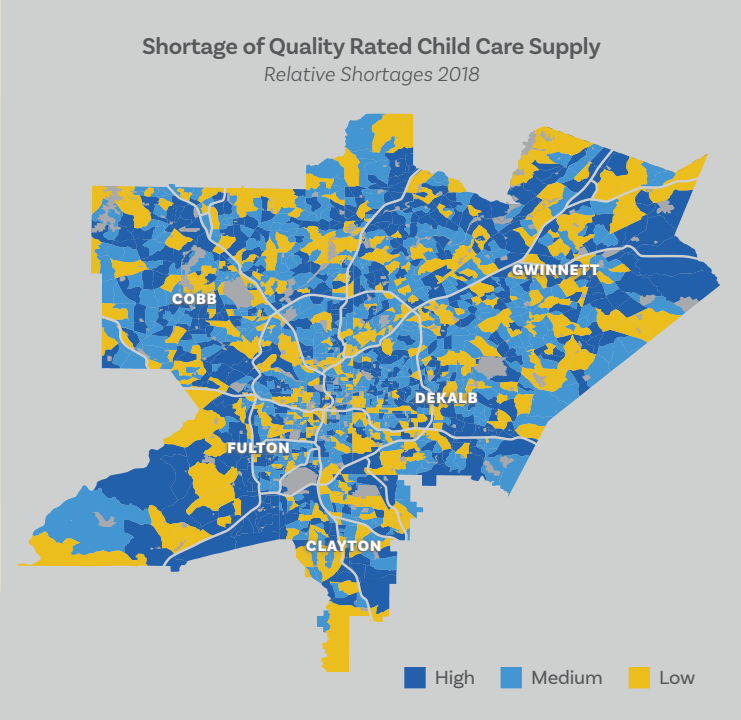
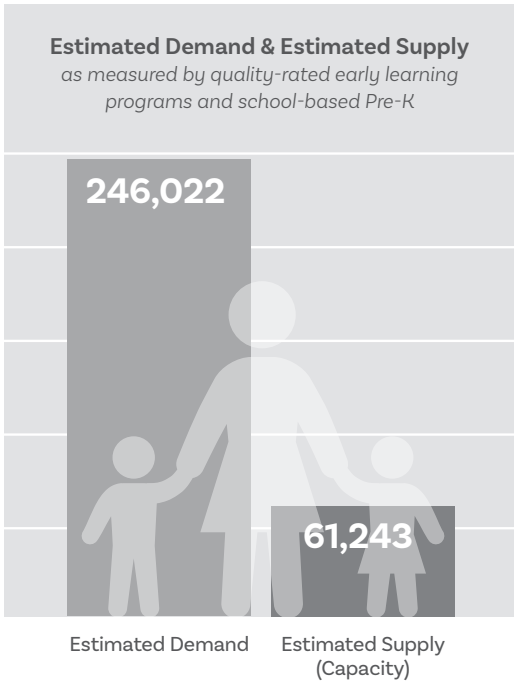
Estimated demand and estimated supply as measured by quality-rated early learning programs and school-based Pre-K. This indicator was selected in the absence of a state-wide assessment for kindergarten readiness. Once an assessment is available in Georgia, this core indicator will change. Currently, the estimated demand for early learning programs is 246,022 while estimated supply of quality-rated early learning programs and school-based Pre-K is 61,243.

**Why It Matters**

Children who have access to quality early education programs or Pre-K develop cognitive, social and behavioral skills necessary for kindergarten readiness.<sup>7</sup>

**Where Are We Going?**

Substantial work is occurring throughout our region to better prepare children for kindergarten. One example is the ATL ACCESS (Atlanta Child Care and Early Learning Supply Status) Map, a new tool to explore the early learning landscape in Metro Atlanta. ATL ACCESS Map models the supply, demand and gaps related to child care in the region. It identifies places where care is most scarce and where investments are most needed.



Sources: Georgia Department of Early Childcare and Learning (DECAL) & U.S. Census Bureau 2017 Population Estimates



# 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency

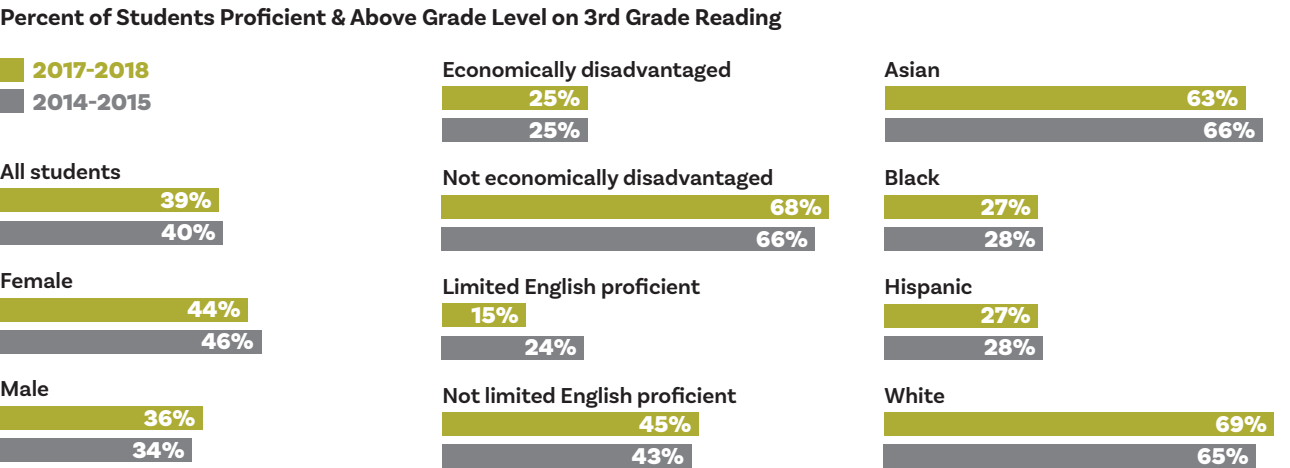


39% of children are reading proficiently by the end of third grade.

**Core Indicator**  
Percent of 3rd graders passing English Language Arts state standards.

**Where Are We?**  
Approximately 28,625 3rd graders were not reading proficiently by the end of 3rd grade in 2017-18. Overall proficiency fell from 40% to 39% since last year.

**Why It Matters**  
At this time, students are making the shift from learning to read to reading to learn. Meeting increased educational demands becomes more difficult for students who struggle to read.<sup>8</sup> Students who do not read at grade level by 3rd grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school than proficient readers.<sup>9</sup>



Source: Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA), 2014-2015 & 2017-2018 Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade (EOG) Assessments (by grade)

**3rd grade Reading Factor Analysis**  
Get Georgia Reading Campaign's research has identified 11 factors that limit a student's ability to read proficiently by 3rd grade. Learn4Life's Change Action Network has identified successful strategies that address three of those factors.

Key Drivers	➤ Early Childhood Education	Adult Literacy	Children's Mental Health	Social-emotional Competence
	➤ Physical Health	Attendance	Language Development	Summer Learning Loss
	➤ Teacher Preparation	Birth Outcomes	School & Classroom Climate	

➤ Change Action Network focus areas

# 3rd Grade Reading Bright Spots

## ➤ Early Childhood Education Reach Out & Read



Project description  
Reach Out to Read's model is delivered during routine well child checkups, typically 10 times prior to a child's 5th birthday. Starting at the newborn visit, trained medical providers speak with parents about the importance of reading aloud 20 minutes a day.

At each well-child visit the child receives a new book to take home and build their home library along with advice to the parent  
Following their medical provider's advice, parents read aloud with their children more often and engage them in literacy activities like visiting the library and museums.

- Progress Report**
- Increased connection to funders to serve more children.
  - Expanded partnerships throughout metro Atlanta.

## ➤ Physical Health Vision to Learn, The Lighthouse



Project Description  
Vision to Learn and The Lighthouse's mobile vision clinics visit schools and provide vision screenings, eye exams, and ultimately glasses free of charge to all students who have unmet needs.

- Progress Report**
- Expanded Vision to Learn services to Clayton County School District and DeKalb County Schools.
  - Provided more than 4,500 glasses to students in metro Atlanta.

## ➤ Teacher Effectiveness Read Right from the Start on the Cox Campus



Project Description  
The Cox Campus offers free, interactive courses and resources based on child development research. This video-based online learning platform's content is grounded in neuro and social science. Courses share language and literacy practices that are built on a continuum for adults who interact with children aged 0-8, with the singular goal of eradicating illiteracy. As a result of philanthropic investments, financial and geographical barriers are removed so educators can have equitable access to these practices at no cost.

- Training provided by the Cox Campus has been proven to advance teacher pedagogy and skill that is then applied to ensure children are proficient readers.
- Progress Report**
- Established strong relationships with school districts to effect literacy reform. The work has been reciprocal – where learnings from school experiences help inform Cox Campus coursework and resources.
  - Developed community relationships beyond the education sector, including a partnership with Cobb Library System to enhance the efficacy of librarians in furthering language and literacy.



# Eighth Grade Math Proficiency

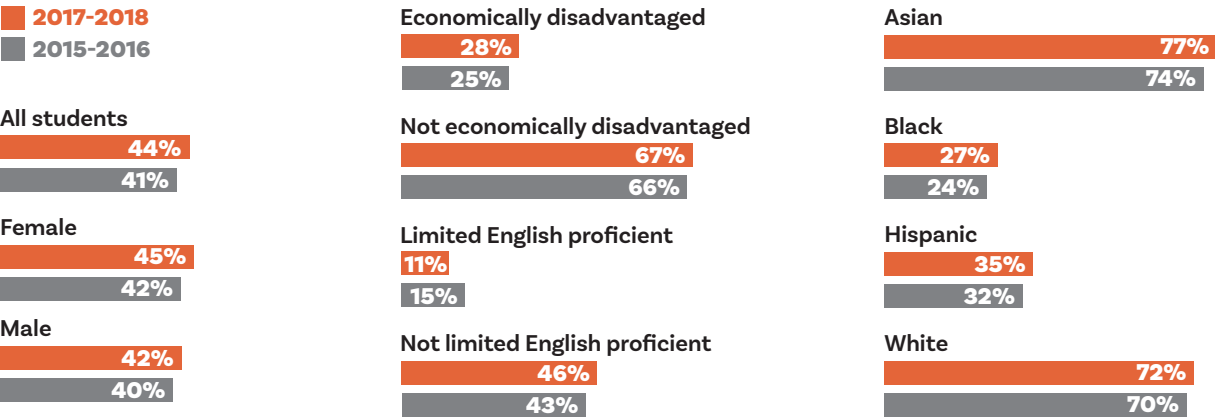


44% of children are proficient in math by the end of the 8th grade.

**Core Indicator**  
Percent of 8th graders passing math state standards.

**Why It Matters**  
To increase the proportion of students graduating from high school prepared for the rigor of post-secondary programs, we must dramatically increase the number of students who achieve proficiency in Algebra – the “gatekeeper” subject<sup>10</sup>—in their middle school or early high school years. Proficiency rose 3% from 41% last year to 44% in 2017-2018.

Percent of 8th Grade Students Proficient and Above at Math



Source: Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (GOSA), 2015-2016 & 2017-2018 Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade (EOG) + End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments (by grade)

**Eighth Grade Math Factor Analysis**  
As part of the latest change action network, L4L’s middle school math partners have selected three key factors to focus their work: school culture, interventions for struggling students and teacher effectiveness – all while maintaining the critical lens of racial expectations. The network is now working to identify strategies that are successfully addressing these factors.

Key Drivers	Interventions for Struggling Learners	Academic Preparation	Gender Expectations	Racial Expectations
	School Culture	Access to Appropriate Technology	Language and Literacy Skills	Relevant Curriculum
	Teacher Effectiveness	Access to Rigorous Courses	Math Anxiety	Use of Assessment Data

Change Action Network focus areas

# High School Graduation



81% of students graduate high school in four years.

**Core Indicator**  
Percent of students graduating in four years.

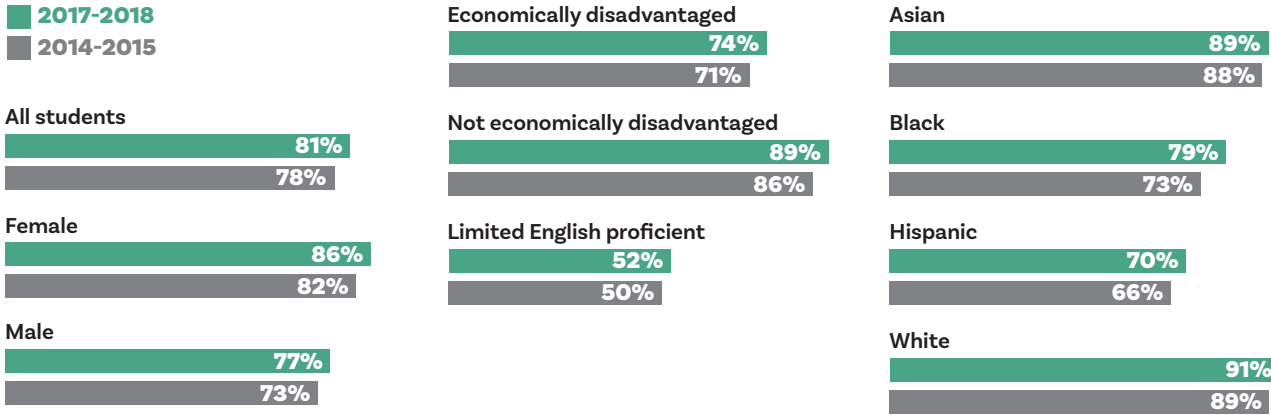
**Where Are We?**  
The high school graduation rate rose 3% from 78% last year to 81% in 2017-2018. Approximately 8,452 students of the 2018 cohort did not graduate high school in four years.

**Why It Matters**  
As college education increasingly becomes a necessity for upward mobility<sup>11</sup>, graduating more students from high school is critical. High school graduation is not only a precursor to college enrollment; it is also a major indicator for earnings throughout adulthood. High

school graduation has been shown to predict health, mortality, teen childbearing, marital outcomes and crime. Increasing the educational attainment of one generation improves the next generation’s academic and social outcomes.

**Where Are We Going?**  
L4L Districts continue to show progress on this measure by offering additional supports for students and a shared commitment by all stakeholders in the school community. L4L will continue to report on this critical cradle-to-career indicator even though the current strategic plan calls for focusing collective energy on the existing three networks.

Percent of High School Students Graduating in Four Years



Source: GOSA, 2014-2015 & 2017-2018 Graduation Rate (4-Year Cohort)



# Post-Secondary Enrollment



**74%** of the 2014 graduating class was enrolled in a post-secondary institution after 16 months.

**Core Indicator**

Percent of students who enroll in a post-secondary institution within 16 months of graduation and complete their course of study in five years.

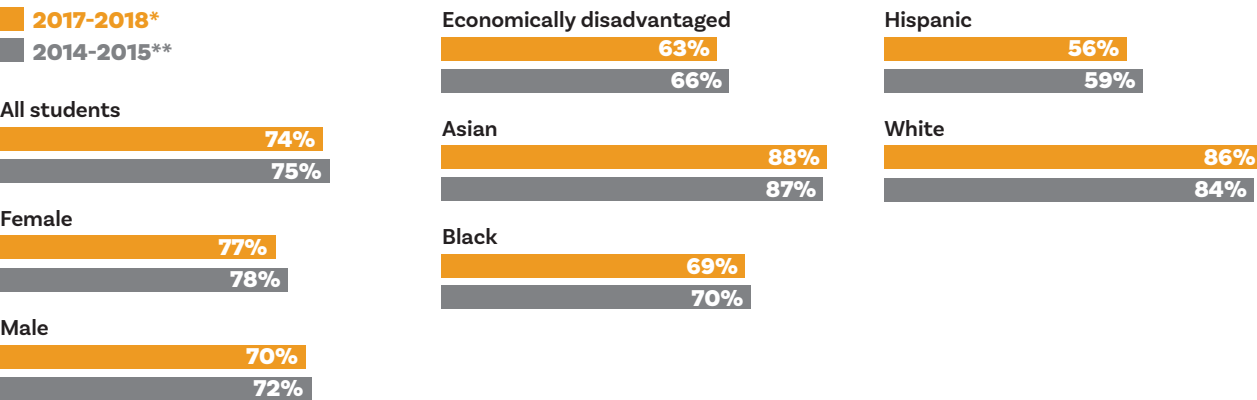
**Where Are We?**

74% of the 2016 graduating class was enrolled in a post-secondary institution after 16 months. Roughly 9,200 students who graduated high school in 2016 did not enroll in a post-secondary institution by 2018.

**Why It Matters**

As students begin to understand the impact of post-secondary education on their future plans, it is critical to ensure their access to post-secondary program options and financial aid information. Post-secondary credentials are not limited to four-year universities; two-year programs and technical certifications are also valuable in this knowledge-based economy.

Percent of students who enroll in a post-secondary institution within 16 months of graduation



Source: GOSA, 2014-2015 & 2017-2018 Post-Secondary C11 Report; \*2016 high school graduates enrolled in post-secondary Institution within 16 months of graduation  
\*\*2013 high school graduates enrolled in post-secondary institution within 16 months of graduation

# Post-Secondary Completion



**27%** of the 2012 graduating class had earned a post-secondary degree or credential by 2017

**Core Indicator**

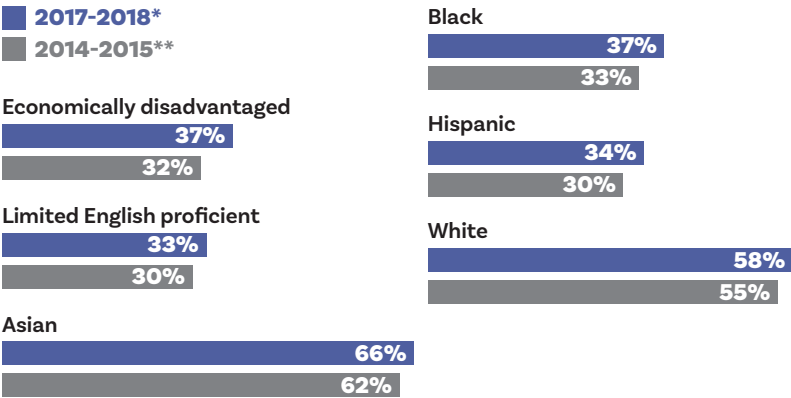
Percent of students who obtain a post-secondary credential within five years of graduating.

**Why It Matters**

By the year 2025, more than 60 percent of jobs will require some form of post-secondary education.<sup>12</sup> Someone with at least a bachelor's degree will earn about two and a half times more over their lifetime than someone with only a high school diploma.<sup>13</sup>

**Persistence**

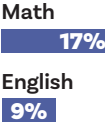
Percent of 2014 graduates who completed one year of credit within 24 months of enrollment



Source: GOSA, 2014-2015 & 2017-2018 Post-Secondary C11 Report. \*2014 high school graduates that completed one year of credit within 24 months of enrollment; \*\*2012 high school graduates that completed one year of credit within 24 months of enrollment

**Remediation**

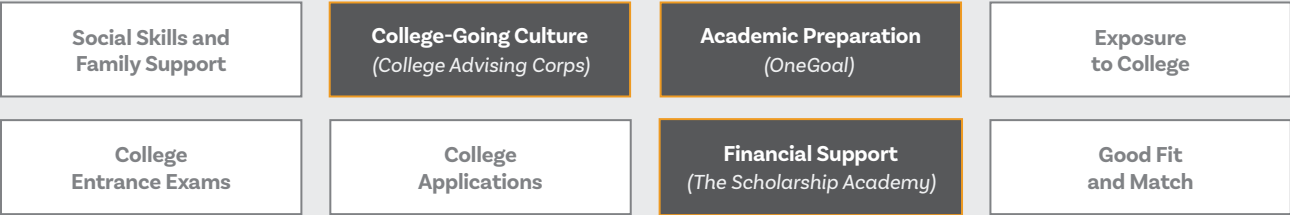
Percent of students requiring remediation\*



\* Class of 2016 at Georgia public colleges and universities (Aggregated)

**Post-Secondary Factor Analysis**

Learn4Life's Change Action Network focuses on improving post-secondary success. Strategies in areas highlighted are under way with partners (parenthetically) noted. See Post-Secondary Bright Spots in the following pages for more information.



Change Action Network focus areas



# Post-Secondary Bright Spot

## College-going Culture



**College Advising Corps (CAC)** works to increase the rates of college enrollment and completion among low-income, first-generation college and underrepresented high school students. CAC trains recent college graduates from University of Georgia and Georgia State University to be full-time college advisers across metro Atlanta.

CAC believes that every student deserves the opportunity to enter and complete higher education and is committed to supporting students as they navigate the complex processes of college admissions, financial aid and enrollment.

### CAC's Innovative Model

- Engages full-time, near-peer advisers
- Utilizes a research-based, match and fit advising strategy
- Provides an open-door whole school approach
- Anchors program at higher education institutions



### CAC's Impact on College-Going Culture in Georgia in 2017-18

- Advised 4,553 seniors
- Led 16,451 one-on-one advising sessions
- Supported 3,791 senior SAT/ACT registrations
- Assisted with 16,239 college application submissions
- Ensured 3,157 FAFSA submissions
- Secured access to \$102 million in financial aid

### Students who meet with CAC's advisers in Georgia\* are:



\*According to a study by a team of researchers associated with Stanford University.

# Post-Secondary Bright Spot

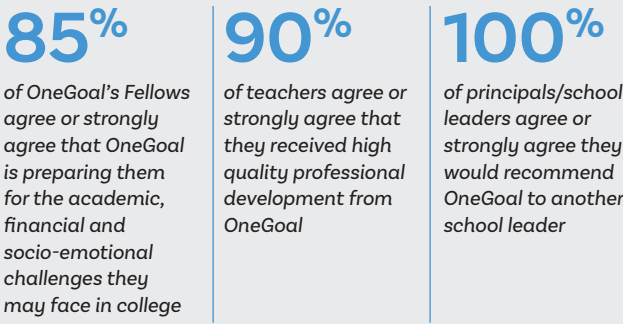
## Academic Preparation



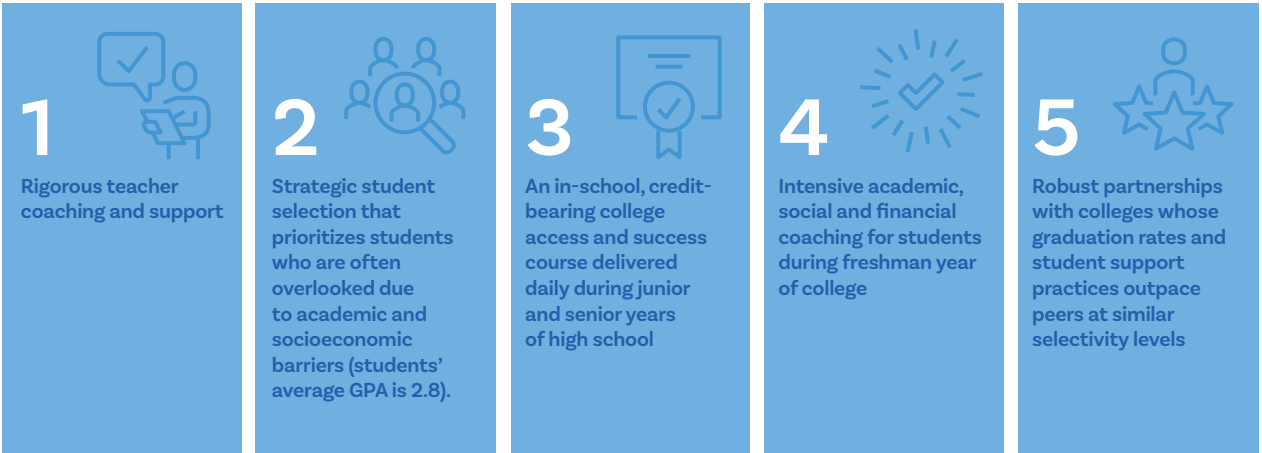
**OneGoal** believes in the strength and value of all students and their communities. A national organization of students, teachers, and education leaders, OneGoal works to ensure every student can achieve their greatest post-secondary aspirations, in order to create a more equitable future.

OneGoal starts as a credit-bearing class in students' junior and senior years of high school and continues

during the critical transitional period through their first year of college or other post-secondary path. OneGoal partners with schools in low-income communities, equipping teachers with the training, tools, technology and partnerships ensure their students realize their post-secondary dreams. And it's working: 81% of OneGoal high school graduates enroll in a post-secondary institution and 86% of those who enroll persist one year later.



### How it works:



# Post-Secondary Bright Spot

## Financial Support



The mission of **The Scholarship Academy** (TSA) is to help students and their families navigate through the financial aid process by equipping them with training, counseling and access to resources to empower them to take ownership of financing their education.

TSA has engaged more than 10,000 metro Atlanta students in securing private funding for college education, trained more than 500 counselors and advisors how to use our curriculum, and helped low-income, first-generation students secure \$37 million in private funding for college.

TSA’s Vision: *Students enter college on a pathway to graduate with as little debt as possible.*

### How it works:

## 1 LEARN

Equip counselors with the appropriate technology to help students build scholarship portfolios and create 4-year college funding plans.



## 2 DO

Directly empower disconnected youth through a 20-module curriculum delivered in twice weekly 50-minute sessions during the school day. These sessions challenge them to develop their leadership, civic engagement and entrepreneurial skills positioning them for scholarship success.



## 3 TRACK

Use TSA’s online tool, The Virtual Scholarship Center, to create an online community of “Scholarship Mentors” to train low-wealth families to create 4-5 year college funding plans to address the gaps in their financial aid packages over time.



# Support for Learn4Life



### Our Supporters

Our supporters generously provide the resources we need to implement effective strategies on a large scale.

AT&T  
Atlanta Regional Commission  
Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta  
Delta Air Lines  
Dobbs Foundation  
Enterprise Holding Foundation  
Gas South  
Georgia Power  
Graphic Packaging  
Green-Sawtell Foundation  
Home Depot Foundation  
Kelin Family Foundation  
The Kendeda Fund  
Metro Atlanta Chamber  
Morehouse School of Medicine  
Sartain Lanier Family Foundation  
Southern Education Foundation  
State Farm Mutual Insurance Company  
SunTrust Foundation  
TEGNA Foundation  
United Way of Greater Atlanta  
The Zeist Foundation

### How You Can Support Learn4Life

- Bring leadership and influence to the shared effort to improve common outcomes for all children – from cradle to career
- Join a Change Action Network, which are open to all interested stakeholders
- Visit [L4LMetroAtlanta.org](http://L4LMetroAtlanta.org) to sign up for the L4L Blog and to interact with our region’s data
- Follow @L4LMetroAtlanta to stay engaged
- Support the work of L4L financially to accelerate collective impact



### Executive Committee

Learn4Life is governed by an Executive Committee, comprised of a partnership of four leading regional organizations, committed to supporting a Metro Atlanta agenda for education.



### References

Footnote references available here: [l4lmetroatlanta.org/2019AnnualReport\\_references](http://l4lmetroatlanta.org/2019AnnualReport_references)





Metro Atlanta Regional Education Partnership