

Education Data 101



A brief guide for Georgia leaders to tell compelling stories and make informed decisions with community data.

What is community data?

Data exists at many levels. While national or state-level data may be helpful for providing context for the causes we serve, community data is essential for identifying where inequities exist and how we can align resources with the needs of our community. It helps ensure we're providing the right services to the right people.

The case for more standard data.

Georgia's nonprofits, agencies, and organizations often address shared or overlapping issues. The more we can describe these issues and evaluate our impact with standardized indicators, the easier it is to learn from one another, form authentic partnerships, tell compelling stories, and secure funding.

Equity-driven. Data-informed.

When used improperly, data can perpetuate inequities. For instance, a data metric indicating poor performance could lead to limited funding in the places that need it most. That is why it is crucial to focus on identifying and addressing disparities when using data to understand community needs and inform policy, programming, and funding decisions. Data can guide you to answers but is not the answer in itself. So, use data as a critical navigation tool and let equity be your destination.

Why is education data important?

Understanding education data is essential for identifying opportunities for improvement in Georgia's education sector. For example, low high school graduation rates may indicate the need for additional resources within a school or school district; and high 8th grade math scores could inform best practices to share with other communities. Understanding education data can add clarity and eliminate some of the mystery when trying to prioritize what and where efforts should be focused in our communities.



Neighborhood Nexus supports Georgia's mission-driven organizations to ask the right questions, use the best data, tell compelling stories, and make informed decisions. We accomplish this by offering community data from dozens of sources all in one place, building organizational data capacity, and providing custom projects. Find out more at neighborhoodnexus.org.

AVAILABLE GEOGRAPHIES LEGEND

The data referenced in this document is publicly available. "Available Geographies" refers to the various levels or areas by which that information can be reviewed.

- S** State
- C** County
- D** School District
- Z** ZIP Code
- T** Census Tract
- P** Data Point (School)



In this uniquely challenging moment for public education, data is the flashlight we need to understand what works. It is essential to have a common framework and language, and this data-informed tool will ensure the 'bright spots' we scale and amplify will best serve the students of our region.

—Ken Zeff, Executive Director Learn4Life



Indicators

01 KINDERGARTEN READINESS Original source: By request from [DECAL](#)



Percent of children aged 0-4 enrolled at a high-quality early education center (center that has received a quality rating or a public school that offers a Pre-Kindergarten program)

Why it matters

Children who have access to quality early education programs develop cognitive, social, and behavioral skills necessary for kindergarten (Learn4Life).

Neighborhood Nexus recommendation

This metric serves as a proxy while awaiting a state-wide assessment. Use it to find gaps in access to high-quality education centers especially in rural or economically disadvantaged communities.

Helpful data tools

- [GA CACDS Dashboard](#)
- [GEEARS Community Compass](#)
- [GEEARS Early Childhood Profiles](#)



02 THIRD-GRADE READING

Original source: [GOSA](#)



Percent of third-graders passing English-Language Arts state standards

Why it matters

Students who do not read at grade level by third grade are four times more likely than proficient readers to drop out of high school (Learn4Life).

Neighborhood Nexus recommendation

Use this data to advocate for additional resources and early interventions in communities with low reading scores to prevent future educational deficiencies.

Helpful data tools

- GOSA [Georgia School Grades Reports](#)

03 EIGHTH-GRADE MATH

Original source: [GOSA](#)



Percent of eighth-graders passing mathematics state standards

Why it matters

Algebra is the gatekeeper for access to upper-level high school courses in math and science, which are drivers of high school graduation, college readiness, and college completion (Learn4Life).

Neighborhood Nexus recommendation

Advocate for additional resources in communities with low 8th grade math scores to ensure students from all backgrounds have equitable access to educational opportunities and are set up for future success.

Helpful data tools

- GOSA [Georgia School Grades Reports](#)

04 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

Original source: [GADOE](#)



Percent of students graduating high school in four years

Why it matters

High school graduation is a strong predictor of health, mortality, teen childbearing, marital outcomes, and crime (Learn4Life).

Neighborhood Nexus recommendation:

In communities with consistently low high graduation rates, underlying problems may prevent students from graduating. Where there are deficiencies in multiple areas of student achievement, advocate for early interventions.

Helpful data tools

- GOSA [Georgia School Grades Reports](#)

05 POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT

Original source: [GOSA](#)



Percent of high school graduates enrolled in a postsecondary institution two years after their high school graduation

Why it matters

By the year 2025, more than 60 percent of jobs will require some form of post-secondary education. It is critical to ensure students have access to post-secondary program options and financial aid information (Learn4Life).

Neighborhood Nexus recommendation

Use this metric to understand which populations are underrepresented in postsecondary enrollment and where to improve postsecondary enrollment resources such as SAT/ACT or college application prep courses.

Helpful data tools

- GOSA [High School Graduate Outcomes Tool](#)

06 POSTSECONDARY ATTAINMENT

Original source: [GOSA](#)



Percent of students who attain a postsecondary credential within five years of graduating

Why it matters

Those with at least a bachelor's degree will earn about 2.5 times more over their lifetime than those with only a high school diploma. A more educated population can result in lower instances of child abuse, lower rates of criminal behavior, and fewer teen pregnancies (Learn4Life).

Neighborhood Nexus recommendation

Use this metric to advocate for improved higher education policies and financial aid to increase access for underrepresented populations such as students of color, nontraditional students, and first-generation college students.

Helpful data tools

- GOSA [High School Graduate Outcomes Tool](#)

07 SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Original source: [GOSA](#)



Percentage of students absent more than 15 days per year (or percentage of students absent more than 10% of enrolled days)

Why it matters

Achievement is impacted beginning at the sixth day of absence—whether excused, unexcused, or suspension—and has a significant impact on both subject-specific test scores and high-school graduation rate (Get Georgia Reading).

Neighborhood Nexus recommendation:

Low school attendance could be an indicator of underlying problems like food insecurity, physical or mental illness, or domestic issues. Use this metric to explore student wellness, and advocate for additional resources.

Helpful data tools

- GOSA [Georgia School Grades Reports](#)



08 SCHOOL SUSPENSION

Original source: [GOSA](#)



Percentage of students receiving one or more school suspensions

Why it matters

Research shows that there is a linear correlation between attendance and student achievement. Student absences, including out of school suspension (OSS), are one of the best predictors of graduation rate (Get Georgia Reading).

Neighborhood Nexus recommendation

While high suspension rates can be an indicator of underlying problems such as food insecurity, physical or mental illness, or domestic issues; it may be an indicator of ineffective behavioral intervention.

Helpful data tools

- GOSA Student Discipline Dashboard

09 ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Original source: [GOSA](#)



Percent of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students

Why it matters

LEP students may struggle with education achievements if they do not have access to resources to help them overcome language barriers in school.

Neighborhood Nexus recommendation:

Use this metric in conjunction with demographic data to advocate for additional ESOL resources in communities with a large percentage of LEP and nonnative English speakers.

Helpful data tools

- GOSA [Georgia School Grades Reports](#)

10 INTERNET ACCESS

Original source: [ACS](#)



Percent of households with Internet access

Why it matters

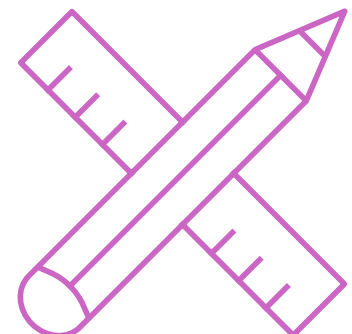
Lack of internet access can hinder students' educational achievements especially since the onset of the pandemic when many schools switched to virtual learning during times of insufficient staffing or COVID outbreaks.

Neighborhood Nexus recommendation:

Use this metric to identify where to implement additional funding and resources for student technology, Wi-Fi hotspots, and technology assistance.

Helpful data tools

- [GA DCA Broadband Map](#)
- [33N Computer and Internet Access Maps](#)
- [FCC Broadband Map](#)



From the Field

GEEARS

GEEARS worked with Neighborhood Nexus to develop the [Readiness Radar](#), a suite of interactive mapping tools and local profiles, allowing communities to quickly assess child well-being and early learning resources. The tools help funders, practitioners, advocates, and others to understand the landscape of early learning resources and pinpoint where gaps exist so they can work to ensure all Georgia students can enter kindergarten prepared to succeed.

Features indicators 01, 02



GET GEORGIA READING

Leveraging statewide education data and local assets, Neighborhood Nexus is supporting GGR and its pillars by producing and maintaining [interactive maps and dashboards](#) that allow users to see how schools or school district are fairing in their academic achievement in relation to demographic information. Early education advocates and decision-makers use these tools to support their work in ensuring all children in Georgia become proficient readers by the end of third grade.

Features indicators 01, 02, 03, 04, 09



LEARN4LIFE (L4L)

Neighborhood Nexus has developed a [dynamic dashboard](#) to give each of Learn4Life's (L4L) networks and partners easy access to education performance throughout the region. The dashboard allows advocates to examine trends in equity across metro Atlanta and identify schools that are showing progress for historically underserved students to ensure that every child in our region becomes a thriving citizen who achieves success in school, career and life, while contributing to our community.

Features indicators 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06



THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS!

We would like to thank our partners at Learn4Life, Get Georgia Reading, and GEEARS for their support. Their work has informed the research that went into developing this document.



Additional Information

ADDITIONAL INDICATORS

- [School Climate Star Rating](#)
- [Georgia Student Health Survey](#)
- [Per Pupil Expenditure](#)
- [Student Withdrawals](#)
- [CCRPI](#)

GET GEORGIA READING INDICATORS

- [Preterm Birth](#)
- [School Climate](#)
- [Low Birthweight](#)
- [Maternal Education](#)
- [Children Living in Poverty](#)
- [Child Care Climate](#)
- [Child Care Teacher Qualifications](#)
- [Directly Certified Students](#)

DATA SOURCES & TOOLS

- [Data Nexus](#)
- Learn4Life [State of Education in Metro Atlanta 2020](#)
- Learn4Life [School Achievement Data](#)
- Governor's Office of Student Achievement [Downloadable Data](#) & [Data Dashboards](#)
- [Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning](#)
- [Georgia's Cross Agency Child Data System](#)
- [United Way Child Wellbeing Map](#)
- [Stanford Educational Opportunities Data Tool](#)
- [Southern Regional Education Board](#)



Caution: Data Isn't Perfect

When using data, be cautious and remember that data can have gaps, be biased, or perpetuate inequities. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

Equity

Certain data points may contribute to systemic inequities. If you see correlations between deficits and certain geographic areas or demographic groups, use this as an opportunity to advocate for additional funding or resources for these communities. Don't use low performance as a justification to deny opportunities to communities that have been consistently and systematically overlooked.

Validity

Available data may not accurately represent the indicator. Look at how the metric is defined and see if the data actually represents this definition. If it doesn't, you may need to explore different metrics that may be more valid or proceed with caution if the invalid metric is the closest approximation of the data you need.

Reliability

Available data may not represent the defined metric consistently across all geographies and time frames. Look to see if there are any major differences in the data across categories. If something stands out, it may not have been collected or documented the same way across all categories.

Availability

Certain data points may not be publicly available for all years or geographies defined. Do not ignore gaps in data when you see them. Instead, ask yourself why there might be gaps and determine if it affects how useful the data is for your purpose.

Data Primers in this series:

Access Data 101

Demographic Data 101

Education Data 101

Environmental Data 101

Health Data 101

Household Economics Data 101

Housing Data 101

Workforce Data 101



Neighborhood Nexus can provide additional data points and help you leverage community data to support those you serve and achieve your organization's strategic priorities.

Visit neighborhoodnexus.org/our-services to find out more!

20221116

**Neighborhood
Nexus**

neighborhoodnexus.org

