



FINANCIAL REPORT • FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021

# Northwest Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency Rome, Georgia

Including Independent Auditor's Report

Greg S. Griffin | State Auditor  
Kristina A. Turner | Deputy State Auditor



**DOAA**

Georgia Department  
of Audits & Accounts

# **Northwest Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency**

## **Table of Contents**

### **Independent Auditor's Report**

### **Financial Statement**

Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance	1
Notes to the Financial Statement	3



## **INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT**

The Honorable Brian P. Kemp, Governor of Georgia  
Members of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia  
Members of the State Board of Education  
and  
Dr. Brian Otott, Executive Director and Members of the  
Northwest Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency Board of Control

We have audited the accompanying Statement of Revenues, Expenditures, and Changes in Fund Balance and the related notes (financial statement) of the Northwest Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA), a component unit of the State of Georgia, as of and for the year ended June 30, 2021.

### ***Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statement***

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statement in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America; this includes the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statement that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### ***Auditor's Responsibility***

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial statement based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statement is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statement. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statement, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the RESA's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statement in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the RESA's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statement.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

## ***Opinion***

In our opinion, the financial statement referred to above presents fairly, in all material respects, the respective changes in fund balance of the general fund and the related notes for the year ended June 30, 2021 in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

## ***Emphasis of Matter***

As discussed in Note 2 to the financial statement, the Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance was prepared for the purpose of meeting the requirements of the RESA and the Georgia Department of Education and is not intended to be a complete presentation of the RESA's assets, liabilities, revenues and expenses nor does it constitute a complete set of financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. Our opinion is not modified with respect to this matter.

As discussed in Note 6 to the financial statement, in 2021, the RESA restated beginning fund balance to correct misstatements. Our opinion is not modified with respect to this matter.

## ***Restriction on Use***

Our report is intended solely for the information and use of the RESA's management, members of the Board of Control, and the Georgia Department of Education and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg S. Griffin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line extending from the end.

Greg S. Griffin  
State Auditor

September 7, 2022

**Northwest Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency**

NORTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY  
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES, AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCE  
GOVERNMENTAL FUND  
YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2021

	GENERAL FUND
	<hr/>
<u>REVENUES</u>	
State Funds	\$ 5,165,977.77
Federal Funds	1,152,014.83
Investment Earnings	14.78
Miscellaneous	2,036,130.30
Total Revenues	<hr/> 8,354,137.68 <hr/>
<u>EXPENDITURES</u>	
Current	
Instruction	3,851,442.39
Support Services	
Pupil Services	221,114.33
Improvement of Instructional Services	3,431,174.25
General Administration	222,157.56
School Administration	183,178.15
Business Administration	208,279.54
Maintenance and Operation of Plant	119,662.37
Total Expenditures	<hr/> 8,237,008.59 <hr/>
Net Change in Fund Balance	117,129.09
Fund Balance - Beginning (Restated)	<hr/> 1,621,001.99
Fund Balance - Ending	\$ <hr/> 1,738,131.08 <hr/>

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NORTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
JUNE 30, 2021

NOTE 1: DESCRIPTION OF REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY

**REPORTING ENTITY**

The Northwest Georgia Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA), a component unit of the State of Georgia was created by the General Assembly to provide shared services to improve the effectiveness of educational programs and services of local school systems, to provide instructional programs directly to selected local school systems, and to provide Georgia Learning Resources System services.

RESAs are neither county nor independent school systems. Rather, they are service agencies, partly funded by the state, created to provide educational and support services to a group of school systems. Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) §20-2-270.1 and §20-2-271 enumerates the specific kinds of assistance RESAs must provide to member school systems. Each RESA is governed by a board of control composed of the school superintendent of each member school system, the president or highest administrator of each member postsecondary institution, and a local public or regional library director appointed by the director of the Office of Public Library Services of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. RESAs are subject to the rules of the State Board of Education that govern local school systems except where explicitly stated otherwise.

RESAs may acquire, lease, purchase, lease purchase, or dispose of real or personal property and may incur debts for those purposes subject to the approval of the board of control. The property will be held in the name of the RESA. RESAs may sell or provide at a reasonable cost goods to Georgia private schools. RESAs also may provide services relating to non-educational areas such as sales and service of audio-visual equipment, sales of office supplies and consumable educational materials. RESAs have latitude to identify and provide within their available resources other non-educational services to member school systems.

NOTE 2: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The accompanying Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance of the RESA has been prepared for the purpose of meeting the requirements of the RESA and Georgia Department of Education. The Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balance is not intended to be a complete presentation of the RESA's assets, liabilities, revenues, and expenses nor does it constitute a complete set of financial statements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles. The more significant of the RESA's accounting policies are described below.

**BASIS OF PRESENTATION**

The RESA reports one major governmental fund, the general fund, which is the RESA's primary operating fund.

**BASIS OF ACCOUNTING**

The basis of accounting determines when transactions are reported on the financial statement. The RESA uses funds to report on its financial position and the results of its operations. Fund accounting is designed to demonstrate legal compliance and to aid financial management by segregating transactions related to certain governmental functions or activities. A fund is a separate accounting entity with a self-balancing set of accounts.



NORTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
JUNE 30, 2021

Governmental funds are reported using the current financial resources measurement focus and the modified accrual basis of accounting. Under this method, revenues are recognized when measurable and available. The RESA considers all revenues reported in the governmental funds to be available if they are collected within sixty days after year-end. Interest is considered to be susceptible to accrual. Expenditures are recorded when the related fund liability is incurred. Capital asset acquisitions are reported as expenditures in governmental funds. Acquisitions under capital leases are reported as other financing sources.

The RESA funds certain programs by a combination of specific cost-reimbursement grants, categorical grants, and general revenues. Thus, when program costs are incurred, there are both restricted and unrestricted resources available to finance the program. It is the RESA's policy to first apply grant resources to such programs, followed by cost-reimbursement grants, then general revenues.

### Depreciation Expense

The RESA's capital assets were all fully depreciated on July 1, 2020. There was no depreciation expense for fiscal year ended June 30, 2021.

### USE OF ESTIMATES

The preparation of the financial statement in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the amounts reported in the financial statement and accompanying notes. Actual results may differ from those estimates.

### NOTE 3: LEASES

#### Operating Leases

The RESA leases copiers and a postage machine under the provisions of one or more long-term lease agreements classified as operating leases for accounting purposes. Rental expenditures under the terms of the operating leases totaled \$16,058.36 for the year ended June 30, 2021. The following future minimum lease payments were required under operating leases at June 30, 2021:

Year Ending		
2022	\$	14,350.56
2023		14,350.56
Total	\$	<u>28,701.12</u>

### NOTE 4: OTHER POST-EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS (OPEB)

#### Georgia School Personnel Post-Employment Health Benefit Fund

**Plan Description:** Certified teachers and non-certified public-school employees of the RESA as defined in §20-2-875 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) are provided OPEB through the School OPEB Fund - a cost-sharing multiple-employer defined benefit post-employment healthcare plan, reported as an employee trust fund and administered by a Board of Community Health (Board).

NORTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
JUNE 30, 2021

Title 20 of the O.C.G.A. assigns the authority to establish and amend the benefit terms of the group health plan to the Board. Information about the OPEB plan is available in the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, which is publicly available at <http://sao.georgia.gov/statewide-reporting/acfr>.

**Benefits Provided:** The School OPEB Fund provides healthcare benefits for retirees and their dependents due under the group health plan for public school teachers, including librarians, other certified employees of public schools, regional educational service agencies and non-certified public-school employees. Retiree medical eligibility is attained when an employee retires and is immediately eligible to draw a retirement annuity from Employees' Retirement System (ERS), Georgia Judicial Retirement System (JRS), Legislative Retirement System (LRS), Teachers Retirement System (TRS) or Public-School Employees Retirement System (PSERS). If elected, dependent coverage starts on the same day as retiree coverage. Medicare-eligible retirees are offered Standard and Premium Medicare Advantage plan options. Non-Medicare eligible retiree plan options include Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA), Health Maintenance Organization (HMO) and a High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP). The School OPEB Fund also pays for administrative expenses of the fund. By law, no other use of the assets of the School OPEB Fund is permitted.

**Contributions:** As established by the Board, the School OPEB Fund is substantially funded on a pay-as-you-go basis; that is, annual cost of providing benefits will be financed in the same year as claims occur. Contributions to the School OPEB Fund from the RESA were \$150,409.00 for the year ended June 30, 2021. Active employees are not required to contribute to the School OPEB Fund.

#### NOTE 5: RETIREMENT PLANS

The RESA participates in various retirement plans administered by the State of Georgia, as further explained below.

#### **TEACHERS RETIREMENT SYSTEM OF GEORGIA (TRS)**

**Plan Description:** All teachers of the RESA as defined in O.C.G.A §47-3-60 and certain other support personnel as defined by O.C.G.A. §47-3-63 are provided a pension through the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia (TRS). TRS, a cost-sharing multiple-employer defined benefit pension plan, is administered by the TRS Board of Trustees (TRS Board). Title 47 of the O.C.G.A. assigns the authority to establish and amend the benefit provisions to the State Legislature. The Teachers Retirement System of Georgia issues a publicly available separate financial report that can be obtained at [www.trsga.com/publications](http://www.trsga.com/publications).

**Benefits Provided:** TRS provides service retirement, disability retirement, and death benefits. Normal retirement benefits are determined as 2% of the average of the employee's two highest paid consecutive years of service, multiplied by the number of years of creditable service up to 40 years. An employee is eligible for normal service retirement after 30 years of creditable service, regardless of age, or after 10 years of service and attainment of age 60. Ten years of service is required for disability and death benefits eligibility. Disability benefits are based on the employee's creditable service and compensation up to the time of disability. Death benefits equal the amount that would be payable to the employee's beneficiary had the employee retired on the date of death. Death benefits are based on the employee's creditable service and compensation up to the date of death.

**Contributions:** Per Title 47 of the O.C.G.A., contribution requirements of active employees and participating employers, as actuarially determined, are established, and may be amended by the TRS Board. Contributions are expected to finance the costs of benefits earned by employees during the year, with an additional amount to finance any unfunded accrued liability. Employees were required to

NORTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
JUNE 30, 2021

contribute 6.00% of their annual pay during fiscal year 2021. The RESA's contractually required contribution rate for the year ended June 30, 2021, was 19.06% of annual RESA payroll. For the current fiscal year, employer contributions to the pension plan were \$900,289.17 from the RESA.

#### **EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM**

**Plan Description:** The Employees' Retirement System of Georgia (ERS) is a cost-sharing multiple-employer defined benefit pension plan established by the Georgia General Assembly during the 1949 Legislative Session for the purpose of providing retirement allowances for employees of the State of Georgia and its political subdivisions. ERS is directed by a Board of Trustees. Title 47 of the O.C.G.A. assigns the authority to establish and amend the benefit provisions to the State Legislature. ERS issues a publicly available financial report that can be obtained at [www.ers.ga.gov/financials](http://www.ers.ga.gov/financials).

**Benefits Provided:** The ERS Plan supports three benefit tiers: Old Plan, New Plan, and Georgia State Employees' Pension and Savings Plan (GSEPS). Employees under the old plan started membership prior to July 1, 1982, and are subject to plan provisions in effect prior to July 1, 1982. Members hired on or after July 1, 1982 but prior to January 1, 2009 are new plan members subject to modified plan provisions. Effective January 1, 2009, new state employees and rehired state employees who did not retain membership rights under the Old or New Plans are members of GSEPS. ERS members hired prior to January 1, 2009 also have the option to irrevocably change their membership to GSEPS.

Under the old plan, the new plan, and GSEPS, a member may retire and receive normal retirement benefits after completion of 10 years of creditable service and attainment of age 60 or 30 years of creditable service regardless of age. Additionally, there are some provisions allowing for early retirement after 25 years of creditable service for members under age 60.

Retirement benefits paid to members are based upon the monthly average of the member's highest 24 consecutive calendar months, multiplied by the number of years of creditable service, multiplied by the applicable benefit factor. Annually, postretirement cost-of-living adjustments may also be made to members' benefits, provided the members were hired prior to July 1, 2009. The normal retirement pension is payable monthly for life; however, options are available for distribution of the member's monthly pension, at reduced rates, to a designated beneficiary upon the member's death. Death and disability benefits are also available through ERS.

**Contributions:** Member contributions under the old plan are 4.00% of annual compensation, up to \$4,200.00, plus 6.00% of annual compensation in excess of \$4,200.00. Under the old plan, the state pays member contributions in excess of 1.25% of annual compensation. Under the old plan, these state contributions are included in the members' accounts for refund purposes and are used in the computation of the members' earnable compensation for the purpose of computing retirement benefits. Member contributions under the new plan and GSEPS are 1.25% of annual compensation. The RESA's total required contribution rate for the year ended June 30, 2021 was 24.66% of annual covered payroll for old plan members of which 19.91% was required from the RESA and 4.75% was contributed on behalf of the RESA by the state. Additionally, the RESA's total required contribution rate was 24.66% for new plan members and 21.57% for GSEPS member. Contributions are expected to finance the costs of benefits earned by employees during the year, with an additional amount to finance any unfunded accrued liability. Employer contributions to the pension plan were \$18,742.68 for the current fiscal year.

NORTHWEST GEORGIA REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY  
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT  
JUNE 30, 2021

NOTE 6: RESTATEMENT OF PRIOR YEAR FUND BALANCE

For fiscal year 2021, the RESA made prior period adjustments to correct misstatements due to outstanding check and payable errors which require the restatement of the June 30, 2020, fund balance for the general fund. This change is in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

Fund Balance (General Fund), July 1, 2020, as previously reported	\$	1,366,479.51
Prior Period Adjustments		<u>254,522.48</u>
Fund Balance (General Fund), July 1, 2020, as restated	\$	<u><u>1,621,001.99</u></u>