



SPECIAL EXAMINATION • REPORT NUMBER 25-06 • DECEMBER 2025

Inclusive Post-Secondary Education

Requested information on IPSE program components and coordination

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Why we did this review

The House Appropriations Committee requested this special examination of Inclusive Post-Secondary Education (IPSE) programs. The Committee asked that we examine IPSE admissions, academics, social integration, internships, and outcomes, as well as program staffing and accountability.

About IPSE

In 2008, federal legislation provided grant funding to establish post-secondary programs for students with intellectual disabilities who traditionally did not have access to college. Georgia's first Inclusive Post-Secondary Education (IPSE) program began in 2009. Over time, IPSE expanded to include programs at 10 institutions (8 in the University System of Georgia, 1 in the Technical College System of Georgia, and 1 at a private college). In academic year 2025, these programs served 152 students.

IPSE has received state funding since fiscal year 2014. State appropriations are directed to the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities, which provides oversight and distributes grants to the 10 programs. In fiscal year 2025, state grant funding totaled approximately \$550,000.

Since fiscal year 2024, the state has provided a grant for IPSE students at public institutions to help cover tuition and fees. Grants totaled \$1.5 million in academic year 2025.

Inclusive Post-Secondary Education

Requested information on IPSE program components and coordination

What we found

Inclusive Post-Secondary Education (IPSE) programs provide students with intellectual disabilities academic and social experiences in a college environment. Most programs in Georgia align with key best practices, although we identified issues at one program. To ensure programs meet minimum standards and follow best practices, the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) should improve its oversight.

Georgia's IPSE programs differ in their approaches but generally fulfill key components of the IPSE model.

IPSE programs in Georgia are designed to support students with intellectual disabilities in achieving academic, career, and independent living goals. Program structures vary (e.g., course formats, staffing), but most fulfill statutory requirements and incorporate key best practices. (Concerns about one program are noted on the following page.)

- **Academics** – Programs of study require inclusive courses that students attend with non-disabled peers. Supports are provided, such as course modifications and peer mentors. Some programs also offer courses on independent living, which may be specific to IPSE students.
- **Work experiences** – Programs typically require internships to further program goals of preparing students for future employment.
- **Social Inclusion** – Programs have supports and/or requirements for social involvement in activities outside the IPSE programs. Social inclusion is often supported by peer mentors and could include club participation or attending campus events.

GCDD could improve oversight to ensure IPSE programs meet minimum standards and achieve intended outcomes.

As the contracting entity for state funds, GCDD plays a role in funding and overseeing IPSE programs. However, it has

historically provided limited oversight, which contributed to issues identified during our audit. For example, contract language lacks clarity in key areas, such as requirements for inclusion and the process for authorizing new programs. Additionally, while annual site visits to programs are contractually required, they have been irregular and included no formal evaluation or documented review (e.g., checklist).

Data collection and analysis have also been inconsistent. Programs are required to report quarterly on various metrics (e.g., enrollment, graduation, funding), but GCDD has not consistently aggregated or analyzed this data to monitor trends or outcomes. Additionally, stakeholder feedback mechanisms are underutilized. Surveys of students and families are not routinely administered, and response rates are often low. This limits GCDD's ability to assess program effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.

GCDD recently began to address these issues by reorganizing staff duties, developing a new site visit report, and planning for a new data tool. However, further improvements are needed to ensure programs are having the desired impact.

Issues at one program likely signal noncompliance with the IPSE model.

Our review found Albany Technical College's Leveraging Education for Advancement Program (LEAP) exhibited several differences from other Georgia programs, raising concerns about compliance with IPSE requirements and best practices. Specifically, LEAP does not have the same level of inclusion with students outside the program—LEAP students are enrolled in inclusive academic courses, but most of the students' program time occurs in a segregated setting. Additionally, some courses are virtual and asynchronous, limiting interaction with non-disabled peers. The program also lacks internships and peer mentoring, which are standard in other IPSE programs. Finally, career development is limited to informal job shadowing, and students have few opportunities for social development. We identified evidence of LEAP's issues with career development and socialization in its past quarterly reporting; however, GCDD either did not identify or did not address them.

What we recommend

We recommend that GCDD improve its oversight of IPSE programs; this includes clarifying contract language and conducting additional monitoring. GCDD should also improve its data collection practices to better assess program effectiveness. Finally, we recommend that Albany Technical College work with GCDD to ensure the LEAP program meets minimum standards for IPSE programs.

See **Appendix A** for a detailed listing of recommendations.

Agency Responses:

GCDD agreed with the report's findings and recommendations. It also expressed its conclusion that "GCDD is no longer the most appropriate state entity to conduct technical assistance and contractual monitoring for" the IPSE programs and will seek changes.

Albany Technical College agreed with the finding and recommendations related to the LEAP program. It provided a corrective action plan to address the identified issues.

GVRA disagreed with the finding and recommendations related to its funding of and relationship with the IPSE programs. Details are included in the finding.

Agency comments are included at the end of relevant findings.

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Purpose of the Special Examination

This review of Georgia’s Inclusive Post-Secondary Education (IPSE) programs was conducted at the request of the House Appropriations Committee. Our review focuses on the following questions:

- To what extent do IPSE program participants achieve desired outcomes?
- How are IPSE programs held accountable for supporting student success?
- How similar are IPSE program components? If best practices are available, do institutions follow them?
- How similar are IPSE program resources across institutions?

A description of the objectives, scope, and methodology used in this review is included in **Appendix B**. A draft of the report was provided to the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Technical College System of Georgia, and the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency for their review, and pertinent responses were incorporated into the report.

Background

Higher Education Opportunities Act

In 2008, the Higher Education Opportunities Act (HEOA) authorized competitive federal grants for the creation or expansion of high quality, inclusive comprehensive transition and post-secondary programs (CTPs) for students with intellectual disabilities. These programs increase access to a traditional college experience for students with intellectual disabilities because they do not require a high school diploma. In addition, students attending CTPs would be eligible for federal student aid.

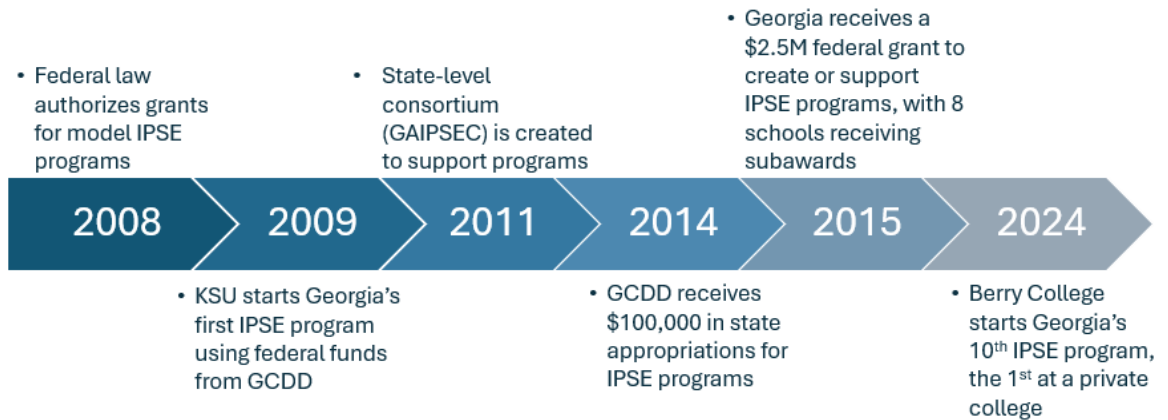
The HEOA defined students with intellectual disabilities as those “with a cognitive impairment or disability that is characterized by significant limitations in intellectual and cognitive functioning and adaptive behavior.”

Georgia IPSE Programs

Georgia’s Inclusive Post-Secondary Education (IPSE) programs first began with federal aid to the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD, described on page 3) in 2009. Georgia’s first IPSE program was the Academy for Inclusive Learning and Social Growth at Kennesaw State University, created with federal funds from GCDD. State funding for IPSE began in fiscal year 2014, with \$50,000 for each of the two programs that existed at the time (Kennesaw State and East Georgia State). As more programs were created, state funding for IPSE programs increased to approximately \$550,000 in fiscal year 2026.

Exhibit 1

IPSE programs have expanded in recent years



Sources: Staff interviews, IPSE websites, appropriations acts

As shown in **Exhibit 2**, there are currently 10 IPSE programs in Georgia. Eight programs are at public colleges within the University System of Georgia (USG), one is part of the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), and one is at a private college. Additional information on these programs is included in **Appendix C**, and locations are shown in **Appendix D**.

Exhibit 2

Georgia has 10 IPSE programs (AY 2025)

Institution	Program Length	Enrollment ¹
University System of Georgia		
Kennesaw State University	2 or 4 years	38
Georgia Institute of Technology	2 or 4 years	36
Georgia State University	2 or 4 years	27
Georgia Southern University	2 years	13
University of Georgia (UGA)	2 years	11
Columbus State University	2 or 4 years	<10
East Georgia State College	2 years	<10
Georgia College & State University (GCSU)	2 years	<10
Technical College System of Georgia		
Albany Technical College	1 to 2 years	10
Private College		
Berry College	2 years	<10
Total		152

¹ Enrollment numbers fewer than 10 were redacted due to confidentiality concerns. The total includes all programs.

Source: IPSE program documents and spring 2025 enrollment records

Developmental disabilities include a spectrum of intellectual and physical challenges that begin in early childhood and impact daily functioning.

State Oversight Entities

The Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD) and the Georgia Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Consortium (GAIPSEC) are the two primary state entities that provide oversight to and promote best practices for Georgia's IPSE programs.

Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities

Established in 1971, GCDD is an independent state agency that works to promote opportunities for individuals with developmental disabilities to meaningfully participate in society. In addition to providing IPSE oversight, GCDD also supports and funds other programs intended to improve quality of life for disabled individuals.¹ These include initiatives to provide technology training for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and to improve employment supports for workers with disabilities.

GCDD is administratively attached to the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities and is governed by a 28-member council. GCDD employs an executive director and 11 staff. Four staff members have specific duties related to IPSE in addition to working on GCDD's other initiatives.

GCDD annually contracts with each of Georgia's 10 IPSE programs to award state funding. The contracts require quarterly reports that document various program measures, as well as quarterly fiscal reports that show expenditures for areas such as personnel, travel, supplies, and student scholarships (GCDD approves IPSE programs' budgets at the beginning of the fiscal year). The contracts also require GCDD to provide the programs any necessary technical assistance (e.g., publicizing programs with low enrollment).

GCDD also contracts with GAIPSEC, described below, to provide ongoing support and quality control for IPSE programs.

Georgia Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Consortium

GAIPSEC is a state-funded initiative of GCDD that began in 2011 to improve access to inclusive post-secondary education programs. GAIPSEC is described as a collection of institutions of higher education, community support agencies, families, and K-12 educators. GAIPSEC is hosted in partnership with Georgia State University's Center for Leadership in Disability (CLD). Its coordinator is also the CLD assistant director, who supervises the manager of Georgia State's IPSE program. Two contractors also work with GAIPSEC part time.

GAIPSEC's fiscal year 2026 contract with GCDD is for \$27,550 in state funds. Under the contract, GAIPSEC staff hold quarterly meetings with IPSE programs to promote best practices. GCDD requires IPSE programs to participate in these meetings and may adjust funding for low participation. GAIPSEC also supports

¹ GCDD acts as the state's Council on Developmental Disabilities under the federal Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act. GCDD indicated its work is driven by a five-year strategic plan created by council members based on the unmet needs of Georgians with developmental disabilities.

the development of new IPSE programs and conducts outreach to special education teachers and families across the state.

In fiscal year 2015, GAIPSEC and the CLD were awarded a \$2.5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education through Model Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID). During the period of funding (2015-2020), eight institutions received subawards to create IPSE programs; six of these programs were still operating in December 2025.

CTP Requirements and Other Best Practices

GCDD's contract requires IPSE programs to obtain CTP status, a one-time certification from the U.S. Department of Education determined through an application and document review. CTP programs must serve and provide supports for students with intellectual disabilities, focusing on academic enrichment, socialization, and independent living skills. CTP programs are required to be inclusive, with students spending at least 50% of their time in courses and/or internships with their non-disabled peers. Georgia's IPSE grant statute (discussed on page 7) describes additional related requirements. Key components of the IPSE grant and CTP status are discussed below.

- **Academic inclusion** – Students take college courses with their non-disabled peers, and staff provide supports and modifications² as necessary. These courses may be taken for credit or audited.
- **Independent living** – CTP programs must provide instruction related to independent living skills (e.g., financial literacy, self-advocacy). These courses may be inclusive or limited to only students in the program.
- **Work experiences** – To meet IPSE grant requirements, programs typically have students participate in inclusive internships or work-based training to help prepare for competitive, integrated employment after program completion.
- **Social inclusion** – To meet IPSE grant requirements, programs should facilitate opportunities for social interaction with other students on campus to maximize opportunities for inclusion.
- **Person-centered planning** – Programs must use a collaborative process known as person-centered planning to identify students' interests and goals. This process helps determine the courses, jobs, and social opportunities the student wants to participate in.

While not required, peer mentors are commonly used to support these key components. Peer mentors are traditional, degree-seeking students who provide individual assistance. They may accompany IPSE students to class or social activities. They may also attend person-centered planning meetings to help

Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary (CTP) status is a federal designation for qualified IPSE-type programs.

² Modifications are adaptations that allow the student to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in the course content. Modifications may change the target skill and may reduce learning expectations or fundamentally change the content.

identify social goals. Peer mentors are not always assigned to specific students, and scheduling is based on availability and student need.

In addition to the key components listed above, the IPSE grant statute requires that programs offer their graduates a meaningful credential (e.g., certificate of completion or certificate of college and career readiness). While Georgia IPSE students are generally considered non-degree seeking, the programs do provide a credential upon completion.³ (Albany Tech students may earn the same credential as traditional students.) Credentials are listed in **Appendix C**.

The Higher Education Opportunities Act that established CTP status also led to the creation of a national coordinating center, known as Think College. Think College provides resources, technical assistance, and training related to college options for students with intellectual disabilities. The coordinating center has also established the Inclusive Higher Education Accreditation Council, which developed accreditation standards related to student achievement, curriculum, faculty and staff, and program development. While these are a source of best practices based on the CTP requirements, accreditation has been limited to a five-program pilot, and plans for future expansion are uncertain. No program in Georgia is currently accredited.

Financial Information

Each year, GCDD receives a state appropriation to fund IPSE programs and conduct oversight. While not a separate program in the budget, most of GCDD's state funding is directed to IPSE. As shown in **Exhibit 3**, GCDD distributed approximately \$529,000 (67%) in state funds to the IPSE programs via grants in fiscal year 2025. Approximately \$3,000 (0.4%) was used for the GAIPSEC website and a data analysis contract. (GCDD indicated GAIPSEC did not receive funds under a fiscal year 2025 contract while its responsibilities were reorganized, and the amount was adjusted for 2026.) Finally, GCDD spent approximately \$255,000 on operating expenses related to administration of IPSE and its other programs. (GCDD also receives federal funding for these other programs, which totaled approximately \$2.0 million in fiscal year 2025.)

Exhibit 3

State-funded expenditures for IPSE have increased (FY 2022-2026)¹

	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026 ²
IPSE Program Grants	\$382,070	\$457,981	\$555,405	\$528,531	\$552,450
GAIPSEC	\$28,605	\$44,476	\$44,000	\$3,240	\$27,550
Operational Expenses ³	\$103,043	\$120,272	\$147,229	\$255,171	\$246,598
Total State Funds	\$513,718	\$622,730	\$746,633	\$786,942	\$826,598

¹ While GCDD only receives state funding for IPSE, it receives federal funding for its other programs, which is not shown in the table.

² Numbers shown for FY 2026 are GCDD's projections.

³ Operational expenses include administration costs for IPSE grants and GCDD's other programs.

Source: GCDD documents and staff interviews

³ We did not attempt to assess whether the credentials met the definition of "meaningful" as part of this review.

As shown in **Exhibit 3**, GCDD's state funding has grown over time, increasing by approximately 60% since fiscal year 2022. The largest increases occurred in fiscal years 2023 and 2024 (21% and 20%, respectively), when funds were added to support IPSE improvements and expansion.

Funding for IPSE Programs

All IPSE programs in Georgia receive grants through GCDD (ranging from \$28,000 to \$94,000 in fiscal year 2026). Grant funding is allocated using a formula based primarily on enrollment and program length. Most frequently, programs use these funds to pay staff salaries.

In addition to the GCDD grant, IPSE programs typically charge a program fee (amounts are shown in **Exhibit 4**), which program staff indicated is used for staff salaries, peer mentor stipends, student scholarships, and other programmatic expenses. Programs may also receive financial and/or in-kind support (e.g., office and classroom space) from their institutions. Some program staff who are also full-time faculty receive partial courseload adjustments (i.e., teaching fewer classes to allow time to support IPSE operations). Additionally, some institutions pay for staff benefits and/or provide funding for graduate assistants who support the program and the students.

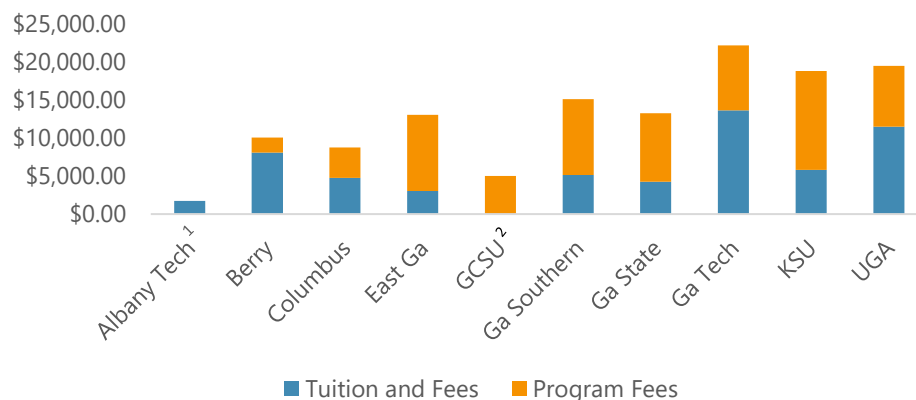
Eight programs also receive Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA) funding for providing pre-employment and transition services to IPSE students who are also GVRA clients. These programs can receive \$3,000 per student per semester, which may be used for program costs (typically staff salaries) or to cover the individual student's costs (i.e., tuition and fees).

Student Costs and Financial Aid

In general, IPSE students pay typical postsecondary student costs, plus IPSE program fees. As shown in **Exhibit 4**, students pay tuition and fees to their

Exhibit 4

Tuition and fees range from \$1,700-\$22,000 per year (AY 2026)



¹ The Albany Tech program does not charge a program fee.

² The GCSU program fee includes tuition and fees, but students do not pay traditional tuition rates because they are not officially enrolled in GCSU classes.

Housing Options for IPSE Students

IPSE students are eligible for on-campus housing at five of Georgia’s programs (Columbus State, East Georgia State, Georgia Southern, Georgia Tech, and Kennesaw State). Of the 152 students enrolled in these programs during academic year 2025, 82 (53%) lived in on-campus housing. On-campus housing generally costs between \$2,100 to \$5,400 per semester. Students who do not live on campus must arrange and pay for off-campus housing or live at home. Based on students’ home zip codes, we determined that 51% of students live within 25 miles of the IPSE program they attend.

respective institutions at nine programs (ranging from approximately \$1,740 to \$13,630 per year). Additional IPSE program-specific fees are common (nine programs) and range from \$2,000-\$14,000 per year.

To help offset costs, IPSE students are eligible for some forms of financial aid. Under the Higher Education Opportunities Act, students can receive federal aid in the form of need-based Pell grants (students are not eligible for federal student loans). As shown in **Exhibit 5**, during academic year 2024, programs reported 41% of IPSE students (ranging from 0% to 81% across programs) received Pell grants, averaging \$5,651. Some IPSE programs also offer need-based scholarships, but frequency and amounts were not included in the data used for our analyses.

Exhibit 5
Most IPSE students received financial aid (AY 2024)

	% Received	Average Amount
Pell Grant (Federal)	41%	\$5,651
IPSE Grant (State)	77%	\$5,347

Source: IPSE program quarterly reports and GOSA data

Students can apply for IPSE and Pell grants by submitting the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

The state primarily provides financial aid through its IPSE grant, which was created by Senate Bill 246 in 2023. The grant was established as a five-year pilot program for IPSE students who are Georgia residents and are enrolled at USG and TCSG institutions (students at Berry College are ineligible). IPSE grants are administered by the Georgia Student Finance Authority (GSFA). In the first year of funding (fiscal year 2024), GSFA was appropriated \$955,830 for IPSE grants. Funding for the IPSE grant increased to \$2.3 million (a 140% increase) in fiscal year 2025 and \$2.6 million in fiscal year 2026.

IPSE grant amounts have changed since its inception. For the grant’s first year (academic year 2024), amounts varied based on the number of hours taken and each institution’s tuition rates. In that year, 77% of students received the IPSE grant, and amounts averaged \$5,347. After the first year, grant amounts were set to equal the current standard undergraduate tuition at the respective institutions, with additional amounts for institutional and IPSE fees based on funding availability.⁴ At USG institutions, the maximum per term award is \$6,500

⁴ IPSE grant data was only available for academic year 2024.

(\$13,000 per year); the maximum is \$1,334 (\$4,000 per year) at TCSG institutions.

It should be noted IPSE students do not qualify for the HOPE Scholarship because they are enrolled in non-degree programs.⁵ However, Albany Tech students may receive HOPE grants, which varies based on the student's program of study and number of hours of enrollment.⁶

⁵ Our analysis of IPSE students' financial aid identified instances of HOPE scholarship awards that appear to be in conflict with eligibility criteria. This issue is under further review.

⁶ To protect student confidentiality, we did not include statistical information due to the limited number of students receiving the Career Grant.

Requested Information

Finding 1: GCDD is implementing new policies and procedures but should take additional steps to improve IPSE monitoring.

Limitations in GCDD's oversight of IPSE contributed to issues identified during our review. GCDD acknowledged weakness with prior IPSE practices and has begun to reorganize staff duties, change data collection requirements, and conduct regular site visits. Even with recently implemented changes, GCDD's contractual requirements and monitoring practices may not be sufficient to ensure program compliance with key best practices.

Since fiscal year 2014, GCDD has contracted with IPSE programs to receive an allocation of the state appropriation intended to expand and support IPSE programs (\$552,000 in fiscal year 2026).⁷ As the contracting entity, GCDD is responsible for ensuring programs adequately provide IPSE services, even when implementation varies. This includes contract language that communicates clear expectations, proper monitoring, and data reporting that demonstrates performance and measures customer satisfaction. Each area requires improvement to ensure Georgia's IPSE programs meet federal CTP criteria and remain eligible for state funding, as described below. GCDD has acknowledged issues with past oversight and begun to make changes to improve some areas.

- **Clear contract language** – GCDD has not assigned responsibility or created a process for authorizing new IPSE programs to receive state funding.⁸ GCDD and GAIPSEC each indicated the other entity was responsible; however, language in the GAIPSEC contract only discusses providing support to potential new IPSE programs. As a result, it is not clear what steps a school must take or documentation it must submit to receive exploratory funding or move from exploration to authorization.

In addition, while staff indicated IPSE students should have an intellectual disability (in line with federal and state statute⁹), GCDD contracts do not include this requirement. Admissions materials at half of Georgia's IPSE programs reference the broader category of developmental disabilities (although all IPSE program staff indicated they require students to meet the criteria for an intellectual disability). The student data we reviewed was not sufficient to verify whether all students met these criteria.

While existing program contracts include language requiring CTP status¹⁰ and inclusive courseloads, they allow programs to be technically

Developmental disabilities is a broader category that includes intellectual disabilities, as well as other disabilities (e.g., cerebral palsy, autism spectrum disorder).

⁷ In fiscal year 2018, most IPSE appropriations went through GVRA.

⁸ According to staff, the most recently added programs were started when a more formal process existed during the period Georgia had a federal TPSID grant.

⁹ Federal and state statutes indicate programs are designed for students with intellectual disabilities; however, they do not specify that programs should serve them exclusively. There was some disagreement on this issue among the experts we interviewed.

¹⁰ CTP status is earned through an initial document review and involves no monitoring by the federal government.

compliant while failing to meet the federal criteria. As noted in Finding 2, courses at Albany Tech are technically inclusive, but students are segregated for most of their program time.

- **Sufficient monitoring** – GCDD provided few examples of past oversight, and those we reviewed did not involve evaluating program outcomes or progress. (Previously, oversight fell largely to a single GCDD staff member who did not consistently document actions taken.) Additionally, while program contracts indicate site visits will occur once a year, in the past they were irregular and not evaluative. Monitoring has not been sufficient to ensure compliance with criteria (see Finding 2), and when compliance issues were identified, they were not always corrected. GCDD has reorganized IPSE duties and began conducting site visits using a new report form during our audit.
- **Quality information** – Program contracts require quarterly reporting of program activity and expenditures, including 17 quantitative program measures reported twice a year (e.g., number of graduates, amount of PELL grant funding leveraged). However, GCDD has not consistently collected or aggregated performance-related data (see discussion in Finding 6). Staff acknowledge previous data tools were burdensome and repetitive and shared plans for improvements.

Further, IPSE best practices include considering ongoing input from stakeholders when evaluating programs, but GCDD does not require surveys of students or families. We reviewed a discontinued family survey created by GAIPSEC that showed positive feedback but had a very low response rate. Staff shared plans for future student and alumni surveys that will include questions related to program feedback. Additionally, at least two programs reported having their own stakeholder survey.

Without sufficient oversight, stakeholders do not have assurance that programs are meeting federal criteria, following best practices, or achieving goals. Our audit found some issues that should have been identified through regular oversight processes. For example, an issue related to insufficient inclusion in Kennesaw State's program was not identified through monitoring but through a stakeholder complaint (GCDD then took action to help address it). Additionally, as discussed in Finding 2, Albany Tech's IPSE program is likely not fully compliant with the IPSE model. GCDD staff have expressed concern over some aspects of the program to the Albany Tech program director, but we found no evidence of corrective action.

It should be noted that among the southeastern states we reviewed, only Florida has a state entity dedicated to supporting and monitoring its programs. Florida appears to have stronger processes; however, the state legislature contributes significantly higher state appropriations to its programs and the monitoring entity.

Other entities have limited oversight of IPSE

Outside of GCDD, IPSE programs at public institutions are not overseen by a centralized body. Staff at USG said programs are not coordinated by the central office. Similarly, the director of Albany Tech's IPSE program does not report to the TCSG central office.

Each IPSE program's institution of higher education provides some level of oversight, but this varies. Examples include calculating or providing input on the program's fee, evaluating and approving the credential(s) a program offers, and receiving basic reports from the program on enrollment and credentials earned.

Finally, GVRA provides funding for many IPSE programs to provide services related to employment and transition (see Finding 9). The funding has reporting requirements—according to GVRA, each semester programs submit a one-page narrative for each eligible student describing progress in the required areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. GCDD should work with GAIPSEC to clarify responsibility for authorizing new IPSE programs. If applicable, this should be articulated in GAIPSEC's contract.
2. GCDD should adjust IPSE reporting to better verify CTP requirements are being met.
3. GCDD should continue with plans to solicit program feedback and consider how to best coordinate the use of such feedback.
4. GCDD should review IPSE best practices to identify any other critical components that should be added to program contracts and monitored for compliance.

GCDD's response: *GCDD agreed with the finding. It also noted that “no other State Councils on Developmental Disabilities provide monitoring or oversight to any academic programs at institutes of higher education.” GCDD indicated best practice is for the state to fund a technical assistance center at a university instead, so it will seek to “transition [these] responsibilities to a more appropriate entity.”*

Recommendation 1: *GCDD indicated it “will work with GAIPSEC to clarify and contractually articulate” responsibility for authorizing new IPSE programs.*

Recommendation 2: *“GCDD will restructure program reporting so that it directly verifies each component of the federal CTP standards.”*

Recommendation 3: *GCDD intends to begin using the satisfaction measures in its new survey tools.*

Recommendation 4: *GCDD noted it “will review contracts and seek to incorporate additional best practices to the greatest degree feasible given available resources.”*

Finding 2: Issues within Albany Tech’s program likely signal noncompliance with the IPSE model.

Albany Tech’s implementation of its IPSE program does not appear to comply with federal and state criteria or best practices. Evidence of student inclusion, career development and socialization in the program is significantly lower than that of other programs.

Albany Tech’s IPSE program—known as the Leveraging Education for Advancement Program (LEAP)—has been in operation since Fall 2017. Albany Tech is the only technical college in Georgia with an IPSE program. LEAP’s total enrollment is usually 10 or fewer students.

LEAP is unique academically because students take courses for credit and can receive the same credential as traditional students; however, most recent graduates received an IPSE-only credential. Based on data for academic years 2020-2024, approximately 70% of students who completed LEAP received a Business Office Assistant certificate, which was designed for and open only to LEAP students.

Our examination identified issues with LEAP’s program components that may not meet essential IPSE criteria, as described below.

- **Academics** – While LEAP students are technically only enrolled in inclusive courses, most of their program time is spent in a segregated setting. LEAP students have three hours of program time every day and spend that time in the LEAP classroom receiving soft skill instruction or academic assistance unless they have an in-person class. They may also receive additional non-inclusive online tutoring in the evening. LEAP staff indicated some students take asynchronous online courses and do not interact in person with non-disabled peers during that time. Accreditation standards call for online learning to be limited.

LEAP does not have the same level of academic inclusion as other programs. For their students to qualify for the IPSE grant, Georgia’s IPSE programs must have at least 50% of a student’s courseload occur in inclusive settings with non-IPSE students. LEAP may technically meet this requirement because students only officially enroll in catalog courses open to all students; however, they are receiving hours of daily instruction in a segregated setting. Other IPSE programs account for similar IPSE-specific instruction in their calculations to achieve 50% inclusion—each IPSE course (e.g., Financial Literacy) must be balanced with a catalog course (e.g., Intro to Theater). The asynchronous online aspect of many LEAP courses further minimizes interactions with other students.

- **Career development** – The LEAP program of study does not include internships, unlike all other Georgia IPSE programs. Georgia’s IPSE grant statute requires programs to provide integrated work experiences. LEAP reports limited evidence of job shadowing (e.g., assisting with tasks

around campus such as answering the phone), but staff indicated finding career development opportunities is a challenge.

- **Socialization** – Unlike other IPSE programs, LEAP does not have peer mentors or structures to ensure social inclusion with non-disabled peers. Instead, these support functions are performed by LEAP staff. Additionally, LEAP does not typically report evidence of its students having meaningful interaction with non-disabled students or individualized socialization (e.g., a student joining a club based on their interests). Instead, students typically go on field trips and attend events with other LEAP students. According to LEAP staff, there are fewer opportunities for social interaction at Albany Tech than at the other IPSE programs. Because social inclusion is a key component of IPSE, it is considered a minimum standard, and other programs have found ways to address challenges.

As discussed in Finding 1, GCDD is responsible for ensuring IPSE programs meet essential criteria and provide the intended IPSE experience. GAIPSEC has also contracted with GCDD to promote best practices among Georgia’s IPSE programs. Issues discussed above should be evident when sufficient monitoring is occurring. For example, we identified indications of LEAP’s issues with career development and socialization in its past quarterly reporting; however, GCDD either did not identify or did not address them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. GCDD should evaluate Albany Tech’s LEAP program to identify deficiencies and ensure changes are made to meet minimum criteria.
2. Albany Tech should work with GCDD to ensure the LEAP program meets minimum criteria.

GCDD’s response: *GCDD agreed with the finding.*

Recommendation 1: *GCDD indicated it began evaluating LEAP after conducting a site visit during our audit. GCDD staff have met with LEAP staff, drafted a corrective action plan for the LEAP program, and will conduct further site visits, technical assistance, and monitoring in 2026.*

Albany Tech’s response: *Albany Tech agreed with the finding.*

Recommendation 2: *Albany Tech indicated it “will work with GCDD to ensure that the LEAP program meets the minimum criteria. Spring 2026 is the target follow-up date.” Albany Tech also provided action steps it will use to address issues related to academic inclusion, career development, and social inclusion.*

Finding 3: The admissions process to identify applicants who will be successful in the program is generally similar across IPSE programs.

Staff at each IPSE program review documents and conduct interviews to determine whether an individual is a good fit for their program. Key considerations include whether the student meets the federal definition of intellectual disability, is motivated to participate in the program, and wants to be gainfully employed in a competitive, integrated environment. While IPSE admissions may include components similar to institutions' standard admissions, the review and selection process is more involved.

Similar to other states, Georgia's IPSE programs are intended to support students with intellectual disabilities who are seeking to continue academic, career and technical, and independent living instruction at an institution of higher education to prepare for gainful employment. All programs require students to have a minimum level of independence and no history of significant behavioral or emotional problems. Most programs also require students to meet minimum reading and/or math skills. GCDD staff stated IPSE would be an appropriate program for a very small percentage of the population of students with intellectual disabilities.

Admissions Process

IPSE admissions processes include some components similar to those for degree-seeking students—all programs require an application and interview, and most require letters of recommendation. However, IPSE admissions are more in-depth and require additional documentation. This process is intended to assess the student's motivation and independence, as well as identify students who present challenging behaviors in the academic environment.

Specific steps of the IPSE admissions process are described in **Exhibit 6** and discussed below.

Exhibit 6

Admissions process components are similar across IPSE programs

Application	Supporting Documents	Interviews	Pre-Admission Events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All programs • Education, employment, and/or medical histories • Questionnaire (8 programs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All programs • Psychological evaluation • Recommendation letters (8 programs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All programs • Typically on-campus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 programs • Activities such as mock class and tour • Timing varies

Source: IPSE program documents and interviews

- **Application** – All programs require prospective students to submit an application that generally includes the applicant's educational,

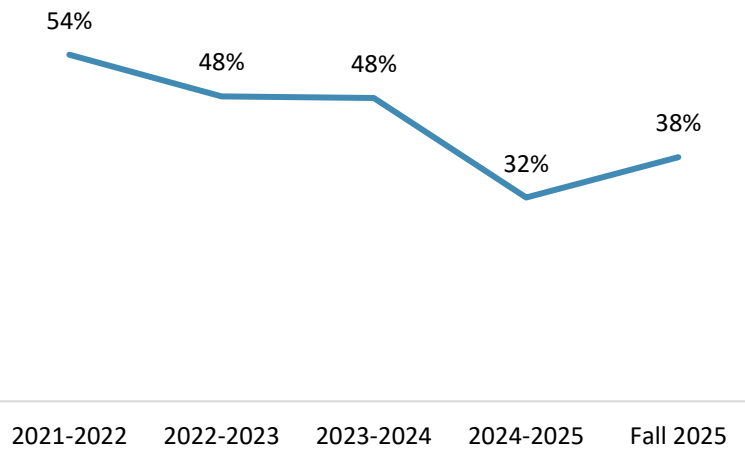
employment, and medical histories, and most require a questionnaire regarding personal interests and motivations. Prospective IPSE students usually apply to programs directly. Four programs also require students to apply through their institution's Office of Admissions later, but this is a formality.

- **Supporting documentation** – Students must submit a psychological evaluation that is generally used to confirm they meet the diagnostic criteria for an intellectual disability (one program indicated an evaluation could be cost prohibitive for some families). The evaluation also helps staff identify any concerns about the student's ability to successfully participate in the program. Most programs also require letters of recommendation, typically from teachers or past employers.
- **Interviews** – Generally, programs interview prospective applicants on campus, but some may also offer virtual interviews. Interviews are intended to assess the student's ability to successfully participate in the program, including navigating a college campus, attending classes, and interacting with other students. Program staff also use interviews to determine a student's interest in college and employment.
- **Mandatory pre-admission days or orientations** – Five programs require additional participation in on-campus activities such as a mock class, campus tour, or meeting with current staff, other IPSE students, and peer mentors. Two programs require students to attend a pre-admissions day that serves as a screening event prior to the full application, and two others require students to spend a day on campus as part of the interview process. Additionally, one program has a mandatory summer orientation for accepted students.

Admission timeframes vary across programs. Some have established application periods with defined start and end dates (e.g., five months), while others accept applications throughout the year. For example, Georgia Southern is always accepting applications, but for a fall semester start, the student must apply by April 1. The program conducts interviews in November through March and notifies those accepted by June. Columbus State also accepts applications year-round, but its process allows admissions up to one month before the semester begins.

Acceptance Rates

For the fall 2025 academic term, the overall acceptance rate for IPSE programs was 38% (70 of 183 applicants were accepted). As shown in **Exhibit 7**, this rate has declined over time due to an increase in the number of applicants. The lower acceptance rates are not a result of insufficient program capacity—IPSE program staff indicated they are able to accept the students they believe are good candidates for the program while maintaining appropriate cohort sizes to ensure the necessary level of support. Only one program (UGA) regularly maintains a waitlist, but others indicated they may identify applicants to fill spots that may become available.

Exhibit 7**Overall IPSE acceptance rate has declined (AY 2022-2026)**

¹ The decline in 2024-2025 was due to a significant increase in applicants to Georgia State's program.

Georgia State was unsure of the reason but said it may have been growing awareness of IPSE programs.

² For programs that offer two certificates, acceptance rates were only calculated for initial acceptance into the first certificate program.

Source: IPSE program data

Acceptance rates vary by program. Between academic years 2022 and 2026, average acceptance rates across the programs ranged from 25% to 100%. Georgia Southern and UGA typically have the lowest acceptance rates (averaging 25% and 33%, respectively), while Albany Tech admitted all applicants during the years reviewed (Albany Tech program staff indicated they perform some screening before prospective students apply).

Some programs indicated they will recommend other paths if they determine the student is not a good fit for IPSE. For example, they may recommend students under age 22 remain in their local school system, as allowed by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Other examples of alternatives are discussed in **Appendix E**. If staff believe a student needs a higher level of support than they can provide, they may recommend another IPSE program that offers additional support.

Finding 4: IPSE programs generally provide similar academic experiences that meet requirements for inclusion.

Federal legislation requires IPSE-type programs to provide academic enrichment, with at least half of students' program time taking place in inclusive classes and/or internships. Georgia programs generally foster inclusive learning experiences where IPSE students achieve learning outcomes while receiving support as needed, with some variation in what is required or tracked for student learning outcomes.

All IPSE programs have a general program of study, though credit hours can vary due to course availability or subject (e.g., some courses have lab hours). For example, **Exhibit 8** shows Georgia Southern's EAGLE Academy program of study, which includes IPSE-specific courses as well as multiple inclusive general study courses and career experiences. The average number of classes taken per semester ranged from one at Albany Tech to six at UGA.¹¹ According to program staff, IPSE programs try to limit enrollment in online courses, which aligns with best practices.

Exhibit 8

Sample IPSE program of study includes coursework and internships

Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 3	Semester 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EAGLE Academy course (3hr) EAGLE Academy course (2hr) <p>Inclusive courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> FYE 1220 First Year Experience (2hr) KINS 1525 (2hr) GSU 2131 Career Explorations (3hr) <p>Total hours: 12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EAGLE Academy course (3hr) EAGLE Academy course (3hr) <p>Inclusive courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GS course (3hr)¹ GS course (3hr) <p>Total hours: 12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EAGLE Academy course (3hr) <p>Inclusive courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GS course (3hr) GS course (3hr) <p>Career Experience (3hr)</p> <p>Total hours: 12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EAGLE Academy course (3hr) <p>Inclusive courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GS course (3hr) GS course (3hr) <p>Career Experience (3hr)</p> <p>Total hours: 12</p>

¹ Georgia Southern (GS) courses are selected by EAGLE Academy students and staff based on the student's career goals.
Source: Georgia Southern IPSE program documents

To meet federal requirements, GCDD's program contract stipulates IPSE students must spend at least 50% of their program time (i.e., courseload) in integrated settings. All programs have a plan to meet this minimum and expect students to take at least one inclusive course per semester. At nine programs, IPSE students are generally enrolled as auditors and non-degree seeking students; at Albany Tech, they enroll as regular undergraduates and take courses for credit. Three programs exclusively use inclusive courses; seven have a mix of inclusive and IPSE-specific courses.

¹¹ The average number of class calculation is incomplete because Georgia State, Albany Tech, and GCSU provide IPSE-specific instruction that does not appear in coursework data. Additionally, Berry College did not have IPSE students during the period reviewed. Other programs' averages fall between one and six classes.

Data limitations¹² prevented a comprehensive evaluation of IPSE students' coursework; however, we were able to identify evidence of enrollment in inclusive courses at all programs with data.¹³ Health, communications, and the arts were common inclusive course subjects across programs operating within the University System of Georgia; inclusive courses at Albany Tech were in areas such as business technology, job acquisition skills, and computer literacy.

Programs are also required to incorporate person-centered planning in their development of each student's course of study. All programs have a process for incorporating student interests into their coursework, and coursework data suggests students often enroll in classes based on their personal interests (many courses had only one IPSE student enrolled). Participation in inclusive courses may require instructor approval, but program staff indicated students generally do not have difficulty getting into courses related to their interests.

IPSE students commonly receive the following supports to help ensure their academic success:

- **Peer mentors** – Nine programs use peer mentors to assist IPSE students with academics. (Albany Tech uses staff instead of peers, which is discussed further in Finding 2.) Peer mentors play a variety of roles, including helping the student navigate campus, serving as study partners, and contributing to student evaluation. Program staff described peer mentor support as individualized—some students need more assistance, especially at the beginning of the semester, but this may decrease over time. It is typical for peer mentors to attend classes with IPSE students.
- **Coursework modifications** – IPSE students generally receive accommodations and/or modifications for inclusive coursework, as determined by program staff. To evaluate student work, most programs have rubrics or contracts for each inclusive course and require some level of effort on assignments. We saw variation in records that specified letter grades, including some students who failed (which supports staff statements about evaluation).

Accommodations are provided to assist student success and can include changes to instructional delivery, materials, and evaluation.

Modifications are adaptations that change the target skill and may reduce learning expectations or fundamentally change course content.

¹² We obtained course data for academic years 2020-2024 from the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) and the schools that do not report IPSE students' courses to GOSA. (Berry College did not have IPSE students during the period reviewed.) Because all necessary information was not included in the data, we could not use it to verify all programs met the inclusion requirement. For example, some schools do not report IPSE-specific courses and/or internships (usually considered inclusive).

¹³ At East Georgia State's CHOICE, inclusive coursework previously did not start until the second semester. However, during our audit, the program changed directors and indicated inclusive coursework would occur every semester going forward.

Finding 5: IPSE programs have similar goals for job training and social development, but implementation varies based on resources, institutional support, and location.

All IPSE programs share the same purpose of preparing students with intellectual disabilities for competitive, integrated employment while immersing them in student life on campus. However, opportunities and practices for job training and socialization vary based on institution location, resources, and other factors.

IPSE programs are intended to prepare students for employment in an inclusive atmosphere. To achieve this, they facilitate access to job training, which typically includes internships or other work-based instruction. Program staff and peer mentors may encourage or require students to participate in various social activities (e.g., student organizations, campus events). According to best practices, these elements support the development of skills needed for gainful employment.

As discussed below, programs generally follow state requirements and best practices related to job training and social opportunities. All programs utilize person-centered planning to identify student interests through collaborative meetings with students, their families, and program staff. We identified issues at one program that are noted below and further discussed in Finding 2.

Job Training

In accordance with the state's IPSE grant requirements and accreditation standards, Georgia's IPSE programs aim to provide students with job training and internship opportunities while enrolled. Although the programs vary in their approach, most align with these best practices, with one exception.

Nine of the 10 programs require students to participate in job experiences, although the plans for student job and internship progression vary (e.g., paid, on- vs. off-campus, number of hours). Program staff indicated students typically start working in their first or second semester and are placed in work environments with non-disabled peers. Generally, student job interests are identified during person-centered planning, and staff then work to identify opportunities in relevant areas. Student work performance is evaluated by supervisors and/or program staff and is typically based on attendance, motivation, and independence. Program staff stated internships have not typically led to offers for employment post-completion. Instead, they are intended for gaining experience and exploration of a field.

We obtained information regarding programs' job training efforts during interviews with program staff and by reviewing reports submitted to GCDD. Examples are described below.

- **Berry College** – IPSE students begin working in paid on-campus jobs during their first semester as part of Berry College's broader program to provide all students paid work experiences. (Staff noted off-campus jobs

are less likely due to the lack of public transportation.) IPSE staff identify student interests during person-centered planning the summer prior to enrollment to expedite employment. Students can stay in the same job from semester to semester or switch if their interests change.

- **Georgia Tech** – Students begin internships in the second semester of the four-year program and typically change jobs every semester. Career interests are identified in IPSE-specific classes taken in the first two years of the program. In the last two years, students select a career path to develop more specific skills. As they progress through the program, the number of hours worked each week increases, and students move from on-campus to off-campus roles.
- **Georgia Southern University** – Students typically begin internships in the second year of the program. During the first year, students explore career options and develop skills in IPSE-specific courses and may also access Georgia Southern’s career services. Students’ first internships are generally on campus, but they are eventually placed in off-campus internships when possible to prepare for post-completion employment.

Students’ access to work experiences is impacted by factors such as the program staff and institution’s network of potential employers, staffing resources, geography, and access to public transit or other modes of transportation. For example, students in Atlanta have broader opportunities because a variety of off-campus internships (e.g., Georgia Aquarium, hotels) are accessible by public transportation and rideshare services. By contrast, students in rural institutions are more likely to be employed on campus (e.g., athletics department, child development center). Additionally, programs indicated having an employment coordinator allows for dedicated time to develop relationships on campus and with community businesses to better identify opportunities most aligned with student interests.

As noted in Finding 2, Albany Tech does not require students to participate in an internship, and staff indicated no students have had internships. Program staff indicated students participate in some job shadowing, but this experience deviates from the employment training opportunities” at other IPSE programs.

Social Opportunities

Georgia’s IPSE programs’ social opportunities generally align with the state grant requirement to emphasize student social inclusion. Best practices also recommend that socialization include immersion with non-disabled, degree-seeking students. While all programs encourage students to participate in campus activities, formal supports and requirements vary. Concerns related to one program are noted below.

According to program staff, goals for socialization are typically individualized and documented as part of person-centered planning, but only three programs include a social component with their satisfactory academic progress requirements and evaluate students’ progress on meeting these goals. In part due

to the informal nature of socialization, there is not a consistent method of measuring progress or growth across programs. Some programs attempt to track student event attendance comprehensively, but most use informal means such as staff conversations with students.

Programs typically rely on peer mentors (paid or unpaid, depending on the institution) to facilitate and encourage socialization on campus. According to program staff, peer mentors spend time with multiple students each week based on their availability, as well as the IPSE students' preference and needs. The mentors learn students' interests and help them find clubs to meet other students with similar interests. They may also attend campus events and other social activities with IPSE students.

Program resources and structure may impact social opportunities. For example, GCSU's IPSE students are only on campus Tuesdays and Thursdays, which can limit opportunities because many clubs meet in the evenings or on other days of the week. To address this, GCSU staff sponsor inclusive events (e.g., karaoke nights) every semester and encourage students and peer mentors to spend time together on campus when possible. In contrast, UGA's program encourages students to meet with engagement coaches (degree-seeking student workers who are available to work with all students) to help connect them to clubs and organizations that fit their interests.

As noted in Finding 2, Albany Tech does not utilize peer mentors or provide the same level of inclusive social activities as other programs.

Finding 6: GCDD does not sufficiently monitor data to assess IPSE program exit outcomes, including employment.

The primary goal of IPSE-type programs is to prepare students for future employment. Most programs in Georgia require internships or jobs as part of the curriculum, but there is inconsistent data collection and tracking for post-exit employment. Additionally, program outcome data could be better contextualized by tracking factors such as program retention rates and whether graduates are actively seeking competitive, integrated employment.

Federal CTP standards and Georgia's IPSE grant statute require programs to provide instruction that prepares students for employment. Accreditation standards call for programs to provide individualized supports for students to seek and sustain employment and to monitor, report, and set goals for related metrics as part of program accountability. For example, Florida requires its programs to report retention rates and collect employment data on completers for five years.

A retention rate is the percentage of students from a given cohort who graduated or were still enrolled within a specified term.

Limited Research on IPSE Program Outcomes

We found no studies demonstrating IPSE programs have a causal impact on employment outcomes. The academic literature we reviewed described correlations that cannot clearly be attributed to IPSE programs. Studies showed a positive relationship between outcomes and attending post-secondary education programs (not specific to IPSE) or demonstrated better employment outcomes compared to individuals with intellectual disabilities who did not attend a program. Most studies note there is still a pressing need for more research due to a general lack of published literature and limitations such as small sample sizes. We analyzed employment outcomes but cannot state the jobs reported are a result of the IPSE program attended due to the lack of a comparison population. As described in Finding 3, IPSE students represent a small percentage of individuals with disabilities; as such, it is likely not valid to compare IPSE student outcomes to those of the broader population of those with intellectual disabilities.

Twice a year, Georgia IPSE programs report to GCDD three measures related to exit outcomes: the number of graduates, the number of graduates with jobs, and the number of graduates continuing their education. GCDD does not require programs to report other measures that would provide a complete picture of program outcomes, including retention rates and the number of graduates who are neither employed nor continuing education. Contracts require the collection of 90-day post-graduation student outcome data (a standard measurement in the field), but GCDD could not produce examples of 90-day data collected for prior academic years.

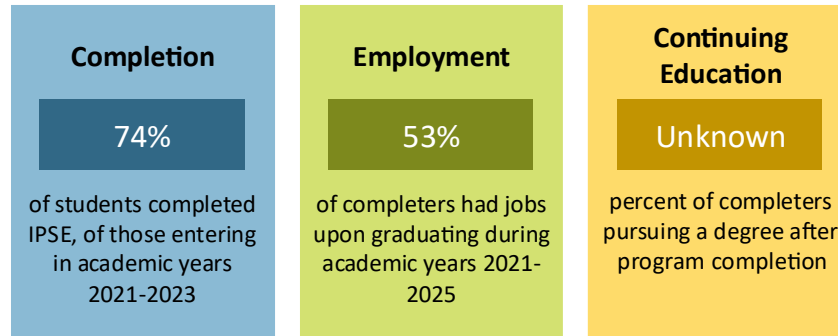
Additionally, we saw little evidence that GCDD aggregates data, monitors trends, or calculates statistics like employment rate. GCDD staff indicated they review employment data and notice trends but the observations have never required intervention. Incomplete analysis is likely due to limitations in the data—GCDD has changed data collection procedures multiple times in recent years, and programs have differed in their understanding of how to correctly report employment data.

Previous data collection was more extensive, requesting that program staff complete surveys regarding their students and program components. However, GCDD determined the surveys were repetitive and burdensome and discontinued their use during academic year 2024. GCDD has yet to implement a comprehensive replacement. Programs have noted challenges with collecting this type of data from IPSE alumni with limited staff capacity, particularly because written surveys may be a challenge for some students. GCDD noted it had requested additional state funding for IPSE support, including funds for alumni outreach, but was not granted the full amount.

We analyzed various datasets to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of IPSE program exit outcomes, as shown in **Exhibit 9** and described below.

Exhibit 9

IPSE program outcomes



Source: DOAA analysis of program documents, quarterly reports, and GOSA data

- **Completion** – We used student data provided by the programs¹⁴ to calculate the percentage of completers among students who entered an IPSE program in academic years 2021-2023.¹⁵ Overall, 74% of students completed programs during that timeframe. Individual program rates ranged from 60%-100%.
- **Employment** – Program reports to GCDD indicate that 53% of completers had jobs upon graduating during academic years 2021-2025. Overall reported employment rates for individual programs ranged from 14% to 81%.¹⁶

We attempted to evaluate employment rates using data from the Georgia Department of Labor's unemployment insurance records, but we determined the data was not sufficiently complete for our analysis.¹⁷ IPSE graduates we could identify were commonly employed in restaurants, supermarkets, and K-12 schools.

- **Continued Education** – Program reporting to GCDD does not specifically include IPSE students who subsequently enroll in degree programs. Program reports indicate that on average 31% of graduates were continuing their education in academic years 2024 and 2025. However, this number appears to be primarily those who obtain an initial two-year IPSE certificate and then pursue an advanced IPSE certificate.

We evaluated enrollment records to identify IPSE completers who subsequently enrolled in degree programs. We found fewer than 10 instances of this occurring (the actual number has been omitted due to confidentiality issues), although there are potentially more because the

¹⁴ We used data from GOSA for the two programs that had completion records in its database.

¹⁵ At the four-year programs, students earn an initial credential after two years and an advanced credential if they finish the second two years. To allow comparisons with two-year programs, we calculated completion of the initial credential at four-year programs. Additionally, our rate counts students who had not completed by academic year 2024 as non-completers, though they may have gone on to complete the program in subsequent years. It is possible some of these students enrolled in Spring 2023 and completed within two years.

¹⁶ This range excludes GCSU and Berry College, which started their programs in academic years 2023 and 2025, respectively.

¹⁷ Because the Georgia Department of Labor only reports on individuals with three or more quarters of employment, the data is likely not fully representative of all post-exit employment of IPSE graduates.

available data does not include out-of-state colleges and some private Georgia colleges. We also found several instances where students initially enrolled as traditional freshmen and subsequently switched to an IPSE program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. GCDD should better track employment for at least 90 days after graduation, as well as other exit outcomes across programs.
2. GCDD should routinely aggregate completion, employment, and continuing education trends and identify outliers. GCDD should communicate with programs as necessary if data shows areas of concern.

GCDD’s response: GCDD agreed with the finding and pointed to planned changes based on a “data optimization report” it contracted for in Fall 2024. It noted that rollout of the new data processes was delayed by staffing turnover and additional data requests from the General Assembly. GCDD also indicated that programs have reported difficulties tracking exit outcomes and the new approach is intended to “reduce the programs’ overall data burden, leaving greater program capacity to focus on gathering alumni data.”

Recommendation 1: “In 2026, GCDD will use the recommendations of the Fall 2024 data optimization report, including exit outcomes, to address the issues identified in the finding.”

Recommendation 2: GCDD indicated it will “aggregate response data and communicate with programs about any areas of concern.”

Finding 7: IPSE programs foster skills such as independence and self-determination, but these areas are not consistently monitored.

All of Georgia’s IPSE programs include support and/or instruction intended to grow skills related to independence and self-determination. Program staff can provide anecdotal evidence of individuals’ growth in these areas but may have difficulty measuring it. Because this is a critical component of IPSE, GCDD should include it in evaluative monitoring to ensure programs are adequately addressing student needs in this area.

Georgia’s IPSE programs are required to provide instruction related to independent living. Accreditation standards call for independent living to be included in regular student progress reports and part of a program’s satisfactory academic progress policy. The standards include examples of areas of independent living skills such as financial management, health and safety, and nutrition; activities can include instruction in technology tools or the use of transportation.

One study found IPSE students were in better physical health, took less medication, and had better and more satisfying relationships than a comparison group.

Georgia IPSE participants often receive independent living instruction as part of their coursework. Common courses include Life and Career Planning, Financial Literacy, and Nutrition and Health. In seven programs, students are graded in these courses. Student progress is also evaluated as part of person-centered planning, and four programs incorporate independence or interpersonal skills into their policy for satisfactory academic progress. Less formal instruction also occurs—peer mentors or program staff may initially work with IPSE students to facilitate navigating campus, maintaining a calendar, or using transportation.

GCDD reporting requirements related to independent living are limited—quarterly reporting asks for anecdotes of student success and program-level counts of individuals¹⁸ better able to self-advocate. Additionally, Georgia programs must describe work in this area to be approved as comprehensive transition and postsecondary programs, but (as discussed on page 4) this is a one-time designation involving document review with no reporting requirements to maintain the status.

We found no industry standard to measure growth in this area other than post-exit independent living status (e.g., with parents, with roommates, or alone), which some programs collect. Some programs have started collecting more data related to this growth (e.g., pre- and post-tests); others have plans or expressed the desire to do so. Given the variances that occur in instruction based on student needs, there may be no single way to measure the related progress or outcomes. However, program accountability should include verifiable evidence of programs' continued work in this area to ensure students can receive all intended benefits of IPSE.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. GCDD should consider how to best support programs interested in further developing ways to demonstrate growth or outcomes related to independent living.
2. GCDD should evaluate programs' work related to independent living as part of its site visits and other routine monitoring.

GCDD's response: *GCDD agreed with the finding.*

Recommendation 1: *GCDD noted that its 2024 data optimization report (see response to Finding 6) includes measures to demonstrate independent living outcomes. GCDD plans to implement the recommendations of that report in 2026.*

Recommendation 2: *GCDD indicated it will make reporting changes that include independent living instruction/support and will review the current site visit tool to ensure adequate monitoring of independent living.*

¹⁸ Language in the prompt for this information is vague and does not specify the population desired.

Finding 8: Program staffing levels vary by institution.

The number and type of staff vary across IPSE programs, and many rely heavily on part-time positions. Programs with multiple full-time staff and graduate students may be better able to support their IPSE students. While there is no consensus around what positions IPSE programs must have, schools reported benefits from having positions such as employment and academic coordinators.

Best practices recommend IPSE programs begin with a staffing structure sufficient to support program operations. This includes at least one faculty advisor and one program director or coordinator. As programs grow, they should consider hiring program coordinators who manage academics, employment, and/or peer support.

As shown in **Exhibit 10**, the number of staff varies across Georgia's IPSE programs, ranging from two to nine positions. Some programs have multiple full-time staff, while others are supported entirely by part-time staff, which can include faculty who do not receive additional compensation for the time spent on IPSE. Well-established programs with larger student cohorts typically have more positions. Staffing levels can also be affected by the level of support (financially or in-kind) provided by the school.

Exhibit 10

Most programs rely on part-time staff

	Executive Director	Program Director(s)	Program Coordinator(s)	Other ¹
Albany Tech < 10 students	✓		X	✓✓X
Berry College < 10 students	✓		✓	
Columbus State < 10 students	✓	✓		
East Georgia State < 10 students	✓	✓		✓
GCSU < 10 students	✓	✓✓	✓	
Georgia Southern 13 students	✓	✓		
Georgia State 27 students		✓	✓✓✓	
Georgia Tech 36 students	✓		✓✓✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Kennesaw State 38 students	✓	✓	✓✓✓✓✓✓	
UGA 11 students	✓	✓	✓✓	
✓ Full Time ✓ Part Time X Vacant				

¹ Includes mentors/tutors (Albany Tech and Georgia Tech) and administrative support positions (East Georgia State and Georgia Tech).

Source: USG records, IPSE program documents and interviews

Duties for typical staff positions at IPSE programs are described below, although programs may use different position titles. It should be noted that the absence of a position does not mean those duties are not being performed; rather, staff indicated they are shared across the existing positions.

- **Executive directors** (described as faculty advisors in best practice literature) primarily perform administrative work and commonly oversee funding, reporting, research, and program implementation. The position is typically held by a faculty member who often still maintains a full courseload. Eight of the 10 IPSE programs have an executive director, but only two (Georgia Tech and Kennesaw State) are full time. Georgia State does not have an executive director but indicated the program director performs these duties.
- **Program directors** manage daily program operations, such as supervising program coordinators, overseeing programs of study and identifying academic courses, and communicating with families when necessary. Seven of the 10 IPSE programs have program directors, and five are full-time.
- **Program coordinators** support the program by coordinating internship and job opportunities, advising students on their coursework, and working with students to develop skills needed for success. Three programs have one program coordinator who supports all program components, and four others have multiple coordinators (i.e., academic, employment, and peer mentor coordinators). The two largest programs (Kennesaw State and Georgia Tech) employ the most program coordinators—six and five, respectively. Three programs have no coordinator positions.

In addition to staff positions, most programs utilize degree-seeking students to provide support. As discussed in Findings 4 and 5, nine programs are supported by peer mentors, who are typically either volunteers or paid student workers. (Albany Tech has mentors/tutors on staff who fill this function but are not students.) Additionally, three programs utilize graduate students to either teach IPSE-specific curriculum (Georgia State) or provide occupational therapy or counseling services to students (Georgia State, Kennesaw State, and UGA).

We were unable to draw any causal links between staffing and outcomes due to limited data; however, program staff indicated it would be difficult to support students to meet desired outcomes with fewer employees. Program staff noted certain positions are critical to success; for example, full-time employment coordinators are able to spend more time searching for and coordinating internship opportunities, while helping to develop necessary workplace skills. Three smaller programs indicated they hoped to fund this position to ease the burden on current staff.

Some programs also described staffing challenges. Two programs indicated that retaining quality staff in part-time roles is difficult because of the skills needed—

staff should have experience working in higher education and with students with intellectual disabilities. One program had two vacancies, including a part-time employment coordinator, and could not fill either vacancy during the time of our review. Additionally, three programs' executive directors expressed concerns about program sustainability after they leave or retire.

GCDD's response: GCDD agreed with the finding. It noted, "the audit identified fragility among IPSE program staffing, with certain roles going unfilled and three program directors expressing concerns about the sustainability of their programs once they retire." GCDD believes "this indicates that some additional resources may be a wise investment to support program stability and continuity."

Finding 9: IPSE programs face obstacles in securing GVRA support.

IPSE programs can receive GVRA funding for providing pre-employment transition and similar services to their students. In general, IPSE program staff do not find it easy to navigate or manage the GVRA relationship. As a result, two programs do not secure and maintain GVRA support although they provide comparable pre-employment services. GVRA acknowledged some difficulties and has recently created a dedicated IPSE counselor position, but staff turnover and communication issues contribute to persisting problems.

GVRA is required to provide or arrange for the provision of pre-employment transitions services (Pre-ETS) for all individuals with disabilities under age 22 in need of such services. These services can include job counseling, internships, and instruction in social skills and self-advocacy. IPSE programs provide Pre-ETS by design and are thus eligible for GVRA funds when their student is a GVRA client—up to \$3,000 per student per semester for a maximum of four semesters.¹⁹ Vocational rehabilitation agencies in other southeastern states also support IPSE students.

Eight of Georgia's 10 IPSE programs receive GVRA funding for Pre-ETS, which ranged from \$25,000 to \$102,000 in fiscal year 2025.²⁰ Funding is sent directly to the institutions and may pay for program staff salaries, but staff at three programs stated they pass the funds to the students to defray costs. In one instance, a program was unaware that a student was receiving GVRA support, which had been directed to the student's account; GVRA staff said they would correct this issue moving forward. The remaining two IPSE programs have not taken steps to obtain GVRA funding. We identified several challenges that may prevent programs from receiving full GVRA support.

¹⁹ Nearly 80% of the GVRA funding is federal (the remainder is a state match).

²⁰ Based on available data. IPSE programs report GVRA funding to GCDD only when the funding is used for students' tuition and fees (vs. for programmatic expenses). One program (Columbus State) had no students receiving GVRA support during fiscal year 2025 and is excluded from this range.

- **Program staff capacity** – The two programs that do not participate stated their small staff levels (i.e., fewer than three full-time employees) make it difficult to manage a relationship with GVRA. Program staff said the process to obtain funding is time consuming due to shifting GVRA policies, extensive paperwork, and the need to facilitate communication among families, GVRA staff, and financial aid offices. GVRA indicated some procedural elements are required by federal rules and obligations.
- **GVRA internal communication** – GVRA recently created a position dedicated to IPSE, but eligible students are not always referred to this counselor and transferring them takes time. GVRA staff acknowledged some IPSE clients can be missed if they are referred to offices with no knowledge of IPSE.
- **Funding level** – GVRA has not assessed its Pre-ETS rate of \$3,000 per semester since 2020, when it was set using a market comparison. Staff at one IPSE program said the funds they receive from GVRA are not sufficient to offset the cost of associated work. Alabama and Tennessee respectively offer \$4,500 and \$5,000 per student for up to four semesters, and in Tennessee additional semesters of support can be secured with justification.²¹ Amounts in other southeastern states we reviewed varied; in North Carolina, support can cover all expenses and exceed four semesters.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. GVRA should improve internal communication on IPSE to make the support process easier.
2. GVRA should evaluate the amount paid for IPSE services and consider whether it should be increased.

GVRA’s response: *GVRA disagreed with the finding and the recommendations, emphasizing statutory requirements to develop Individual Plans for Employment for clients, a process that requires exploring all available service options and gathering information about clients’ disabilities, functional limitations, and goals.*

Recommendation 1: *GVRA disagreed with the recommendation. It noted it has taken the step of “redirecting internal resources to a dedicated [IPSE] counselor to ensure clients receive the support needed.” GVRA indicated this counselor will continue to attend GCDD and GAIPSEC meetings “to address questions and needs as they arise.”*

Recommendation 2: *GVRA disagreed with the recommendation. It acknowledged “the vast differences in how state VR programs are*

²¹ GVRA documentation indicates students can receive additional semesters of support with supervisory approval; however, this does not happen in practice except at Albany Tech, which has a unique GVRA relationship (as a for-credit program).

funded and their capacity to fund services and training programs. GVRA believes its current level of support for IPSE is in line with comparable services” and noted it “has continuously evaluated its rates” over the past five years.

Appendix A: Table of Findings and Recommendations

	Agree, Partial Agree, Disagree	Implementation Date
Finding 1: GCDD is implementing new policies and procedures but should take additional steps to improve IPSE monitoring. (p. 9)	Agree	N/A
1.1 GCDD should work with GAIPSEC to clarify responsibility for authorizing new IPSE programs. If applicable, this should be articulated in GAIPSEC's contract.	Agree	August 2026
1.2 GCDD should adjust IPSE reporting to better verify CTP requirements are being met.	Agree	August 2026
1.3 GCDD should continue with plans to solicit program feedback and consider how to best coordinate the use of such feedback.	Agree	August 2026
1.4 GCDD should review IPSE best practices to identify any other critical components that should be added to program contracts and monitored for compliance.	Agree	August 2026
Note: GCDD indicated it would seek transition of oversight responsibilities to a new entity, effective at the beginning of fiscal year 2028.		
Finding 2: Issues within Albany Tech's program likely signal noncompliance with the IPSE model. (p. 12)	Agree	N/A
2.1 GCDD should evaluate Albany Tech's LEAP program to identify deficiencies and ensure changes are made to meet minimum criteria.	Agree	Ongoing / August 2026
2.2 Albany Tech should work with GCDD to ensure the LEAP program meets minimum criteria.	Agree	Spring 2026
Finding 3: The admissions process to identify applicants who will be successful in the program is generally similar across IPSE programs. (p. 14)	Agree	N/A
3.1 No recommendations		
Finding 4: IPSE programs generally provide similar academic experiences that meet requirements for inclusion. (p. 17)	Agree	N/A
4.1 No recommendations		
Finding 5: IPSE programs have similar goals for job training and social development, but implementation varies based on resources, institutional support, and location. (p. 19)	Agree	N/A
5.1 No recommendations		
Finding 6: GCDD does not sufficiently monitor data to assess IPSE program exit outcomes, including employment. (p. 21)	Agree	N/A

	Agree, Partial Agree, Disagree	Implementation Date
6.1 GCDD should better track employment for at least 90 days after graduation, as well as other exit outcomes across programs.	Agree	August 2026
6.2 GCDD should routinely aggregate completion, employment, and continuing education trends and identify outliers. GCDD should communicate with programs as necessary if data shows areas of concern.	Agree	August 2026
Finding 7: IPSE programs foster skills such as independence and self-determination, but these areas are not consistently monitored. (p. 24)	Agree	N/A
7.1 GCDD should consider how to best support programs interested in further developing ways to demonstrate growth or outcomes related to independent living.	Agree	August 2026
7.2 GCDD should evaluate programs' work related to independent living as part of its site visits and other routine monitoring.	Agree	August 2026
Finding 8: Program staffing levels vary by institution. (p. 26)	Agree	N/A
8.1 No recommendations		
Finding 9: IPSE programs face obstacles in securing GVRA support. (p. 28)	Disagree	N/A
9.1 GVRA should improve internal communication on IPSE to make the support process easier.	Disagree	
9.2 GVRA should evaluate the amount paid for IPSE services and consider whether it should be increased.	Disagree	

Appendix B: Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

Objectives

This report examines the Inclusive Post-Secondary Education (IPSE) programs in Georgia. Specifically, our examination set out to determine the following:

1. To what extent do IPSE program participants achieve desired outcomes?
2. How are IPSE programs held accountable for supporting student success?
3. How similar are IPSE program components? If best practices are available, do institutions follow them; and
4. How similar are IPSE program resources across institutions?

Scope

This special examination generally covered IPSE program²² activity that occurred during academic years 2021-2025 with consideration of earlier or later periods when relevant. Information used in this report was obtained by reviewing relevant laws, rules, and regulations, as well as agency documents. We interviewed agency officials and staff from the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities (GCDD), the Georgia Inclusive Post-Secondary Education Consortium (GAIPSEC), the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency (GVRA), the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE), and Georgia's 10 IPSE programs; we also conducted site visits at nine IPSE programs.²³ We interviewed IPSE program staff at institutions or oversight bodies in five other southeastern states (Alabama, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee).

We obtained IPSE student data from 9 of the 10 current IPSE programs in Georgia.²⁴ The University System of Georgia (USG) provided data for eight programs for academic years 2021-2024, including student zip code, disability type, and completion outcome (e.g., completed, withdrew). We assessed the data and determined it was reliable for our analysis, subject to limitations discussed in the following pages. To obtain additional relevant data, we shared the necessary student identifiers with staff at the Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA). Staff at the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) also collected IPSE student data for the one TCSG program (Albany Technical College) and shared it directly with GOSA. GOSA analysts used the student data to provide matching records from the statewide longitudinal data system known as GA AWARDS, which collects data from multiple state agencies and is used for (and restricted to) academic and state agency research. We analyzed GA AWARDS data related to student enrollment, high school credentials, post-secondary coursework, post-secondary credential awards, financial aid, and employment. We assessed the data and generally determined it was reliable, subject to limitations discussed on the following pages.

We obtained available program data from GCDD for all programs for academic years 2021-2025, including quarterly reporting for performance measures related to student outcomes (e.g., graduates with jobs) and fiscal measures related to student financial assistance (e.g., number of students receiving Pell grants). We assessed the data and determined it was reliable for our analysis, subject to limitations

²² The University of West Georgia previously had an IPSE program, but it ended in 2021 and was excluded from our review.

²³ During our audit, the program at East Georgia State College experienced a leadership transition. While we interviewed staff and reviewed documents related to this program, a site visit was not feasible during the timeframe of our audit.

²⁴ Because the program at Berry College only had enrolled students starting in Fall 2024, it did not have sufficient data for our intended analyses (e.g., completion rate). Therefore, we did not request student data from this program.

discussed on the following pages. Although the program data is self-reported, we believe it represents a credible source of program-level data.

Due to legal restrictions under the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, information related to student records is prohibited from public disclosure. As a result, certain confidential information has been omitted from the report. Specifically, we have omitted statistical calculations that would describe groups of fewer than 10 students.

Government auditing standards require that we also report the scope of our work on internal control that is significant within the context of the audit objectives. We reviewed internal controls as part of our work on Objective 2.

During the course of the audit, we identified a potential internal control issue that was outside the scope of this audit. A separate review has been undertaken, and if appropriate, a report will be issued in Spring 2026.

Methodology

To determine the extent to which IPSE program participants achieve desired outcomes, we conducted a literature review to determine the extent of peer-reviewed research on IPSE outcomes. We interviewed staff at IPSE programs or monitoring entities in other states to identify industry standards related to IPSE outcome data collection. We interviewed Georgia IPSE program staff about their outcome data processes and the link between IPSE coursework or career development and post-exit employment. We reviewed GCDD and GAIPSEC documentation related to outcomes, including example program and alumni surveys.

To calculate a completion rate, we used student data provided by USG and TCSG. While four IPSE programs offer a four-year track (i.e., an initial two-year certificate and an optional advanced two-year certificate), we limited completion rate analysis to the initial two-year credential. We received student data for academic years 2020-2024 but limited the completion rate analysis to students whose initial enrollment came in 2021, 2022, or 2023 to better restrict results to students who completed within the expected two years. (We could not know whether students enrolled in 2020 completed on time, and students newly enrolled in 2024 would not have had time to complete.) For the two programs with credential data in the GA AWARDS database, we were able to compare the completion rate against those student credential records and determined that the completion rates we calculated for those programs were similar to the rates calculated using GA AWARDS records.

To determine the extent to which IPSE graduates pursue other post-secondary education, we analyzed GA AWARDS enrollment records. We checked these against self-reported numbers in programmatic quarterly reports regarding students who continue their education. The self-reported numbers do not specify whether students are pursuing another IPSE degree (i.e., an advanced certificate) or some other post-secondary education. However, the GA AWARDS data is not necessarily complete because out-of-state schools and some private schools do not report to GOSA. As a result, we determined we could not specify the number of graduates continuing their education in degree programs.

To calculate an employment rate, we attempted to use unemployment insurance wage data reported to GOSA by the Georgia Department of Labor. However, we determined this data was not sufficiently complete for our purposes, primarily because no wage data is reported to GOSA until an individual has

three or more quarters of wage data (i.e., the first two quarters of wages are not reported). Instead, we reviewed and aggregated performance measures self-reported to GCDD by all IPSE programs for academic years 2021 to 2025.

To determine the extent to which IPSE programs are held accountable for supporting student success, we interviewed GCDD staff about their duties related to and past oversight of IPSE. We reviewed GCDD sample contracts for IPSE programs and GAIPSEC. We reviewed GCDD documents related to program grants. We reviewed emails related to IPSE site visits, data collection, and quarterly reports, as well as documents describing new and planned policies for data and site visits. We reviewed all quarterly reports—program reports and expense reports—from academic year 2024-2025 and sample quarterly reports from prior years. We interviewed GAIPSEC staff and reviewed past program and student surveys administered by GAIPSEC. We reviewed documents and interviewed GCDD staff about the discontinuation of the GAIPSEC surveys. We interviewed program staff about GCDD and GAIPSEC involvement. We interviewed GVRA staff about support for IPSE programs and the reporting of student progress and outcomes.

To identify best practices, we interviewed IPSE program staff in four southeastern states (Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee) regarding coordination, monitoring, and support in their states. We interviewed staff at the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities about coordination, monitoring, and support of IPSE in Florida. We also reviewed federal legislation, state legislation, national IPSE accreditation standards, and industry literature to identify required criteria and best practices.

To obtain information on IPSE program components and any best practices, we interviewed IPSE program staff from all 10 programs. We reviewed documents from each program including applications, policies for satisfactory academic progress, and programs of study to compare the academic, job training, and social components of each program. We reviewed coursework data obtained from GOSA and the programs directly when necessary (some programs do not report coursework to GOSA, or students did not appear in GOSA's data) to identify inclusive courses and determine the average number of courses taken in a term.

To identify best practices, we interviewed program staff from an IPSE program in New York who are also involved with the Inclusive Higher Education Accreditation Council and reviewed the accreditation standards as best practices. Due to the large quantity of accreditation standards used by the Council, we focused on practices related to multiple standards and standards also supported by other sources (e.g., other states, observed similarities across Georgia's programs). Academic, job training, and social components of each IPSE program were compared to the best practices when applicable.

To determine the extent to which IPSE program resources vary across institutions, we interviewed IPSE program staff from all 10 programs. USG provided data on IPSE program staffing and funding for these positions at each USG institution. We reviewed program expense reports submitted by the IPSE programs to GCDD. We also interviewed staff at GVRA to determine to what extent IPSE programs can use Vocational Rehabilitation funding for program operations or student costs.

We treated this review as a performance audit. We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our

findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

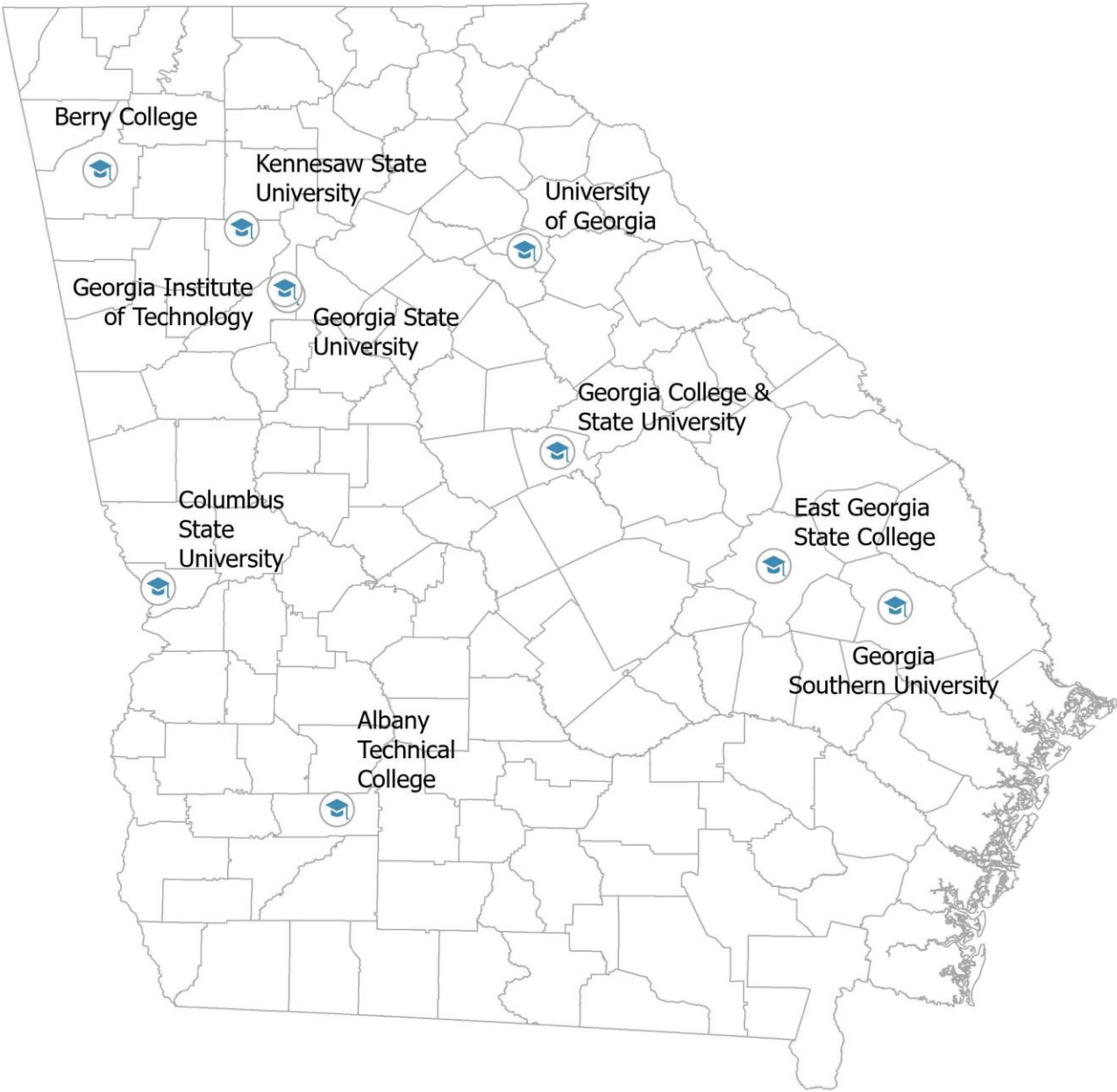
If an auditee offers comments that are inconsistent or in conflict with the findings, conclusions, or recommendations in the draft report, auditing standards require us to evaluate the validity of those comments. In cases when agency comments are deemed valid and are supported by sufficient, appropriate evidence, we edit the report accordingly. In cases when such evidence is not provided or comments are not deemed valid, we do not edit the report and consider on a case-by-case basis whether to offer a response to agency comments.

Appendix C: IPSE Programs in Georgia

Institution	Program Name	Credential(s)	Year Established
Albany Technical College	Leveraging Education for Advancement Program (LEAP)	LEAP students can earn any certificate offered by the college	2017
Berry College	Berry College Program for Inclusive Learning	No certificate, recognized as "Scholars of Integrity in Personal and Professional Development" by the college	2024
Columbus State University	Guidance and Opportunities for Academic and Leadership Success (GOALS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College Experience and Personal Development Certificate • Certificate of Community and Career Leadership 	2015
East Georgia State College	CHOICE Program for Inclusive Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of Accomplishment in Work Readiness Skills 	2015
Georgia College & State University	GC Thrive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of Completion in Liberal Arts Education 	2023
Georgia Southern University	EAGLE Academy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate of Accomplishment 	2017
Georgia State University	Inclusive Digital Expression and Literacy (IDEAL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate in Career Readiness • Certificate of Program Completion 	2016
Georgia Institute of Technology	Expanding Career, Education and Leadership Opportunities (EXCEL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate in Academic Enrichment, Social Fluency, and Career Exploration • Certificate in Social Growth, Leadership, and Career Development 	2015
Kennesaw State University	Academy for Inclusive Learning and Social Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate in Academic, Social, and Career Enrichment • Certificate in Advanced Leadership and Career Development 	2009
University of Georgia	Destination Dawgs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certificate in College and Career Readiness 	2017

Source: Program documents and websites

Appendix D: IPSE Program Locations



Source: Program websites

Appendix E: Other Options for Students with Intellectual Disabilities

Other options than IPSE are available for students with intellectual disabilities in Georgia. These include the following:

- **Local Education Agency services** – For students with intellectual disabilities, transition planning (i.e., moving into post-high school life) is a required part of their individualized education plan once they begin high school or turn 16 (whichever comes first). All school districts must provide or arrange for the provision of transition services, which may include instruction, community experiences, and the acquisition of daily living skills.

By federal law, students with disabilities are entitled to a free and appropriate public education until age 22. However, transition service offerings in small districts may fluctuate over time due to changes in student needs or grant funding, and some students with disabilities choose to leave high school before the age of 22.

- **Vocational rehabilitation (VR) services** – GVRA provides VR services to help individuals with disabilities prepare for and obtain employment. When a client applies for VR services, a GVRA counselor performs an intake assessment to determine eligibility and individual needs. Services can include counseling, post-secondary support, and work readiness training. To qualify for VR services, an individual's disability must be permanent and affect the ability to work.
- **Residential GVRA programs** – GVRA operates two residential programs: Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation and Cave Springs Rehabilitation Center. Students are typically VR clients aged 18-25. Each site provides training in the areas of independent living and employment skills.
- **Disability services at institutions of higher education** – The Americans with Disabilities Act requires colleges and universities to provide equal access to post-secondary education for students with disabilities. This can include providing assistive technology as well as academic accommodations (e.g., notetaking services, extended time on examinations). All schools with IPSE programs also provide disability services for eligible degree-seeking students, but IPSE programs offer additional academic assistance where needed and provide career development and independent living instruction.

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