



FOLLOW-UP REVIEW • REPORT NUMBER 22-18 • JUNE 2025

Georgia Department of Education – Agricultural Education

Action taken to measure progress but status of FFA camps unclear

Greg S. Griffin | State Auditor
Lisa Kieffer | Executive Director



DOAA
Georgia Department
of Audits & Accounts

This page intentionally blank



Performance Audit Division

Greg S. Griffin, State Auditor
Lisa Kieffer, Executive Director

Why we did this review

This follow-up review was conducted to determine the extent to which the Agricultural Education Program at the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) addressed recommendations from our January 2023 special examination (Report #22-18).

The special examination evaluated the extent to which (1) the Young Farmer program has a reasonable approach to accomplish its purpose and (2) the current structure of youth camps contributes to financial and liability risks.

About Young Farmer and Youth Camps

The Young Farmer (YF) program was created in 1951 to provide educational instruction and opportunities to adults interested or engaged in agriculture, and it seeks to increase proficiency in agricultural production, management, agribusiness, and leadership. Currently, there are 61 active YF programs across the state.

Since 1948, the Georgia Association of Future Farmers of America (FFA) and the state have partnered to operate recreational and youth camping programs (referred to in this report as FFA camps). FFA camps consist of two state-owned facilities offering overnight accommodations, dining services, meeting space, and recreational facilities available to FFA and Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) members, as well as other educational groups.

Georgia Department of Education – Agricultural Education

Action taken to measure progress but status of FFA camps unclear

What we found

Since our 2023 special examination, the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) has established processes that will allow it to assess progress toward achieving Young Farmer program goals and evaluate the program's effectiveness. However, GaDOE does not yet know whether FFA camps should be considered state entities, which would subject the camps to state financial management requirements.

Program Goals and Performance Standards

In the original report, we noted that GaDOE had established program goals and required YF teachers to complete an annual program of work, which contained 51 standards (requirements). However, the goals established for the YF program were not clearly defined or measurable. In addition, the program lacked performance measures that would help determine whether program requirements and activities demonstrate progress toward achieving program goals. Finally, program of work requirements were largely administrative and not clearly tied to program goals.

- **Statewide Goals** – Following the audit, GaDOE updated the Young Farmers program guide to include three broad areas (Adult Education, Agricultural Awareness and Community Engagement, and Leadership Development), each with specific measures that establish the desired results that YF teachers and participants are expected to achieve. In May 2025, GaDOE made additional changes to the program guide to further define broad goals associated with each of the three areas.
- **Program of Work Requirements** – As recommended, GaDOE revised the program of work standards to eliminate redundancy and improve clarity. GaDOE indicated that programmatic and administrative standards are important for assessing YF teacher

eligibility for state grant funds, which may prevent significant changes. However, through its review process, GaDOE condensed the number of standards from 51 to 48.

Program Monitoring Activities

At the time of our original report, GaDOE lacked a policy for how YF teachers' performance should be assessed. Teachers were required to submit program activity data in monthly reports; however, there was no process for ensuring the data submitted were accurate and complete. In addition, GaDOE did not use the information collected to evaluate program performance on a statewide level, though data limitations (such as inconsistent reporting and data collected in various formats) would have prevented a meaningful analysis.

According to the updated Young Farmers program guide, teachers continue to be assessed against program of work requirements but are now also assessed against the newly established performance measures (also referred to as statewide goals). The Young Farmer program executive director is responsible for assessing compliance with statewide goals, while regional directors within Agricultural Education assess compliance with program of work standards. The program guide also outlines consequences for noncompliance with requirements.

As recommended, GaDOE worked with a committee of YF teachers and other stakeholders to redesign the monthly reporting systems to ensure reporting accuracy and consistency. The redesign helped to streamline reporting, and the program guide includes specific instructions on data fields to facilitate consistent data entry. GaDOE reported that YF teachers have been trained on the updated reporting system, which it will continue to do for new teachers. Information provided by Young Farmer teachers via monthly reports will be aggregated and used to track progress toward statewide goals.

FFA Camps

The original report found that FFA camps—which operate on state-owned properties and receive state funds—were not defined as units of the state. In addition, GaDOE did not centrally manage the camps (unlike other state entities with similar camps); rather, they were overseen by a Camp Administrative Committee made up of representatives from GaDOE and various non-state entities (e.g., local school systems, agribusiness). This arrangement created financial and liability risks.

In February 2023, GaDOE sought clarification of the FFA camps' status as state or non-state entities from the Office of the Attorney General, which would determine whether the camps should comply with state financial management requirements. However, no determination has been made as of May 2025.

GaDOE's Response: *GaDOE agreed with the current status as stated in the report.*

The following table summarizes the findings and recommendations in our 2023 report and actions taken to address them. A copy of the 2023 special examination report 22-18 may be accessed at [Georgia Department of Education – Agricultural Education - DOAA](#).

Agricultural Education Follow-Up Review, June 2025

Status: 4 Findings			
Substantially Addressed: 2	Partially Addressed: 0	Not Addressed: 1	No Recommendation: 1

<p>Finding 1: The YF Program is not designed to measure progress toward achieving program goals.</p> <p>Substantially Addressed – GaDOE has taken action to establish measurable goals that are tied to broad program goals.</p>	
Original Recommendations	Action Taken
<p>1.1 GaDOE should establish clear, measurable goals for the YF program that are re-evaluated regularly to assess their reasonableness and relevance.</p>	<p>Fully Implemented – In response to Recommendation 1.2, GaDOE established 10 specific performance measures tied to the three areas in the Young Farmer teacher program guide (Adult Education, Agricultural Awareness and Community Engagement, and Leadership Development). For example, five specific measures are now associated with Adult Education (e.g., all or most YF teachers will provide classes/professional learning opportunities that meet community needs).</p> <p>In May 2025, GaDOE further updated the program guide to develop broad program goals for each of the three areas. For example, the overarching goal for Adult Education is to “support the learning and development of Young Farmer participants through curriculum design, engaging instruction, ongoing assessment, support, and coordination of additional resources.” According to GaDOE, these changes have been approved and were in effect at the time of this report’s release.</p>
<p>1.2 GaDOE should establish performance measures that are tied to program goals. The performance measures should include outcome, as well as output, measures. Once performance measures are established, GaDOE should determine whether program requirements and activities demonstrate progress toward achieving goals.</p>	<p>Fully Implemented – As noted above, GaDOE established 10 measures (also referred to as statewide goals) for the three Young Farmer program areas. GaDOE categorizes these measures as implementation and impact goals (similar to output and outcome measures, respectively). For example, one implementation goal for Adult Education requires that 100% of Young Farmer teachers will provide 20 classes focused on regional agricultural needs based on community surveys. A related impact goal requires that 80% of class participants will implement one new practice related to content delivered by the Young Farmer teacher. While most data to support the goals will be obtained through Young Farmer teachers’ monthly reporting, some information will be obtained through annual surveys of program participants. GaDOE issued the first participant survey in Fall 2024.</p> <p>As discussed below, GaDOE compiles this information to evaluate the program at the individual teacher and statewide levels.</p>

Agricultural Education Follow-Up Review, June 2025

<p>1.3 GaDOE should evaluate the programmatic (non-administrative) program of work requirements and modify those that are identified as irrelevant to the program’s goals.</p>	<p>Fully Implemented – According to GaDOE, the program of work requirements were evaluated and condensed to 48 standards (from 51 in the original report) to eliminate redundancy and improve clarity. GaDOE emphasized the importance of the programmatic (and administrative) requirements to assess Young Farmer teacher programs’ eligibility for continued funding.</p> <p>According to GaDOE, it will continue to review the extent to which the Young Farmer teacher program of work requirements demonstrate progress toward achieving program goals.</p>
--	---

Finding 2: While GaDOE assesses YF teachers’ compliance with reporting requirements and collects information on YF activities, it does not evaluate overall program performance.

Substantially Addressed – GaDOE has adopted policies regarding YF teacher monitoring, accountability guidelines, and evaluations that determine program effectiveness on a statewide level.

Original Recommendations	Action Taken
<p>2.1 GaDOE should establish a policy regarding ongoing monitoring of YF teachers. The policy should clearly assign responsibility for ongoing monitoring activities. The policy should also document the consequences for failing to comply with program requirements and include a procedure for determining funding cuts that result from non-compliance.</p>	<p>Fully Implemented – GaDOE adopted a policy regarding ongoing monitoring of Young Farmer teachers in January 2025. The policy establishes the standards against which teachers will be evaluated—the program of work requirements and the 10 program measures (or statewide goals). As stated in the proposed policy, the executive director of the Young Farmer program is responsible for assessing compliance with statewide goals, while regional coordinators for Agricultural Education assess compliance with program of work standards.</p> <p>The policy lists the steps that will be taken when YF teachers fail to meet expectations. Consequences include corrective action plans and a reduction in state grants funds (ranging from a 15% reduction in year 2 of noncompliance to 100% if determined to be noncompliant over a five-year period).</p>
<p>2.2 GaDOE should evaluate program performance at a statewide level. This could include setting benchmarks to compare to monthly report data.</p>	<p>Fully Implemented – GaDOE indicated that data obtained from YF teachers through the monthly reporting process (discussed in the next section) will now be consolidated across the state. In addition, GaDOE will aggregate data associated with teacher progress in achieving the newly established goals and measures. A separate reporting tool (Effectiveness Monitoring Google form) was designed to capture information to evaluate statewide/teacher performance, which GaDOE indicated it will also review monthly.</p>

Agricultural Education Follow-Up Review, June 2025

<p>2.3 GaDOE should work with YF teachers, local school CTAE directors, and program management to redesign the monthly reports to track more meaningful information, such as which service types are most commonly provided and to whom. For information currently collected but not used, GaDOE should decide whether this information is needed.</p>	<p>Fully Implemented – GaDOE stated that it worked with a committee of YF teachers and other stakeholders to redesign the monthly reporting system and ensure consistency in reporting. Previously, reports allowed inconsistent categorization of activities and included a large number of activities that YF teachers would use to document their work. Through the redesign, GaDOE streamlined reporting categories and established reporting expectations in the program guide, providing specific instructions on data fields to ensure users enter information consistently. In the redesigned reporting system, YF teachers are also able to electronically track contacts, which were previously tracked on paper.</p>
<p>2.4 GaDOE should ensure YF teachers are trained and provided sufficient guidance to ensure activity data is consistently reported.</p>	<p>Fully Implemented – According to GaDOE, training has been provided to YF teachers each year since 2022 during GaDOE’s bi-annual teacher updates (though training for 2025 has not yet occurred). The program guide also serves as a tool to enhance reporting accuracy. As noted in the program guide, additional training will be available for new YF teachers.</p>
<p>2.5 GaDOE should consolidate the adult enrollment forms and the monthly reports to ease the administrative burden on YF teachers and increase the accuracy of reporting.</p>	<p>Fully Implemented – GaDOE has consolidated the adult enrollment forms and monthly reports. GaDOE also adjusted the information management system based on YF teacher feedback.</p>

Finding 3: YF services vary across the state and are based on community requests for assistance.

Original Recommendations	Action Taken
No Recommendations.	No Recommendations.

Finding 4: It is unclear whether Future Farmers of America (FFA) camps should be considered units of the state, which creates financial and liability risks.

Not Addressed: Assistance and information have yet to be received from state attorney general’s office.

Original Recommendations	Action Taken
<p>4.1 GaDOE, in consultation with the Office of the Attorney General, should clarify the status of the FFA camps as state or non-state entities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. If FFA camps are determined to be state entities, GaDOE should centrally manage the camps to ensure they comply with state laws, rules, and policies governing state entities. b. If FFA camps are determined to be non-state entities, GaDOE (in consultation with the State Properties Commission) should re-establish an agreement with the Georgia Future Farmers of America, Inc., Georgia Association of Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America, inc., or other relevant party. The agreement should outline the roles and responsibilities of each for camp operations. 	<p>Not Implemented – In February 2023, GaDOE requested assistance from the Office of the Attorney General in determining whether FFA camps were to be considered state or non-state entities. As of May 2025, a determination had not been made.</p>

Agricultural Education Follow-Up Review, June 2025

<p>4.2 The FFA camps should update their policies and procedure manual (last updated in 2009) to ensure they are current and accurately reflect all financial policies and controls in place.</p>	<p>Not Implemented – GaDOE is waiting on information from the Office of the Attorney General office regarding the status of FFA camps.</p>
---	--

This page intentionally left blank