



Department of
Education

State Systemic Improvement Plan

Phase III – 2

Tennessee Department of Education | April 2018



Contents

Summary of Phase III – 2 (Spring 2017 – Spring 2018).....	4
Implementation.....	9
Changes to Implementation Timeline.....	10
Implementation Activities.....	10
Department Infrastructure Improvements	10
Implementation of Strategy One: Access to Core Instruction.....	11
Implementation of Strategy Two: Special Education in Continuum of Service	14
Implementation of Strategy Three: Addressing Skill Deficits	18
Outputs	19
Stakeholder Involvement in Implementation of the SSIP	20
Communication on Implementation.....	21
Stakeholder Decision-Making on Implementation of the SSIP	23
Data on Implementation and Outcomes	26
Measuring Effectiveness.....	26
Baseline Data.....	27
Sampling Procedures.....	29
Data Collection Procedures, Timelines, and Comparisons.....	30
Data Management and Analysis.....	30
Demonstrating Progress and Making Modifications.....	30
Data Collected	30
Change to Baseline Data	34
Changes to Implementation and Strategies.....	35
Stakeholder Involvement in Evaluation of SSIP	36
Data Quality Issues	37
Progress Toward Improvements.....	39
Infrastructure Changes.....	39
Fidelity of Implementation	39
Train-the-Trainer Sessions	39

District-led Trainings	40
Classroom Observations	42
Outcomes	45
Improvements in the SiMR.....	47
Plans for Next Year	48
Implementation Activities.....	48
Evaluation Activities	48
Barriers.....	52
Additional Support Needed	52
Appendix	53
Theory of Action	54
Revised Detailed Implementation Plan.....	55
Flow of Supports	56
Types of Assessment	57
State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) Summit	58
Feedback Loop: Review of Improvement Strategy 1	64
Feedback Loop: Review of Improvement Strategy 2.....	65
Feedback Loop: Review of Improvement Strategy 3.....	66
Strategy 2: Fall 2017 Training Surveys	67
Strategy 2: Winter 2018 Training Surveys.....	68
Strategy 1: Final Spring Surveys.....	69
Evaluation Data Table	70



Summary of Phase III – 2 (Spring 2017 – Spring 2018)

The 2016-17 school year served as the inaugural year of implementation of the assiduous plans and strategies outlined in Phase I and Phase II of the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP). During the school year, the first coherent improvement strategy of increasing access to core instruction was deployed through a series of trainings in the 30 districts representing the initial test cohort of the SSIP. Results from training surveys, self-assessments, and classroom observations helped determine the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation efforts to adjust for subsequent years. On the whole, the feedback and data were extremely positive. Implementation of this coherent improvement strategy continued in SSIP Phase III – 2. For clarification purposes, Tennessee considers spring 2017 through spring of 2018 to comprise the SSIP Phase III – 2 reporting period.

In Phase III – 2, the second coherent improvement strategy of ensuring special education is the most intensive intervention through a continuum of supports available to students commenced. A similar format of training was utilized for this strategy as compared to the first coherent improvement strategy and similar positive results have been yielded thus far in this initial year of implementation. Strategy two has served as an effective complement to strategy one, with a focus on engaging a diverse cadre of district staff to support students with disabilities (SWDs) both in core instruction and in intervention. In concert with strategy two, the third strategy of writing instructionally appropriate IEPs (IAIEPs) to effectively serve students and provide appropriate services was utilized in the 2017-18 school year, with focus on effectively writing present levels of performance and goals. Both were areas identified with the greatest concern based on internal student file reviews conducted by the department in the fall of 2017.

The theory of action developed in Phase II and implemented in part in Phase III – 1 has remained unchanged. All expected activities and outputs because of activities have been implemented and yielded results as expected. For more information about this theory of action, please see the Appendix section “Theory of Action” on page 54.

Infrastructure Changes

As noted in Phase II, there have been a bevy of notable changes to state infrastructure over the last several years within the department as well as within the division of special populations and student support. The most recent structural change took place over the course of the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years, in which a newly minted district support team began serving as an additional resource to districts across the state.

This team allocates their time to a diverse array of responsibilities, including providing monitoring support and technical assistance to at-risk districts, and members have also been partners in the work relative to the SSIP. They serve as additional regional resources to assist the SPDG interventionists and assist in supporting the over 700 special educators, general educators, and school administrators in 111 participating schools within the 30 school districts selected to participate in the initial test cohort for the SSIP.

The 2017-18 school year saw a shift in the organizational structure of the special populations team, with an executive director of special populations being named to oversee the various veins of work throughout the division. The charge of this executive director has been to find opportunities for intersection to ensure that the communication from the department is cohesive rather than having disparate initiatives and strategies. This executive director also oversees the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) and the strategies outlined in the SSIP. Accordingly, this affirms that the work of the SSIP is not separate from the overall work of the division, but an integral part.

Implementation Activities

Implementation of the first coherent improvement strategy of increasing access to core instruction has continued throughout the course of the 2017-18 school year with some revisions. Based on lessons learned from the first year of implementation, the department has further fleshed out this first strategy to create alignment between it and strategy two. In addition, while the evidence-based practices (EBPs) for the first strategy remain focused on universal design for learning (UDL) and differentiation of instruction, additional components addressing student access to core instruction and development of an inclusive culture and environment have been switched from strategy two to strategy one. This revised strategy will be implemented in the expanded cohort the Phase III – 3 reporting period.

The second coherent improvement strategy (supported by the access work outlined in strategy one), emphasizes provision of intensive intervention to help ameliorate deficits and enable students to better access core instruction. Vital EBPs for this strategy have included data-based decision-making, in which educators use a wide amalgamation of data to inform practice, ensuring a strong culture of collaboration district-wide is established to best support students, and the use of assessment to inform instruction and instruction to inform assessment. All this work coalesces into a multi-sensory system of support. Of course, the success of this work is contingent on the appropriate continuum of service model to be established to ensure those that need the most intensive support are receiving it.

The third coherent improvement strategy of addressing skill deficits through the writing of IAIEPs began on a slightly different timeline, with trainings and resources for the strategy being developed in the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years. Training on this strategy has continued through the 2017-18

school year, but has been integrated in much of the work around strategy two. In doing this, the department has been able to link areas of concern in the writing of IEPs to foundational ways to mitigate these concerns when both writing the IEPs and supporting students. The department conducted file reviews in the fall of 2017 to identify areas of greatest need about the writing of IEPs and has begun tailoring trainings with districts in the SSIP initial cohort to address the most problematic elements.

Evaluation Activities and Data

In Phase I Tennessee identified a SiMR of **increasing by three percent annually the percent of students with an SLD in grades 3–8 scoring at or above basic on the statewide English/Language Arts (ELA) assessment**. Evaluation activities are designed to track progress toward and achievement of this ambitious but achievable goal. At the end of the 2016-17 school year, the department was able to conduct seminal reviews and evaluations of the results from the first year of the plan's implementation. The following process evaluation questions for coherent strategy one were addressed in Phase III – 1¹: participation of staff in each district training; acquisition of knowledge and skills as a result of trainings, based on district staff responses; and fidelity of implementation of tools and activities in the classroom, predicated on classroom observations.

Consistently, there was an increase in the percent of district respondents reporting that they agreed that the trainings improved their knowledge and skills regarding the support of SWDs in core instruction. In surveys following the spring trainings on increasing access to core instruction, over 96 percent of respondents reported that the trainings were relevant and prepared them for the next steps of implementation of the strategy. In addition, over 96 percent of survey respondents from spring 2017 agreed that their knowledge of this first coherent improvement strategy and its EBPs increased due to the trainings, and over 94 percent agreed that they felt their abilities to support this strategy had increased.

To ensure these trainings for the first coherent improvement strategy were being completed with fidelity in both the fall, winter, and spring of the 2016-17 school year, the SSIP evaluation team developed a checklist to monitor that all requisite topics were covered in the training and done with efficacy. In addition to this fidelity measure, members of the evaluation team, the department, and/or district special education supervisors conducted monitoring of classroom implementation of the first coherent improvement strategy. A differentiated inventory rubric was established to collect this information for reporting and for teacher, school, and district feedback. By the end of the 2016-17 school year, 89 teachers received two observations using the differentiation inventory rubric. On the

¹ See SSIP Phase III – 1 (“Attachment 1—SSIP Phase III – 1”) report. This attachment is available under the “Phase 3 SSIP” tab in GRADS 360 and on the state special education data page found [here](#).

second observation, 92 percent of the teachers assessed received scores in one of the top three quartiles of scores and could be regarded as having met fidelity targets.

These improvements in data for the process evaluation questions elucidated improved knowledge and perceived improvements in practices in participating schools within participating districts, which were confirmed by classroom observations. In concert with these process evaluation questions, the department sought to address the outcomes evaluation question specific to access to core instruction. Evaluation of actual outcomes is vital to ensure demonstrable, systemic change. An increase in the percentage of students with specific learning disabilities (SLD) in the general education setting 80 percent or more of the day was identified for this evaluation question. The baseline data for Dec. 1, 2015 yielded a percentage of 79.83 students with SLD accessing the general education setting 80 percent or more of the day. In May 2017, a comparison report was pulled to identify change in this overall percentage. In the May data pull, the environment percentage increased by 2.35 percent, with 82.18 percent of students with an SLD participating in the general education setting 80 percent or more of the day.

For the second coherent improvement strategy of ensuring special education is the most intensive intervention in a continuum of service model, some initial progress monitoring data on key performance indicators, including self-reported information from participating district staff and survey responses, have been gathered to date, and overall the information has been very encouraging, indicating that SSIP schools are moving in the right direction. The department has been particularly encouraged by the responses from participating district staff and the excitement they have shared for the SSIP in their responses and comments. One responding educator participating in strategy two for the 2017-18 school year shared: “[this work has taught me] to implement something new; I have to stop and make time – otherwise, it becomes only a good idea.”

“[This work has taught me] to implement something new; I have to stop and make time – otherwise, it becomes only a good idea.”

The department anticipates that most of the measures necessary to conduct analysis and evaluation of the first year of implementation of the second strategy will be available in the summer of 2018. To determine the process and progress of strategy implementation during this timeframe, the evaluation team will review the fidelity of implementation reports conducted by evaluation staff, SPDG interventionists, and district staff. In addition, the department will continue randomly sampling files of students with an SLD in participating schools and districts to address the third strategy. Student universal screening data will be sampled in the 2018 school year in the participating districts and schools to determine the impact that the strategies are having on skill deficits.

Changes to Plan

The most notable changes to the SSIP in Phase III – 2 were modifications to timelines for implementation and data quality concerns that led to modification of baseline data for the SiMR. Although the department initially planned to deploy trainings for all coherent improvement strategies in the 2016-17 school year, given time constraints related to the release of SPDG funds, the department elected to provide trainings and professional development for only the first coherent improvement strategy. The scope of training and implementation required for each of the strategies is copious and providing the trainings over two years makes the process much more manageable.

There was also a revision to the following outcomes evaluation questions: *What is the rate of improvement of those students identified with an SLD for whom IAIEPs have been successfully written (will use sampling of students in participating schools) and who are receiving instruction utilizing strategies to ensure special education is the most intensive intervention? While the department had hoped to glean information about skill deficits from the present levels in IEPs, there was no certainty that such information would readily be available nor did this account for students moving in or out of classes, schools, and/or districts. To reconcile these concerns, the department will ask districts to provide universal screening data for five randomly selected students who have been in attendance in the same location with the same teacher for the duration of the school year. These data are required and are nationally normed, which will enhance the viability/validity and reliability of data gleaned and improve the veracity of any conclusions drawn based on these data.*

Finally, due to technical challenges with Tennessee's assessment vendor in the 2015-16 school year, students in grades 3-8 did not participate in the annual statewide assessments. Accordingly, the department is unable to report the very data referenced in the SiMR. Tennessee's request to waive assessment statutory requirements was approved by the United States Department of Education, but the absence of information relative to the English Language Arts (ELA) assessment means that the department had to establish the assessment results for the 2016-17 school year as the baseline data. Because a growth metric is the cornerstone of Tennessee's SSIP, having comparison data is imperative, and until assessment results from the 2017-18 school year have been returned, the department will be unable to assess growth in student performance and whether the SiMR has been met.



Implementation

Achievement of the SIMR—**increasing by three percent annually the percent of students with an SLD in grades 3–8 scoring at or above basic on the statewide**

English/Language Arts (ELA) assessment—is contingent upon the successful

implementation of three coherent improvement strategies identified in Phase I² and Phase II³(see Figure 1.1). This second year of Phase III implementations efforts signals the first time all three coherent improvement strategies are operating in the initial cohort of SSIP districts.

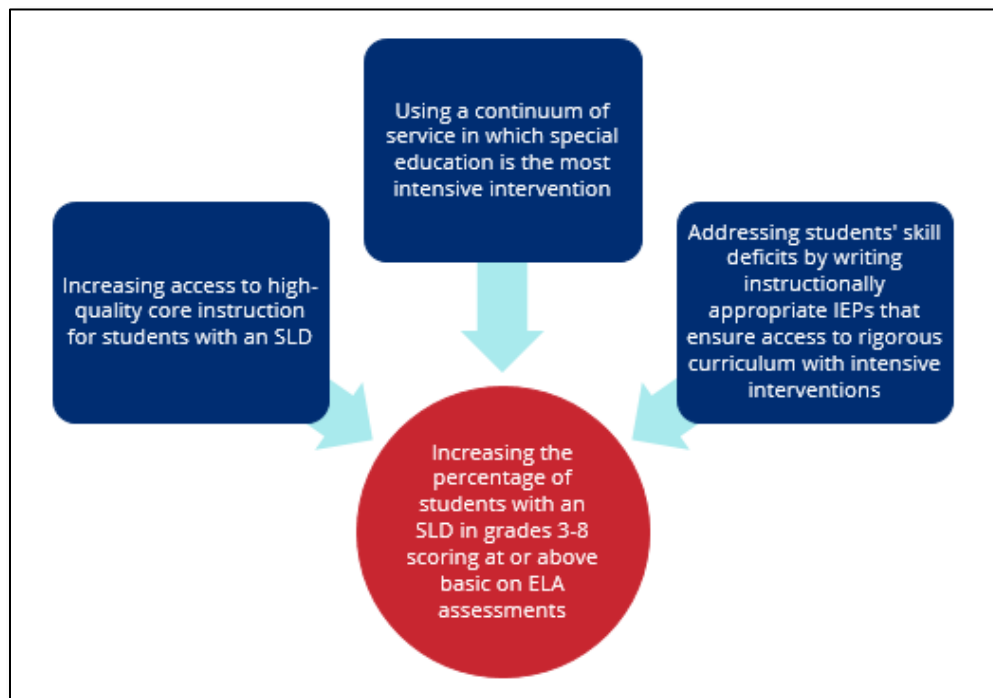


Figure 1.1. The broad theory of action from Phase I.

In the summer of 2017, the department launched its second coherent strategy, which is focused on ensuring special education is the most intensive intervention in a continuum of service model. In conjunction with the release of this second strategy, implementation of the first strategy, which began in the 2016-17 school year, has continued and is consistently being refined to support participating districts and schools.

The fundamental evidence-based practice (EBP) for the third coherent improvement strategy, writing IAIEPs to address students' skill deficits, commenced several years prior to implementation of the SSIP,

² See SSIP Phase I ("Attachment 2—SSIP Phase I") report. This attachment is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360 and on the state special education data page found [here](#).

³ See SSIP Phase II ("Attachment 3—SSIP Phase II") report. This attachment is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360 and on the state special education data page found [here](#).

however, the department has harnessed the opportunity to link this third strategy to the trainings developed and provided for strategy two. In doing so, participating districts are now able to both cultivate skills regarding intensification of interventions for SWDs and learned how to effectively develop documentation that is thorough and effective. Such an intersection between the strategies makes the experience less pedantic and more practical for participants.



Changes to Implementation Timeline

Based on the diligent efforts made in the 2016-17 school year to ensure the revised timeline would be met, no notable changes to the implementation timeline of the second year of Phase III have occurred. This timeline has since been updated (See Appendix section “Revised Detailed Implementation Plan”) to reflect any changes in the implementation efforts from the 2016-17 school year and onward.



Implementation Activities

For Phase III – 2, implementation activities have been primarily focused on the deployment of strategy two. Strategy three is in many ways embedded in the second strategy to ensure that improvement in intervention correlates to improved evaluation of students’ performance and development of effective, measurable goals.

Department Infrastructure Improvements

As established in the Phase III – 1 report, the department has spent the last several years establishing a streamlined organizational structure that effectively supports districts and the initiatives outlined in Tennessee’s SSIP. There have been several recent reorganizations within the division over the last year that have further enhanced the department’s infrastructure and the ability to support the work of the team. A new position, executive director of special populations, was established to better orchestrate the initiatives developed by the division. This position is responsible for linking work done by disparate teams, including the former instructional programming team (now the office of support services for student readiness), the work being done relative to eligibility standards overseen by the director of school psychology services, and the SPDG interventionists supporting districts with the work outlined in the SSIP. The executive director also serves as the SPDG project manager.

This executive director is also responsible for overseeing the newly minted (as of the summer of 2017) targeted support team. This team assists with the investigation of complaints submitted by parents, will provide support to districts identified as Needs Intervention based on district local determinations for the Annual Performance Report (APR), and conducts site visits in districts with evidence of systemic concerns. In addition to providing direct support predicated on department designations, this team is available to support districts as requested, including those in the SSIP initial cohort. They serve as

additional regional resources and regularly work in tandem with the SPDG interventionists for designated regions. Information about the flow of support in the established infrastructure of the department and in the scope of the SSIP can be found on page 16 of the Phase III – 1 report.⁴

Implementation of Strategy One: Access to Core Instruction

Work around access – the focus of strategy one – has also continued although implementation of strategy two was the major thrust of SSIP efforts in the 2017-18 school year. Strategy one was expanded to new schools within the 30 districts in the initial SSIP cohort. However, moving forward the major elements of this strategy will be redesigned for the 2018-19 school year to better complement the content of strategy two.

For students to get the most intensive intervention supports to ensure academic success, they must also receive access to core instruction with appropriate supports in a positive environment. In recognizing the inherent interaction between the first two strategies, the department has made a concerted effort to further flesh out the content and EBPs for strategy one to temper what became an extremely comprehensive set of trainings and activities in strategy two. The revamped content for this strategy will be available for the second cohort of SSIP districts that will be selected for the 2018-19 school year. For this second cohort, the EBP of “environment” will be moved from strategy two to strategy one. In the context of this strategy, environment refers to the culture and climate of a school that fosters a positive learning space in which all students are supported, valued, and respected. Educators have the same high expectations for all students and provide instruction that is designed to help individual students meet their potential. As such, including environment as a major component in initial deployment of SSIP activities will help undergird the overall mission of the plan.

Evidence-Based Practice: Environment (for Phase III – 3 in the 2018-19 School Year)

Building out a detailed way to support and scaffold education for students helps foster an effective environment within a school, in which all parties believe that SWDs have the capacity to be successful, and all staff play an integral part in their growth. Indeed, SWDs are not solely the responsibility of special education staff but are a part of the school in all its facets. For this reason, building a positive school environment was identified as the overarching EBP added to this strategy and served as a major cornerstone of the fall trainings provided by district-wide facilitators. Research contends that both

⁴ See Appendix for “Flow of Supports” chart (page 56).

emotional support⁵ and classroom climate⁶ – which the department groups under the umbrella of “environment” – have the capacity to yield improved student outcomes.

Support for the development of strong emotional supports and a positive classroom climate to improve student outcomes and success in school can be found in a broad array of literature.⁷ Based on a research brief compiled by Allen et al. (n.d.), it was found that through the use of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) developed by the University of Virginia’s Curry School of Education, researchers were able to conclude that “teachers’ ability to establish a positive emotional climate, their sensitivity to student needs, and their structuring of their classroom and lessons in ways that recognize adolescents’ needs for a sense of autonomy and control, for an active role in their learning, and for opportunities for peer interaction were all associated with higher relative student gains in achievement.”⁸

To better streamline the strategies and make their activities more manageable for the second SSIP cohort that will be selected for the 2018-19 school year, this EBP will be moving from strategy two to strategy one (see Figure 1.2). Cultivating a positive learning environment and a school and district-wide climate that supports all students will help achieve the overarching goal of ensuring SWDs have access to core instruction, as there must be a strong inclusive culture and positive school environment sharing a unified belief that all students are general education students first and have the right and the capacity to participate in their least restrictive environment.

For the SWDs particularly addressed in Tennessee’s SiMR – students with an SLD – core instruction should be a part of a student’s least restrictive environment given that appropriate interventions and support should make access to core instruction in the general education setting a viable option. On

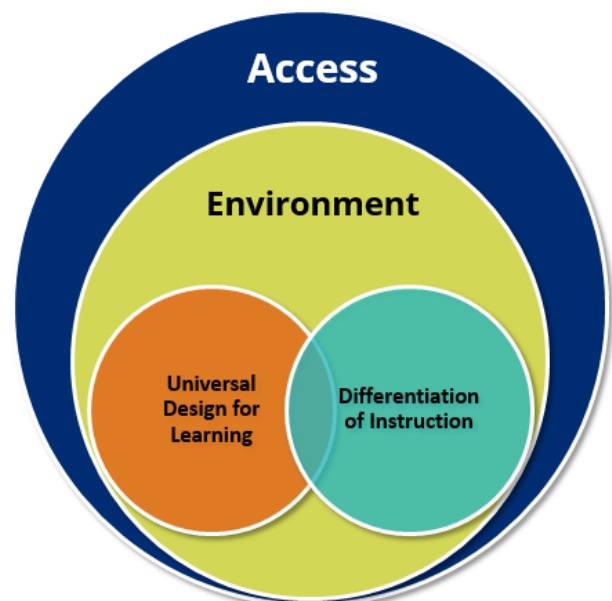


Figure 1.2. The three EBPs that address the coherent improvement strategy of access to core instruction.

⁵ Robert C. Pianta, Karen M. LaParo, and Bridget K. Hamre, *Classroom Assessment Scoring System™: Manual K-3* (Baltimore, MD: Paul H Brookes Publishing, 2008).

⁶ Alan McLean, *The Motivated School* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2003).

⁷ Alan McLean, *Motivating Every Learner* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd., 2009); Bridget K. Hamre and Robert C. Pianta, “Can Instructional and Emotional Support in the First-Grade Classroom Make a Difference for Children at Risk of School Failure?,” *Child Development* 76, no. 5 (2005): 949-967.

⁸ Joseph P. Allen, Anne Gregory, Amori Mikami, Janetta Lun, Bridget K. Hamre, and Robert C. Pianta, *Predicting Adolescent Achievement with the CLASS™ Observation Tool* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia).

point, students with an SLD have deficit areas that may require additional services, but this should not preclude them from accessing core instruction, particularly in the areas in which they present no deficits. By developing a strong foundation predicated on a positive school environment, the additional EBPs of UDL and the effective differentiation of instruction for students are likely to be more successful.

Evidence-Based Practice: Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

UDL was one of the evidence-based practices (EBPs) employed to address strategy one. Work with this practice has continued throughout the 2017-18 school year, with SPDG interventionists and division of special populations and student support staff supporting expansion of the work to additional schools within participating districts. The initial deployment of this strategy in the 2016-17 school year was not quite as rigorous in this second round of implementation. The department has recognized this as a concern, and as aforementioned will be reworking elements of the trainings on this strategy and this particular EBP. Guidance on this work was deployed through three sets of trainings in the 2016-17 school year, in which district facilitators led fall, winter, and spring workshops focused on ensuring students have the appropriate scaffolds and infrastructure in place to succeed in the classroom.

Evidence-Based Practice: Differentiation of Instruction

As was noted in Phase II, in many ways differentiation and scaffolding of instruction for SWDs to increase access to core instruction (see Figure 1.2) is interconnected with the UDL methodology itself. This EBP encourages educators to respond to variance in students and their learning styles within the classroom to help them succeed.⁹ The department has continued supporting this work in the 2017-18 school year through provision of trainings and support to facilitators in new schools (which are in the initial cohort of districts but perhaps weren't schools participating in the work in the first year of implementation) that might be implementing the content of this strategy for the first time. The department recognizes that there are opportunities for improvement in the current practice. The department has begun the process of redeveloping some of this work to better align with strategies two and three, since the three are so inextricably intertwined.

The use of accommodations and modifications for SWDs will be one of the major focal points of the upcoming revisions to trainings. The department wants to ensure districts adequately understand that fair does not necessarily mean equal; SWDs may require additional resources and services to best access core instruction. This contention lies at the very heart of this EBP –, it prioritizes that instruction must be differentiated for students, and such differentiation may vary dramatically from student to

⁹ Paul S. George, "A Rationale for Differentiating Instruction in the Regular Classroom," *Theory Into Practice* 44, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 185-193.

student. Conversations around this practice will continue to be a topic of conversation at the revised communities of practice (CoPs).

Implementation of Strategy Two: Special Education in Continuum of Service

In the summer of 2017, implementation of this second strategy began with a five day training for special education facilitators and special education directors representing all participating districts. In Phase III – 1, the department conceptualized this second strategy as one predicated on effective data-based decision-making. Integral to this decision-making was the tandem use of the statewide response to instruction and intervention (RTI²) initiative and a multi-sensory approach to create an effective continuum of service model in which special education is the most intensive intervention. Through development and deployment of the trainings and content relative to this second strategy, the department reconceived the original graphic for this strategy outlined in Phase III – 1 to develop one better outlining what this strategy represents. Figure 1.3 reflects the revisions to this second strategy that took place Phase III – 2, in which special education remains the most intensive intervention in the continuum of service model. As shared on page 12, this EBP will be added to the work for strategy one starting with the second cohort of participating districts in the 2018-19 school year.

The continuum is essential to recognize how one should intensify education to meet the needs of students, and RTI² – an initiative that began statewide in July 2014 – provides an organized format by which to develop such a scale. Creating an effective continuum of service model is contingent on four pivotal EBPs for this strategy: developing a strong culture and environment within schools that encourages all staff to support all students, utilizing data-based decision-making, particularly as it relates to developing and evaluating a multi-sensory approach to education, and having a solid continuum of service model established. Both data-based decision-making and the multi-sensory

approach model must operate in concert with one another, as to make data-based decisions, an effective multi-sensory approach and effective interventions must be employed, and vice versa.

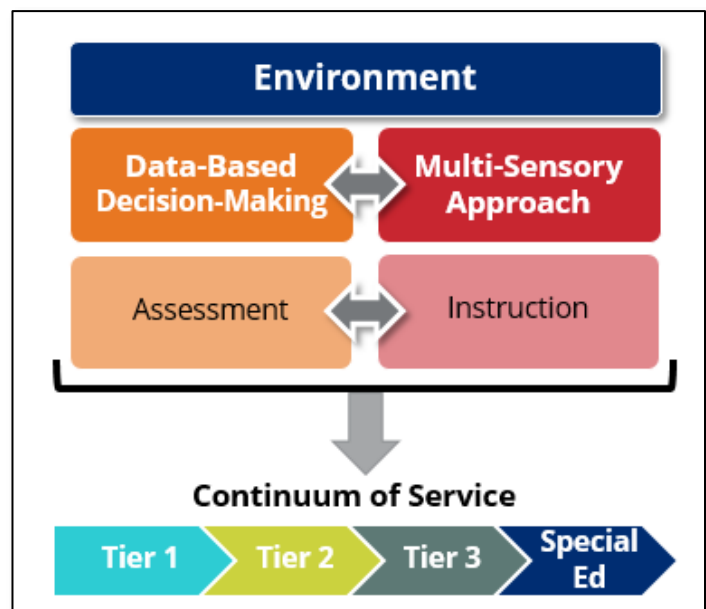


Figure 1.3. The revised EBPs developed in Phase III – 1 that address the coherent improvement strategy of providing special education interventions in a continuum of service.

Evidence-Based Practice: Environment

In the initial summer trainings held for district-wide facilitators in the 30 initial districts in the SSIP cohort, the development of a positive school environment was one of the major tenets discussed. Training materials encouraged attendees to create a climate for engagement, with a focus on empowering students rather than controlling them, valuing them and their input rather than rejecting them, and accordingly teaching them to know and value themselves. The executive director of special populations, who led these train-the-trainer sessions, dedicated time to explicating the importance of appropriate environments, and provided a detailed matrix developed by Alan McLean¹⁰ (see Figure 1.4).

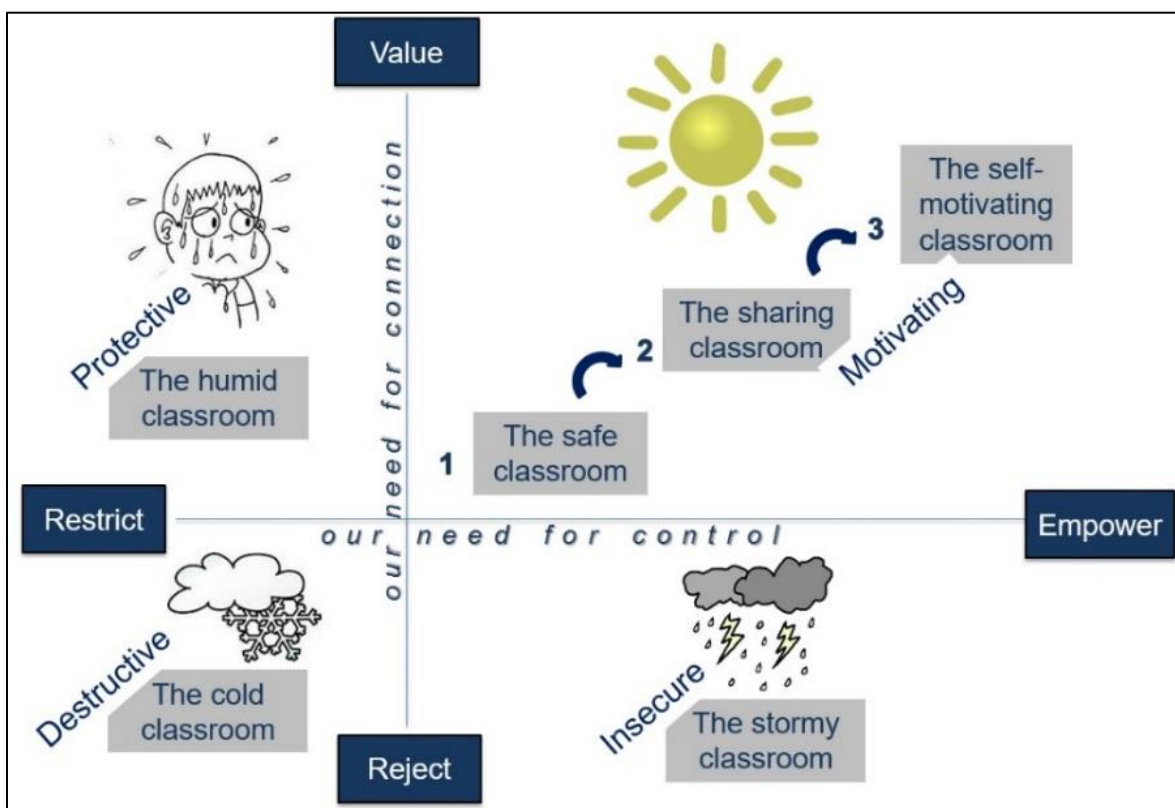


Figure 1.4. Alan McLean's matrix on building a positive classroom environment to improve student outcomes.

In recognizing this value of environment, the school team members required to be involved in the SSIP activities have evolved. Rather than having solely special education teachers and special education supervisors receive training from district-wide facilitators relative to the EBPs for this strategy, the department required staff from the district to include general education teachers and school administrators. The environments established by teachers must be reinforced by the overall

¹⁰ A. McLean, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

environments of schools and districts. By engaging more school staff in the work, the importance of this EBP is highlighted and is more likely to succeed.

By establishing environment as an essential and foundational practice to ensure access to core instruction for SWDs, it will make the more nuanced work explored in strategy two easier to navigate. For the EBPs of this strategy to be successful, it is imperative that a strong culture and climate be established in participating schools and districts. As aforementioned, this EBP will be moving from strategy two to strategy one in Phase III – 3.

Evidence-Based Practices: Multi-Sensory Approach and Data-Based Decision-Making

These EBPs have been grouped together, as they are innately intertwined. As evidenced in Figure 1.5, both inform one another, as do their sub-practices (instruction for a multi-sensory approach and assessment for data-based decision-making). The materials developed for strategy two were focused heavily on utilizing a multi-sensory approach to educate and support SWDs, partially informed by the research findings of Orton-Gillingham and Lindamood-Bell. The executive director of special populations,

who led the train-the-trainer event designed to equip district-wide facilitators with the tools necessary to lead their own three-part workshops in their respective districts, began by underscoring major shifts necessary to effectively educate students (see Figure 1.5).

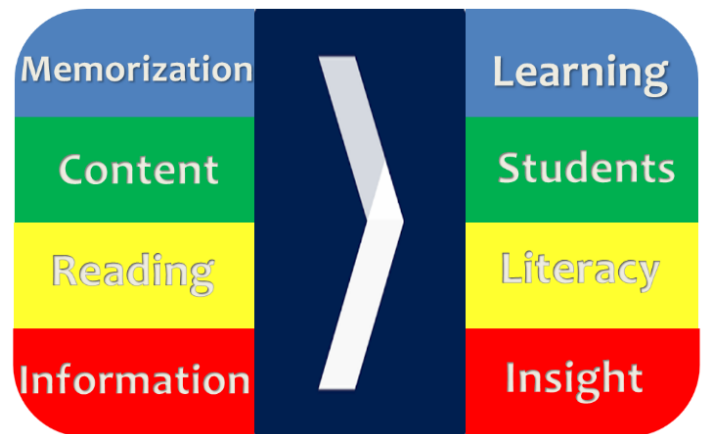


Figure 1.5. Essential shifts in educator thought-process.

By shifting the mindset of school teams, educators are better able to focus on how to successfully teach all students and ensure they are actually learning. Multi-sensory approaches to learning were engaged by facilitators in the community of practice (CoP) sessions held in each of the 30 participating districts. To ensure consistency and accuracy in redelivery of information at the CoPs, the department developed training webinars to be led by facilitators twice in the fall, winter, and spring. For the fall CoPs, tactile learning was the major focus, with facilitators providing guidance on different tools, including: story elements hand strategies, building essays with LEGO® bricks, phrasing with beads, and jumping vowels on the floor.

The multi-sensory toolkits provided through fall trainings for strategy two and in the fall CoPs were essential to begin adjusting educators' mindsets and equip them with improved instructional practices. Winter trainings expanded on the utilization of improved practices to best support students, with an additional focus on the use of appropriate assessments to evaluate student progress and

performance. Having multi-sensory approaches at one's disposal are great, but it's imperative for educators to know when and how to use them. Assessment data also lets educators know whether or not new instructional practices are yielding the desired improvements in student performance. In the winter trainings, participants were provided an overview of types of assessments used to evaluate students and when they should be used.¹¹ In addition, the trainings renewed focus on the writing of IAIEPs (the major EBP for strategy three), particularly present levels of performance and goals, as these serve at the cornerstone of the IEP and are essential for knowing how and where to intervene.

In February, the executive director of special populations held a two-day train-the-trainer session at the department's statewide Partners in Education (PIE) conference for SSIP district facilitators. In this session, attendees received training on the delivery of spring sessions for which they would be responsible in their respective districts. Throughout the spring, facilitators will be coalescing the information covered in the previous two trainings and also equipping attendees with more tools and materials for the classroom. The major thrust of this spring session is data-based decision-making. With the groundwork of multi-sensory approaches to education and effective assessments of performance in place – which lead to appropriate intervention decisions – the next logical step is to evaluate whether the work being done is actually having the desired impact.

As has been outlined in Tennessee's overall SSIP, it is essential to review data at various points throughout a year rather than solely relying on a summative assessment to discover the interventions did not work. However, to know whether the EBP of multi-sensory approaches is working, the EBP of data-based decision-making must be employed to evaluate student performance and make adjustments as needed. To support educators in using the appropriate assessments to make data-based decisions, the department developed a comprehensive document detailing the purpose, context, and areas assessed for many of the available assessment tools.¹²

The executive director of special populations has developed a repository of information to assist both facilitators and educators in the implementation of the comprehensive trainings offered throughout the course of this inaugural year of strategy two's implementation. This repository contains the training materials for the three workshops held throughout the year, PowerPoints with tools, visuals, a comprehensive script, information from all the CoPs, tactile templates and resource documents. In order to engage families, the training content will also be modified for a parent audience and be delivered through the SPDG interventionists in collaboration with Support and Training for Exceptional Parents (STEP) advocacy group.

¹¹ See Appendix for "Types of Assessment" chart (page 57).

¹² A state-developed report titled, *Reading Resources: Assessments to Inform Present Levels*, can be found [here](#).

Evidence-Based Practices: Response to Instruction and Intervention

Much of the information regarding the EBP of creating a continuum of service model to appropriately scaffold student support and interventions was covered in depth in Phase II and Phase III – 1 of the SSIP. The department is continuing to provide trainings to districts regarding implementation of the statewide model – RTI² – to ensure effective implementation of the continuum. Districts complete surveys annually to assess their own continuum of service models in their districts or schools and identify areas of concern. In February 2018, the department released initial findings and a great deal of research about RTI² and its impact on education in the state.

Implementation of Strategy Three: Addressing Skill Deficits

In many ways this strategy has been imbedded in the scope of work for strategies one and two, with some of the revisions to trainings offered. That being said, it possesses discrete elements that warrant it being remaining a distinct strategy (see Figure 1.6). A renewed focus on the elements of the IEP that most explicitly address how to ameliorate skill deficits has been the crux of the most recent training on strategy three. Much of the work done in strategy two's implementation over the 2017-18 school year has incorporated core values of this strategy – namely development of appropriate present levels of performance to inform measurable annual goals, which point toward student specific progress monitoring. The train-the-trainer events and facilitator-led workshops have served as effective venues to support this strategy and its chief EBP of writing IAIEPs.



Figure 1.6. The EBP for the coherent improvement strategy of addressing students' skill deficits.

Evidence-Based Practice: Writing of Instructionally Appropriate IEPs (IAIEPs)

As noted in previous SSIP reports, this EBP has been implemented in several waves over the last several years. To assess the quality of the IEPs being developed, the department conducted a robust review of sampled IEPs from each of the 30 participating districts (more information provided in the "Data on Implementation and Outcomes" section). Student files were randomly selected and comprised five percent (or a minimum of five) of the students with specific learning disabilities (SLD). Members of the instructional programming team, targeted support team, and the SPDG interventionists conducted reviews utilizing a defined rubric¹³ that has been augmented and become

¹³ A state-developed rubric, *High-Quality IAIEP Development*, can be found [here](#).

more thorough over various iterations since Phase II. This rubric continues to measure the quality of IEPs for specific sections of the document. This review allowed the department to identify concerning trends in writing IEPs, particularly regarding both the data collection and writing of present levels of performance and measurable annual goals.

To address these prominently weak areas of the IEPs sampled throughout the SSIP initial cohort, these sections of the IEP became a major focus of the work done in strategy two (see aforementioned information). In addition, the department elected to develop mini-conferences across the state – with attendance preference given to districts in the SSIP cohort – to address some of the systemic concerns and trends observed in the IEPs. In doing this, the department was able to provide additional guidance and training on this EBP through multiple forums.



Outputs

As thoroughly outlined in Phase III – 1, demonstrable steps toward the different phases of the more detailed theory of action have taken place over the last several years in the department's work toward the SiMR. More exhaustive information is provided in Phase III – 1 relative to the “promote” and “provide” phases in the theory of action. In addition, Phase III – 1 expanded on details of the “produce” phase in the theory of action relative to strategies one and three. For the purposes of the Phase III – 2 report, information on the preliminary steps taken in the “produce” phase for strategy two are detailed below.

Strategy Two: Special Education in a Continuum of Service

Establishing a continuum of service model is essential to have a foundation upon which to scaffold special education interventions. Thus, the work done relative to the RTI² initiative deployed in the 2014-15 was a vital piece in the development and release of this second strategy. With RTI² now established statewide, the department has been able dedicate efforts to ensuring special education is the most intensive intervention in this continuum model. In this Phase III – 2 reporting period, the department honed in on the development of content for trainings on intensification of intervention and how to support learners in an effective way that meets their unique needs, and then subsequent training on this work.

Figure 1.7 is the framework upon which this coherent improvement strategy is based, predicated on the content developed by the executive director of special populations. It outlines the EBP of environment, which hones in on establishing an appropriate learning environment that entails emotionally supportive classrooms and positive school and district climates. This EBP is touched on in the first two sections of Figure 1.7 and trainings on this work were offered in the fall of 2017. The EBP of utilizing multi-sensory approaches to effectively educate students can be seen in the third and fourth sections of Figure 1.7 and such trainings were offered in the winter of 2017-18. The EBP of data-

based decision-making is reflected in the final two sections of Figure 1.7 and will be covered in the spring 2018 training sessions.

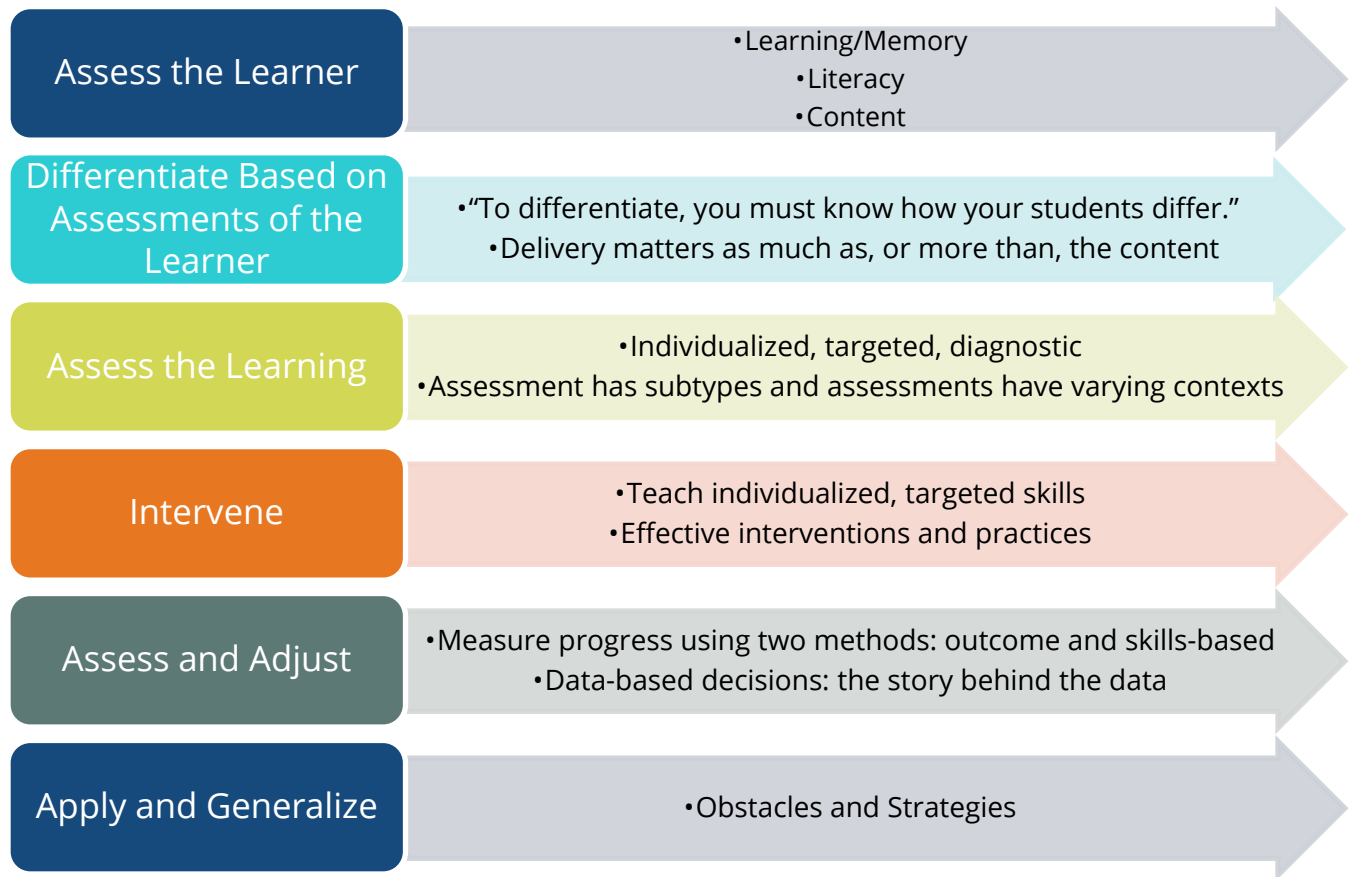


Figure 1.7. Outline of the content covered in implementation of strategy two in the 2017-18 school year.



Stakeholder Involvement in Implementation of the SSIP

The department has continued to engage and solicit feedback from stakeholders during this initial period of plan implementation. Communication has taken place with a wide swath of stakeholders and agencies that are integral to the analysis and success of the SSIP. The stakeholders engaged to date have included: special education supervisors, educators, legislators, district administrators, advocacy groups, and the Governor's Advisory Council for the Education of Students with Disabilities. The latter organization represents parents of SWDs, individuals with disabilities, educators, and student and parent advocates. The department recognizes that it is imperative to keep this diverse array of stakeholders engaged in the continuing implementation of the SSIP, as they offer keen insight and feedback that may enhance the quality of the plan.

Communication on Implementation

The department has worked to keep stakeholders apprised of all information relative to implementation efforts currently being implemented in Phase III – 2. Information has been communicated through a variety of mediums, including presentations and written briefs/updates. Assorted methods of communication have been intentionally employed to ensure that as many stakeholders as possible are reached. By presenting at conferences targeted at educators and district administrators, the department has been able to both communicate information and respond to questions and solicit feedback. For parties unable to attend these conferences, such as parents or advocacy groups, the department maintained connections through written communications and in-person meetings, like the Governor’s Advisory Council, which is open to the public.

Partners in Education (PIE) Conference

A statewide presentation was held at the department’s annual PIE conference in February of 2018, during which many implementation updates were shared with attendees. This presentation was offered by both the executive director of special populations and the assistant commissioner and featured data addressing implementation process of the strategies implemented thus far. During this session, a participating administrator from a district in the initial SSIP cohort had the opportunity to share his experience implementing the strategies. He shared his initial hesitations and reluctance to the work and how the outcomes yielded as a result of implementation converted him to an adamant supporter.

This session was an excellent opportunity to showcase the SSIP and the implementation efforts. The participating administrators noted adjustments and improvements made during the course of implementation of the strategies. He also shared lessons learned that will assist the state in refining the SSIP activities in coming years for additional cohorts. At the conclusion of the session, attendees were provided information about the application process to join the second cohort of districts that will begin implementation of strategy one in the 2018-19 school year.

Advisory Council

The Governor’s Advisory Council routinely receives updates about the implementation of SSIP activities and strategies, as well as any relevant data regarding the strategies. For example, in April 2017, the executive director of data services led a summit with members of the Advisory Council to engage in meaningful conversations about the work completed thus far as well as the impending implementation slated to begin in Phase III – 2. The summit began with an overview of the three SSIP strategies and their EBPs. Information was provided in a document¹⁴ to Council members, who were then split into

¹⁴ See Appendix for “State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) Summit” document (pages 58-63).

three separate groups to discuss one of the three strategies each. Staff from the division of special populations and student support served as resources during the table conversations to address any questions or probe further discussion. Responses to the questions¹⁵ were collated and reviewed by the SSIP implementation team to determine areas of improvement.

Superintendents' Study Council

During the 2017-18 school year, the assistant commissioner and executive director of special populations shared with the executive committee the work being done relative to multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) and RTI² in the state of Tennessee. One of the four components outlined in the tiers pertains to engaging instruction, which linked nicely with the strategies outlined in the SSIP. In particular, the executive director of special populations shared the intersections of strategy one and the access work central to strategy two and the importance of environment and climate to ensure successful implementation of the work. It was also shared that the SSIP cohort would be expanding to include a new round of school districts in the 2018-19 school year.

Early Literacy Council

In April of 2017, prior to the implementation of strategy two, the executive director of special populations and the assistant commissioner presented the plan for this second strategy's content – providing the most intensive intervention in a continuum of service model – to the Early Literacy Council in order to gain feedback about content. This was done to ensure the work being done was well-aligned to activities and initiatives being implemented elsewhere across the department and state.

Disability Day on the Hill

In February of 2018, the executive director of special populations was invited to participate on a panel of parents, advocates, and various members of the department of education to speak about disability rights in Tennessee. As a member of the panel, the executive director spoke to the access strategies employed by the department to safeguard that all students are viewed as general education students first.

Teacher's Advisory Council

In February of 2018, the executive director of special populations was invited to present information on access for SWDs, including the work of the SSIP, to the Teacher Advisory Council. This council is comprised of the nine finalists for the Tennessee Teacher of the Year Award from each of the state's three Grand Divisions and the three winners from each of the Grand Divisions. These educators serve

¹⁵ See Appendix for "Feedback Loop: Review of Improvement Strategy 1" document (page 64); "Feedback Loop: Review of Improvement Strategy 1" document (page 65); and "Feedback Loop: Review of Improvement Strategy 3" document (page 66).

as ambassadors representing districts and their peers to the department. During this training on access to core instruction and providing appropriate interventions for SWDs, participants were given the opportunity to work through interactive activities about teacher mindset, classroom climate, and the purpose for differentiated instruction.

Written Communication

To increase access to information about the SSIP and its activities, the department decided to establish quarterly updates regarding the implementation process, strategies established, and next steps for the coming quarter. The department provides updates in multiple forums, including the department's data services website for special education,¹⁶ the biweekly Commissioner's Update for Directors, and the biweekly Special Education Directors' Update. Through these communication networks, the department hopes to reach a wide swath of stakeholders and ensure that information on the SSIP is readily accessible for the public.

Stakeholder Decision-Making on Implementation of the SSIP

Although efforts have been made to share information about the SSIP implementation process with a wide range of stakeholders, the department recognizes that success of the SSIP is contingent upon not just this communication, but the availability of feedback loops. The informational presentations on the SSIP have been opened to questions and comment from the various audiences addressed and such feedback has been included in the overall review process of Phase III – 1 and Phase III – 2 implementation.

The most detailed stakeholder feedback has been solicited throughout implementation from the Advisory Council. This Council represents an excellent cross-section of stakeholders who can offer input from varied perspectives. Quarterly meetings offer consistent opportunities to share information and receive comments. While statewide surveys were employed to reach members of the public from across the state, the low response rate made them difficult to utilize with confidence and didn't yield the desired depth of responses. In light of this, the department elected to renew focus on the Advisory Council as the feedback mainstay.

The first SSIP summit with the Advisory Council, detailed under the "Communication on Implementation" subsection on page 21, was held in April 2017 and guiding questions¹⁷ were used to drive conversations with members about the three coherent improvement strategies.

¹⁶ The Data Services Team website can be found [here](#).

¹⁷ See Appendix, pages 58-66.

- **Strategy One: Increasing Access to Core Instruction**

Stakeholders felt that the deployment of the EBPs for strategy one seemed effective and appropriate given the information provided and in some instances their experience as members of the SSIP initial cohort. Issues uncovered with regard to the requisite CoPs for this strategy were also shared, and Council members felt that reducing the frequency of CoPs from monthly to quarterly might be more effective to ensure engagement with district staff. They liked the department's suggestion to possibly create online platforms to overcome communication barriers in larger districts.

Regarding the evaluation practices, members were pleased with the positive initial responses indicating improvement in teacher understanding of strategies and confidence to implement their strategies. They suggested collecting data on least restrictive environment categories on a monthly basis to evaluate short-term changes, with the understanding that changes might be slight since environment changes are predicated on revised annual IEP documents. The Council members discussed what success would look like for this strategy and concurred with the information outlined in documentation from Phase III – 1. Success would be predicated on increased knowledge and skills for educators implementing new practices and an increase in the percent of time SWDs (particularly those with an SLD) are in the general education setting. These stakeholders felt that scalability of this strategy should be delayed until the deployment of strategy two in the 2017-18 school year, since the strategies are important to pair together over two years and assess holistically. Accordingly, the state only assisted in expansion of trainings on this strategy to new schools within districts already participating rather than beginning a new SSIP cohort.

- **Strategy Two: Special Education in a Continuum of Service**

Given that at the time of the summit, strategy two had not yet been implemented, some of the questions were more difficult for members of the Advisory Council to address. Members were provided an overview of the anticipated plans for implementation of this strategy and its EBPs by the executive director of special populations. Feedback on the presented information was solicited, and overall the Council members felt the plan for deployment and the content created would be appropriate and productive. They anticipated successful implementation of this plan yielding more collaborative school environments in which all educators support all students, where interventions are being used that actually address student deficits, and progress is being effectively monitored to make data-based decisions. Members also concurred that the working of strategy three would need to be intertwined with strategy two to address the writing of IAIEPs in tandem with improving educational methods.

Universally, the Advisory Council members determined that successful results for this strategy would be improved student outcomes and decreases in deficits captured in progress reporting and universal screening. Most members felt that while RTI² was important to maintain and evaluate as an EBP, the processes in place with surveys, self-reporting, and the evaluations completed by staff in the state Centers of Regional Excellence (CORE) were currently sufficient. Some members had concerns about the outcomes evaluation question for this strategy, noting that it might be difficult to get consistent progress monitoring data from the same student over several years. Universal screening data were suggested as a more viable alternative, and accordingly the department elected to revise the metrics for this particular measurement.

- **Strategy Three: Addressing Skill Deficits**

The unique timeline of implementation for this strategy made conversations about it a little more difficult. The chief EBP for strategy three – writing IAIEPs – was initially introduced in 2014. Accordingly, the focus of conversations with the Advisory Council were centered around ways to better implement the strategy going forward and integrate it effectively with the other strategies. Members felt this strategy was an essential piece of the plan, but that it would be better to explore with the implementation of strategy two, which is what the department elected to do. Present levels of performance and measurable annual goals had emerged as particularly troubling areas of IEPs reviewed. Thus, these two areas became a focal point in the material and content for strategy two.

The Advisory Council approved of the department's proposed evaluation measures, including the annual IEP reviews in SSIP cohorts to ensure improvements are taking place. Council members reported that success for this strategy would be measurable improvement in accessibility and specificity of IEPs.

The executive director of data services and the executive director of special populations will lead a new SSIP summit at the Advisory Council meeting in April 2018. During this session, the executive director will provide examples of the activities developed for the strategy two trainings and will share proposed changes to the format of the strategy one work that will be implemented in the 2018-19 school year. She will share SSIP evaluation data on the three strategies implemented. Advisory Council members and other advocates and stakeholders in attendance at this meeting will provide feedback by responding to a series of questions and participation in round-table conversations. The summit will be filmed and made available on the department's website for public viewing.¹⁸ Results of this meeting will be compiled and shared in the spring/summer quarterly SSIP update.

¹⁸ The Advisory Council for the Education of Students with Disabilities website can be found [here](#).



Data on Implementation and Outcomes

Understanding the effectiveness of any plan is crucial to determine whether changes or modifications to work should be made. Interim methods of assessment, including short-term outputs and key measures to determine whether a plan is being implemented with fidelity and is yielding progress toward the desired result, are essential to successful evaluation plans. In Phase III – 1, the department created an evaluation process (Figure 2.1). It was designed to be as comprehensive as possible, covering the initial steps of developing an evaluation team and logic model to guide work as well as the more intermediate steps that include collecting data and developing evaluation activity timelines.

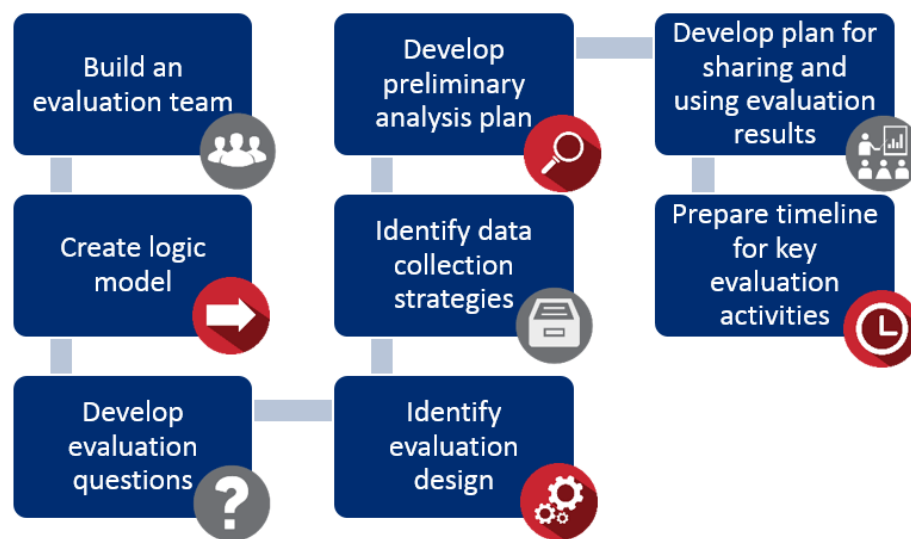


Figure 2.1. The steps completed to develop the evaluation process for the SSIP.



Measuring Effectiveness

The department has continued evaluating the implementation of the strategies employed for the SSIP in Phase III – 2. Ensuring that the SSIP is being implemented appropriately and consistently is of paramount importance. To measure the effectiveness of implementation and assess whether intended outcomes are achieved, the department has ensured:

- Evaluation measures are aligned to the theory of action
- Clear data sources are specified for each measure of performance
- Baseline data are collected and will be consulted for measures of performance
- Sampling procedures are specified
- Planned data collection procedures, comparisons, and timelines are in place
- Analytical procedures that will assess progress toward goals are selected.

Alignment with the theory of action relative to implementation and outcomes data has continued as anticipated through Phase III – 2. Additionally, the same measures and data sources outlined in the Phase III – 1 report have been employed successfully. The only change relative to the evaluation plan is the revision to evaluation question 15.

Baseline Data

The outcomes evaluation questions and their specified measures, as well as the SiMR, all have traditional baselines upon which to assess improvement. This is not the case for all the process evaluation questions, as seen in the, questions 1, 1.a, 6, 6.a, and 11, which report counts and/or are compliance-based rather yielding data upon which to meaningfully measure change. The remaining process evaluation questions have more traditional baselines available to measure short-term outcomes, intermediate outcomes, and growth. These baselines are integral to the entire evaluation process, as they will serve as a salient reference point by which to evaluate success of SSIP coherent improvement strategies and their EBPs throughout Phase III – 2. We anticipate that as a result of implementation of the SSIP, there will not only be an improvement over the course of a school year in participating schools for these outcomes questions, but also improved outcomes when comparing their data to non-participating schools and districts.

Baselines for Key Measures

The key measures that will address the fidelity of implementation outlined in the process evaluation questions and both outcomes evaluation questions are crucial to assess whether the implementation of coherent improvement strategies and their EBPs yield the desired results. Descriptions of the baseline data for these key measures are listed below by improvement strategy.

- **Strategy One: Increasing Access to Core Instruction**

Two key measures have been identified for this strategy, as reported in Phase III – 1: questions five and 14 (see “Evaluation Data Table”¹⁹). Question 5 addresses the fidelity of implementation of this strategy and its EBPs in the participating classrooms. Evaluation of fidelity of implementation was conducted using the Differentiation Inventory rubric in the spring of 2017, which was completed by SPDG interventionists, SPDG contracted staff, and special education supervisors. The details of these fidelity checks can be found in this report in the “Evaluation Data Table.”¹⁹

Question number 14 addresses improvement in the percentage of the day in which students with an SLD have access to core instruction for 80 percent or more of the day. Collection of baseline data came from the federal IDEA census report pulled on Dec. 1, 2015. Statewide, it was

¹⁹ See Appendix for “Evaluation Data Table” (page 70).

reported that 79.83 percent of students with an SLD were served in the general education setting 80 percent or more of the day.

- **Strategy Two: Special Education in a Continuum of Service**

Two key measures have been identified for this strategy to measure progress in implementation and progress toward the SiMR. The process evaluation question number 10 addresses the fidelity of implementation of this strategy and its EBPs in the participating classrooms. For strategy two to be meaningful and produce the anticipated improved results in educational place and student outcomes, the implementation must be completed with efficacy to inspire confidence in data.

Outcomes evaluation question number 15 addresses rate of improvement data for students who are receiving instruction on this strategy and its EBPs. In Phase III – 1, the evaluation question and metric by which successful implementation was to be measured was changed from evaluation of change in referral rate for those students referred for an SLD to evaluating improvement in the progress monitoring data in students' IEPs. Concerns were discussed both within the department and at stakeholder meetings (particularly with the Governor's Advisory Council) regarding the validity of progress monitoring data in an IEP. There are inherently a vast array of risks in using this as the measurement, as progress monitoring tools might differ year to year, might not be completed for whatever reason, and are not always nationally normed.

Accordingly, the department has elected to utilize universal screening data from the beginning and end of the school year in which the strategy is implemented to evaluate progress. Universal screeners are nationally normed and are consistently completed for all students. In the summer of 2018, the department will request universal screener data for five students with an SLD from each district and will compare the fall 2017 and spring 2018 data to determine if strategy two has yielded improvements.

- **Strategy Three: Addressing Skill Deficits**

Two key measures have been identified for this strategy to measure progress in implementation and toward the SiMR. The process evaluation question number 13 in the "Evaluation Data Table"²⁰ addresses the fidelity of implementation of this strategy and its EBP in the participating classrooms. For strategy three to be meaningful and produce the anticipated improved results in educational place and student outcomes, the implementation must be completed with efficacy to inspire confidence in data. In the summer and fall of 2017, content experts in the division of special populations and student support along with the SPDG interventionists conducted reviews of files in the 30 participating districts. Five percent of students with an SLD had their

²⁰ See Appendix for "Evaluation Data Table" (page 70).

most current IEPs pulled to evaluate quality utilizing the state-developed rubric. This amounted to 510 records. The scoring of these files informed where additional support might be needed in the different areas of the IEP. Figure 2.2 under the “Data Collected” section on page 34 shows the trends of data for each of the discrete elements of the IEPs that were reviewed.

The sections of the IEP that yielded greatest concern were the narratives, present levels of performance, and measurable annual goals. For the narratives section of the IEP, 52 percent of the records reviewed did not meet expectations for this area as per the established rubric. For present levels of performance, 45 percent of the records reviewed did not meet expectations. Finally, for measurable annual goals, 47 percent of the records reviewed did not meet expectations. Such information reinforced the necessity of these areas to be imbedded into trainings and work outlined in strategy regarding assessment students and measuring their progress.

The EBP for this coherent improvement strategy—the writing of IAIEPs—is focused on documenting students’ skill deficits with relevant data sources and developing a plan by which to address the deficits. The IEP should be a blueprint which, when followed, should mitigate skill deficits and address student needs. This is done through the writing of effective present levels of performance, identification of measurable goals to work toward, and determining the appropriate intervention services and accommodations/modifications necessary to meet these goals.

However, while writing a thoughtful plan is essential to support students, it is the implementation of this plan that is essential to truly realize desired outcomes. Accordingly, this evaluation question will also be used address the success of the second improvement strategy of using a continuum of service model in which special education is the most intensive intervention. This measure will be affected by the EBPs in the second coherent strategy, which focuses on intensity and rigor of interventions offered through special education. This, coupled with an effectively written IEP that clearly outlines where students require support and what these supports are, should yield positive outcomes for a student and increase the rate of improvement for students.

Sampling Procedures

To answer the process evaluation questions in the “Evaluation Data Table,” information will be predicated on the responses of those participants in the sampled schools within the 30 districts in the test cohort. The assessment data from the sampled 30 school districts will be used in the final evaluation question (number 16), which is the SiMR. There will be different sampling conducted to answer two of the evaluation questions (question 13 and question 15). There have been not changes to

the sampling outlined for question 13, while revisions have been made to the data source and sampling methodology that will be employed to address question 15.

Sampling for Universal Screening Data (Question 15)

To determine whether the writing of IAIEPs (in conjunction with ensuring special education is the most intensive intervention in a continuum of service model) is ameliorating skill deficits for students with an SLD participating in training on IAIEPs and intensified instructional practices, the department will pull a sample of five students with an SLD in participating districts and utilize their universal screening data from the start of the school year and the end of the school year to measure improvements. As noted in the “Baseline” section, these sampled IEPs will be reviewed prior to trainings and implementation of EBPs for the second and third coherent improvement strategies and after implementation to assess rate of improvement. An additional five students will be randomly selected for review to account for possible attrition should any students leave throughout the evaluation cycle.

Data Collection Procedures, Timelines, and Comparisons

No changes. For information on the collective procedures, timelines, and comparisons, please review Table 2.b on page 46 of Phase III – 1.

Data Management and Analysis

No changes. For more information on data management and analysis practices, including the staff responsible for conducting such work, please see page 58 of Phase III – 1.



Demonstrating Progress and Making Modifications

Over the course of the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years, a wide swath of data were captured to begin the measurement of progress toward the SiMR and determine where modifications or improvements should be made to the SSIP as a whole. Data on strategy one was aggregated in the summer of 2017, and baseline data has been captured throughout implementation of strategy two in the 2017-18 school year. For this second strategy, most data for this inaugural year will be available in the summer of 2018.

Data Collected

For this report, the information included covers the period since the last SSIP submission (April 2017) and includes data available as of March 13, 2018. More detailed information about the data collected is outlined in the “Evaluation Data Table.”²¹

²¹ See Appendix for “Evaluation Data Table” (page 70).

Strategy One: Access to Core Instruction

At the conclusion of the 2016-17 school year, 713 educators from 120 schools in the 30 districts making up the initial SSIP cohort received training in this strategy and its EBPs. Of the 713 educator trained, 51 percent were general education teachers, 25 percent were special education teachers, and 18 percent were school administrators.

Surveys conducted in April and May of 2017 yielded aggregate information from participants about whether they felt the trainings for strategy one prepared them for their next steps in implementation and sustaining the work. Of the 287 respondents to the survey, 96.2 percent agreed that they understood the next steps necessary to implement the content and EBPs covered in the trainings. In addition, 96.1 percent of respondents agreed that their knowledge of how to support SWDs in the general education setting had increased over the course of the trainings, and 94 percent agreed that their ability to support SWDs in the general education setting had increased. These data address process evaluation questions 1-4 (see "Evaluation Data Table"²¹).

Question 5 addresses whether the content for strategy one was implemented with fidelity in the participating districts. Across the state, 89 teachers received two observations, between three to six months apart, and overall scores were assigned to one of four quartiles. As of the second observation, 92 percent of teachers received scores on the second observation in one of the top three quartiles of scores, which can be considered as meeting fidelity requirements. Seventy-seven percent of teachers observed received scores on the second observation in the top two quartiles. Encouragingly, 74 percent of teachers observed increased to a higher quartile in their second observation.

Question number 14 addresses improvement in the percentage of the day in which students with an SLD have access to core instruction for 80 percent or more of the day. Statewide, it was reported that 79.83 percent of students with an SLD in the general education setting 80 percent or more of the day as of Dec. 1, 2015. As of May 1, 2017, 81.18 percent of students with an SLD were in the general education setting 80 percent or more of the day (more information provided in the "Evaluation Data Table"). This led to a 2.35 percent increase from the baseline until the end of the first year of implementation.

Strategy Two: Special Education in a Continuum of Service

In the 2017-18 school year, two of the 30 districts in the initial SSIP cohort had significant changes in leadership that required them to delay implementation of the EBPs for strategy two. Accordingly, only 28 districts participated in work around this strategy. All 28 districts held their fall trainings in 2017, and 27 of the 28 districts have held their winter trainings. In the fall trainings, there were approximately 622 special educators, general educators, and school administrators in the 108 participating schools in attendance across the state. As of March 13, 2018, 560 special educators, general educators, and/or

school administrators in the 108 participating schools had attended the winter trainings. Spring trainings are scheduled for most districts but have yet to take place.

From these fall and spring trainings, the department has gathered or will gather attendance data to address process evaluation questions 6, 6.a, and 6.b.²² In addition, information gleaned from participant surveys completed following the trainings will address process evaluation questions 7-10. Information for the spring trainings will be aggregated in the summer of 2018 and included in the Phase III – 3 report for the 2018-19 school year.

Though the initial data currently available do not fully evidence the progress toward improvements, the data do provide some information about how the state is currently implementing the EBPS for strategy two. As enumerated in the “Evaluation Data Table,”²² for the fall of 2017, at least one member from all school teams across the state attended the requisite trainings. Participation in trainings is imperative to ensure that strategies and EBPs are being effectively implemented in the classroom. Thus, this participation rate is very positive.

The survey responses from participants who have already received training yielded positive responses as well, with nearly 66 percent of participants responding to the survey. Of the 409 respondents to the fall surveys, 96.8 percent agreed that the fall training prepared them for the next steps to implement work. For each of the questions asked in the fall 2017 surveys,²³ over 94 percent of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with each item on the survey, all of which focused on improved knowledge and skills, confidence in the ability to implement strategies, and understanding of the next steps. The department has been encouraged by this snapshot of strategy two implementation and hopes to see improvements in responses from participants in the winter and spring post-training surveys. If trainings are being consistently attended, and the skills learned are being implemented with fidelity in the classroom, then the department anticipates seeing improvement across all data points, particularly relative to changes in the educational environment data and the SiMR.

As of March 13, 2018, several districts are still preparing to complete or have just recently completed their winter trainings. The reasons for delays in completion of the winter trainings have included: weather-related problems that led to school cancellations, illness of staff, staff turnover, and/or scheduling conflicts. However, the department has received initial data back for the winter trainings from the vast majority of participating schools. To date, the responses have been very promising, with 91.8 percent of respondents agreeing that the winter training prepared them for the next steps to

²² See Appendix for “Evaluation Data Table” (page 70).

²³ See Appendix for “Strategy 2: Fall 2017 Trainings” chart (page 67).

implement work. For each of the questions asked in the winter 2018 surveys,²⁴ over 90 percent of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with each item on the survey, all of which focused on improved knowledge and skills, confidence in the ability to implement strategies, and understanding of the next steps.

Strategy Three: Addressing Skill Deficits

As delineated under the “Baseline Data” section on page 27, data was gathered in the 2017-18 school year to address the key measures identified for this strategy: process evaluation questions 13. Data for the second key measure, process evaluation question 15, will be collected and aggregated in the summer of 2018. For strategy three to be meaningful and produce the anticipated improved results in educational place and student outcomes, its implementation must be completed with efficacy to inspire confidence in data. In the summer and fall of 2017, content experts in the division of special populations and student support along with the SPDG interventionists conducted reviews of 510 student files in the 30 participating districts. Figure 2.2 (page 34) shows the trends of data for each of the discrete elements of the IEPs that were reviewed.

The sections of the IEP that yielded greatest concern were the narratives, present levels of performance, and measurable annual goals. For the narratives section of the IEP, 51.96 percent of the records reviewed did not meet expectations for this area as per the established rubric. For present levels of performance, 45.1 percent of the records reviewed did not meet expectations. Finally, for measurable annual goals, 47.26 percent of the records reviewed did not meet expectations. Such information reinforced the necessity of these areas to be imbedded into trainings and work outlined in strategy regarding assessment students and measuring their progress.

²⁴ See Appendix for “Strategy 2: Winter 2018 Trainings” chart (page 68).

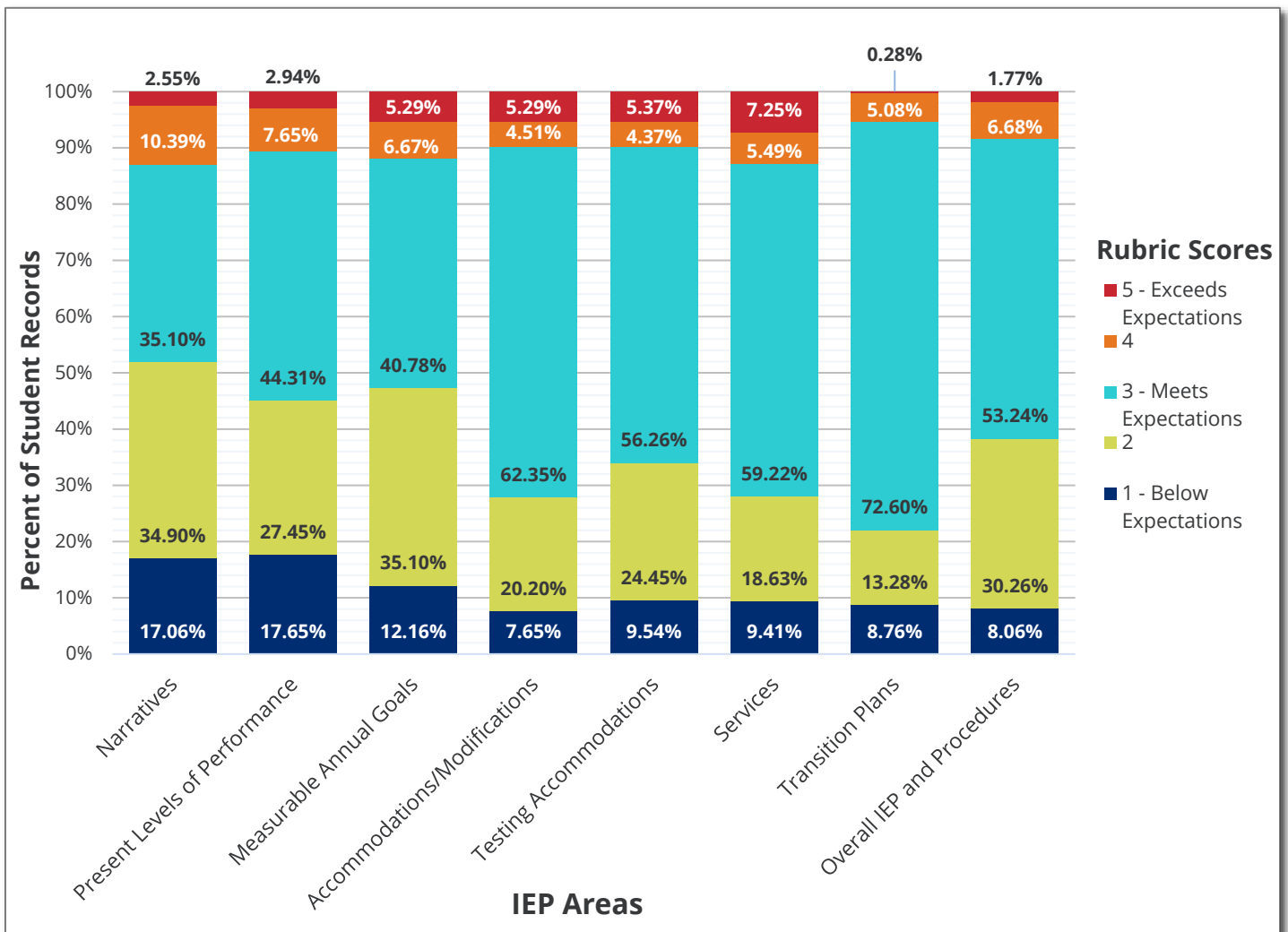


Figure 2.2. Scoring results gathered as a result of the IEP reviews for students with an SLD in participating districts.

Change to Baseline Data

To date, the only change to baseline data that occurred is related to the assessment baseline for the SiMR itself. After the assessment results are aggregated for the 2017-18 school year, the department will be able to assess growth on the statewide assessments and compare the results to the new baseline data that was established as a result of the statewide assessment results from the 2016-17 school year.

Based on the statewide assessment results for the target group of students outlined in Tennessee’s SiMR, the department now has new baseline data upon which to evaluate growth. The new state assessment has four performance levels, with performance level one being the lowest performance based on assessment scale scores and performance level four being the high performance based on assessment scale scores. Below is a crosswalk denoting nomenclature of these performance levels:

- **Performance Level 1 = Below** (*under the previous assessments, the performance level was called “Below Basic”*)
- **Performance Level 2 = Approaching** (*under the previous assessments, the performance level was called “Basic”*)
- **Performance Level 3 = On Track** (*under the previous assessments, the performance level was called “Proficient”*)
- **Performance Level 4 = Mastered** (*under the previous assessments, the performance level was called “Advanced”*)

For the SiMR, the department will continue looking at the performance of those students scoring at or above performance level two (previously term “at or above Basic”), or at or above Approaching. In the 2016-17 school year, 36.8 percent of students with an SLD in grades 3-8 taking the ELA statewide assessment scored at or above Approaching. To meet the SiMR, the department expects a three percent increase in this percentage in the 2017-18 school year, or a minimum of 39.8 percent of students with an SLD taking the ELA statewide assessment scored at or above Approaching.

Changes to Implementation and Strategies

As noted in the “Implementation” section (page 9), there have been some adjustments made to work streams in this second year of implementation. As well, changes will occur moving forward in the 2018-19 school year when a new cohort is selected. Namely, given the large scope of work in strategy two, one of the EBPs – environment – will be added to strategy one in the 2018-19 school year. Such a decision will ensure that environment and school/district climate are a focal point of the work outlined in strategy one relative to getting SWDs access to core instruction. Laying the foundation of this first strategy and its EBPs will increase the success of the more nuanced and instructional EBPs in strategy two, which will be deployed in the 2019-20 school year for the second cohort of districts.

Efforts have been made over Phase III – 2 to improve the CoPs for strategy two. This work was done in response to concerns brought forward by participating districts regarding the unstructured nature of the CoPs and their frequency. In order to alleviate the burden on participating districts and their facilitators, the executive director of special populations developed training content and toolkits to help facilitators lead the CoPs. These toolkits include content and materials for the session, including an explicit script to follow, and the goals and objectives of the CoP are explicitly outlined. To prepare facilitators for the CoPs, the executive director of special populations and SPDG interventionists have hosted webinars in which each CoP session is modeled for facilitators. These webinars are saved and made available for use at any time should facilitators wish to review them.

To address frequency concerns, rather than requiring the CoPs to take place every month, they have been limited to two for the fall, winter, and spring (six CoPs in total). These more intentional sessions

are an excellent complement to the training provided and reinforce the activities, EBPs, and additional strategies covered in the fall, winter, and spring trainings, respectively. Thus, the CoPs are not unstructured meetings in which facilitators must lead discussion and prepare their own content (as was the case in the 2016-17 school year), and the information discussed is meaningful and germane to the trainings covered most recently. In light of these changes, the CoPs have consistently been better attended with more positive feedback reported.



Stakeholder Involvement in Evaluation of SSIP

Throughout the development of the SSIP, the department has made a concerted effort and utilized a range of strategies to involve as many stakeholders as possible throughout the state in two-way communication around evaluation of the SSIP. Engagement strategies have included conferences, presentations, written communications, surveys, and posting information on the department's website. Many of the evaluation questions and metrics ultimately included in the SSIP were suggested by stakeholders in various forum. Thus, these same stakeholders will be crucial for effective evaluation of the SSIP.

Stakeholders have received information about the SSIP evaluation through means similar to those outlined in the "Stakeholder Involvement in Implementation" section. Such communication is vital to ensure that stakeholders are not just aware of the strategies and progress in implementation of the SSIP, but that they are cognizant of the results of implementation. In addition to reports of these evaluation activities and key measures, the department will also solicit feedback from stakeholders so they can be active in decision-making for ongoing evaluation. Below are planned communications with stakeholders that have been developed to-date. This is not comprehensive, and as information is received from these groups and the SSIP evaluation team, there may be other opportunities and venues by which stakeholders could be reached.

Advisory Council Presentations

This summit will cover information on the implementation activities of the SSIP from year one and the data results available, as well as provide an opportunity to share information about the second year of implementation and the work done for strategy two. For strategy one, information about improvements in the environment percentage for SWDs will be shared, along with the final survey and observation results from the 2016-17 school year. The Council will have the opportunity to weigh in on these results, note any concerns they might have, and offer suggestions regarding the plan and its evaluation. The department recognizes that this plan is fluid and that stakeholders may have insight and acumen that may require enhancements or adjustments to the work.

In addition to sharing data and the evaluation work done for strategy one, the executive director of special populations will model some of the activities developed and implemented for strategy two and

solicit detailed feedback. Initial data available thus far – namely around knowledge and skills attained through the training – will be shared to demonstrate the excellent progress being made relative to the training of educators in this strategy and its EBPs. The Advisory Council will have an opportunity to collaborate and discuss the work with one another and share out possible input or noted opportunities for improvement.

Special Education Supervisors Presentations

The department will engage special education supervisors in conversations about the evaluation of the SSIP at an annual conference to be held in the fall of 2018. By this date, all initial implementation work denoted in the “Implementation Activities” section will have concluded for strategy one, and the department will be able to share more comprehensive information about the implementation process, lessons learned, and discuss with supervisors the scalability of the work and where they see opportunities for improvement in the coming years. In addition, information will be shared regarding the second cohort of districts that will be selected to being implementation of the work in the 2018-19 school year.

Written Communication

Written communication about the SSIP will continue in quarterly updates made publicly available on the state’s website. Data on key measures will be shared through these communications, which will also be distributed through the Commissioner’s Update for Directors and the Special Education Director’s Update. An annual survey will also be offered to stakeholders with information about the evaluation of the SSIP and available data to reach as wide an audience as possible. Results of this survey will be utilized by the department in assessment of the SSIP and evaluation process and will also be communicated through quarterly updates to ensure all stakeholders are aware of the feedback received.



Data Quality Issues

There were several concerns for data quality that have implications for assessing the efficacy of Tennessee’s SSIP. Most prominent among these concerns was the absence of statewide assessment data for the 2015-16 school year. In not having such data available, the department was unable to assess progress toward the SiMR for the 2016-17 school year. Though not a true baseline, it was elected, based on stakeholder feedback, that the 2016-17 assessment data would serve as the new baseline for the SiMR, and progress would be measured in Phase III – 3 once data for the 2017-18 assessment was completed. It is imperative that two consecutive years of data on the same assessment be available to attain the growth metric at the heart of the SiMR.

Beyond this large-scale data quality issue were smaller aspects of evaluation with inherent concerns. Among these were possible limitations with self-reporting and surveying. While on the whole, the

response rates for trainings have been relatively high – on average about 60 percent of the participants in sessions respond to surveys – this still does not provide the entire picture of participants' perceptions of trainings.

An additional concern of note is the limited sample sizes pulled for assessing progress and answering evaluation questions. Given the limited capacity of the department and the scope of duties of those supporting the SSIP, smaller samples were selected to evaluate several components of the plan. For example, process question 13 in the evaluation plan²⁵ requires a sampling of student files to assess the quality of IEPs being written for students with an SLD. A minimum of five student records and a maximum of five percent of the student records for students with an SLD were pulled from the participating districts. In some instances, the smaller districts had a very small population of students with an SLD, and in such situations this made it possible for a more representative percent of student records to be reviewed. However, the sampling was not as representative for larger school districts with thousands of students with an SLD. Such limitations could have noteworthy impacts of the information gleaned from these file reviews.

For question 15 in the evaluation plan, a sampling of students' universal screening data is required to determine improvement in scores from the beginning of the school year to the end of the school year. Though these data are valuable and appropriately address the goal of increasing the rate of improvement in areas of deficit, capacity once again becomes a concern for both the department and district staff, who will be responsible for providing the universal screening data. In light of this, the evaluation team will have to pull a limited selection of student records to determine improvements that may not completely indicative of pervasive outcomes in the participating districts.

²⁵ See Appendix for "Evaluation Data Table" (page 70).



Progress Toward Improvements

This second year of implementation of the SSIP has yielded some measures of progress toward the desired goals. Much of the data are related to the trainings on strategies and their EBPs over the past two years, however, the department also has more comprehensive data at its disposal to measure more systemic and broad change. The structural changes within the division of special populations and student support have made it easier for the department support the work of the SSIP and ensure its success moving forward through expansion.



Infrastructure Changes

As detailed in the “Data on Implementation and Outcomes” section of this report, the department has gone to great lengths to support districts in the implementation of the SSIP. The three SPDG interventionists hired to serve districts in the three Grand Divisions of the state have been instrumental in guiding the work of the SSIP and its strategies and EBPs. These interventionists have been integrated into the targeted support team to reduce the number of districts for which they are responsible. The three Grand Divisions in which the interventionists are stratified contain a broad array of districts that can be overwhelming to manage. Combining staff under one team has made it possible for one interventionist/support staff member to be available in each of the eight centers for regional excellence (CORE) across the state. With a smaller caseload, more intensive support will be provided for each of the districts and support relative to the SSIP will be a primary focus of the technical assistance provided.



Fidelity of Implementation

To monitor the fidelity of implementation of the SSIP activities in the 2016-17 school year and thus far in the 2017-18 school year, the department has utilized several practices to certify the success of learned strategies. It is imperative that the work of the SSIP be taught with fidelity and implemented in the classroom with fidelity to determine whether the activities are working and eliciting the intended result.

Train-the-Trainer Sessions

Prior to the beginning of the 2017-18 school year, the department hosted a train-the-trainer event in Nashville, during which the facilitators selected for each participating district received training on how to redeliver the second coherent improvement strategy and its EBPs in their respective districts. Of the 85 district staff participating in the event (30 of which were facilitators), 53 completed a post-training survey. This survey employed a four-point Likert scale (with 4 indicating “Strongly Agree” and 1 indicating “Strongly Disagree”), and participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with eleven

survey items concerning the impact of the training. The results of this information can be seen in Table 3.a.

As a result of the session:	Mean
I understand better that learning requires grouping, ordering, connecting, and personal reflection. (n=53)	3.91
I understand better that literacy has six parts, with three inputs (viewing, listening, reading) and three outputs (showing, speaking, writing). (n=53)	3.91
I understand better that reading can be divided into three major categories (decoding, fluency, comprehension) and those categories have up to 100 subcategories. (n=53)	3.81
I understand better that motivation is influenced most by the climate of the classroom. (n=53)	3.79
I understand better that there are three major categories of assessments (screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring). (n=53)	3.79
My ability to train teachers to implement delivery methods that work for memory (i.e. active learning [group/order/connect/self], tactiles, discussion, teaching others) has increased. (n=53)	3.75
I understand better that PLEPs have 4 major components and they are the foundation of a strong IAIEP. (n=53)	3.74
My ability to train teachers to analyze reading assessment data for the root cause of reading difficulties, looking beyond screening data and symptomatic behaviors has increased. (n=53)	3.74
My ability to train teachers to use the context of reading assessment data (task, outcome, level, and design) to inform intervention decisions has increased. (n=53)	3.72
My ability to train teachers to create a classroom climate where language, environment, and delivery empowers students and shows them their value has increased. (n=53)	3.70
My ability to train teachers to differentiate instruction and tasks to meet differing literacy strengths and needs has increased. (n=51)	3.63
My ability to train teachers to determine appropriately aligned intervention resources for each individual student has increased. (n=53)	3.60

Table 3.a. Fidelity rating scale is as follows: 4-Strongly Agree, 3-Agree, 2-Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree

District-led Trainings

In Phase III – 1, observations were conducted by department staff to assess the efficacy of implementation of strategy one trainings led in districts by their facilitators. These same observations were gathered in the 2017-18 school year to assess trainings on strategy two. As shown in Table 3.b, district supervisors monitored the fall 2017 training sessions (led by district facilitators) and reported whether the appropriate items were covered in the training. As of March 2018, fidelity monitoring data was available for 22 of the 28 that held sessions in the fall. On the whole, the monitoring results of these trainings were very positive.

Which of the Following Training Activities Occurred During the Professional Development Session Observed	Percentage Yes
Grouping (educational buzzwords)	100 percent
Ordering (seven yellow cards)	100 percent
Connections (snowman)	100 percent
Personal reflection (quotes)	100 percent
Memory Test (pairs of words to associate)	96.2 percent
Memorization vs learning (three math vocabulary cards)	96.2 percent
Levels of memory triangle (from sensory register to long-term memory)	96.2 percent
Maslow's Hierarchy	100 percent
Daniel Pink's three keys to motivation (autonomy, mastery, purpose)	92.3 percent
Classroom climate (graphic climates of four different classrooms)	100 percent
Say this, not that	100 percent
Purpose of school (choose an image)	100 percent
Literacy sort (six blue cards, input and output)	92.3 percent
Bridges (choose an image)	80.8 percent
Essences (essence of literacy)	96.2 percent
Textbooks graphics (biosphere - which communications best?)	76.9 percent
Intervention chart - participants add to cumulative chart for "what works"	96.2 percent

Table 3.b. Baseline data survey results on trainings.

As shown in Table 3.c, district supervisors monitored the winter 2018 training sessions for each district (led by district academic coaches) and reported whether the appropriate items were covered in the training relative to strategy two. As of March 2018, fidelity monitoring data was available for 19 of the 28 participating districts. This low response is due to the fact that several districts have not yet been able to hold sessions due to weather and health-related issues.

Item	Percentage Yes
Iceberg image (what do you see?)	94.7 percent
Toolbox (what tool to use for the problem)	94.7 percent
Types of assessment activity (rebuild the graphic with the missing words and pictures)	94.7 percent

Parts of reading sort (16 yellow cards)	89.5 percent
Sight word/phonics discussion (airplane, coin, and t-oi-ck)	89.5 percent
Comprehension graphic (place the eight comprehension cards on the graphic)	89.5 percent
Vocabulary video and discussion	94.7 percent
Jack and Jill (choose the reading deficit as you gain more information)	89.5 percent
What is assessment? (choose and image)	94.7 percent
Synthesis (purple-reference points and green-context)	83.3 percent
TOLD analysis (choose assessments and analyze context)	94.7 percent
Assessment lanes (is an assessment S/D/UPM/NPM)	94.7 percent
Reading assessment matching (choose assessments, identify type, and match to areas of reading)	94.7 percent
Case Study A	89.5 percent
Case Study B	38.9 percent
Reading deficit quadrants (four profiles of readers by graphing decoding vs comprehension)	89.5 percent
Intervention chart (participants add to cumulative chart for “what works”)	89.5 percent

Table 3.c. Baseline data survey results on trainings.

Monitoring data from the spring 2018 sessions focused on strategy two will be available in the summer of 2018 and will be shared in the Phase III – 3 report.

Classroom Observations

Successful trainings presented with fidelity are crucial to imbue teachers with the skills and toolkits to implement strategies in their classrooms. As well, the evaluation of teachers implementing these strategies in the classroom is imperative to ensure it is being done with fidelity. Special education supervisors for the participating districts, as well as SPDG interventionists and members of the SSIP evaluation team, have led the charge in gathering classroom observation data for fidelity monitoring. As of March 13, 2018, 184 classrooms had been observed utilizing the differentiation inventory, 25 of which were second observations. Classrooms are observed twice to determine growth and improvements in implementation over time. Table 3.d shows the preliminary results of this fidelity monitoring, with the mean based on the scoring metrics outlined on page 30 in the “Demonstrating Progress and Making Modifications” Section. The mean score provided is based on the following scale: 1 = Installing; 2 = Installed; 3 = Refining; and 4 = Full Implementation.

Checklist Item	Mean
Uses brain-friendly techniques	2.22
Facilitates students making content personal to them	2.47
Teachers for learning, not memorization	2.48
Consistently connecting new information/skills to what is already known/mastered	2.49
A blend of explicit and constructivist, appropriate matched to the student and content	2.20
Creates a motivating, empowering climate focused on student ownership	2.71
Uses language as a tool for empowerment and showing value	2.58
Appropriately balanced between challenge and ability	2.49
Teaches students, not content	2.81
Understands each student's literacy strengths and weaknesses (inputs/outputs)	2.60
Uses, and allows students to create, visuals that are richly and intentionally embedded with meaning	2.28
Deliver through multiple senses to allow maximum access to new information	2.34
Can identify the three major parts of reading and the subcategories of each	2.68
Can identify the specific barrier(s) for each individual student	2.40
Recognizes the types and context beneath students' data and uses this to inform insightful instructional decisions	2.08
Analyzes all assessment data to inform PLEPs and goals	2.20
Strategically evaluated, using both needs-based goal monitoring and broad outcome measures	2.14
Aligned to needs identified through assessment, including diagnostics	2.22
Looks beyond symptoms to determine the root cause of each student's difficulty	2.31
Systematically designed to scaffold and build in layers toward the student's goal(s)	2.39
Aligned to PLEPs and goals	2.35
Gives frequent, specific feedback focused on a growth mindset	2.56
Adapts during instruction (and according to needs-based goal monitoring) to meet each student's need(s)	2.78
Specific, targeted, and focused, usually on underlying or prerequisite skills	2.47
Aligned to the individual student's needs	2.40
Always working toward the goal of reading for full understanding	2.50

Table 3.d. Rating scale is as follows: 4-Full Implementation, 3-Refining, 2-Installed, 1-Installing

For those 25 classrooms that have been observed twice, there have been significant improvements in the installation process of this strategy. Table 3.e provides the percent of the 25 classrooms that were at level two (installed) during the first observation and the percent installed or higher during the second observation. This same information will be collected for all remaining classrooms subsequent to their second review.

Checklist Item	Percent Installed or Higher 1 st Observation	Percent Installed or Higher 2 nd Observation
Uses brain-friendly techniques	65.4 percent	92.3 percent
Facilitates students making content personal to them	73.1 percent	92.3 percent
Teachers for learning, not memorization	73.1 percent	96.0 percent
Consistently connecting new information/skills to what is already known/mastered	69.2 percent	92.3 percent
A blend of explicit and constructivist, appropriate matched to the student and content	61.5 percent	92.3 percent
Creates a motivating, empowering climate focused on student ownership	84.6 percent	92.3 percent
Uses language as a tool for empowerment and showing value	80.8 percent	92.3 percent
Appropriately balanced between challenge and ability	69.2 percent	92.3 percent
Teaches students, not content	80.0 percent	96.2 percent
Understands each student's literacy strengths and weaknesses (inputs/outputs)	76.0 percent	92.3 percent
Uses, and allows students to create, visuals that are richly and intentionally embedded with meaning	60.0 percent	88.0 percent
Deliver through multiple senses to allow maximum access to new information	64.0 percent	88.5 percent
Can identify the three major parts of reading and the subcategories of each	46.2 percent	84.6 percent
Can identify the specific barrier(s) for each individual student	42.3 percent	96.2 percent
Recognizes the types and context beneath students' data and uses this to inform insightful instructional decisions	38.5 percent	92.3 percent
Analyzes all assessment data to inform PLEPs and goals	42.3 percent	96.0 percent
Strategically evaluated, using both needs-based goal monitoring and broad outcome measures	38.5 percent	88.5 percent
Aligned to needs identified through assessment, including diagnostics	38.5 percent	92.3 percent
Looks beyond symptoms to determine the root cause of each student's difficulty	38.5 percent	92.3 percent
Systematically designed to scaffold and build in layers toward the student's goal(s)	38.5 percent	96.2 percent
Aligned to PLEPs and goals	38.5 percent	92.3 percent
Gives frequent, specific feedback focused on a growth mindset	73.1 percent	92.3 percent
Adapts during instruction (and according to needs-based goal monitoring) to meet each student's need(s)	65.4 percent	92.3 percent
Specific, targeted, and focused, usually on underlying or prerequisite skills	65.4 percent	92.3 percent
Aligned to the individual student's needs	61.5 percent	96.2 percent
Always working toward the goal of reading for full understanding	65.4 percent	92.3 percent

Table 3.e. Rating scale is as follows: 4-Full Implementation, 3-Refining, 2-Installed, 1-Installing



Outcomes

The “Evaluation Data Table”²⁶ provides broad array of data available to being assessing outcomes – both short-term and long-term – necessary to achieve the SiMR. Recent restructuring to better support districts in the implementation of strategies will continue enhancing these outcomes moving forward. A summary of the outcomes readily accessible for the three strategies as of March 15, 2018 have been provided below.

Strategy One: Access to Core Instruction

The first year of implementation for this strategy showed steady improvements in process evaluation questions designed to yield more short-term outcomes. For evaluation question 1.b, addressing preparation for next steps in the implementation of strategy one, 91.3 percent of survey respondents felt prepared in the fall to begin implementing the learned strategies and activities in the classroom, and in the spring this percentage of respondents in agreement leapt to 96.2 percent. Increase in knowledge as a result of the strategies was also positive relative to access to core instruction, with 92.6 percent of survey respondents agreeing their knowledge increased relative to supporting SWDs in core instruction in the fall. In the spring, this agreement percentage increased to 96.1 percent. Relative to improvement in the actual ability to implement the EBPs and activities, the positive trajectory in agreement on surveys continued. In the fall, 89.7 percent of respondents agreed that their ability to support SWDs in core instruction improved. In the spring, 94 percent agreed with this statement.

For this work to be successful, the department recognizes that there must be fidelity in the implementation of this strategy’s EBPs and developed two process evaluation questions to address fidelity. In the spring, survey respondents reflected on the learned activities and 93.7 percent agreed that they had improved their ability to implement with fidelity the learned interventions. In addition to this self-reporting, the department also had independent observations of 89 classrooms completed over the course of the year. Observations for these classrooms were conducted twice to assess improvement as well as fidelity in implementation. For the second observation, 92 percent of teachers in the classrooms observed received scores in the top three quartiles of scores, which can be regarded as meeting fidelity targets.

Whereas these process evaluation questions are necessary to measure short-term outcomes, more systemic and demonstrable improvements relative to this strategy (more intermediate outcomes) are also vital to assess progress toward the SiMR. Educational environment data was selected in Phase II to evaluate overall change in behavior that is reflected in concrete data. After one year of implementation of this strategy, there was a 2.35 percent increase in the percent of students with an SLD in the general

²⁶ See Appendix for “Evaluation Data Table” (page 70).

education setting 80 percent or more of the day from the baseline data (pulled December 1, 2015) to the initial comparison data (pulled May 1, 2017).

Strategy Two: Special Education in a Continuum of Service

Much of the data for this second strategy will be compiled in the summer subsequent to initial implementation. Based on the data currently available, there was an overall decrease in the short-term outcome (as denoted in the process evaluation questions in Table 2. A) related to preparation for next steps in implementation from the fall to the spring. In the fall, 96.8 percent of respondents agreed that the session prepared them for next steps, with responses addressing winter trainings had 91.8 percent of respondents agreeing they felt prepared for next steps.

Given the large scope of this strategy, the department has made the adjustments outlined in the “Implementation Activities” section on page 10 to move part of the robust strategy two content to strategy one. The decrease in respondent confidence for the next steps in implementation of this second strategy, noted in the previous paragraph, can likely be attributed to overall complexity of the trainings for this second strategy. Thus, by distributing content for the two strategies more evenly, it is anticipated that in future trainings on strategy two, educators will have more time to better prepare for next steps relative to this work. Environment will be removed as an EBP from this strategy and moved to strategy one regarding access to core instruction for the second cohort of districts.

A similar trend was identified for respondents agreeing that the trainings increased their knowledge of how to make special education the most intensive intervention. In the fall, 94.24 percent agreed with this knowledge-based process evaluation question, and thus far in the winter 94.24 percent of respondents have agreed with this question. Regarding improvement in ability, 96.43 percent of the survey respondents agreed that the fall session improved their ability to make special education the most intensive intervention, and 92.1 percent of respondents agreed with this question in the winter. The department anticipates that the percentages yielded from respondents relative to the winter trainings will change as the trainings conclude and more attendees complete the survey.

More information about the overall process evaluation questions will be available the Phase III – 3 report. In addition, information on the intermediate outcome of increased rate of improvement on universal screening data over the course of the school year in which the EBPs are implemented will be collated in the summer of 2018 to evidence more systemic change. This evaluation question will specifically address progress toward the state’s SiMR.

Strategy Three: Addressing Skill Deficits

Given that implementation efforts for this strategy have taken place over the last several years, the more short-term outcomes were able to be addressed in Phase III – 1. In Phase III – 2, the department

was able to better analyze the fidelity of implementation in the writing of IAIEPs to address skill deficits. As noted in the Phase III – 1 report, all participating districts in the initial SSIP cohort received some form of training on this strategy. In the summer and fall of 2017, the department conducted file reviews of students with an SLD in the participating districts to assess the efficacy of implementation in eight core areas. As a result of this review, the areas of highest performance were: the writing of accommodations/modifications (72.15 percent of files reviewed met or exceeded expectations based on state-developed quality rubric); the writing of special education services (71.96 percent of files met or exceeded expectations); and the writing of transition plans for students ages 14 or older (77.96 percent of files met or exceeded expectations).

The areas flagged as weaker based on this review included: narratives (48.04 percent of files met or exceeded expectations); present levels of performance (54.9 percent of files met or exceeded expectations); and measurable annual goals (52.74 percent of files met or exceeded expectations). The department anticipated these portions of the IEP would be the weakest, and efforts have been made in trainings across the state and in the content of strategy two to specifically target these areas.



Improvements in the SiMR

Due to challenges with the assessment vendor, statewide assessments were not conducted for students in grades 3-8 in the 2015-16 school year. Accordingly, the department was unable to revise the baseline for the SiMR until the 2016-17 school year. Revision to the baseline was necessary, as the statewide assessment was completely redesigned and aligned to new standards in the 2015-16 school year. Accordingly, all prior assessments would not be comparable.

The department—based on internal discussions, support from technical assistance centers and OSEP, and external stakeholders—made the decision to establish the data for statewide assessments to be conducted in the 2016-17 school year for the baseline. As a result, comparison data by which to measure progress toward the SiMR will not be available until the summer of 2018, when the 2017-18 data will be compiled. Once such information is available for analysis, the department will be able to ascertain whether improvements have been made toward the SiMR and, if not, consider if modifications to the SSIP are necessary.



Plans for Next Year

In preparation for the coming years of Phase III implementation, the department and its stakeholders have plotted out the additional activities, identified the upcoming evaluation activities and metrics, as well as expected outcomes, identified potential barriers and solutions to such barriers, and determined needs for additional support and assistance.



Implementation Activities

The coming 2018-19 school year will see the addition of the second cohort for SSIP implementation. In the spring of 2018, the department will once again open a competitive process in which districts can submit an application for participation. Staff will review the applications to determine whether the district has the appropriate infrastructure in place to complete the strategies and their EBPs. Districts selected for participation will receive a \$10,000 stipend that can be spent on additional supplies and materials to support the SSIP activities. They will also receive preference relative to statewide and district level trainings.

Though initially considered a barrier in the implementation of SSIP work, the staggering of strategies across two years proved incredibly beneficial. Moving forward with this second cohort, strategy one will be implemented in the 2018-19 school year (with the revisions enumerated in the “Implementation Activities” section on page 10 enacted) and strategy two will be deployed in the 2019-20 school year. Strategy three will be imbedded in both of these strategies, but primarily in the content of strategy two. In addition to the inclusion of a new cohort of districts, SSIP activities will continue to expand to new schools in the initial cohort and progress will also be measured. For more information on the timeline of implementation, please see Figure 4.1 (page 50).



Evaluation Activities

In the summer of 2018, much of the analysis of data from the 2017-18 school year will be conducted. With the information that will be available at this point in time, members of the SSIP evaluation team will be able to answer process evaluation questions 7-10 with complete data:

- Question 7:** Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on special education within a continuum of service model reporting that these opportunities increased their knowledge of how to make special education services the most intensive level of intervention?
- Question 8:** Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on special education within a continuum of service model reporting that these opportunities improved their ability to make special education services the most intensive level of interventions?

Question 9: Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on special education within a continuum of service model reporting that these opportunities improved their ability to implement with fidelity the interventions intended to make special education services the most intensive level of interventions?

Question 10: Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on special education within a continuum of service model indeed implementing interventions with fidelity?

Comparisons will also be completed for outcomes evaluation questions 14 and 15:

Question 14: What is the change in the percentage of students with an SLD in the general education setting 80 percent or more of the day?

Question 15: What is the rate of improvement for those students identified with an SLD for whom IAIEPs have been successfully written (will use sampling of students in participating schools) and who are receiving instruction utilizing strategies to ensure special education is the most intensive intervention?

Throughout the implementation of the SSIP activities in the second cohort of participating districts in the 2018-19 school year, the department will be able to address process evaluation questions pertaining to strategy one (questions 1-5) and outcomes evaluation question 14. The department will also have the opportunity to conduct evaluation on progress toward the SiMR once the 2017-18 school year assessment data is made available.



- Hold second workshop training on ensuring special education is the most intensive intervention.
- Gather information from surveys to address evaluation questions 6-8.
- Continue gathering information from fidelity checks to address evaluation questions 9 and 10.
- Provide quarterly SSIP update for stakeholders.
- Present an update on the SSIP at the Partners in Education (PIE) conference in February.
- SPDG evaluation team will continue providing monthly updates on progress toward evaluation questions and targets.
- Evaluate the percentage of day students educated in schools implementing strategies spend in core instruction.
- Engage parent stakeholders through STEP trainings and communications.

- Hold third and final workshop training on ensuring special education is the most intensive intervention.
- Develop training modules for teachers and administrators, as well as parents and stakeholders.
- Continue having teachers implementing interventions and district-level staff complete observations and assessment of fidelity of implementation.
- Gather information from surveys to address evaluation questions 6-8
- Continue gathering information from fidelity checks to address evaluation questions 9 and 10.
- Provide quarterly SSIP update for stakeholders.
- Gather post-implementation surveys to address evaluation question 9.
- Engage parent stakeholders through STEP trainings and communications.
- Lead Advisory Council summit on the work outlined for the SSIP to solicit stakeholder feedback.

- Gather post-implementation survey data to address all training-specific evaluation questions.
- Conduct file reviews on IEPs being written in test cohort of districts and schools to measure instructional appropriateness.
- Pull universal screening data from initial cohort to evaluate rate of improvement.
- Evaluate the percent of the day students educated in schools implementing strategies spend in core instruction.
- Evaluate assessment results to determine growth and progress toward the SiMR.
- Provide quarterly SSIP update for stakeholders.
- Assess overall effectiveness of the second year of implementation and consider whether changes or adjustments need to be made.
- Offer train-the-trainer sessions for the implementation of strategy one in the second cohort of participating SSIP districts.

- Begin training with second cohort on strategy one.
- Gather information from trainings to begin addressing evaluation questions 1-5.
- Continue expanding work in schools in the initial SSIP cohort relative to all three strategies.
- Identify districts that require further support on writing IAIEPs based on responses to evaluation questions 11 and 12 and file reviews.
- Finalize the results of the IAIEP file reviews started in the summer.
- Conduct measures for fidelity of implementation to address the evaluation questions.
- Provide quarterly SSIP update for stakeholders.
- Engage parent stakeholders through STEP trainings and communications.



Winter 2019

- Hold second round of trainings in districts relative to strategy one in the new SSIP cohort.
- Gather information from trainings to address evaluation questions 1-4 in the new SSIP cohort.
- Provide supports as needed to the initial and second cohorts of districts as they continue implementation of both strategies.
- Continue providing follow-up support to districts on IAIEPs.
- Provide quarterly SSIP update for stakeholders.
- Conduct measures for fidelity of implementation to address the evaluation questions.
- Engage parent stakeholders through STEP trainings and communications.

Spring 2019

- Hold third and final trainings in districts relative to strategy one in the new SSIP cohort.
- Provide supports as needed to the initial and second cohorts of districts as they continue implementation of both strategies.
- Gather more in-depth data to address outcomes evaluation questions 14-16.
- Continue providing follow-up support to districts on IAIEPs.
- Provide quarterly SSIP update for stakeholders.
- Conduct measures for fidelity of implementation to address the evaluation questions.
- Engage parent stakeholders through STEP trainings and communications.
- Solicit feedback from stakeholders through activities like the Advisory Council summit.

Summer 2019

- Gather post-implementation survey data to address all training-specific evaluation questions.
- Conduct file reviews to determine whether IAIEPs are being appropriately written in both the initial and second cohort of districts. Will be used to inform question 13.
- Gather final observation data to address questions 5 and 10.
- Assist participating districts in scalability opportunities and expansion of the cohort.
- Offer train-the-trainer sessions on strategy two for the second cohort of participating districts.

Fall 2019-2020

- Continue work in implementation of strategies.
- Provide supports as needed to the test cohort of districts as they scale-up their work from schools to the whole district.
- Continue measures for fidelity of implementation to address the evaluation questions.
- Evaluate the data gathered regarding educational environments, universal screening data, and assessment results to determine whether goals are being addressed and anticipated outcomes are being realized.
- Continue evaluating results based on baseline data compared to end of year data and then district-level data compared to control or comparison district-level data.
- Continue communicating results and progress toward the SiMR to the public and solicit stakeholder feedback.



Barriers

Currently, the department is not facing any noteworthy barriers that may impede the work of the SSIP. The infrastructure in place is able to effectively support the strategies and districts are reporting positive outcomes as a result of participation in the SSIP activities. Certainly, potential barriers, such as changes in political administration, leadership, department and division infrastructure, or funding that could have significant implications on the work are not outside the realm of possibility. However, the department is confident that by having resources in place, like the SPDG, to financially undergird this work, and formatting the division of special populations and students support in an efficient manner with regional resources in place to support the activities, any possible barriers will be tempered.



Additional Support Needed

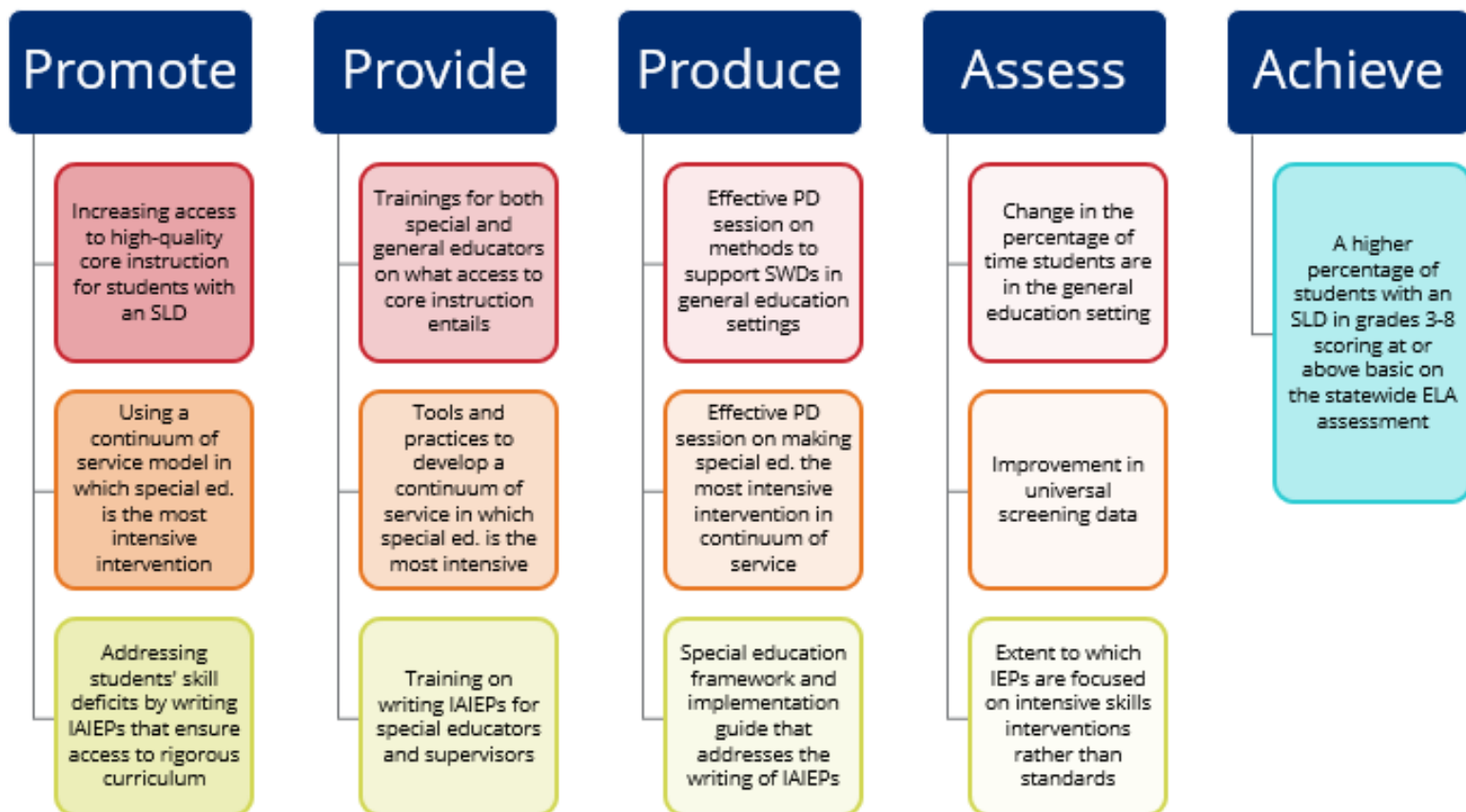
The insight of the federal technical assistance centers has been invaluable throughout the development of Phase I and Phase II of the SSIP, and the department wants to continue receiving their support throughout Phase III implementation. Based on feedback from technical assistance centers relative to effective stakeholder engagement, the department has been able to provide improved sessions to gather responses that will inform the SSIP's work. Rather than sending out an array of communication and surveys to relevant parties across the state, the department has become more intentional in the communication of the SSIP and the results and getting responses back that are meaningful and actionable. Continued guidance like this will be invaluable for the state to continue improving and effectively evaluating this project.

Appendix

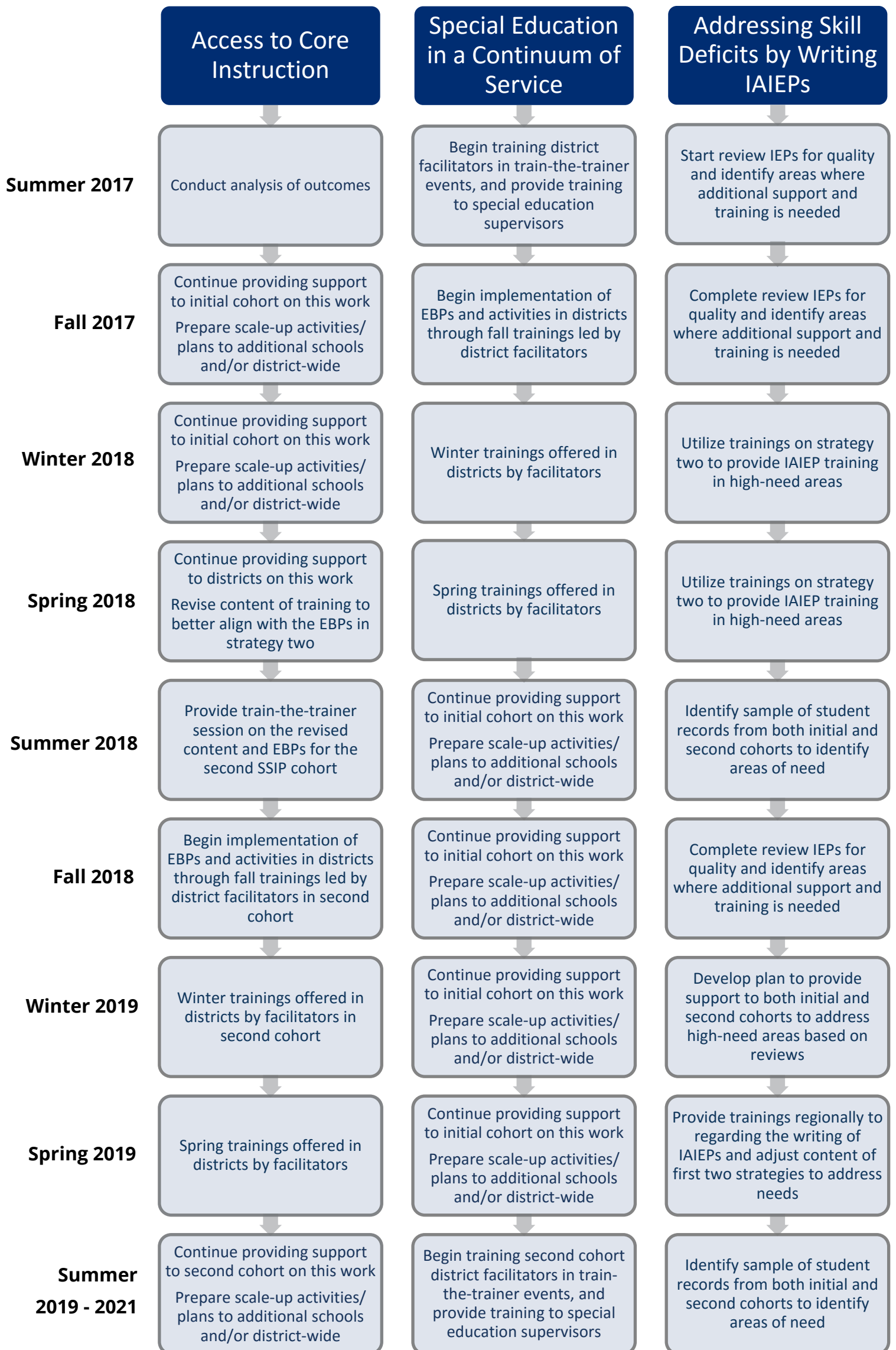
SSIP Phase III – 2



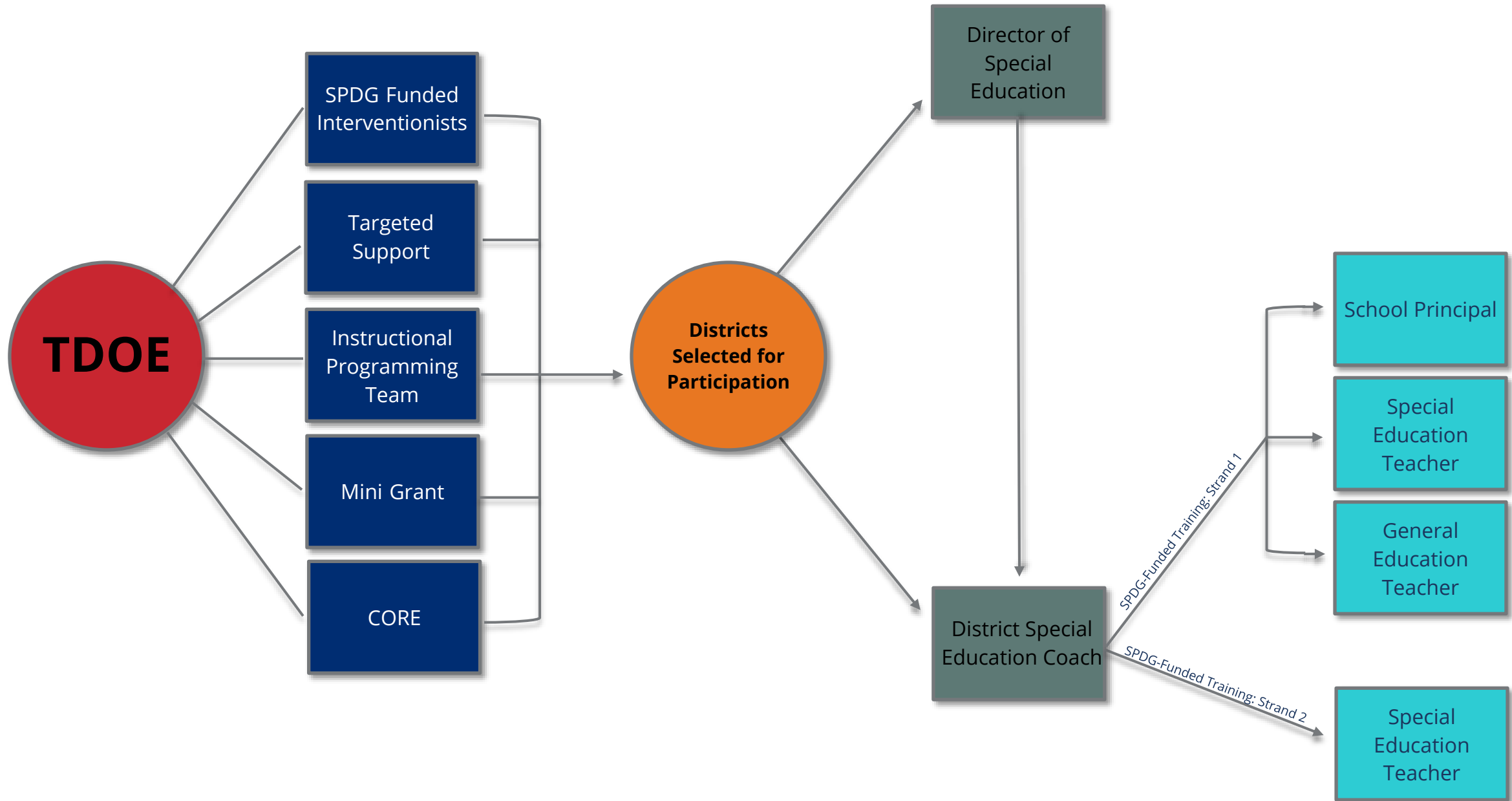
Theory of Action



Revised Detailed Implementation Plan



Flow of Supports



Types of Assessment

Types of Assessment

Screening



Diagnostic



Progress Monitoring



Standardized



Shallow, quick measure



Needs



Level



Universal



Need-based



**WJ IV-Ach
GORT-4**



AIMSweb



WIST/QRI




AIMSweb




Need-based, formative check-ins




State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) Summit

Improvement Strategy 1: Increasing Access to Core Instruction

Implementation for this strategy began in the 2016-17 school year. It focuses on using the evidence-based practices of UDL and differentiation of instruction. There are 30 districts in the initial cohort implementing the activities, with 111 school across these districts participating

Implementation:

To date, the following have taken place for this strategy:

- Development of training content and resources (spring 2016)
- Train-the-trainer event for district facilitators (summer 2016)
- Fall facilitator-led district trainings (fall 2016)
- Winter facilitator-led district trainings (winter 2017)
- Communities of Practice (CoPs) held monthly for each district
- Classroom observations by special education supervisors and SPDG interventionists and evaluators

Upcoming implementation activities:

- Spring facilitator-led district trainings (spring 2017)
- Completion of classroom observations to measure fidelity of implementation
- CoPs

Evaluation:

The following are the evaluation questions outlined in the SSIP for this strategy:

- How many district and school level teams participated in training and PD sessions relative to increasing access to core instruction and using EBPs like UDL and differentiation of instruction?
- Did all the staff required from the school level team attend the training and PD sessions (principal, special education teacher, and general education teacher)?
- Did the team members feel the training was relevant and prepared them for next steps?
- Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on access to core instruction reporting that these opportunities increased their knowledge of how to support SWDs in core instruction?
- Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on access to core instruction reporting that these opportunities improved their ability to support SWDs in core instruction?
- Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on access to core instruction reporting that these opportunities improved their ability to implement with fidelity the interventions intended to support SWDs in core instruction?
- Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on access to core instruction indeed implementing interventions with fidelity?

- What is the change in the percent of students with an SLD in the general education setting 80 percent or more of the day?
- **SiMR:** Is the percentage of students with an SLD in grades 3-8 taking scoring at or above basic on the statewide ELA assessment increasing?

To date, the following data have been gathered for this strategy:

- All required team members for the train-the-trainer event attended the training
- 103 of the 111 participating schools had all team members present at the fall training
- To date, data for winter trainings has been captured for 90 of the 111 schools. Of these 90 schools, 69 had three required team members in attendance
- In the fall 2016 trainings, 91.3 percent of participants responding to post-surveys found the session relevant and felt it prepared them for next steps
- In the winter 2017 trainings, 95.8 percent of participants responding to post-surveys found the session relevant and felt it prepared them for next steps
- In the fall 2016 trainings, 92.6 percent of participants responding to post-surveys found the session increased their knowledge of how to support SWDs in core instruction
- In the winter 2017 trainings, 92.3 percent of participants responding to post-surveys found the session increased their knowledge of how to support SWDs in core instruction
- In the fall 2016 trainings, 89.7 percent of participants responding to post-surveys found the session improved their ability to support SWDs in core instruction
- In the winter 2017 trainings, 92 percent of participants responding to post-surveys found the session improved their ability to support SWDs in core instruction
- Baseline data from Dec. 1, 2015 shows that 79.83 percent of students with a specific learning disability (SLD) are in the general education 80 percent or more of the day

Upcoming evaluation activities:

- Pull comparison environment data on May 1, 2017 to measure change in educational environment
- Gather survey results from participating educators to determine the percent reporting they agree the trainings improved their ability to implement interventions with fidelity
- Aggregate fidelity monitoring data from special education supervisors, SPDG interventionists, and SPDG evaluators

Moving Forward:

The department plans to refine the strategy in the upcoming year and use the data to identify areas of improvement. Next steps will include finalizing initial evaluation data and considering scalability opportunities.

Improvement Strategy 2: Special Education in a Continuum of Service

Due to a delay in the release of SPDG funds, implementation of this strategy has been delayed until the 2017-18 school year. This strategy focuses on making data-based decisions, effectively implementing multi-tiered systems of support like RTI², and a multi-sensory approach to instruction to ensure special education is the most intensive intervention in a continuum of service model.

Implementation:

To date, the following have taken place for this strategy:

- Implementation of the response to intervention (RTI) model in Tennessee beginning July 1, 2014, has established a foundation for multi-tiered systems of support. Having tiers of increasing rigor helps identify how special education is the most intensive intervention
- Department staff have begun the process of developing content for this strategy
- Schools have been identified for participation in the activities for this strategy

Upcoming implementation activities:

- Train-the-trainer event for district facilitators (summer 2017)
- Fall facilitator-led district trainings (fall 2017)
- Winter facilitator-led district trainings (winter 2018)
- Spring facilitator-led district trainings (spring 2018)
- Communities of Practice (CoPs) held monthly for each district
- Classroom observations by special education supervisors and SPDG interventionists and evaluators

Evaluation:

The following are the evaluation questions outlined in the SSIP for this strategy:

- How many district and school level teams participated in training and PD sessions relative to ensuring special education is the most intensive intervention in a continuum of service model and using EBPs like RTI², multi-sensory approaches, and data-based decision-making?
- Did the requisite staff attend the training and PD sessions (special education supervisor and special education teacher)?
- Did the team members feel the training was relevant and prepared them for next steps?
- Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on special education within a continuum of service model reporting that these opportunities increased their knowledge of how to make special education services the most intensive level of intervention?
- Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on special education within a continuum of service model reporting that these opportunities improved their ability to make special education services the most intensive level of interventions?
- Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on special education within a continuum of service model reporting that these opportunities improved their ability to implement with

fidelity the interventions intended to make special education services the most intensive level of interventions?

- Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on special education within a continuum of service model indeed implementing interventions with fidelity?
- What is the rate of improvement for those students identified with an SLD for whom IAIEPs have been successfully written (will use sampling of students in participating schools) and who are receiving instruction utilizing strategies to ensure special education is the most intensive intervention?
- **SiMR:** Is the percentage of students with an SLD in grades 3-8 taking scoring at or above basic on the statewide ELA assessment increasing?

Upcoming evaluation activities:

- Pull records for students with an SLD in the classroom participating in implementation of the strategy (two records per participating district) with progress monitoring data to measure rate of improvement
- Maintain attendance data and survey response data from the trainings to address process-based evaluation questions
- Utilize surveys to measure educators' confidence in implementation of the strategy
- Aggregate fidelity monitoring data from special education supervisors, SPDG interventionists, and SPDG evaluators

Moving Forward:

The department plans on completing the strategy content by the spring of 2017 to begin trainings for facilitators relative to this strategy in the summer of 2017. Much of the implementation and evaluation processes will mimic those employed in the 2016-17 for the first strategy.

Improvement Strategy 3: Reducing Skill Deficits

Because of the alignment of this strategy with strategy two, the department elected to delay implementation efforts of it until the 2017-18 school year. This strategy addresses skill deficits and how to effectively develop plans that address deficits and increase rate of improvement for students with an SLD.

Implementation:

To date, the following have taken place for this strategy:

- Developed the IAIEPs in the 2013-14 school and provided trainings across the state beginning in the summer of 2014
- Established the special education framework during the 2013-14 school year to support educators with writing IAIEPs and developing effective special education interventions
- Trainings have continued to be offered regionally to districts and as well to CORE office interventionists to support the initiative
- Schools have been identified for participation in the activities for this strategy

Upcoming implementation activities:

- Conduct file reviews on students with an SLD from the test cohort of districts
- Provide trainings and remediation to those districts identified in need of additional supports relative to the writing of IAIEPs

Evaluation:

The following are the evaluation questions outlined in the SSIP for this strategy:

- How many staff attended trainings relative to writing IAIEPs?
- Did the team members find the training and PD sessions valuable, high-quality, and relevant?
- Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on writing IAIEPs reporting that they (and/or staff they trained) are utilizing the skills and principles learned in their trainings when completing IEPs?
- Are staff (and/or the staff they trained) who participated in trainings and PD sessions on IAIEPs incorporating the skills and principles in their practice with fidelity?
- What is the rate of improvement for those students identified with an SLD for whom IAIEPs have been successfully written (will use sampling of students in participating schools) and who are receiving instruction utilizing strategies to ensure special education is the most intensive intervention?
- **SiMR:** Is the percentage of students with an SLD in grades 3-8 taking scoring at or above basic on the statewide ELA assessment increasing?

To date, the following data have been gathered for this strategy (based on prior trainings):

- At least one staff member in each district in the SSIP initial cohort has attended a training on writing IAIEPs

- Based on educator and special education supervisor surveys, 73.9 percent of respondents reported that the found trainings on writing IAIEPs valuable, high-quality, and relevant
- In the same survey, 98.6 percent of respondents reported that they are utilizing the skills and principles learned in their trainings when completing IEPs

Upcoming evaluation activities:

- Pull five percent of the IEPs for students with an SLD in each participating district and conduct reviews using a quality review rubric in the summer of 2017
- Identify districts struggling and areas in which they are struggling to provide tailored technical assistance

Moving Forward:

The department plans on providing technical assistance to districts based on the reviews of records, which will be done annually to ensure continued support is available. Review of this strategy will be done in tandem with review of the second strategy, since the two are intertwined. While providing intensive special education intervention is important, it cannot be done without the appropriate plan in place to support the work, and vice versa.

Feedback Loop: Review of Improvement Strategy 1

Implementation Questions:

- Do you feel the format by which this strategy was deployed was effective? Do you see areas for improvement?
- The department has had difficulty ensuring that districts are completing their CoPs monthly, as required under the SSIP/SPDG. Alternatives, such as online platforms, have been entertained to reduce issues with the logistics or travel associated with the visits. Are there other opportunities you see to address this concern?
- There has been some concern with requisite school team members not attending trainings. How should this be addressed? Do you think there should be a written criteria on how to ensure these missing team members are brought up to speed on training content?
- Do you feel the next steps are appropriate?

Evaluation Questions:

- Do you feel like the evaluation questions for this strategy are appropriate? Do you feel there need to be changes made to the evaluation questions, and if so, what changes should be made/questions should be added?
- What are your initial thoughts about the data available? As expected? Better? Worse?
- Do you see opportunities for improvement in data collection and/or review? If so, where and why?
- What do you think success looks like for this strategy?
- Do you think there are opportunities for scalability, and if so, when do you think it would be appropriate to begin scaling up activities?
- How would you like to provide feedback and/or receive updates about the SSIP, moving forward?

Feedback Loop: Review of Improvement Strategy 2

Implementation Questions:

- What content or areas of focus do you think would be relevant to include in the trainings for this strategy?
- Do you feel the format by which this strategy is scheduled to be deployed is effective? Do you see areas for improvement?
- What would successful implementation of this strategy look like?
- Do you see opportunities for improvement in linking the implementation of this strategy and the third strategy of addressing skill deficits through the writing of IAIEPs?
- Do you feel the next steps for implementation are appropriate?

Evaluation Questions:

- Do you feel like the evaluation questions for this strategy are appropriate? Do you feel there need to be changes made to the evaluation questions, and if so, what changes should be made/questions should be added?
- Do you feel that the data being reviewed is appropriate to address the evaluation questions and determine whether or not the SSIP is achieving its goal?
- Do you feel that there should be evaluation metrics to assess implementation of RTI², and if so, what should those metrics be?
- What do you think success looks like for this strategy?
- How would you like to provide feedback and/or receive updates about the SSIP, moving forward?

Feedback Loop: Review of Improvement Strategy 3

Implementation Questions:

- Do you feel the format by which this strategy is scheduled to be deployed is effective? Do you see areas for improvement?
- Do you feel it would be more effective to provide wide-scale trainings to participating districts on the writing of IAIEPs as a whole, or focus on areas of concern discovered during file reviews?
- What does successful implementation of this strategy look like?
- Do you see opportunities for improvement in linking the implementation of this strategy and the second strategy of making special education the most intensive intervention in a continuum of service model?
- Do you feel the next steps for implementation are appropriate?

Evaluation Questions:

- Do you feel like the evaluation questions for this strategy are appropriate? Do you feel there need to be changes made to the evaluation questions, and if so, what changes should be made/questions should be added?
- Do you feel that the data being reviewed is appropriate to address the evaluation questions and determine whether or not the SSIP is achieving its goal?
- Do you feel that there should be evaluation metrics to assess implementation of RTI², and if so, what should those metrics be?
- What do you think success looks like for this strategy?
- How would you like to provide feedback and/or receive updates about the SSIP, moving forward?

Strategy 2: Fall 2017 Training Surveys

On a scale of 1 4 (with 1 being "Strongly Disagree" and 4 being "Strongly Agree"), rate the following statements:	n	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I understand better that learning requires grouping, ordering, connecting, and personal reflection	409	1.0 percent	2.0 percent	40.3 percent	56.7 percent
I understand better that motivation is influenced most by the climate of the classroom	409	1.2 percent	2.7 percent	37.4 percent	58.7 percent
I understand better that literacy has six parts, with three inputs (viewing, listening, reading) and three outputs (showing, speaking, writing)	408	1.0 percent	1.5 percent	40.0 percent	57.6 percent
My ability to implement instructional strategies that work for memory has increased	409	1.2 percent	4.2 percent	46.7 percent	47.9 percent
I am confident in my ability to implement delivery methods that work for memory	409	0.5 percent	3.2 percent	54.8 percent	41.6 percent
My ability to create a classroom climate where language, environment, and delivery empowers students and shows them their value has increased	409	0.7 percent	2.4 percent	44.7 percent	52.1 percent
I am confident in my ability to create a classroom climate where language, environment, and delivery empowers students and shows them their value	409	0.5 percent	0.5 percent	44.3 percent	54.8 percent
My ability to differentiate instruction and tasks to meet differing literacy strengths and needs has increased	409	0.7 percent	4.6 percent	48.9 percent	45.7 percent
I am confident in my ability to differentiate instruction and tasks to meet differing literacy strengths and needs	409	0.2 percent	2.7 percent	52.1 percent	45.0 percent
I understand the next steps I need to take to implement this training	408	0.7 percent	2.5 percent	52.9 percent	43.9 percent

Strategy 2: Winter 2018 Training Surveys

On a scale of 1-4 (with 1 being "Strongly Disagree" and 4 being "Strongly Agree"), rate the following statements:	n	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I understand better that there are three major categories of assessments	330	1.2 percent	3.0 percent	43.9 percent	51.8 percent
I understand better that reading can be divided into three categories (decoding, fluency, comprehension) and those categories have up to 100 subcategories	330	1.5 percent	3.6 percent	39.1 percent	55.8 percent
As a result of this training, I understand better that present levels of performance have four major components and they are the foundation of a strong IAIEP	329	3.0 percent	4.9 percent	49.2 percent	42.9 percent
My ability to use the context of reading assessment data to inform intervention decisions has increased	329	1.5 percent	6.7 percent	52.6 percent	39.2 percent
I am confident in my ability to use the context of reading assessment data to inform intervention decisions	329	1.5 percent	6.1 percent	55.0 percent	37.4 percent
My ability to analyze reading and assessment data for the root cause of reading difficulties, looking beyond screening data and symptomatic behaviors has increased	329	1.2 percent	5.8 percent	55.3 percent	37.7 percent
I am confident in my ability to analyze reading assessment data for the root cause of reading difficulties, looking beyond screening data and symptomatic behaviors	329	1.5 percent	7.3 percent	55.3 percent	35.9 percent
My ability to determine appropriately aligned intervention resources for each individual student has increased	329	1.5 percent	5.8 percent	55.9 percent	36.8 percent
I am confident in my ability to determine appropriately aligned intervention resources for each individual student	329	1.5 percent	7.0 percent	56.5 percent	35.0 percent
I understand the next steps I need to take to implement this training	329	1.8 percent	6.4 percent	53.8 percent	38.0 percent

Strategy 1: Final Spring Surveys

As a result of the trainings on Strategy 1 in the 2016 17 school year:	Agree
My ability to implement UDL has increased	93.7 percent
My ability to implement differentiated instruction with fidelity has increased	95.0 percent
My ability to implement Know-Understand-Do (KUDs) with fidelity has increased	94.0 percent
My ability to implement appropriate accommodations with fidelity has increased	96.1 percent
My ability to implement small group instruction with fidelity has increased	95.1 percent
My ability to implement differentiated students' end products with fidelity has increased	96.8 percent
My ability to implement task analysis with fidelity has increased	95.4 percent
Aggregated Fidelity	93.7 percent

Evaluation Data Table

Question Number	Evaluation Question	Indicator of Performance	Data Reported
Process Evaluation Questions			
1	How many district- and school-level teams participated in training and PD sessions relative to increasing access to core instruction and using EBPs like UDL and differentiation of instruction?	District-level and school-level teams participated in required sessions on these EBPs.	<p>Fall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Teams: 30 • School Teams: 111 <p>Winter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Teams: 30 • School Teams: 109 <p>Spring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Teams: 29 • School Teams: 106
1.a	Did all the staff required from the school-level team attend the training and PD sessions (principal, special education teacher, and general education teacher)?	District-level and school-level teams participated in required sessions on these EBPs.	<p>Fall: Based on the self-reported attendance information and qualifying information from SPDG interventionists, at least one member of each 111 school teams participated in fall training. <u>Of these 111 school teams, 103 had all three required team members in attendance.</u></p> <p>Winter: Based on the self-reported attendance information and qualifying information from SPDG interventionists, at least one member of each 110 school teams participated in winter training. <u>Of these 109 school teams that have held winter trainings, 90 had all three required team members in attendance.</u></p> <p>Spring:</p>

			<p>Based on the self-reported attendance information and qualifying information from SPDG interventionists, at least one member of each 110 school teams participated in spring training. <u>Of these 106 school teams that have held winter trainings, 96 had all three required team members in attendance.</u></p>
<p>1.b</p>	<p>Did the team members feel the training was relevant and prepared them for next steps?</p>	<p>90 percent reported that they found the sessions relevant and that they prepared them for next steps.</p>	<p>Fall: 65.4 percent of participants in the fall trainings responded via survey to address this evaluation question. Of the 448 respondents to this question, <u>91.3 percent agreed that the session was relevant and prepared them for next steps.</u></p> <p>Winter: 59.2 percent of participants in the winter trainings responded via survey to address this evaluation question. Of the 353 respondents to this question, <u>95.8 percent agreed that the session was relevant and prepared them for next steps.</u></p> <p>Spring: 56.9 percent of participants in the winter trainings responded via survey to address this evaluation question. Of the 287 respondents to this question, <u>96.2 percent agreed that the session was relevant and prepared them for next steps.</u></p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on access to core instruction reporting that these opportunities increased their knowledge of how to support SWDs in core instruction?</p>	<p>80 percent agree that the training and PD opportunities increased their knowledge in this area.</p>	<p>Fall: 65.4 percent of participants in the fall trainings responded via survey to address this evaluation question. Of the 448 respondents to this question, <u>92.6 percent agreed that the sessions increased knowledge of how to support SWDs in core instruction.</u></p> <p>Winter:</p>

			<p>59.2 percent of participants in the winter trainings responded via survey to address this evaluation question. Of the 352 respondents to this question, <u>92.3 percent agreed that the sessions increased knowledge of how to support SWDs in core instruction.</u></p> <p>Spring: 56.9 percent of participants in the winter trainings responded via survey to address this evaluation question. Of the 287 respondents to this question, <u>96.1 percent agreed that the sessions increased knowledge of how to support SWDs in core instruction</u></p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on access to core instruction reporting that these opportunities improved their ability to support SWDs in core instruction?</p>	<p>70 percent agree that the training and PD opportunities improved their ability to support SWDs in general education classroom.</p>	<p>Fall: 65.4 percent of participants in the fall trainings responded via survey to address this evaluation question. Of the 448 respondents to this question, <u>89.7 percent agreed that the session improved their ability to support SWDs in core instruction.</u></p> <p>Winter: 59.2 percent of participants in the winter trainings responded via survey to address this evaluation question. Of the 352 respondents to this question, <u>92 percent agreed that the session improved their ability to support SWDs in core instruction.</u></p> <p>Spring: 56.9 percent of participants in the winter trainings responded via survey to address this evaluation question. Of the 287 respondents to this question, <u>94 percent agreed that the session</u></p>

			<u>improved their ability to support SWDs in core instruction.</u>
4	Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on access to core instruction reporting that these opportunities improved their ability to implement with fidelity the interventions intended to support SWDs in core instruction?	70 percent agree they are implementing learned strategies with fidelity during the spring after beginning implementation.	Participants responded to a series of responses ²⁷ addressing learned strategies and improvement in the ability to implement them with fidelity. Based on overall responses, an aggregate fidelity of <u>93.7 percent of respondents agreed that they improved their ability to implement with fidelity the interventions intended to support SWDs in core instruction.</u>
5	Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on access to core instruction indeed implementing interventions with fidelity?	70 percent are implementing strategies with fidelity.	In total, 89 teachers received two observations using the Differentiation Inventory between three to six months apart. Overall scores were assigned to one of four quartiles. <u>74 percent of teachers increased to a high quartile in the second observation, and 92 percent of teachers observed received scores for the second observation in the top three quartiles of scores, which can be regarded as having met fidelity. 77 percent of the 89 teachers received scores on the second observation in the top two quartiles.</u>
6	How many district- and school-level staff participated in training and PD sessions relative to ensuring special education is the most intensive intervention in a continuum of service model and using EBPs like RTI ² , multi-sensory approaches, and data-based decision-making?	At least one special educator from participating schools attended all required sessions on these EBPs.	Fall: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special educator counts: <u>515 educators in the 223 participating schools</u> • Other district staff counts: <u>111 district staff in the 28 participating districts</u> Winter: ²⁸ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special educator counts: <u>383 educators in 189 schools</u>

²⁷ See Appendix for “Strategy 1: Final Spring Surveys” chart (page 69).

²⁸ This is the most current data available as of March 15, 2018. However, there remain several districts and schools that have yet to hold their trainings due to mitigating circumstances or have not yet reported their data.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other district staff counts: <u>81 district staff in 23 of the participating districts</u> <p>Spring: Data to be compiled in summer 2018.</p>
6.a	Did the requisite staff attend the training and PD sessions (special education supervisor and special education teacher)?	At least one special education from participating schools attended required sessions on these EBPs.	<p>Fall: Based on the self-reported attendance information and qualifying information from SPDG interventionists, <u>220 of these 223 participating schools had at least one special educator in attendance.</u></p> <p>Winter: Based on the self-reported attendance information and qualifying information from SPDG interventionists, <u>177 of these 189 school teams that have held winter trainings had at least one special educator in attendance.</u></p> <p>Spring: Data to be compiled in summer 2018.</p>
6.b	Did the team members feel the training was relevant and prepared them for next steps?	90 percent reported that they found the sessions valuable, high-quality, and relevant.	<p>Fall: 65.7 percent of participants in the fall trainings responded via survey to address this evaluation question. Of the 409 respondents to this question, <u>96.8 percent agreed that the session was relevant and prepared them for next steps.</u></p> <p>Winter: 60.22 percent of participants in the winter trainings responded via survey to address this evaluation question. Of the 330 respondents to this question, <u>91.8 percent agreed that the session was relevant and prepared them for next steps.</u></p> <p>Spring: Data to be compiled in summer 2018.</p>

7	Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on special education within a continuum of service model reporting that these opportunities increased their knowledge of how to make special education services the most intensive level of intervention?	80 percent agree that the training and PD opportunities increased their knowledge in this area.	<p>Fall: 65.7 percent of participants in the fall trainings responded via survey to address this evaluation question. Of the 409 respondents to this question, <u>96.9 percent agreed that the sessions increased knowledge of how to make special education the most intensive level of intervention (based on average of survey's three knowledge questions).</u>²⁹</p> <p>Winter: 60.22 percent of participants in the winter trainings responded via survey to address this evaluation question. Of the 330 respondents to this question, <u>94.24 percent agreed that the sessions increased knowledge of how to make special education the most intensive level of intervention (based on average of survey's three knowledge questions).</u>³⁰</p> <p>Spring: Data to be compiled in summer 2018.</p>
8	Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on special education within a continuum of service model reporting that these opportunities improved their ability to make special education services the most intensive level of interventions?	70 percent agree that the training and PD opportunities improved their ability to make special education the most intensive intervention.	<p>Fall: 65.7 percent of participants in the fall trainings responded via survey to address this evaluation question. Of the 409 respondents to this question, <u>96.43 percent agreed that the session improved their ability to make special education the most intensive intervention (based on average of survey's six ability questions).</u>³¹</p> <p>Winter:</p>

²⁹ See Appendix for "Strategy 2: Fall 2018 Trainings" chart (page 67).

³⁰ See Appendix for "Strategy 2: Winter 2018 Trainings" chart (page 68).

³¹ See Appendix for "Strategy 2: Fall 2018 Trainings" chart (page 67).

			<p>60.22 percent of participants in the winter trainings responded via survey to address this evaluation question. Of the 330 respondents to this question, <u>92.1 percent agreed that the session improved their ability to make special education the most intensive intervention (based on average of survey's six ability questions).</u>³²</p> <p>Spring: Data to be compiled in summer 2018.</p>
9	Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on special education within a continuum of service model reporting that these opportunities improved their ability to implement with fidelity the interventions intended to make special education services the most intensive level of interventions?	70 percent agree they are implementing learned strategies with fidelity during the spring after beginning implementation.	<p><u>N/A</u></p> <p>Data to be gathered in the spring 2018 survey, subsequent to spring trainings. Should be aggregated no later than June 15, 2018.</p>
10	Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on special education within a continuum of service model indeed implementing interventions with fidelity?	70 percent are implementing interventions with fidelity.	<p><u>N/A</u></p> <p>Data to be finalized no later than June 15, 2018.</p>
13	Are staff (and/or the staff they trained) who participated in trainings and PD sessions on writing IAIEPs incorporating the skills and principles in their practice with fidelity?	One year after implementation, 75 percent or more of the records reviewed utilizing the quality rubric in each of the eight areas evaluated are meeting or exceeding expectations.	<p>Narratives: 48.04 percent of files meeting or exceeding expectations</p> <p>Present Levels of Performance: 54.9 percent of files meeting or exceeding expectations</p> <p>Measurable Annual Goals: 52.74 percent of files meeting or exceeding expectations</p> <p>Accommodations/Modifications: 72.15 percent of files meeting or exceeding expectations</p>

³² See Appendix for "Strategy 2: Winter 2018 Trainings" chart (page 68).

			<p>Testing Accommodations: 66 percent of files meeting or exceeding expectations Services: 71.96 percent of files meeting or exceeding expectations Transition Plans: 77.96 percent of files meeting or exceeding expectations Overall IEP and Procedures: 61.69 percent of files meeting or exceeding expectations</p> <p>More information can be found in Figure 2.2 on page 34.</p>
Outcomes Evaluation Questions			
14	<p>What is the change in the percent of students with an SLD in the general education setting 80 percent or more of the day?</p>	<p>There is no regression in the percentage of students with an SLD in grades 3–8 in general education 80 percent or more of the day within participating schools from the baseline 2015-16 school year to the end of each year of implementation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline Data <u>79.83 percent of students with an SLD in the general education setting 80 percent or more of the day as of Dec. 1, 2015.</u> • Data After Year 1 Implementation <u>82.18 percent of students with an SLD in the general education setting 80 percent or more of the day as of May 1, 2017.</u>
15	<p>What is the rate of improvement for those students identified with an SLD for whom IAIEPs have been successfully written (will use sampling of students in participating schools) and who are receiving instruction utilizing strategies to ensure special education is the most intensive intervention?</p>	<p>There is an increase in the rate of improvement on the universal screening data over the school year in which EBPs are implemented. Repeat this analysis through subsequent years to determine that the progress monitoring data outlined in the current IEP are higher than those in the IEP in place prior to initial implementation.</p>	<p>Data to be compiled in summer 2018.</p>

Overarching Evaluation Question—SiMR

16	<p>Is the percentage of students with an SLD in grades 3–8 taking scoring at or above basic on the statewide ELA assessment increasing?</p>	<p>There is an increase by three percent annually in the percentage of students with an SLD in grades 3–8 scoring at or above basic on the statewide ELA assessment.</p>	<p>Year 1 – 2015-16: Due to issues with Tennessee’s assessment vendor in the 2015-16 school year (see “Data Quality Issues”), no comparisons will be available to conduct in year one of implementation. Assessment data from the 2016-17 school year will serve as the baseline.</p> <p>Year 2 – 2016-17: <u>New Baseline: 36.79 percent of students with an SLD participating on the ELA 3-8 assessment were at or above “approaching” (previously termed “basic”).</u></p> <p>Year 3 (2017-18) and Onward: Data will be available for comparison the summer after every subsequent school year.</p>
-----------	---	--	---