State Systemic Improvement Plan

Phase III

Tennessee Department of Education | April 2017

Contents

Summary of Phase III

In the 2016-17 school year, the Tennessee Department of Education observed the diligent plans established over two years in Phase I and Phase II of the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) come to fruition. While the timelines established in Phase II for implementation and evaluation were modified given unique circumstances, on the whole the implementation efforts in the inaugural year of Phase III have been relatively smooth and yielded positive initial results.

Theory of Action

In Phase I, the department developed a brief theory of action detailing the state-identified measureable result (SiMR), coherent strategies, and evidence-based practices necessary to achieve this ultimate outcome. During this phase, 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**. A more detailed theory of action was developed in Phase II (see Figure S.1), which delineated the activities, outputs, and short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes for each of the three coherent improvement strategies identified to achieve the SiMR.

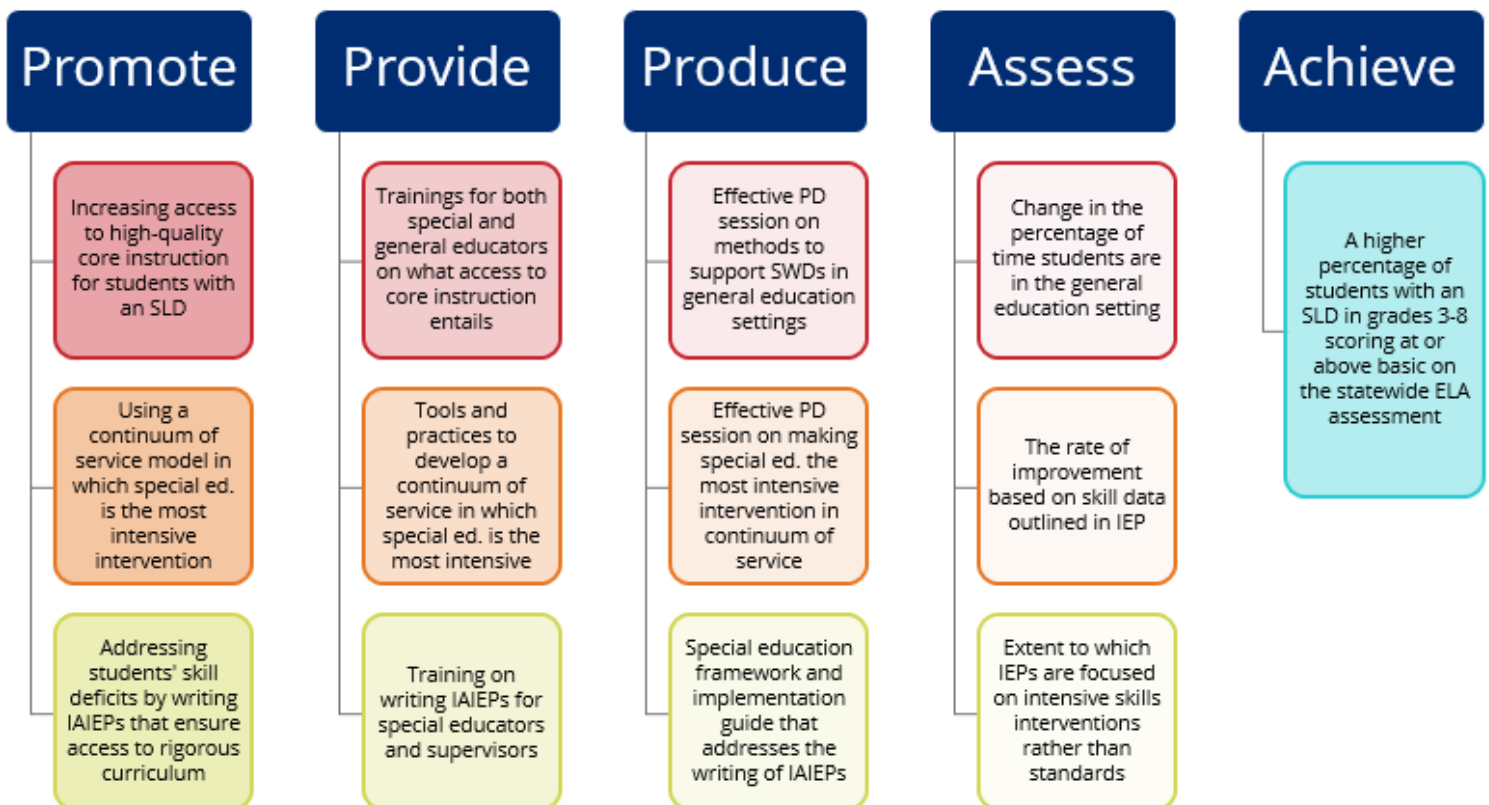| Promote	Provide	Produce	Assess	Achieve
Increasing access to high-quality core instruction for students with an SLD	Trainings for both special and general educators on what access to core instruction entails	Effective PD session on methods to support SWDs in general education settings	Change in the percentage of time students are in the general education setting	A higher percentage of students with an SLD in grades 3-8 scoring at or above basic on the statewide ELA assessment
Using a continuum of service model in which special ed. is the most intensive intervention	Tools and practices to develop a continuum of service in which special ed. is the most intensive	Effective PD session on making special ed. the most intensive intervention in continuum of service	The rate of improvement based on skill data outlined in IEP	
Addressing students' skill deficits by writing IAIEPs that ensure access to rigorous curriculum	Training on writing IAIEPs for special educators and supervisors	Special education framework and implementation guide that addresses the writing of IAIEPs	Extent to which IEPs are focused on intensive skills interventions rather than standards	

Figure S.1. The detailed theory of action from Phase II.

Infrastructure Changes

Prior to the 2016-17 school year, the department refined its infrastructure to support the strategies and activities outlined in the SSIP. As noted in Phase II,[1] one of the first major restructures was undertaken in early 2016 and resulted in the placement of the division of special populations and student support under the state's chief academic officer. In making this change, the department demonstrated that special education was not a disparate area unrelated to academics and instruction, but instead an integral part of it. Such realignment united the division of special populations and student support with others like teachers and leaders, Centers of Regional Excellence (CORE), and college and career readiness and increased opportunities for communication and collaboration cross-divisionally.

Within the division of special populations and student support, the newly established targeted support team and the existing instructional programming team have continued serving as the primary experts on special education programming statewide. These teams have supported and will continue 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. These department staff will also continue providing guidance and training as needed to those districts outside of the cohort. To supplement the resources offered by these two teams and their strong infrastructure, the division of special populations and student support allocated funds from the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) to create three SPDG-funded interventionist positions early in this first year of SSIP implementation. These positions are located in each of the three grand divisions of Tennessee (east, middle, and west Tennessee) and support the test cohort of districts in their work with the coherent improvement strategies.

Implementation Activities

Throughout the course of the 2016-17 school year, the department implemented the first coherent improvement strategy of increasing access to core instruction. Trainings on accessing core instruction for students with disabilities and development of effective professional learning sessions were established and offered to the 30 districts selected to participate in the initial test cohort for the SSIP. The evidence-based practices (EBPs) for this strategy, including the utilization of universal design for learning (UDL) principles in the general education setting and differentiation of instruction to meet the diverse needs of students, were embedded in the trainings provided throughout the year.

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[1] See SSIP Phase II ("Attachment 1—SSIP Phase II") report, page 6, in the "Infrastructure Development" section. This attachment is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360.

Coherent improvement strategy number two focuses on implementing a continuum of services model with special education as the most intensive intervention in the continuum of supports available to students. However, due to the delay in the release of Tennessee's SPDG funds, this second strategy will not begin implementation until the 2017-18 school year. Currently, department staff are developing the content for the strategy to begin academic coach training in the summer of 2017.

The third coherent improvement strategy of addressing skill deficits 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 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years as well, with department staff providing trainings at regional conferences, at specific professional learning communities (PLCs) hosted across the state, in districts requesting support, and to other department staff, such as interventionists from department's eight Centers of Regional Excellence (CORE). Moving forward, the major tenets of this strategy and its EBP of writing instructionally appropriate IEPs (IAIEPs) will be further employed in the 2017-18 school year supplement the second coherent improvement strategy.

Evaluation Activities and Data

In preparation for evaluation of the SSIP, the department began development of protocols and tools to assess implementation efforts, progress, and outcomes. These materials were developed specifically for the first coherent improvement strategy of increasing access to core instruction prior to the start of the 2016-17 school year. Engagement with districts in the SSIP initial cohort began by having administrators in participating schools complete preliminary analysis of current data on their student population. This was done prior to implementation of the first coherent improvement strategy to identify baselines and foster conversation about current performance and demographics of the participating schools during the initial school trainings on this strategy. Questions asked in this pre-work survey included:

- What percentage of students in grades 3-8 scored proficient or advanced on the ELA statewide assessment in your district?
- What percentage of students in grades 3-8 scored proficient or advanced on the ELA statewide assessment in your school?
- What percentage of the students in your school are performing at or above benchmark expectations (i.e. above the 25th percentile) on the reading universal screener?
- What percentage of the students in your school are performing below the 10th percentile on the reading universal screener?
- What percentage of the students in your school are students with disabilities?
- What is the most prevalent disability category in your school?

- What percentage of students with disabilities in your school are in the general education environment at 80 percent or more of the day?
- What percentage of students in your school are English learners?

The information gleaned from the results of this survey was utilized to identify areas of concern, to establish current data upon which to improve, and identify how increasing access to core instruction for students with disabilities might improve on current school-level performance.

To ensure these trainings were being completed with fidelity in both the fall, winter, and spring, 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.

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 on the whole the information has been very encouraging, indicating that SSIP schools are moving in the right direction. In surveys following the fall and winter trainings on increasing access to core instruction, over 93 percent of respondents reported that the trainings were relevant and prepared them for the next steps of implementation of the strategy. In addition, over 92 percent of survey respondents from fall and winter agreed that their knowledge of this first coherent improvement strategy and its EBPs increased due to the trainings, and over 90 percent agreed that they felt their abilities to support this strategy had increased. 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 shared: "I love this initiative. It is changing the conversation from 'how to handle SWDs in our classrooms' to 'how can I make sure I am meeting the needs of all learners?'"

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The department anticipates that the majority of measures necessary to conduct analysis and evaluation of the first year of implementation will be available in the summer of 2017. To determine the process and progress of strategy implementation during this timeframe, the evaluation team will be reviewing the fidelity of implementation reports conducted by evaluation staff, SPDG

interventionists, and district staff. In addition, there will also be comparison data available by summer 2017, which will be used to determine initial outcomes from implementation. Using baseline data from the 2015-16 school year, the SSIP evaluation team will conduct analysis to determine if more students with an SLD are indeed getting more access to core instruction by the end of the first year of strategy implementation.

Changes to Plan

The most notable changes to the SSIP in Phase III were modifications to timelines for implementation and data quality concerns that led to modification of baseline data for the SiMR. While the department initially planned to deploy trainings for 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 second improvement strategy will not begin until the 2017-18 school year. Elements of the third coherent improvement strategy, including the development of the instructionally appropriate individualized education program (IEP) EBP and the special education framework, were implemented in the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school year. However, the department decided to delay evaluation activities for this strategy and tailored support to the 30 participating districts in the SSIP cohort until the 2017-18 school year. This was done with the intention to pair this third strategy with the second, as both are so integral to one another. Figure 1.3 (page 13) provides further details on these changes to the implementation process.

There were also changes to one of the outcomes evaluation questions originally developed in the SSIP Phase II. The evaluation question referenced—*What is the change in the annual percentage of students referred for an SLD subsequent to the baseline 2013-14 school year?* —can be found in the SSIP Phase II report.[2] After internal discussions with department staff and feedback from external stakeholders, the department felt that this question, which was intended to address the coherent improvement strategy, did not adequately answer the question number two. Indeed, the metric was intended to determine whether or not a continuum of service model was being effectively employed, which is certainly crucial to ensure a tiered model of support is in place. But the real question to assess efficacy of the SSIP implementation activities is not whether the model exists, but whether special education as the most intensive intervention is ameliorating skill deficits and leading to improved performance for students with an SLD.

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[2] See SSIP Phase II ("Attachment 1—SSIP Phase II") report, page 78, Table 2.a, Question 15. This attachment is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360.

In addition, this question had precarious legal implications of which the department wanted to remain cognizant. In theory, if there was pervasive over-identification of students with an SLD due to lack of a response to intervention (RTI) model, there should not be an increase in the percent of students referred. However, there are always mitigating circumstances. Moreover, there is also a possibility that perhaps some students who might qualify for an SLD were being under-identified, and thus an increase in referrals might occur as a result of an effective tiered model. In light of these concerns, the department elected to remove this evaluation question. Instead, measures of effective implementation of this strategy will be paired with the outcome evaluation question for the third coherent improvement strategy. Because the two are intertwined, it seems in intuitive that they should be both be provided and measured in tandem.

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 will have to establish the assessment results for the 2016-17 school year as the baseline data. While the department recognizes this will not be a true baseline, as interventions were applied through the implementation of the access to core instruction strategy, it should still provide a base upon which to assess growth in coming years. This growth measurement is the cornerstone of Tennessee's SSIP, so having comparison data in future years will be far more vital than a pure baseline with no mitigating factors.

Implementation

In the summer of 2016, the department began initial implementation of the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP). The commencement of this work was a seminal moment, signaling a culmination of work in which activities outlined on paper were actually put into practice. The success seen thus far in the implementation process is largely predicated on the diligent efforts done on the front end to prepare an effective blueprint for the state's work. The data and infrastructure analysis completed in Phase I helped the department identify the state-identified measureable result (SiMR) upon which to focus efforts, and the coherent improvement strategies to achieve the desired outcome. The improvements to infrastructure, development of evidence-based practices to support coherent improvement strategies, and the creation of an evaluation plan in Phase II were critical to lay groundwork for successful implementation of strategies and practices.

Throughout the 2016-17 school year, the department has consistently reflected on the work outlined in the plan established in Phase II and continued to focus on the theory of action driving the work. Indeed, 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 I (see Figure 1.1).
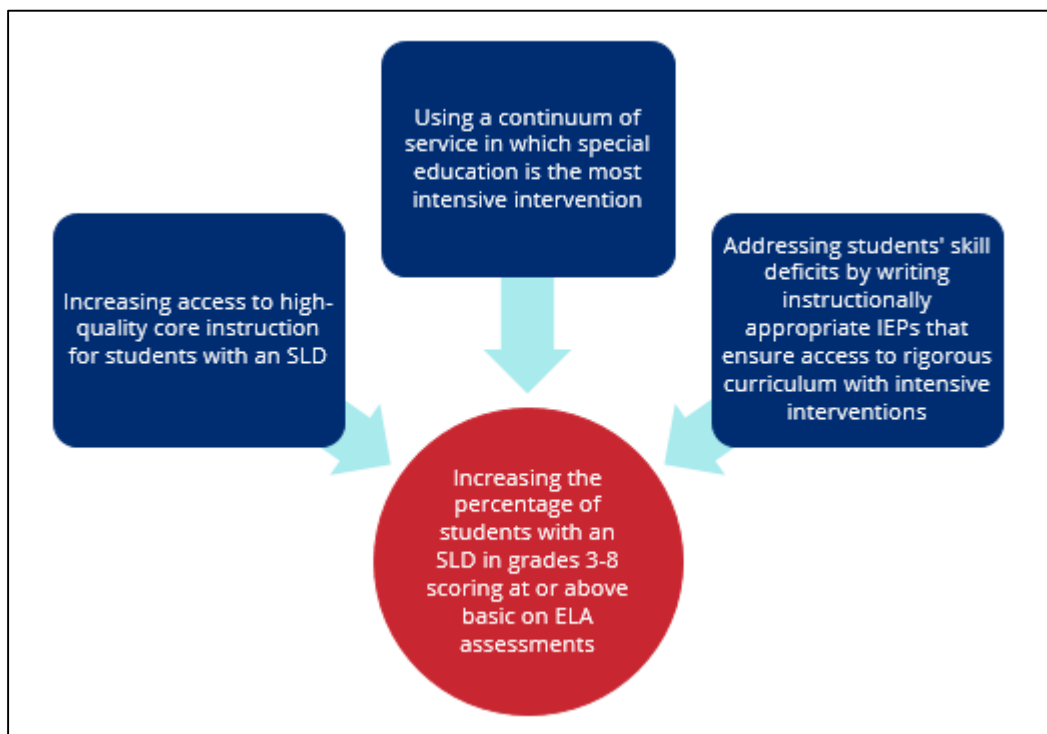

Figure 1.1. The broad theory of action from Phase I.

Changes to Implementation Timeline

There were several adjustments made to the SSIP originally outlined in Phase II given some unique challenges faced by the department. Efforts to align the work of the SSIP with the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) resources meant that the strategies to be carried out through the SPDG were delayed as the department waited for the federal funds to be approved and released by the state legislature. While the SPDG funds became available for state use Oct. 1, 2015, the legislature did not approve their release to the department until spring 2016. Such circumstances stymied some implementation timelines and led to adjustments of the SSIP.

While all three coherent improvement strategies (outlined in Figure 1.1) and their respective evidence-based practices (EBPs) were intended to be implemented in tandem, in practice the department elected, based on internal discussions and stakeholder feedback, to devote the 2016-17 school year primarily to implementing improvement strategy one. In doing so, the department was able to allocate appropriate time and resources to the development of viable materials and trainings for this strategy. The department developed this training content internally in conjunction with the feedback from contracted national experts
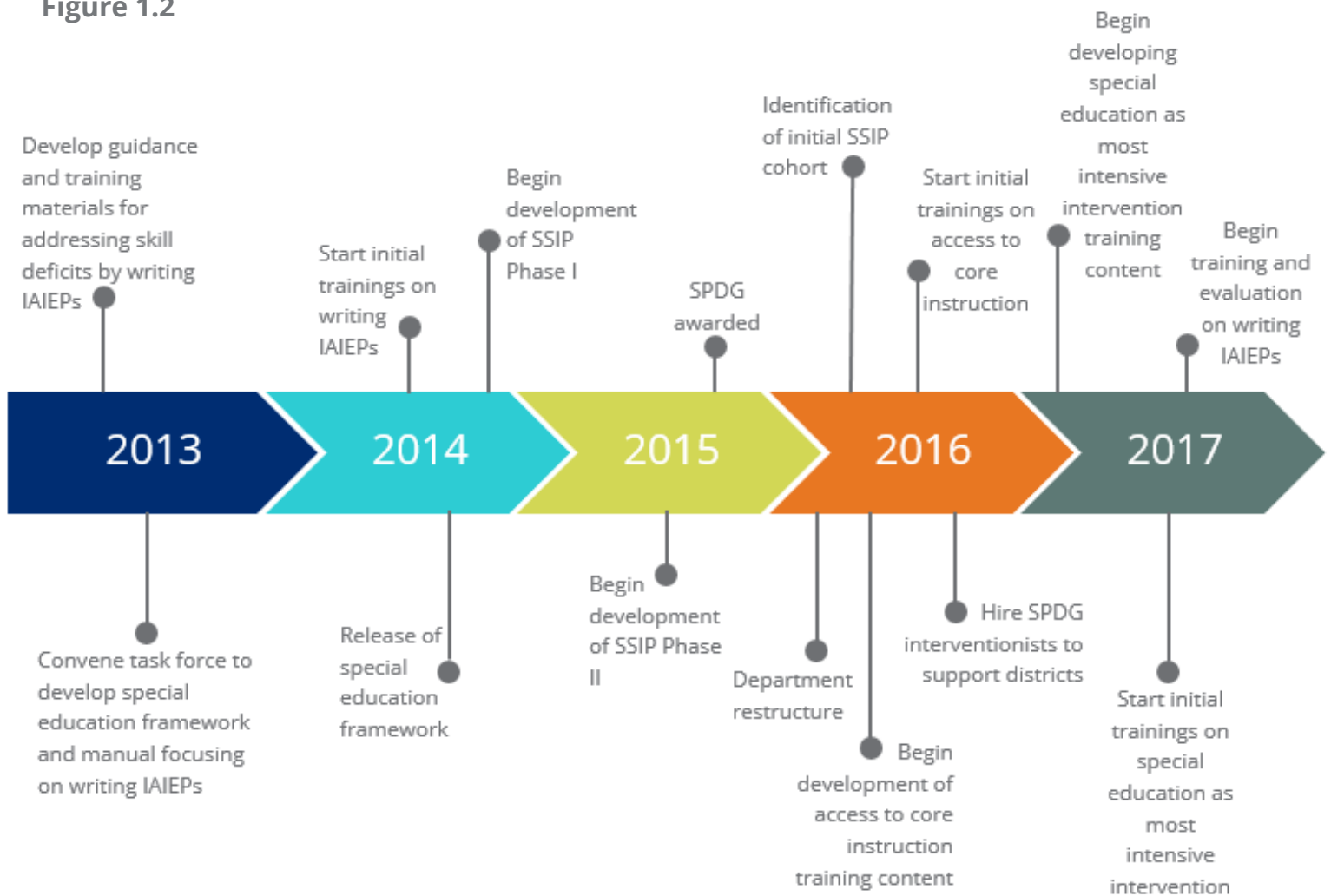
The second coherent improvement strategy—ensuring special education is the most intensive intervention by utilizing a continuum of service model—will be addressed in the 2017-18 school year. This delay in implementation will allow the department to focus intensively on development of content during the spring of 2017 for implementation in the 2017-18 school year. Members of the instructional programming team for the division of special populations and student support are currently developing content for this strategy and will complete train-the-trainer and professional development trainings by late spring 2017. Trainings on coherent improvement strategy two will begin in the summer of 2017 in a similar fashion to the release of training for the first strategy of increasing access to core instruction. The latter strategy will certainly not be abandoned with the implementation of work around intensification of special education intervention, but will continue to be included and reflected upon throughout the ensuing school years.

For the third coherent improvement strategy of addressing skill deficits through the EBP of writing instructionally appropriate IEPs (IAIEPs), much of the groundwork for establishing trainings and developing professional development tools and resources was done several years prior to this first year of SSIP implementation. However, the implementation and evaluation activities for this third strategy, to be completed for the 30 participating districts in the initial SSIP cohort, have been delayed until the 2017-18 school year. The postponement of this work was done in an effort to ensure enactment of this strategy be concurrent with the enactment of the second coherent improvement

strategy addressing special education as the most intensive intervention. Indeed, this third strategy is inextricably linked with the second strategy, and thus it is logical to conduct implementation and evaluation processes in concert with this second strand of training.

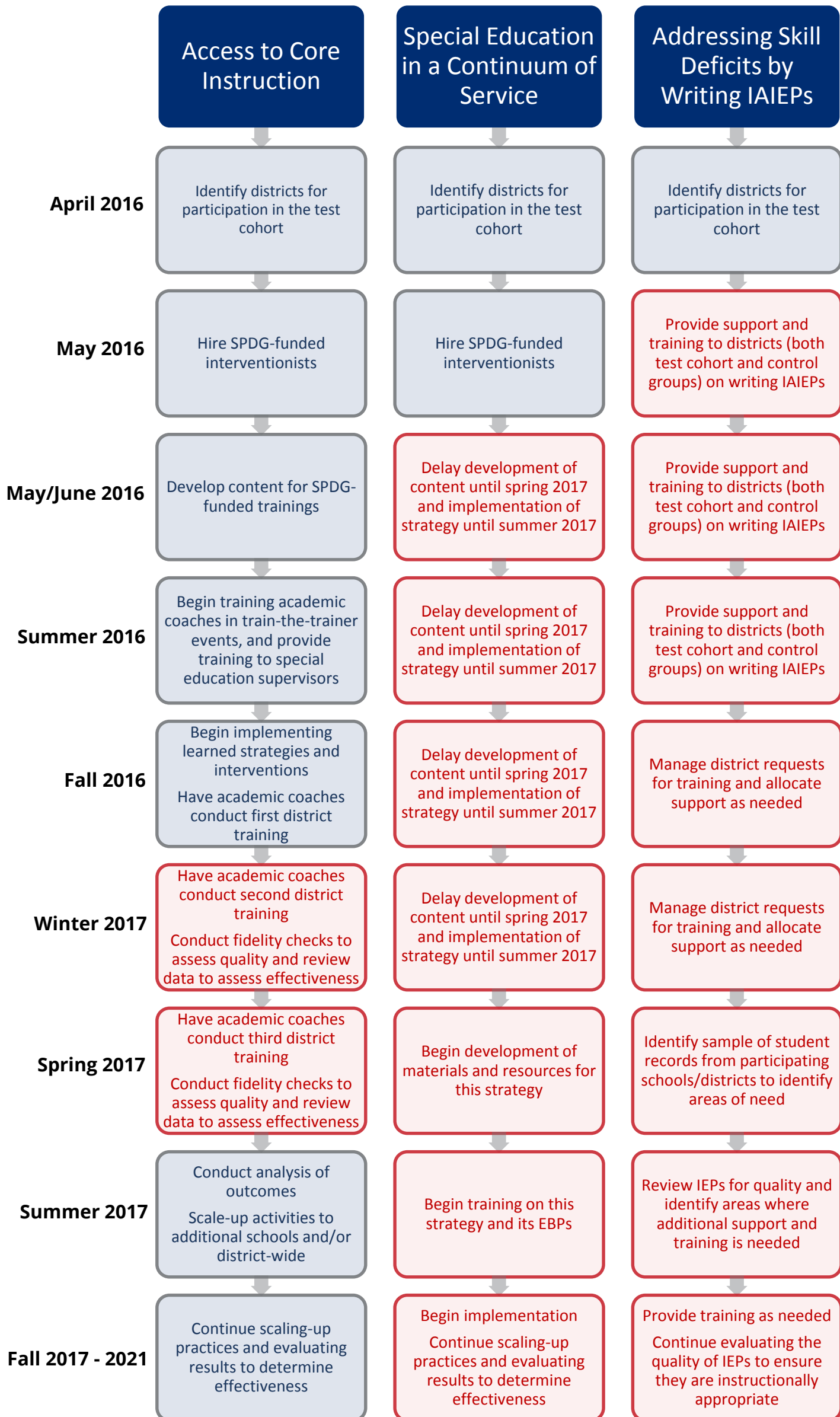A simplified timeline of implementation activities is available in Figure 1.2, which in particular specifies when particular coherent improvement strategies and their EBPs took place or will take place based on the adjusted timeframes.

Figure 1.2

To reflect the changes to the implementation timeline outlined in the SSIP Phase II report, the table has been updated in Figure 1.3 with changed timelines highlighted in red.

Figure 1.3

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Implementation Timeline

	Access to Core Instruction	Special Education in a Continuum of Service	Addressing Skill Deficits by Writing IAIEPs
April 2016	Identify districts for participation in the test cohort	Identify districts for participation in the test cohort	Identify districts for participation in the test cohort
May 2016	Hire SPDG-funded interventionists	Hire SPDG-funded interventionists	Provide support and training to districts (both test cohort and control groups) on writing IAIEPs
May/June 2016	Develop content for SPDG-funded trainings	Delay development of content until spring 2017 and implementation of strategy until summer 2017	Provide support and training to districts (both test cohort and control groups) on writing IAIEPs
Summer 2016	Begin training academic coaches in train-the-trainer events, and provide training to special education supervisors	Delay development of content until spring 2017 and implementation of strategy until summer 2017	Provide support and training to districts (both test cohort and control groups) on writing IAIEPs
Fall 2016	Begin implementing learned strategies and interventions Have academic coaches conduct first district training	Delay development of content until spring 2017 and implementation of strategy until summer 2017	Manage district requests for training and allocate support as needed
Winter 2017	Have academic coaches conduct second district training Conduct fidelity checks to assess quality and review data to assess effectiveness	Delay development of content until spring 2017 and implementation of strategy until summer 2017	Manage district requests for training and allocate support as needed
Spring 2017	Have academic coaches conduct third district training Conduct fidelity checks to assess quality and review data to assess effectiveness	Begin development of materials and resources for this strategy	Identify sample of student records from participating schools/districts to identify areas of need
Summer 2017	Conduct analysis of outcomes Scale-up activities to additional schools and/or district-wide	Begin training on this strategy and its EBPs	Review IEPs for quality and identify areas where additional support and training is needed
Fall 2017 - 2021	Continue scaling-up practices and evaluating results to determine effectiveness	Begin implementation Continue scaling-up practices and evaluating results to determine effectiveness	Provide training as needed Continue evaluating the quality of IEPs to ensure they are instructionally appropriate

Implementation Activities

Early in Phase III implementation, the department focused on modifying and augmenting its infrastructure to better support the SSIP and state priorities. Once this appropriate structure was established, comprehensive implementation of the first coherent improvement strategy of increasing access to core instruction began in summer 2016. In the 2016-17 school year, the department began developing content for the second coherent improvement strategy of ensuring special education is the most intensive intervention in a continuum of service model. The third coherent improvement strategy—addressing skill deficits through the EBP of writing instructionally appropriate IEPs—actually began development and implementation in the 2014-15 school year. However, refinements and updates to this strategy and its resource tools have been made throughout the subsequent years and will continue throughout Phase III.

Department Infrastructure Improvements

Success of any plan is contingent on having an effective foundation upon which to scaffold strategies, initiatives, and practices. Over the last several years, changes have been made to the overall department structure that have more clearly aligned the work of the division of special populations and student support to the rest of the academic divisions in the department. This reconfiguration has allowed the division of special populations and student support to connect its work to priorities within the department's strategic plan and have a voice in decision-making processes regarding statewide project planning. Details of these infrastructure improvements can be found in the SSIP Phase II report.[3]

As noted in Phase II, the department has also aligned the resources from its SPDG to the work of the SSIP. Indeed, the two strands of training outlined in the SPDG—access to core instruction and making special education the most intensive intervention—are identical to the first two coherent improvement strategies delineated in the SSIP theory of action. Through the SPDG, the department hired three interventionists in the fall of 2016 to support districts in each of Tennessee's three grand divisions (east, middle, and west Tennessee) with work relative to the SSIP and SPDG activities. A department intervention specialist in the winter of 2017 was also hired to assist in scaffolding the plan and support those districts participating in the SSIP activities, as well as to provide technical assistance statewide.

The division of special populations and student support also expanded in the summer of 2017 with the development of a new office focused on providing targeted support to districts. This team will assist

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[3] See SSIP Phase II ("Attachment 1—SSIP Phase II") report, page 6, in the "Infrastructure Development" section. This attachment is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360.

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 conduct site visits in districts with evidence of systemic concerns. Evidence for such systemic concerns may arise from reviews of district and school plans, persistent complaints filed, and data concerns identified by department staff. 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. As was shared in Phase II, Figure 1.4 below outlines the flow of supports utilized in the SSIP to achieve the SiMR.

Figure 1.4 P a g e | **16**

Flow of Supports
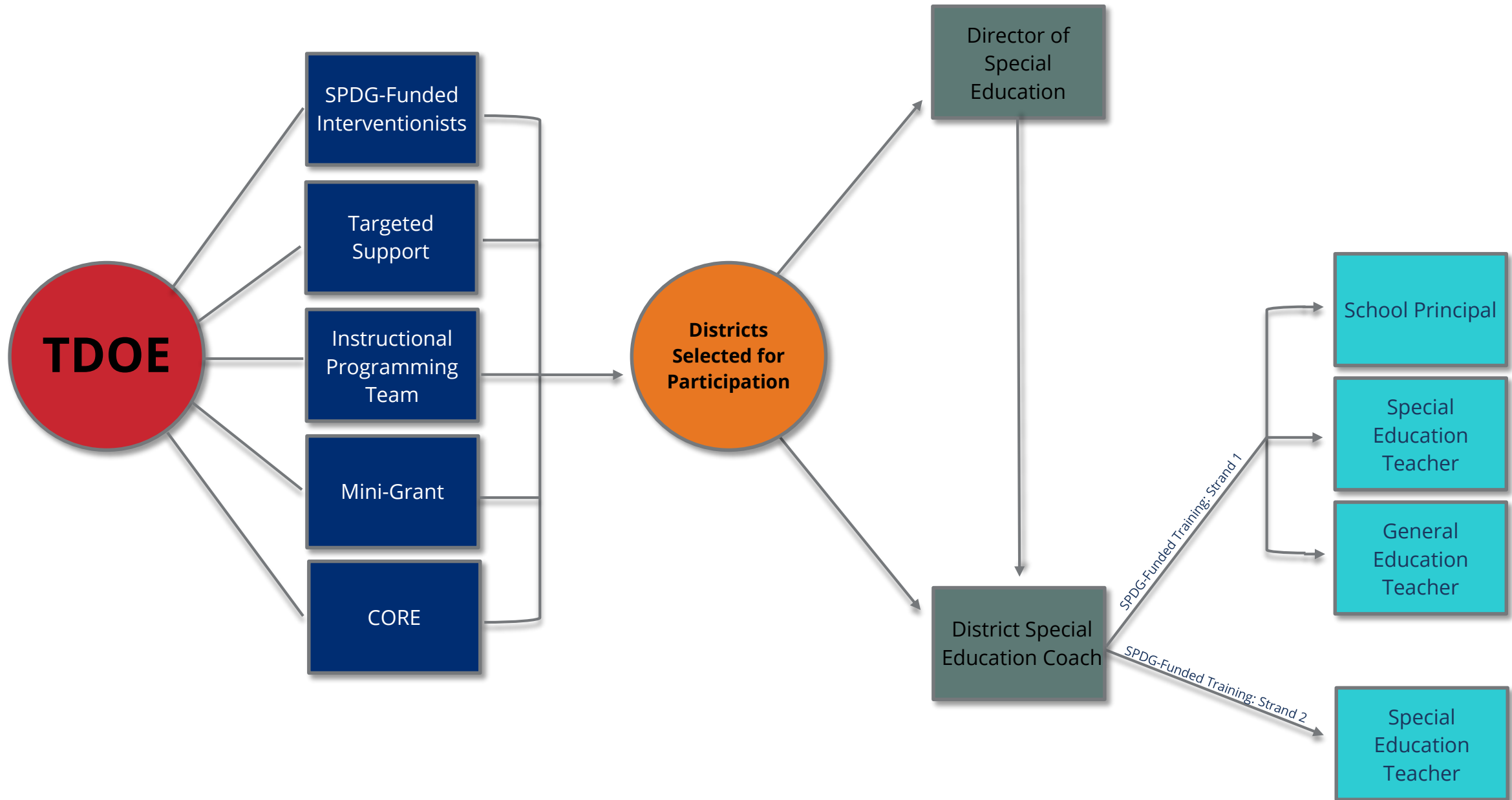
Implementation of Strategy One: Access to Core Instruction

The improved structure of the department, including the addition of the SPDG-funded interventionists, has fostered a strong environment in which the work of the SSIP has the opportunity to flourish. In summer 2016, the first strand of SPDG training to address the first coherent improvement strategy of the SSIP was rolled out. To best support initial implementation of this and all other improvement strategies, the department made the decision to select a test cohort of districts for participation in SSIP activities.

Through a competitive application process,[4] the department identified 30 districts to participate in this work. Each district selected for participation was then asked to identify the schools in which to begin implementation of this training, as well as school teams to lead the work. In the 2016-17 school year, 111 schools participated in the trainings and activities around this strategy of increasing access to core instruction. As specified in the SPDG, each school team must consist of at least one special education teacher, at least one general education teacher, and at least one school administrator. Additionally, the participating districts were required to select an academic coach to guide this first coherent improvement strategy at the district level. These coaches were determined by district staff through utilization of a rubric to find those best suited for supporting the work.

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

Universal design for learning (UDL) was one of the evidence-based practices (EBPs) employed to address the access to core instruction coherent improvement strategy (see Figure 1.5). Guidance on this work was deployed through four waves of training throughout the 2016-17 school year. The initial week-long train-the-trainer session took place in the summer of 2016, and focused on supplying the academic coaches with content and resources to support the strategy of increasing access to core instruction for SWDs through the UDL models outlined in Phase II of the SSIP. Additionally, special education supervisors were
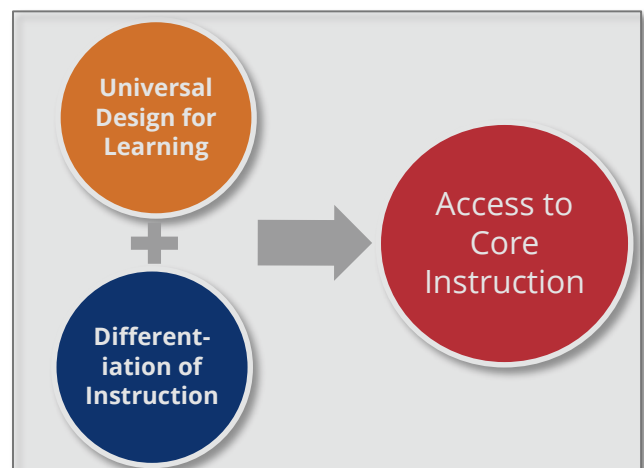
Figure 1.5. The two EBPs that address the coherent improvement strategy of access to core instruction.

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[4] A copy of the SSIP application for participation, titled "Attachment 2—District SSIP Application," is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360.

required to attend the training for a minimum of one day to learn how to effectively support their academic coaches and assess fidelity of implementation. This training included learning: how to utilize fidelity monitoring checklists, including the differentiation inventory developed through the SPDG;[5] how to engage participating staff in communities of practice (CoPs); and how to assist school teams as necessary through the implementation process.

Subsequent to the summer train-the-trainer sessions, academic coaches provided two workshops on implementation of UDL principles in the fall of 2016 and winter of 2017 to their districts' participating school teams. A third and final workshop, also to be led by the academic coaches, will take place in the spring of 2017. The SPDG interventionists for the department, as well as other SSIP evaluation team members specified in Phase II, have attended these district-level trainings to conduct fidelity monitoring, which ensures these coaches have appropriately covered all training information with quality and efficacy.

In addition to the UDL trainings, districts have held CoPs at their local level to connect the work taking place across all participating schools. These CoPs have served as excellent opportunities for collaboration where school teams can share successes found with the use of the strategies and also lessons learned. The SPDG interventionists attend many of these CoPs, as requested, for the regions in which they serve, sometimes along with the SSIP evaluation staff members and SPDG project managers. From these CoPs, the department has been able to glean where districts are excelling or struggling to assist in holistic evaluation of implementation efforts and identify areas to improve trainings and activities in future years and with new cohorts.

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 1.5) is interconnected with the UDL methodology itself. Indeed, this EBP encourages educators to respond to variance in students and their learning styles within the classroom to help them succeed.[6] The department developed presentations and guidance materials in the 2014-15 school year to support districts as they considered how to effectively include SWDs in the general education setting. Trainings were held in the summers of 2015 and 2016 to

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[5] A copy of the differentiation inventory, titled "Attachment 3—Differentiation Inventory," is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360.

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

directly offer support regionally, and the interventionists in regional CORE offices have since taken on the role of supporting districts with this work.

The 30 districts participating in the initial cohort for the SSIP have also received training on differentiating instruction for SWDs in the general education setting as part of the workshops offered in the 2016-17 school year addressing increasing access to core instruction. Embedding this EBP within the trainings covering the EBP of UDL principles was a natural decision, given that both practices are inherently intertwined. Differentiation of instruction has also been a topic of discussion at local CoPs in conjunction with larger conversations around increasing access to core instruction for SWDs.

Implementation of Strategy Two: Special Education in Continuum of Service

While full implementation of coherent improvement strategy two will not take place in participating schools until the 2017-18 school year, some groundwork has been laid to address it. Both the department intervention specialist and the SPDG interventionists supporting the SSIP initial cohort will be collaborating to develop trainings and resources on ensuring special education is the most intensive intervention in a

Figure 1.6. The three EBPs that address the coherent improvement strategy of providing special education interventions in a continuum of service.

continuum of service model. Such training will include content related to providing intense interventions to SWDs by accurately identifying student needs through the use of assessments and progress monitoring data, making data-based decisions regarding those assessments, and aligning student needs with appropriate interventions. In addition, content will focus on the characteristics of appropriate interventions for identified areas of deficit.
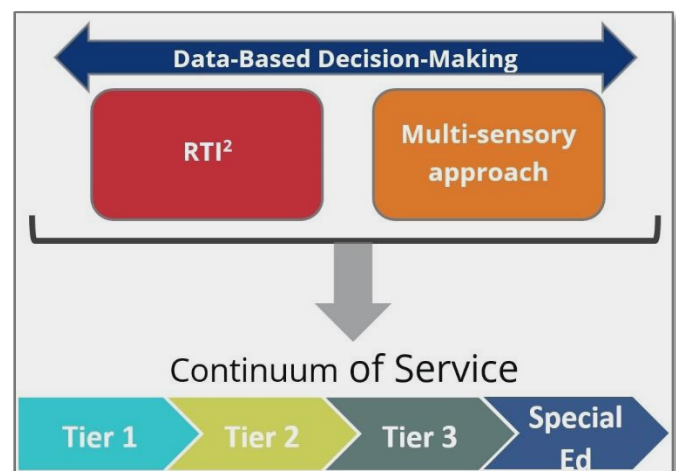
The use of a multi-sensory approach based on the research findings of Orton-Gillingham and Lindamood-Bell will also be embedded within the trainings. These trainings will be geared towards special education teachers as a three part mini-workshop series offered throughout the school year with embedded bridges to practice. Each session will focus on specified objectives. Within each session, participants will work together in small groups to practice the skills taught. Participants will complete bridge to practice activities to implement the skills they have learned at trainings within their own classrooms and provide feedback through follow-up activities. These activities will include

coaching opportunities to assess the fidelity of implementation as well as communities of practice. The subsequent workshop sessions will build upon the skills learned in the previous session. Each session will also be made available as a module on Tennessee's SPDG website in order to provide access to those teachers unable to attend the face-to-face sessions. 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 STEP.

As shown in Figure 1.6, data-based decision-making to inform both the statewide response to intervention and instruction (RTI^2) program initially implemented in Tennessee on July 1, 2014 and the aforementioned multi-sensory approach are integral to ensuring a successful continuum of service model in which special education is the most intensive intervention. Members of the division of special populations and student support will be collaborating with the division of data and research to assess the quality of RTI^2 implementation, particularly in the 30 districts in the initial SSIP cohort. Information will be gathered from these districts through surveys, qualitative data about implementation, and data analysis of key demographics and outcomes to tease out areas for improvement. The multi-sensory approach will begin in the 2017-18 school year and covered in the train-the-trainer and three district-level trainings.

Implementation of Strategy Three: Addressing Skill Deficits

For the last several years, the department has placed a premium on ameliorating skill deficits that prevent SWDs from both effectively accessing core instruction and attaining the desired academic outcomes. Prior to the 2013-14 school year, the writing of standards-based IEPs was common practice; in these IEPs, goals addressed an overarching standard that was used for all students, both SWDs and non-SWDs. Often, these standards-based goals were not specific to students' individual needs and were formulaic in nature. Such a practice was antithetical to the idea of a document being individualized and predicated on the present performance levels of students. In the 2013-14 school year, the department developed detailed trainings and resources to address the writing of instructionally appropriate IEPs (IAIEPs) that addressed skill deficits. In addition, a task force was convened to

Figure 1.7. The EBP for the coherent improvement strategy of addressing students' skill deficits.

create a revised special education framework focused on supporting and writing goals for SWDs and

developing appropriate plans to yield positive outcomes. Thus, the writing of instructionally appropriate IEPs became the primary EBP for this coherent improvement strategy (see Figure 1.7).

Evidence-Based Practice: Writing of Instructionally Appropriate IEPs

As noted in the SSIP Phase II report,[7] this EBP has been implemented in several waves over the last several years. In the 2013-14 school year, the department convened a task force to discuss the methodology by which IEPs were currently being developed across the state. As a result of the task force input, guidance documents and resources for writing instructionally appropriate IEPs were communicated statewide, and large-scale trainings were held regionally to discuss this EBP in the summer of 2014. During this time, the department also developed a framework to be a resource for districts implementing special education programs.

As part of their participation in the SSIP activities, the initial SSIP cohort of 30 districts have the instructional programming team for the division of special populations and student support as a resource to provide further district-level training on writing IAIEPs. Due to the delay in the release of SPDG funds, the department elected to delay provision of support relative to the writing of IAIEPs. Such support in this EBP will become more salient in the coming year, as the second strand of training on the coherent improvement strategy of ensuring special education is the most intensive intervention, gets underway. To be sure, ensuring that special education is the most intensive intervention for a student is contingent on knowing a student's current present levels and identifying measureable goals in the IEP to mitigate deficits and improve academic outcomes. Proper intervention is predicated on having an appropriate guidance document that outlines where and how to intervene.

To prepare for implementation of this strategy, the department will be conducting a review of sampled IEPs from each of the 30 participating districts (more information provided in the "Data on Implementation and Outcomes" section). The files will be selected randomly, comprising five percent of the students with specific learning disabilities (SLD) population. Members of the instructional programming team, targeted support team, and the SPDG interventionists will conduct reviews utilizing a defined rubric[8] specified in Phase II. This rubric measures quality of IEPs for relevant sections of the document. The results of this review will assist the department in identifying problematic trends for specific districts. Trainings on implementation of this EBP will be tailored to meet each specific districts' needs and may encompass all elements of the IAIEP training, or only specific portions. This

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[7] See SSIP Phase II ("Attachment 1—SSIP Phase II") report, page 39, in the "Support for District Implementation of EBPs" section. This attachment is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360.
[8] A copy of the IEP evaluation rubric, titled "Attachment 4—IEP Review Rubric," is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360.

analysis will be done in the summer of 2017, prior to implementation of the second coherent improvement strategy.

Outputs

While the broad theory of action shown in Figure 1.1 (page 10) presents the overarching goals and desired result, the more detailed theory of action fleshed out in Phase II illustrates the steps necessary to successfully reach the SiMR. This detailed theory of action can be seen in Figure 1.8, and it disaggregates the inputs, strategies, activities, and short- and long-term outputs for each of the three coherent improvement strategies, all of which ultimately work in concert to achieve the SiMR.
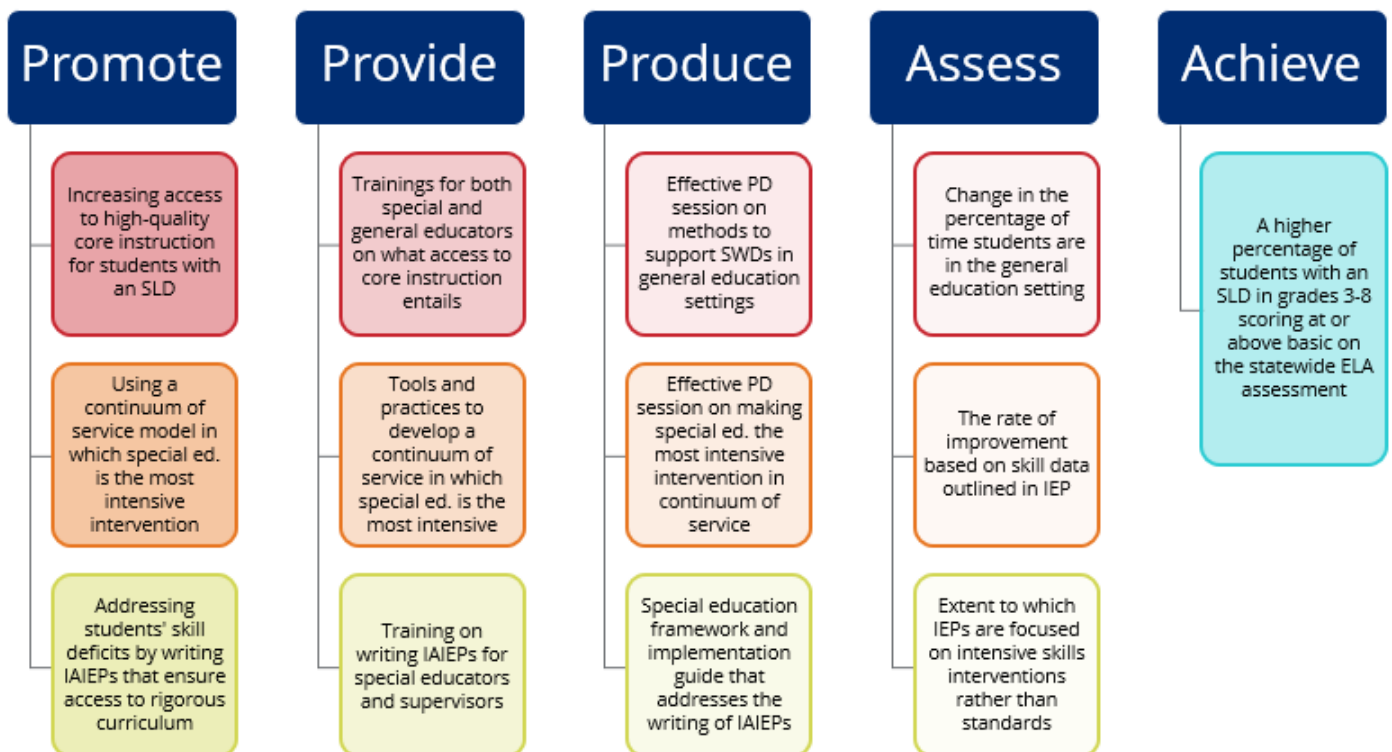
Promote	Provide	Produce	Assess	Achieve
Increasing access to high-quality core instruction for students with an SLD	Trainings for both special and general educators on what access to core instruction entails	Effective PD session on methods to support SWDs in general education settings	Change in the percentage of time students are in the general education setting	A higher percentage of students with an SLD in grades 3-8 scoring at or above basic on the statewide ELA assessment
Using a continuum of service model in which special ed. is the most intensive intervention	Tools and practices to develop a continuum of service in which special ed. is the most intensive	Effective PD session on making special ed. the most intensive intervention in continuum of service	The rate of improvement based on skill data outlined in IEP	
Addressing students' skill deficits by writing IAIEPs that ensure access to rigorous curriculum	Training on writing IAIEPs for special educators and supervisors	Special education framework and implementation guide that addresses the writing of IAIEPs	Extent to which IEPs are focused on intensive skills interventions rather than standards	

Figure 1.8. The detailed theory of action from Phase II.

The steps outlined in Figure 1.8 are essential to achieve desired short- and long-term outcomes, while the preliminary steps for the "provide" and "produce" phases of the theory of action are critical for appropriate development of outputs and successful implementation of the strategies. These steps were provided in Phase II, but were actually enacted for the first coherent improvement strategy of increasing access to core instruction in the 2016-17 school year. Many of the preliminary initial steps

for the third strategy of closing skill deficits were addressed during the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years.

Provide Phase

Figure 1.9 delineates each of the preliminary steps that were necessary to provide the short-term outputs for implementation. The two coherent improvement strategies implemented to date have been outlined in blue to highlight the steps completed for the "provide" phase of the theory of action.
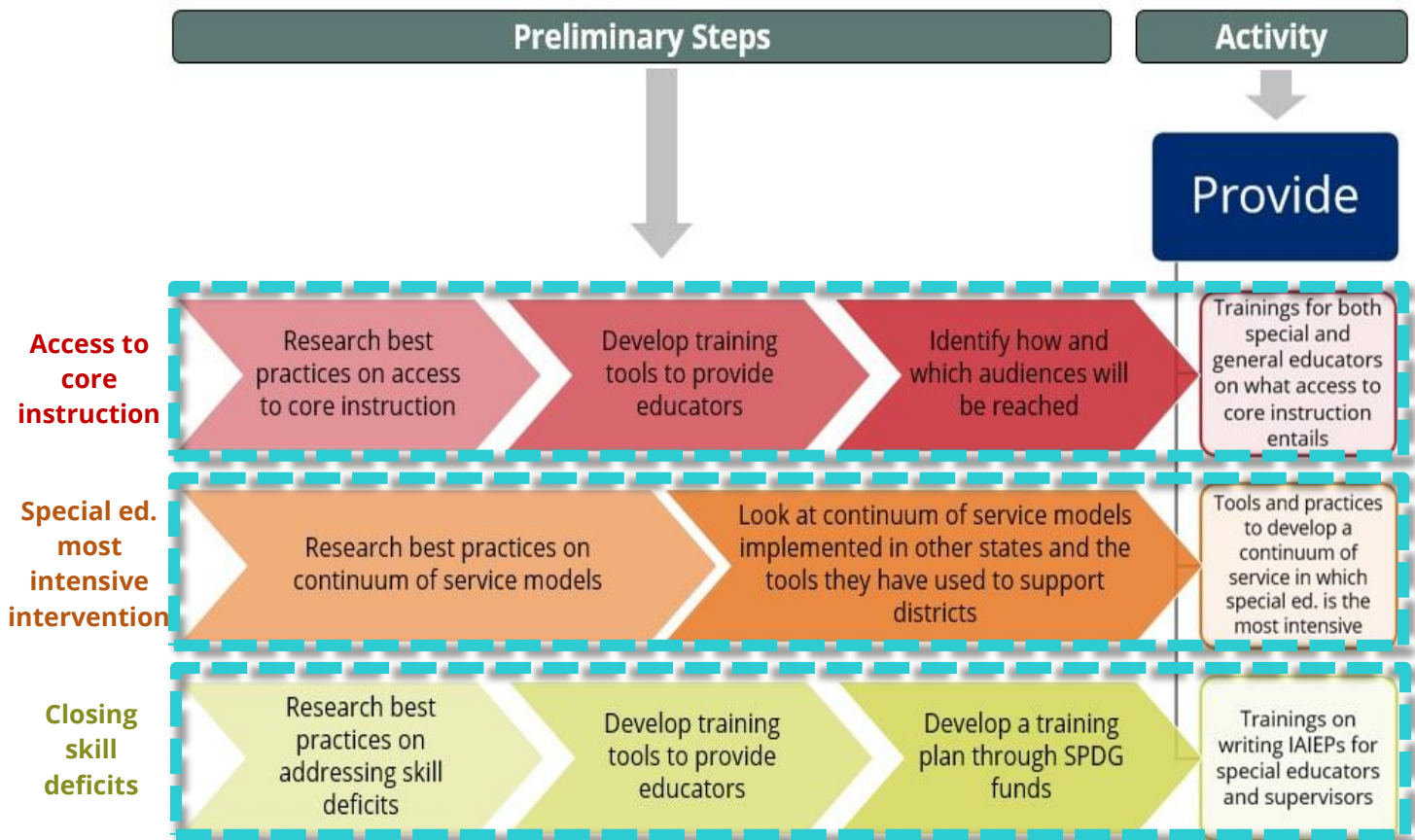

Figure 1.9. The preliminary steps necessary to achieve the activities detailed in the "provide" phase.

Strategy One: Access to Core Instruction

During the preliminary steps in Figure 1.9, the department was able to develop an output of trainings for educators on increasing core instruction. Preparation to provide such trainings, which began in the spring of 2016, entailed research on effective practices, development of resource guides for educators, and identification of effective logistics to provide such trainings. Upon completion of training materials and content, a train-the-trainer event was held in the summer of 2016.

In preparation for the train-the-trainer event, academic coaches were selected by special education supervisors in each of the 30 participating districts. These coaches were charged with gathering the appropriate knowledge and resources for strategies and redelivering the information to their district staff. The train-the-trainer event was the avenue by which content was provided to the coaches, and entailed a week of training on the first coherent improvement strategy of increasing access to core instruction. The purpose of the training was to provide these academic coaches with the skills necessary to provide effective professional development within their respective districts. Special education supervisors were permitted to attend the first four days of the trainings and required to attend the final day of training to learn about the evaluation instruments they would utilize when measuring fidelity of implementation.

Thirty academic coaches participated in the train-the-trainer event (one coach for each participating districts), and 33 special education supervisors participated. Of the 30 participating coaches, 29 responded to a follow-up survey[9] designed to gather information about whether the training was beneficial and gave them the necessary skills to redeliver professional development opportunities in their district. Without exception, participants agreed that the training improved their knowledge and skills in all eleven areas; 100 percent of participants either strongly agreed or agreed with all eleven items. More information on these items can be seen in the "Train-the-Trainer" subsection on page 80.

Subsequent to the train-the-trainer event in the summer of 2016, districts planned their own specific trainings for fall, winter, and spring on increasing access to core instruction. Academic coaches utilized the trainings and content developed by the department to furnish each school team with the EBPs and skills outlined in the first coherent improvement strategy (more information on this training content can be found in the "produce" phase). All school team members are required to attend the three yearly workshop trainings in the fall, winter, and spring.

For the fall district trainings, 713 general education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators in the SSIP initial cohort of 30 districts participated. These attendees came from the 111 school teams that participated in the initial cohort, and 91.3 percent of the participants agreed that the training session was relevant and prepared them for next steps. As of March 1, 2017, 562 general education teachers, special education teachers, and administrators in the SSIP initial cohort of 30 districts participated in the winter training session.[10] Based on the data currently accessible, 90 school teams participated in the spring training, and 95.8 percent of the participants agreed that the training

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[9] A copy of the post-training survey for the train-the-trainer event, titled "Attachment 5—Post Train-the-Trainer Event Survey Questions," is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360.
[10] Several districts had not yet held their winter trainings as of March 1, 2017.

session was relevant and prepared them for next steps. More specific data on the training results can be found in Table 2.c on page 63.

Strategy Two: Special Education in a Continuum of Service

The preliminary steps completed for the second coherent improvement strategy entailed providing an output of tools and practices on a continuum of service model began prior to the release of the statewide response to the RTI[2] model, which began on July 1, 2014. During the 2013-14 school year, department staff researched best practices of methods of tiered intervention and consulted research from other states to effectively develop a continuum of service model in which special education is intended to be the most intensive intervention. Additional guidance on the RTI[2] model can be found in the SSIP Phase II report.[11] In this first year of implementation, the RTI[2] initiative was implemented in waves, with the model being required for all elementary schools as of July 1, 2014, the model being required for middle schools as of July 1, 2015, and the model being required for high schools as of July 1, 2016. Full implementation of RTI[2] began in the 2016-17 school year. Throughout this implementation process, the department staff and regional supports across the state (e.g. CORE office interventionists) have provided guidance, trainings, and support to districts to ensure success of the RTI[2] initiative.

Strategy Three: Addressing Skill Deficits

In the 2013-14 school year, the department completed the preliminary steps to develop the writing of IAIEPs training output. These trainings were developed as a result of research on how to properly address skill deficits, the identification of tools to support educators, and the development of a training plan established through the previous SPDG. As aforementioned, more information about the previous progress on this strategy can be found in the SSIP Phase II report.[12] During the 2016-17 school year, department staff began mapping out connections between the EBP for this strategy and the EBPs in the second improvement strategy, as the two strategies support one another.

Produce Phase

Figure 1.10 delineates the preliminary steps necessary to produce the next set of outputs relative to the two implemented strategies. As in Figure 1.9, the two coherent improvement strategies implemented to date have been outlined in blue to highlight the steps completed for the "produce" phase of the theory of action.

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[11] See SSIP Phase II ("Attachment 1—SSIP Phase II") report, page 37, in the "Support for District Implementation of EBPs" section. This attachment is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360.
[12] See SSIP Phase II ("Attachment 1—SSIP Phase II") report, page 39, in the "Support for District Implementation of EBPs" section. This attachment is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360.
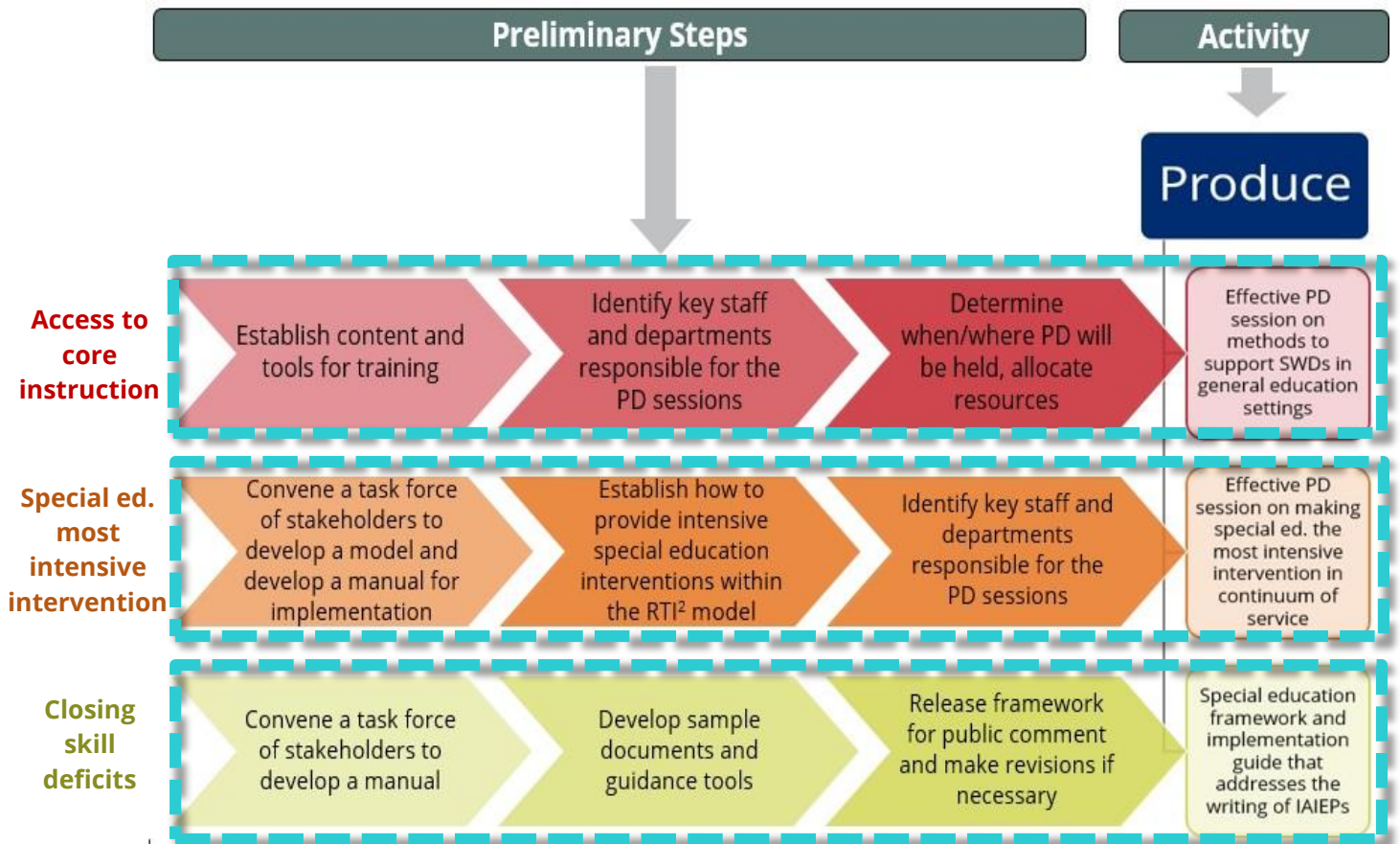
Figure 1.10. The preliminary steps necessary to achieve the activities detailed in the "produce" phase.

Strategy One: Access to Core Instruction

During the preliminary steps outlined in Figure 1.10, the department was able to produce the output of effective professional development sessions supporting the first coherent improvement strategy of increasing access to core instruction. These professional development resources and sessions were aligned to the trainings developed and provided in the "provide" phase. While the trainings were intended to communicate the appropriate skills and EBPs for this strategy to academic coaches, the professional development sessions produced during this phase were intended to be toolkits that would equip coaches with the skills necessary to effectively redeliver and implement the strategy in their respective districts.

Just as with the trainings developed in the "provide" phase, to produce the effective professional development sessions the department completed preliminary steps to ensure a successful output. These preliminary steps included: identifying staff within the department to develop the content, identifying the parties responsible for redelivering the sessions, and assisting with provision of logistics and support to district staff.

Strategy Two: Special Education in a Continuum of Service

In conjunction with the tools and practices developed in the "provide" phase of the theory of action, the department began the preliminary step for the second coherent improvement strategy—*creating a task force to develop the RTI^2 model and manual*—in the 2013-14 school year. This task force utilized the research on effective tools and practices to make thoughtful decisions about an effective multi-tiered model of support. Based on this collaboration, a manual was released prior to implementation of RTI^2 on July 1, 2014. More information about this manual can be found in the SSIP Phase II report.[13]

While the RTI^2 manual developed in the 2013-14 school year was essential to establish an effective continuum of service model, the major thrust of this strategy is ensuring that the model is delineating how special education is the most intensive intervention. The content for trainings on intensification of intervention, which will begin in the 2017-18 school year, is currently being developed by the lead intervention specialist for the division of special populations and student support. Figure 1.11 is the brief framework upon which further training content and resources relative this strategy and its EBPs will be based.
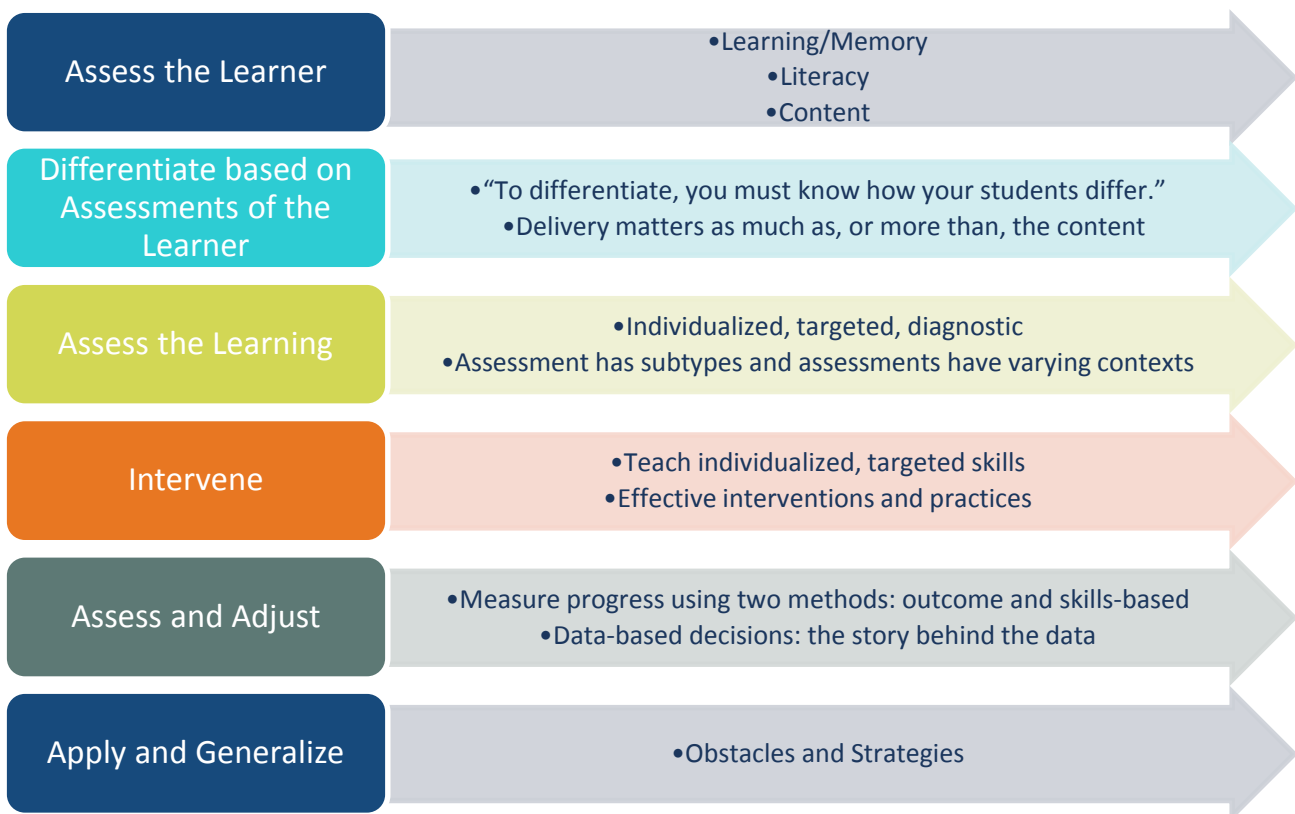
Assess the Learner	•Learning/Memory •Literacy •Content
Differentiate based on Assessments of the Learner	•"To differentiate, you must know how your students differ." •Delivery matters as much as, or more than, the content
Assess the Learning	•Individualized, targeted, diagnostic •Assessment has subtypes and assessments have varying contexts
Intervene	•Teach individualized, targeted skills •Effective interventions and practices
Assess and Adjust	•Measure progress using two methods: outcome and skills-based •Data-based decisions: the story behind the data
Apply and Generalize	•Obstacles and Strategies

Figure 1.11. Framework on the content for the second coherent improvement strategy.

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[13] See SSIP Phase II ("Attachment 1—SSIP Phase II") report, page 35, in the "Support for District Implementation of EBPs" section. This attachment is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360.

Strategy Three: Addressing Skill Deficits

As specified in the SSIP Phase II, in the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years, the department developed a framework to supplement the work done relative the EBP of writing IAIEPs. To develop this framework, a task force was convened in 2013 (see timeline in Figure 1.2 on page 12) to assist in development of guidance documents and the writing of a special education framework that supported districts in fostering an effective special education program meeting the needs of SWDs and improving their outcomes.

Currently, the instructional programming team for the division of special populations and student support is making revisions to this initial framework to more explicitly align with strategies of the SSIP and as well to provide clarification and additional resources to school districts. Indeed, while the original framework served as an excellent first resource for districts, lessons learned over the course of the last several years have highlighted opportunities for improvement to the document. The framework will contain a plethora of sample documents, writing examples, and templates for educators to use and will be made available for public comment in the summer of 2017.

Stakeholder Involvement in Implementation

Just as in Phase II, 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, 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. In Phase II, these stakeholders helped identify evaluation questions and planned activities most germane to the SSIP and its desired outcomes; in addition, they shared concerns about infrastructure challenges and responded to the possible solutions for such challenges. Their contributions helped flesh out many of the improvement strategies outlined in Phase II that have been implemented in Phase III.

Communication on Implementation

The department has worked to keep stakeholders apprised of all information relative to the development of the SSIP, which was planned in Phase II and initially implemented thus far in Phase III. Information has been communicated through a variety of mediums, including presentations and written briefs/updates. This diverse array of communication was done very intentionally to ensure that as many possible stakeholders as possible were reached. Limiting communication to one specific

agency or group of individuals would limit the scope of the work and diminish opportunities for feedback from a wide swath of individuals. By presenting at conferences targeted at educators and district administrators, the department was able to both communicate information in person and respond to questions and solicit feedback as well. For those parties unable to attend these conferences, such as parents or advocacy groups, the department was able to develop establish connections through written communications and meetings, like the Governor's Advisory Council, which is open to the public

Special Education Supervisor Conferences

In the fall of 2016, the executive director of data services attended regional special education supervisor conferences in the three grand divisions of Tennessee to present information about the SSIP implementation work outlined in Phase II and underway in Phase III. This was done in tandem with the assistant commissioner of the division of special populations and student support, who at the time served as the SPDG project manager, to connect both the strategies outlined in the SSIP and the funding mechanisms aligned to this work in the SPDG. At these conferences, supervisors had the opportunity to ask questions about the implementation efforts and learn about future plans to expand the cohort of participating districts from the initial 30 in the test cohort.

Partners in Education (PIE) Conference

A statewide presentation was held at the department's annual PIE conference in February of 2017, during which many implementation updates were shared with attendees. As with the supervisor conferences, the presentation was offered by both the executive director of data services and the assistant commissioner. This session featured data both about the implementation process as well as results from trainings held to date for the first coherent improvement strategy of increasing access to core instruction. Responses from CoPs held by districts in the test cohort were also shared, along with feedback and additional input from participating district and school staff. While many of the responses from CoPs were overwhelmingly positive, some helped the department to identify areas of concern and opportunities for improvement. In an effort to be responsive to immediate needs communicated by the participating districts, the department is currently working to secure an online platform by which district staff can communicate so that CoPs can be held without the burden of navigating travel concerns and/or scheduling conflicts.

A second session dedicated to the SSIP and SPDG grant activities was held at this same conference, during which participating districts had the opportunity to share their experiences and answer questions from attendees. This session was an excellent opportunity to showcase the SSIP and the initial implementation efforts. Districts shared the successes yielded in their classrooms from

implementation of the first coherent improvement strategy on increasing access to core instruction. They noted adjustments or improvements made during the course of implementation and lessons learned that will assist the state in refining the strategy in coming years for additional cohorts.

Advisory Council Presentations

At the Governor's Advisory Council meeting in fall 2016, an overview of the implementation efforts to take place in the 2016-17 school year was presented to both council members and advocacy agencies in attendance. This information was filmed and made publicly available on the department's website.[14] During the presentation, the department shared the circumstances that led to a postponement in the second and third coherent improvement strategies due to the delay in release of SPDG funds. Also included in this presentation were the linkages with the SPDG, communication about the infrastructure enhancements available as a result of the SPDG, and upcoming activities relative to the SSIP. Additional information about this SSIP and SPDG work was also shared at the winter 2017 council meeting and will be discussed at future meetings as well.

Presentation for the Superintendents' Study Council

In February 2017, the executive director of data services presented information on the SSIP, alignment with the SPDG, and implementation efforts to members of the Superintendents' Study Council for Tennessee. Every member of this study council represents a CORE region of the state, and these members are responsible for providing information gleaned from these meetings to their peers in their respective CORE region. This study council is an excellent resource with which to share data and current initiatives with crucial stakeholders who might otherwise not be privy to such information.

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. These updates have been provided in multiple forums, including the department's data services website for special education,[15] 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.

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[14] The Advisory Council website is: https://www.tn.gov/education/article/special-education-advisory-council.
[15] The Data Services Team website is: http://www.tennessee.gov/education/article/special-education-data-services-reports.

Decision-Making on Implementation

While great 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. Indeed, these stakeholders offer invaluable insight and should be active and engaged members in the work as a whole. 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 implementation. For example, some stakeholders suggested that the department provide a robust compilation of data to those districts who may elect to participate in the SSIP activities as the cohort expands. Such data might include educational environment data for SWDs, assessment results for SWDs, and disaggregation of priority APR indicators by disability category to look at outcomes for students with an SLD. They also asked if there was a way they could receive training on how to gather the data themselves. As a result of this feedback, the department will be more diligently providing data to prospective districts to help them monitor their areas of need and provide brief trainings and guidance on how they can gather the data themselves.

In addition to the feedback opportunities available at the presentations, the department will send out an annual survey for stakeholder input in the spring of 2017 to elicit thoughts, suggestions, or concerns about the implementation process and whether stakeholders see opportunities to scale-up work (i.e., increase the test cohort size). Offering a survey allows those who might not be otherwise able to voice suggestions, concerns, or support in other venues and mediums. This survey will be made available on the department website so that it can be publicly accessible.

In addition, the executive director of data services will lead an SSIP summit at the Advisory Council meeting in April 2017 to discuss the progress to date and engage these crucial stakeholders in decisions that need to be made about implementation moving forward. Much of this work and the questions addressed will likely mirror the information to be gathered from the aforementioned survey. The department wants to ensure that similar metrics are collected from all stakeholder groups to aggregate and analyze all results comprehensively, rather than have discrete sets of feedback data that might not be comparable. This summit for the April Advisory Council meeting will be filmed and made available on the department's website for public viewing. Results of this meeting will also be compiled and shared in the spring/summer quarterly SSIP update.

Finally, the department will engage special education supervisors at an annual conference to be held in the fall of 2017. By this date, all initial implementation work denoted in the "Implementation Activities" section will have concluded, 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. This feedback, in conjunction with information obtained from both the statewide stakeholder survey and Advisory Council input, will be used to assess implementation activities moving forward. Stakeholders will be kept informed of the changes made as a result of their feedback through the quarterly communications relative to the SSIP and at subsequent presentations about the plan. The department wants to be certain that stakeholders are made aware of how much their input is indeed valued and integrated into the report.

Data on Implementation and Outcomes

To assist in the visualization of implementation practices, outputs, and evaluation components, an evaluation process (Figure 2.1) was developed during Phase II. 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. These steps have been a compass used to guide the work during Phase III and ensure that the careful preparations done in advance of implementation are still reflected upon.

Measuring Effectiveness

Ensuring that the SSIP is being implemented appropriately and consistently is of paramount importance. On point, the activities of Phase III must be completed with fidelity and routinely assessed to evaluate progress and success. 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; and analytical procedures that will assess progress toward goals are selected.
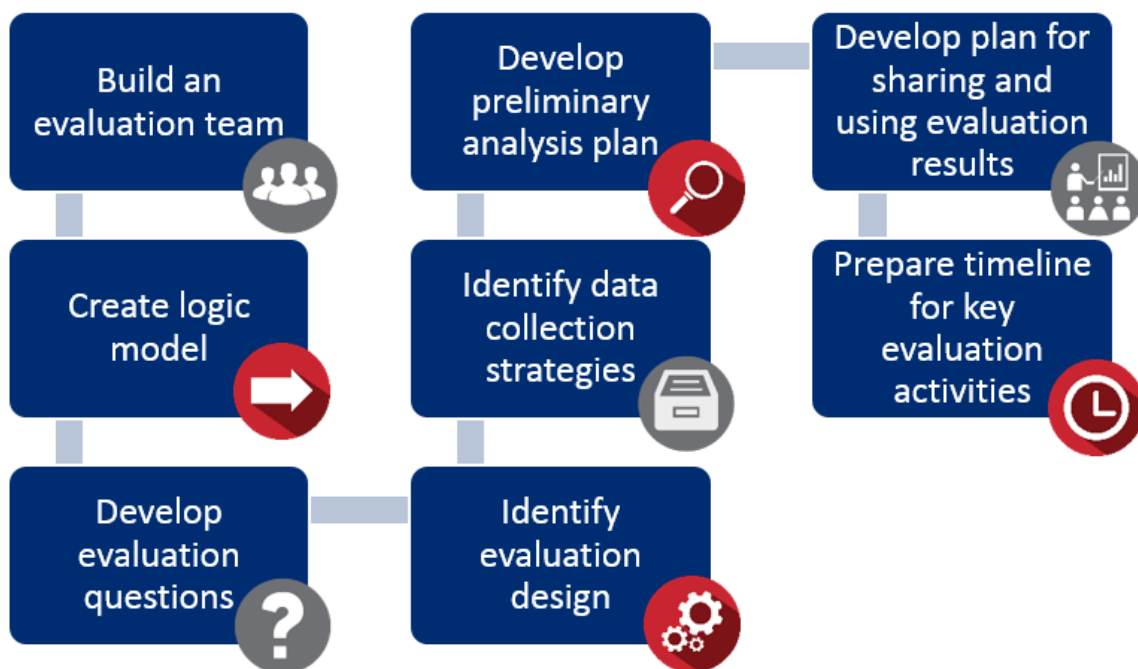
Figure 2.1. The steps completed to develop the evaluation process for the SSIP.

Alignment with Theory of Action

As outlined in the "Implementation" section ("Outcomes" subsection) the implementation and evaluation measures of the SSIP are clearly aligned with the detailed theory of action (Figure 1.8 on page 22). To successfully assess whether the coherent improvement strategies and their EBPs have been appropriately deployed and are yielding the desired outputs and outcomes, appropriate measures need to be selected to evaluate the work. While the preliminary steps for the "provide,"

Figure 2.2. The activities outlined within the theory of action.

"produce," and "assess" sections (see Figure 2.2) of the theory of action have been enumerated in the "Implementation" section, it is the "assess" section of the theory of action that is most salient for monitoring effectiveness of the plan and its activities. This "assess" section seeks to address intermediate outcomes that are indicative of progress toward the SiMR.
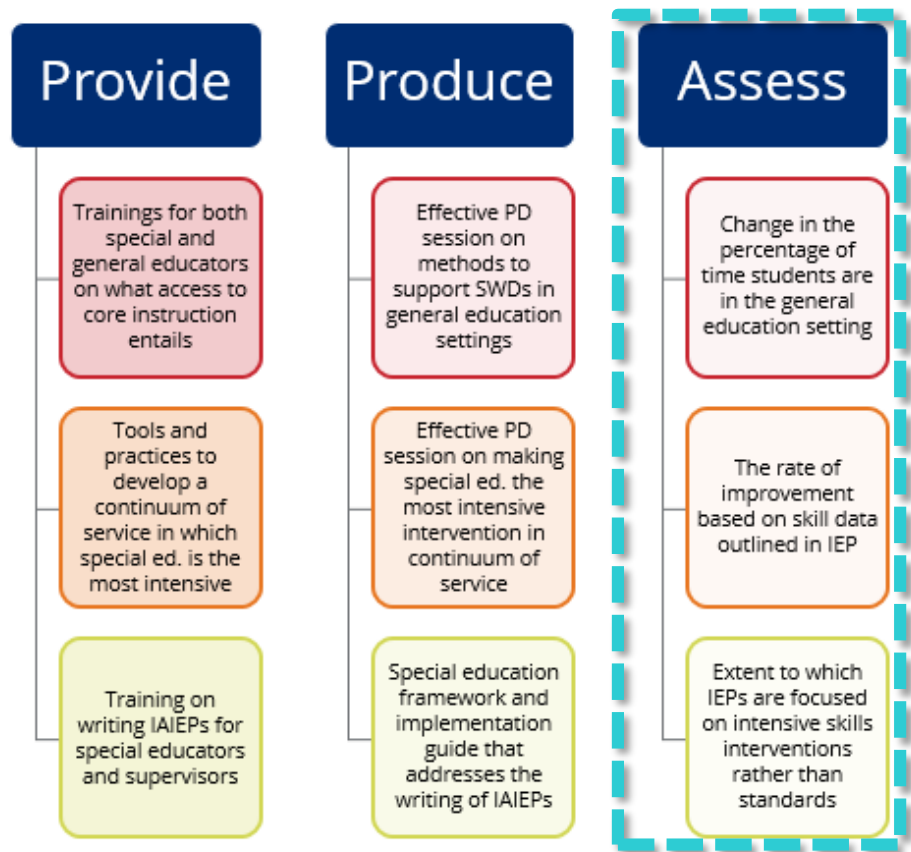
Measures and Data Sources

To appraise the progress toward meeting the short-term and intermediate outcomes while working toward the SiMR, the department identified in Phase II a series of evaluation questions to be answered in Phase III. These evaluation questions serve as the measures by which the department anticipates determining success of the SSIP. Table 2.a (page 36) was developed in Phase II to explicate each evaluation question, the indicator of performance for each question, and the data needed to determine if the indicator of performance was met. These evaluation questions have been broken out in the table to include:

- *Process Evaluation Questions*—elicit information on whether implementation work has been comprehensive and successful for each of the coherent improvement strategies and their EBPs (see "provide" and "produce" sections of the theory of action in Figure 2.2)

- *Outcomes Evaluation Questions*—address intermediate outcomes that should be achieved contingent on successful responses to process evaluation questions (see "assess" section of the theory of action in Figure 2.2)

- *Overarching Evaluation Question*—the SiMR for Tennessee (increasing the percent of students with SLD in grades 3-8 scoring at or above basic on the statewide ELA assessment)

For the first coherent improvement strategy of increasing access to core instruction, the process evaluation questions 1-5 and outcomes evaluation question 14 in Table 2.*a* (page 36) will be used to assess progress. For the second coherent improvement strategy of ensuring special education is the most intensive intervention in a continuum of service model (not yet implemented), the process evaluation questions 6-10 and outcomes evaluation question 15 in Table 2.a will be used to assess progress. Finally, for the coherent improvement strategy of writing instructionally appropriate IEPs, the process evaluation questions 11-13 and outcomes evaluation question 16 in Table 2.a will be used to assess progress.

The "indicator of performance" column in Table 2.a lists the desired answer to each evaluation question, and the "data needed" column displays the sources of data necessary to answer the questions. While these data sources are provided for each evaluation question, the department also identified key measures based on the questions in Table 2.a. The key measures selected are outcomes-based and focused on measurable change in an intermediate outcome that would in turn impact the SiMR.

When engaging with stakeholders during the incipient periods of the SSIP development in Phase I and when fleshing out the plan in Phase II, a clear premium was placed on analyzing changes to intermediate outcomes. Stakeholders were asked in Phase I and Phase II to identify what they felt positive results of the SSIP would be, beyond achieving the SiMR. Many responded that they felt progress could truly be measured by assessing: fidelity of strategy implementation in classrooms; the percent of students in the general education setting 80 percent or more of the day; and improvement in outcomes not just on summative assessments, but also formative assessments like progress monitoring data. This is not to diminish the import of other the remaining process evaluation questions, but rather to ensure a focus is placed on more discrete data points that should impact the SiMR.

Table 2.a   P a g e | **36**

Question Number	Evaluation Question	Indicator of Performance	Data Needed
	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.	Registration information from each training and PD session.
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.	Registration information from each training and PD session.
1.b	Did the team members feel the training was relevant and prepared them for next steps?	90 percent reported that they found the sessions relevant and that they prepared them for next steps.	Participant surveys.
2	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?	80 percent agree that the training and PD opportunities increased their knowledge in this area.	Post-training assessments.
3	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?	70 percent agree that the training and PD opportunities improved their ability to support SWDs in general education classroom.	Post-training assessments.
4	Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on access to core instruction reporting that these opportunities improved their ability to	70 percent agree they are implementing learned strategies with fidelity during the spring after beginning implementation.	Staff surveys from the spring after implementation.

	implement with fidelity the strategies intended to support SWDs in core instruction?		
5	Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on access to core instruction indeed implementing strategies with fidelity?	70 percent are implementing strategies with fidelity.	Fidelity monitoring checklists and observation forms.
6	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 RTI^2, multi-sensory approaches, and data-based decision-making?	District-level and school-level teams participated in all required sessions on these EBPs.	Registration information from each training and PD session.
6.a	Did the requisite staff attend the training and PD sessions (special education supervisor and special education teacher)?	District-level and school-level teams participated in all required sessions on these EBPs.	Registration information from each training and PD session.
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.	Participant surveys.
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.	Post-training assessments.
8	Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on special education within a continuum of service model	70 percent agree that the training and PD opportunities improved their ability to	Post-training assessments.

	reporting that these opportunities improved their ability to make special education services the most intensive level of interventions?	make special education the most intensive intervention.	
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.	Staff surveys from the spring after implementation.
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.	Fidelity monitoring checklists and observation forms.
11	How many staff attended trainings relative to writing IAIEPs?	At least one staff member from districts selected to participate in SPDG-funded SSIP trainings attended a training provided on writing IAIEPs.	Registration information from trainings.
11.a	Did the team members find the training and PD sessions valuable, high-quality, and relevant?	80 percent reported that they found the sessions valuable, high-quality, and relevant.	Participant surveys.
12	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 from their trainings when completing IEPs?	80 percent agree they are utilizing these skills.	Pre-training surveys and annual surveys subsequent to implementation.

13	Are staff (and/or the staff they trained) who participated in trainings and PD sessions on writing IAIEPs incorporating the skills and principles with fidelity?	Meet expectations on four of the five focal areas outlined on the IAIEP quality evaluation rubric.[16]	File reviews completed by instructional programming team using internally-developed quality evaluation rubric.
Outcomes Evaluation Questions[17]			
14	What is the change in the percent of students with an SLD in the general education setting 80 percent or more of the day?	**Year 1:** 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 the first year of implementation. **Year 2 and Onward:** There is no regression the percentage of students with an SLD in grades 3–8 in general education 80 percent or more of the day within participating districts from the baseline 2015-16 school year to the end of the second year of implementation.	Environment data pulled for all SWDs and those students with an SLD from the state IEP data management system.
15	What is the rate of improvement those student 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?	There is an increase in the rate of improvement outlined in the IEP in place prior to implementation of EBPs (prior to 2017-18) and the IEP in place after the first year of implementation (after 2017-18). Repeat this analysis through subsequent years to determine that the progress monitoring data outlined in the current IEP	IEP and progress monitoring data.

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[16] A copy of this IEP evaluation rubric, titled "Attachment 4—IEP Review Rubric," has been attached under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360.
[17] These questions are aligned to the evaluation questions set to be used in the SPDG.

		are higher than those in the IEP in place prior to initial implementation.	
Overarching Evaluation Question—SiMR			
16	Is the percentage of students with an SLD in grades 3–8 scoring at or above basic on the statewide ELA assessment increasing?	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.	ELA assessment results for those students with an SLD in schools included in the test cohort of districts and then results statewide in the coming years.

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 pervasively the case for all the process evaluation questions, as seen in Table 2.a, 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 do 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. On point, it is anticipated 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 there be improved outcomes when comparing their data to schools and districts not participating in SSIP activities.

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 indeed 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 to measure progress in implementation and toward the SiMR. The process evaluation question number 5 in Table 2.a (page 36), addresses the fidelity of implementation of this strategy and its EBPs in the participating classrooms. For this strategy 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 addition to question 5, outcomes evaluation question number 14, in Table 2.a (page 36), is a key measure to assess 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 will come from the federal IDEA census report pulled on Dec. 1, 2015. This federal report disaggregates a broad array of demographics data and educational environment data, including the category of "in the general education setting 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 (more information provided in Table 2.c on page 63). In addition to this aggregated information, environment data will be broken out by each participating school in each participating district to compare the percentage of time spent in the general education setting in 2015 to the percentage of time spent in the general education setting subsequent to the first year Phase III (May 1, 2017).[18]

- **Strategy Two: Special Education in a Continuum of Service**
  Two key measures have been identified for this strategy to measure progress in implementation and toward the SiMR. The process evaluation question number 10 in Table 2.a (page 36), addresses the fidelity of implementation of this strategy and its EBPs in the participating classrooms. As with strategy one, 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.

  In addition to question 10, outcomes evaluation question number 15, in Table 2.a (page 36), addresses rate of improvement data for students who are receiving instruction on this strategy and its EBPs. In Phase II, the evaluation question and metric by which to measure successful implementation of a tiered system of support was referral rate information for those students referred for an SLD. Initially, this appeared to be an effective measure by which to assess whether the over-identification suspected prior to implementation of RTI^2 in July 2014 had abated. Indeed, there was great concern that the old discrepancy model previously utilized in the state identified students with an SLD who may have responded to intensified tiers of instruction and not actually qualified for a disability. Accordingly, the anticipated outcome for this evaluation question was a decrease in the referral rate for students with an SLD predicated on annual comparisons to the baseline data gathered prior to RTI^2 implementation in 2014.

  However, throughout implementation in Phase III, both internal and external stakeholders expressed concern that by using such a metric, the department might unintentionally be encouraging a situation in which students might be denied access to evaluation or undermine the referral process. That was certainly never the intent of the measure; however, the department recognizes the possible implications. As well, mitigating circumstances might yield an increase in referrals that might inadvertently imply that a tiered model is not being appropriately implemented when in fact it is. For

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[18] A copy of the participating school and district-level data, titled "Attachment 11—School and LEA Data," is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360.

this reason, the metric for outcomes evaluation question 15 has been removed and paired with the outcomes evaluation question established for coherent improvement strategy three. Utilizing one evaluation question for both strategies this was done intentionally to reflect the interconnection between the two. More information on this can be found in the "Changes to Implementation and Strategies" section on page 69.

Beyond just the unintended consequences manifest in the original evaluation question 15, referral rate data did not accurately capture the ultimate goal of the second coherent improvement strategy. Ultimately this strategy and its EBPs are addressing intensification of special education intervention to verify that students are receiving support and interventions that are viable and address their areas of need. A more accurate indicator of success for this strategy would be an increased rate of improvement detailed in the IEP from prior to implementation of the strategies and subsequent to implementation.

- **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 Table 2.a (page 36), addresses the fidelity of implementation of this strategy and its EBP in the participating classrooms. As with strategy one and two, 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.

  The key measure for evaluation question number 15, in Table 2.a (page 36), is rate of improvement in progress monitoring data for students with and SLD. The EBP for this coherent improvement strategy—the writing of IAIEPs—is focused on documenting students' skill deficits with progress monitoring data (and other relevant data sources) and developing a plan by which to address the deficits. The IEP indeed 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 measureable 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 of using a continuum of service model in which special education is the most intensive intervention. The strategy 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.

Baseline data for this measure will be used by sampling IEPs for students in classrooms participating in the second coherent strategy in the 2017-18 school year. Specific students' IEPs will be selected prior to implementation of the strategies, and progress monitoring data will be gathered as a baseline for students' present levels of performance. The IEPs developed for these same students subsequent to implementation of strategies will be evaluated, and the progress monitoring data identifying skill deficits will be compared to the baseline data. The department anticipates seeing an increase in the rate of improvement within the progress monitoring data results.

Sampling Procedures

Sampling will be used in several instances throughout the implementation and evaluation of the SSIP. Indeed, the entire evaluation plan is predicated on a sample of 30 school districts and a sampling of schools and educators/administrators within those districts. To answer the process evaluation questions in Table 2.a (page 36), 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 17), which is the SiMR. There will also be different sampling conducted to answer two of the evaluation questions (question 13 and question 15) listed in Table 2.a.

Sampling for Writing IAIEPs (Question 13)

To assess whether the 30 districts in the initial cohort are in fact writing IAIEPs, the department will sample a group of IEPs for students with an SLD in each district over the summer of 2017. Staff will randomly select five percent of the records for students with an SLD to ensure a proportionate amount of IEPs are pulled for review in all participating districts. While the department had hoped to run a sampling model accounting for margin for error and a 95 percent confidence interval, the breadth of records that would need review would simply be

well beyond the capacity of the department. Sampling five percent of the records in participating districts for students with an SLD is both feasible and will provide a cursory glance at IEP trends and consistent issues. These IEPs will be reviewed utilizing the rubric referenced in Table 2.a. More information on this rubric can be found on page 78 in the "Progress Toward Improvements" section. Based on the results of these reviews, the department will pinpoint districts that may require further support in the writing of IAIEPs and in areas in which they need the most support (e.g., writing narratives, develop measureable goals, linking services).

Sampling for Intensive Interventions and Addressing Skill Deficits (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 two randomly selected students in each participating district for file reviews. 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 in progress monitoring data. An additional two 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

Table 2.b (page 46) displays information on the methods by which data will be collected to assess implementation efforts and evaluation questions, the timelines during which data will be collected, and the comparisons that will be completed with the data gathered. Such information is broken out based on relevant evaluation questions necessary to assess effective implementation of SSIP strategies and EBPs and the outcomes based on such implementation. Some of the evaluation questions are not applicable for consideration of comparison groups, as they are finite and such comparison would not yield any information germane to the evaluation question itself.

Table 2.b   P a g e | **46**

Question Number	Evaluation Question	Comparisons	Collection Methods	Timeline
	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?	N/A	Registration information from each training and PD session.	**Fall:** Registration data was available in the winter of 2017. **Winter:** Registration data will be available in the spring of 2017. **Spring:** Registration data will be available in the summer of 2017.
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)?	N/A	Registration information from each training and PD session.	**Fall:** Registration data was available in the winter of 2017. **Winter:** Registration data will be available in the spring of 2017. **Spring:** Registration data will be available in the summer of 2017.
1.b	Did the team members feel the training was relevant and prepared them for next steps?	N/A	Participant surveys.	**Fall:** Surveys were made available for attendees to complete after district trainings concluded. Results of the survey were aggregated and provided by SSIP evaluation team members as districts responded to surveys in the winter of 2017. Updates to survey results were provided bimonthly.

				Winter: Surveys were made available for attendees to complete after district trainings concluded. Results of the survey were aggregated and provided by SSIP evaluation team members as districts responded to surveys in the spring of 2017. Updates to survey results have and will continue being provided bimonthly. **Spring:** Surveys will be made available for attendees to complete after district trainings concluded. Results of the survey will be aggregated and provided by SSIP evaluation team members as districts responded to surveys in the summer of 2017.
2	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?	Participants will be their own control.	Pre/post-test (survey).	**Fall:** Surveys were made available for attendees to complete after district trainings concluded. Results of the survey were aggregated and provided by SSIP evaluation team members as districts responded to surveys in the winter of 2017. Updates to survey results were provided bimonthly. **Winter:** Surveys were made available for attendees to complete after district

				trainings concluded. Results of the survey were aggregated and provided by SSIP evaluation team members as districts responded to surveys in the spring of 2017. Updates to survey results have and will continue being provided bimonthly. **Spring:** Surveys will be made available for attendees to complete after district trainings concluded. Results of the survey will be aggregated and provided by SSIP evaluation team members as districts responded to surveys in the summer of 2017.
3	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?	Participants will be their own control.	Pre/post-test (survey).	**Fall:** Surveys made available for attendees to complete after district trainings concluded. Results of the survey were aggregated and provided by SSIP evaluation team members as districts responded to surveys in the winter of 2017. Updates to survey results were provided bimonthly. **Winter:** Surveys made available for attendees to complete after district trainings concluded. Results of the survey were aggregated and provided by SSIP evaluation team

				members as districts responded to surveys in the spring of 2017. Updates to survey results have and will continue being provided bimonthly. **Spring:** Surveys will be made available for attendees to complete after district trainings concluded. Results of the survey will be aggregated and provided by SSIP evaluation team members as districts responded to surveys in the summer of 2017.
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?	Participants will be their own control.	Pre/post-test (survey).	Data to be gathered through a survey sent out in the spring of 2017, subsequent to the districts' spring trainings. The data should be aggregated no later than June 15, 2017.
5	Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on access to core instruction indeed implementing interventions with fidelity?	Participants will be their own control.	Longitudinal data gathered through fidelity monitoring and observations.[19]	Fidelity monitoring data will be gathered by district special education supervisors, SPDG interventionists, and/or members of the SSIP evaluation team throughout the first year of implementation. The information will be aggregated, with

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[19] More information on fidelity monitoring data in "Data Analysis and Management" section on page 58.

				thresholds set to measure efficacy, in late spring of 2017.
6	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 RTI[2], multi-sensory approaches, and data-based decision-making?	N/A	Registration information from each training and PD session.	**Fall:** Registration data will be available in the winter of 2018. **Winter:** Registration data will be available in the spring of 2018. **Spring:** Registration data will be available in the summer of 2018.
6.a	Did the requisite staff attend the training and PD sessions (special education supervisor and special education teacher)?	N/A	Registration information from each training and PD session.	**Fall:** Registration data will be available in the winter of 2018. **Winter:** Registration data will be available in the spring of 2018. **Spring:** Registration data will be available in the summer of 2018.
6.b	Did the team members feel the training was relevant and prepared them for next steps?	N/A	Pre/post-test (survey).	**Fall:** Surveys will be made available for attendees to complete after district trainings conclude. Results of the survey will be aggregated and provided by SSIP evaluation team members as districts respond to surveys in the winter of 2018. **Winter:**

			Surveys will be made available for attendees to complete after district trainings concluded. Results of the survey will be aggregated and provided by SSIP evaluation team members as districts responded to surveys in the spring of 2018. **Spring:** Surveys will be made available for attendees to complete after district trainings concluded. Results of the survey will be aggregated and provided by SSIP evaluation team members as districts responded to surveys in the summer of 2018.
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?	Participants will be their own control.	Pre/post-test (survey).	**Fall:** Surveys will be made available for attendees to complete after district trainings conclude. Results of the survey will be aggregated and provided by SSIP evaluation team members as districts respond to surveys in the winter of 2018. **Winter:** Surveys will be made available for attendees to complete after district trainings concluded. Results of the survey will be aggregated and provided by SSIP evaluation team members as districts responded to surveys in the spring of 2018. **Spring:**

				Surveys will be made available for attendees to complete after district trainings concluded. Results of the survey will be aggregated and provided by SSIP evaluation team members as districts responded to surveys in the summer of 2018.
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?	Participants will be their own control.	Pre/post-test (survey).	**Fall:** Surveys will be made available for attendees to complete after district trainings conclude. Results of the survey will be aggregated and provided by SSIP evaluation team members as districts respond to surveys in the winter of 2018. **Winter:** Surveys will be made available for attendees to complete after district trainings concluded. Results of the survey will be aggregated and provided by SSIP evaluation team members as districts responded to surveys in the spring of 2018. **Spring:** Surveys will be made available for attendees to complete after district trainings concluded. Results of the survey will be aggregated and provided by SSIP evaluation team members as districts responded to surveys in the summer of 2018.

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?	Participants will be their own control.	Pre/post-test (survey).	Data to be gathered through a survey sent out in the spring of 2018, subsequent to the districts' spring trainings. The data should be aggregated no later than June 15, 2018.
10	Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on special education within a continuum of service model indeed implementing interventions with fidelity?	Participants will be their own control.	Longitudinal data gathered through fidelity monitoring and observations.	Fidelity monitoring data will be gathered by district special education supervisors, SPDG interventionists, and/or members of the SSIP evaluation team throughout the first year of implementation. The information will be aggregated, with thresholds set to measure efficacy, in late spring of 2018.
11	How many staff attended trainings relative to writing IAIEPs?	N/A	Survey responses from participating special education teachers in first year of implementation.	A survey was sent by the SSIP evaluation team in the late fall of 2016 to participating special education teachers. The survey was sent to glean how many educators attended trainings on IAIEPs. Results from this survey were collated by evaluators in winter 2017 to determine whether staff from every participating district had received some form of training.

11.a	Did the team members find the training and PD sessions valuable, high-quality, and relevant?	N/A	Survey responses from participating special education teachers in first year of implementation.	A survey was sent by the SSIP evaluation team in the late fall of 2016 to participating special education teachers. The survey was sent to glean how many educators attended trainings on IAIEPs. Results from this survey were collated by evaluators in winter 2017 to determine whether staff from every participating district had received some form of training.
12	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?	Participants will be their own control.	Survey responses from participating special education teachers in first year of implementation.	A survey was sent by the SSIP evaluation team in the late fall of 2016 to participating special education teachers. The survey was sent to glean how many educators attended trainings on IAIEPs. Results from this survey were collated by evaluators in winter 2017 to determine whether staff from every participating district had received some form of training.
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?	Participants will be their own control.	Longitudinal data gathered through file reviews.	Initial file reviews for review will be identified in the late spring of 2017. Reviews of the files will begin in summer 2017 and be conducted by staff from the instructional programming team and SPDG interventionists. A new selection of records will be pulled again for review in the summer of 2018.

	Outcomes Evaluation Questions			
14	What is the change in the percent of students with an SLD in the general education setting 80 percent or more of the day?	**Year 1:** • Schools selected for initial implementation by districts included in the test cohort will be their own control in year 1. • Schools not selected for initial implementation in the test cohort of districts will also be evaluated and serve as the control group. **Year 2 and Onward:** • Districts will serve as their own control looking at changes from year to year. • Once district-wide implementation occurs in the test cohort, districts not in this cohort will serve as the control group.	**Year 1:** Pre/post-test data from prior to implementation to the end of the first year of implementation. **Year 2 and Onward:** Pre/post-test data from year to year for each school year.	**Year 1:** Baseline data from the Dec. 1, 2015 census data has been pulled for the state and each district and school; comparison data will be gathered on May 1, 2017, and analysis will be completed in the summer of 2017 by the executive director of data services. **Year 2 and Onward:** Data gathered on May 1, 2017 for participating districts will serve as new baseline data for comparisons to data that will be pulled on May 1, 2018. Such processes will take place each subsequent year of implementation in this fashion.
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	**Year 1:** Students in identified schools within test districts who are sampled for IEP monitoring prior to implementation will serve as their own control after the end of the first year of	**Year 1:** Pre/post-test data from prior to implementation to the end of the first year of implementation for sampled students in selected schools. **Year 2 and Onward:**	**Year 1:** Baseline data on progress monitoring data (for those students educated by participating teachers who have written IAIEPs) collected in the summer 2017 will be compared to these same student records and reported progress monitoring data in the summer of 2018 to measure the

special education is the most intensive intervention?	implementation (will look at the new IEP in place). **Year 2 and Onward:** Student sampling for monitoring IEPs will expand to additional schools and test cohort of districts.	Pre/post-test data from year to year for each school year in schools implementing strategies.	rate of improvement. This analysis will be conducted by the executive director of data services, members of the instructional programming team, and SPDG interventionists. **Year 2 and Onward:** Baseline data on specific student deficits (for those students educated by participating teachers) collected in the summer prior to the coming school year and will be compared to these same student records and their progress monitoring data in the following summer.
Overarching Evaluation Question—SiMR			
16	Is the percentage of students with an SLD in grades 3-8 taking scoring at or above basic on the statewide ELA assessment increasing?	**Year 1:** • 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. Data for 2016-17 school year will serve as the baseline. **Year 2:** • Students in classrooms with teachers participating	**Year 1:** 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. Data for 2016-17 school year will serve as the baseline. **Year 2:** Pre/post-test data during first year of implementation	**Year 1:** 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. Data for 2016-17 school year will serve as the baseline. **Year 2:** Baseline assessment data will be available in the summer of 2017 once processed by the accountability office. The statewide data will then be disaggregated by participating district and school. Comparison data

| | | in initial implementation of strategies will be their own control.
• Students not in classrooms with teachers participating in initial implementation of strategies will be the control group.
• Schools without teachers participating in initial implementation of strategies will be the control group.
Year 3 and Onward:
• Districts will serve as their own control looking at changes from year to year.
• Once district-wide implementation has occurred, districts not in the test cohort will serve as the control group. | to data during the second year of implementation.
Year 3 and Onward:
Pre/post-test data from year to year for each school year. | will be available for these control groups in the summer of 2018.
Year 3 and Onward:
Data will be available for comparison the summer after every subsequent school year. The information will be managed by the department's accountability office, and the disaggregation of data will be conducted by the executive director of data services every subsequent school year. |

Data Management and Analysis

The department has been intentional in developing a comprehensive evaluation plan addressing explicit data points and the analysis procedures to be employed to effectively evaluate the SSIP. Such planning is vital to ensure success of evaluation and mitigate potential for error, contamination, and bias of the results. The department will be relying on multiple sources to collect and analyze the data. In an effort to link the SPDG with the SSIP, many of the process evaluation questions (see Table 2.b, page 46) are linked to evaluation efforts being conducted by the SPDG partners.

For process evaluation questions 1-5 in Table 2.b, the Human Development Institute (HDI) at the University of Kentucky will serve as the primary data manager. These questions pertain specifically to the EBPs for the coherent improvement strategy of increasing access to core instruction. The HDI will be responsible for compiling survey data and results from observations conducted by other SPDG partners, including staff from the University of Tennessee and the SPDG interventionists at the department. These members of the evaluation team will serve as the data managers for these evaluation questions. They will be responsible for aggregating the results and evaluating effectiveness of training on the coherent improvement strategies (increasing access to core instruction will be the focus for this year), fidelity of implementation of practices in the classroom, and the student outcomes for those teachers participating in the activities.

In the second year of implementation, which will see the deployment of the coherent improvement strategy of using a continuum of service model in which special education in the most intensive intervention, these same evaluation team members will be responsible for data management, collection, and analysis. The results of this work will address the process evaluation questions 6-10 in Table 2.b.

For process evaluations 11-13, outcomes evaluation questions 14 and 15, and the SiMR (question 16) in Table 2.b, the executive director of data services will be the data manager and responsible for analysis of the information captured. While questions 11 and 12 pertain specifically to survey results conducted by the executive director of data services, information gathered for question 13 will come from file reviews conducted by the instructional programming team and the SPDG interventionists. The executive director of data services will be responsible for compiling the review data and synthesizing the results.

For the outcomes evaluation questions 14, the executive director of data services will pull reports from the statewide IEP data management system to ascertain environment data for students with an SLD in the participating districts and their participating schools. This disaggregation and aggregation will be done to assess whether the implemented first coherent improvement strategy is indeed improving

access to core instruction. Both the instructional programming team and the SPDG interventionists who assisted with data collection for evaluation question 13 will also conduct evaluations of a random sampling of student records to address outcomes evaluation question 15. Evaluation will be completed by examining rate of improvement for students' skill deficits, as demonstrated over the course of the school year. As with question 13, the executive director of data services will still be responsible for aggregating and analyzing the results provided by the instructional programming team and the SPDG interventionists.

For the SiMR (evaluation question number 16), the executive director of data services will work with the accountability team for the department to gather ELA assessment data for students in grades 3–8. This accountability team retrieves test scores from assessments, cleans and codes the data, and utilizing the matrix outlined in the accountability framework approved under the ESSA, reports assessment outcomes to the state. Historically, the executive director of data services receives information from this team disaggregated by subgroups, districts, and schools. To determine students with an SLD, the executive director matches student data to disability categories and codes these students to be included in the overall evaluation of the SiMR.

Demonstrating Progress and Making Modifications

Given the incipient nature of Phase III implementation, the department does not have a wide swath of key data at its disposal to analyze and measure progress at this point in time. Indeed, as enumerated in the "Measuring Progress" section above, most of the evaluation metrics require both baseline data and data subsequent to implementation to make overarching claims about progress or areas that require modification. For the first coherent improvement strategy of increasing access to core instruction, most initial analyses will not begin until the summer of 2017. Once conducted, these analyses will inform the department and its stakeholders of activities and EBPs that require improvement and refinement and areas and EBPs that are successful. In preparation for this impending examination, the department has established the framework by which analysis will be conducted. The department has also gathered some initial data points for evaluation and based on this and feedback from participants throughout the strategy implementation, some revisions to the plan have been made.

Data Collected

In Phase II, the department identified a broad array of data necessary to effectively evaluate the implementation and efficacy of Tennessee's SSIP. These data come from myriad sources and are disaggregated by level of implementation. The department will gather data not just at the statewide level, but also at the district level and school level. For evaluation purposes, the department will

analyze results from the test cohort of 30 school districts who applied for participation in the SSIP activities. Each of these districts has identified schools for participation in the activities and selected teams within these schools. In the 2016-17 school year, 111 schools are participating in the first coherent improvement strategy of increasing access to core instruction. These schools are required to participate in three workshop trainings led by an identified district coach.

All 30 districts held their fall trainings in 2016, and all but five of the 30 districts have held their winter trainings. In the fall trainings, there 713 special educators, general educators, and school administrators in the 111 participating schools in attendance across the state. As of March 1, 2017, 562 special educators, general educators, and school administrators in the 111 participating schools had attended the winter trainings. Spring trainings are scheduled for most districts but have yet to take place. From these trainings, the department has gathered or will gather attendance data to address process evaluation questions 1, 1.a, and 1.b (see Table 2.c, page 63). In addition, information gleaned from participant surveys completed following the trainings will address process evaluation questions 2-5. To track this information in a cohesive manner, the department developed a spreadsheet that captures data points for all the evaluation questions and their specified metrics.[20] This document serves as a repository from which all data relevant evaluation, including schools, districts, and the state, can be retrieved. In Table 2.c (page 63), the information captured to date has been provided in the "Data Reported" column. This data is aggregated at the state level for the sake of this report.

Because the second coherent improvement strategy of ensuring special education is the most intensive intervention by using a continuum of service model has not yet been implemented, the data for its EBPs will not be available for thorough review until the summer of 2018. For this reason, the process evaluation questions 6-10 have been excluded from Table 2.c. The third coherent improvement strategy of reducing skill deficits has been partially addressed this year through survey results. Indeed, process evaluation questions 11, 11.a, and 12 have been addressed in Table 2.c based on responses from district staff participating in the activities.

While initial data currently available does not fully evidence the progress toward improvements, it does provide some information about how the state is currently implementing the EBPS for the coherent improvement strategy of increasing access to core instruction. As enumerated in Table 2.c, for the fall of 2016, at least one member from all school teams across the state attended the fall trainings on this

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[20] A copy of the participating school and district-level data, titled "Attachment 11—School and LEA Data," is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360.

strategy. Participation in trainings is imperative to ensure that strategies and EBPs are being effectively implemented in the classroom. Thus, this high participation rate is very positive.

The survey responses from participants who have already received training yielded positive responses as well, with 91.3 percent of respondents agreeing that the fall training prepared them for the next steps to implement work. In addition, 92.6 percent of these respondents agreed that the fall trainings increased their knowledge of this strategy, while 89.7 percent of these respondents agreed that the fall trainings increased their ability to support SWDs with this strategy. The department has been encouraged by this initial snapshot of SSIP 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 15, 2017, there remain several districts that are 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 92.3 percent of these respondents agreed that the fall trainings increased their knowledge of this strategy (a 0.3 percent decrease from fall to winter). In addition, 92 percent of these respondents agreed that the fall trainings increased their ability to support SWDs with this strategy (a 2.3 percent increase from fall to winter).

Fidelity checks have also been implemented to date to address process evaluation question number five. The checklists address implementation of learned strategies in the classrooms of participating schools and teachers. The inventory[21] consists of 25 instructional practices/strategies across six domains: environment, curriculum, assessment, instruction, classroom leadership and management, and culture and collaboration. An observer—typically a special education supervisor for the district, SPDG interventionist, or SSIP evaluation team member—within a teacher's classroom uses the differentiation to indicate at what level of implementation teachers are utilizing each practice/strategy.

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[21] A copy of the differentiation inventory, titled "Attachment 3—Differentiation Inventory," is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360.

Observers can choose between six different levels of implementation:

1. ***Full Implementation***: all elements of the practice/strategy are observed; they are clearly embedded in teacher's daily classroom instruction; and they are employed to their fullest potential.

2. ***Refining***: all elements of the practice/strategy are observed; some elements are mastered but mastery is not evident for all.

3. ***Installed***: all elements of the practice/strategy are observed, but mastery is not evident.

4. ***Installing***: basic elements of practice/strategy are observed, but some key components are lacking.

5. ***Non-Adopted***: the practice/strategy was not evident during observation, though there was a definite opportunity to do so.

6. ***Not-Evident***: the practice/strategy was not evident during observation; there may not have

Table 2.c

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.	**Fall:** • District Teams: 30 • School Teams: 111 **Winter:**[22] • District Teams: 25 • School Teams: 90 **Spring:** Data to be compiled in summer 2017.
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.	**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> **Winter:** Based on the self-reported attendance information and qualifying information from SPDG interventionists, at least one member of 89 school teams participated in winter training. Of the remaining 22 school teams, one did not have any members in attendance,[23] and 21 school teams had not yet had winter trainings completed. <u>Of these 90 school teams that have held winter trainings, 69 had all three required team members in attendance.</u>

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[22] This is the most current data available as of March 15, 2017. 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.
[23] School in question may be dropping out of the initial cohort.

			Spring: Data to be compiled in summer 2017.
1.b	Did the team members feel the training was relevant and prepared them for next steps?	90 percent reported that they found the sessions relevant and that they prepared them for next steps.	**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, 91.3 percent agreed that the session was relevant and prepared them for next steps. **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, 95.8 percent agreed that the session was relevant and prepared them for next steps. **Spring:** Data to be compiled in summer 2017.
2	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?	80 percent agree that the training and PD opportunities increased their knowledge in this area.	**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, 92.6 percent agreed that the sessions increased knowledge of how to support SWDs in core instruction. **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, 92.3 percent agreed that the sessions increased knowledge of how to support SWDs in core instruction. **Spring:** Data to be compiled in summer 2017.

3	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?	70 percent agree that the training and PD opportunities improved their ability to support SWDs in general education classroom.	**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> **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> **Spring:** Data to be compiled in summer 2017.
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.	<u>N/A</u> Data to be gathered in the spring 2017 survey, subsequent to spring trainings. Should be aggregated no later than June 15, 2017.
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.	<u>N/A</u> Data to be compiled no later than June 15, 2017.
11	How many staff attended trainings relative to writing IAIEPs?	At least one staff member from districts selected to participate in SPDG-funded SSIP trainings attended a training provided on writing IAIEPs.	Of the 76 respondents to the survey requesting this baseline information, 70 stated they had received training on writing IAIEPs. This information was also compared to a district-level survey completed by special education directors

			in each of the 30 participating districts, where these director's shared that they all had received and/or offered training on writing IAIEPs. Given this input through the two sources, <u>it was confirmed that at least one staff member in the participating districts attended a training on writing IAIEPs</u>**.**
11.a	Did the team members find the training and PD sessions valuable, high-quality, and relevant?	80 percent reported that they found the sessions valuable, high-quality, and relevant.	Of the 69 respondents who answered this question in the aforementioned survey, 51 reported that they found the sessions valuable, high-quality, and relevant. In sum, <u>73.9 percent of the respondents reported that they found the sessions valuable, high-quality, and relevant.</u>
12	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?	80 percent agree they are utilizing these skills.	Of the 69 respondents who answered this question in the aforementioned survey, 68 reported that are utilizing the skills and principles learned in IAIEP trainings when completing IEPs. In sum, <u>98.6 percent of the respondents reported that they are utilizing the skills and principles learned in their trainings when completing IEPs.</u>
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?	Meet expectations on four of the five focal areas outlined on the IAIEP quality evaluation rubric.[24]	<u>N/A</u> Initial file reviews to begin in summer 2017 (five percent of IEPs for the students with an SLD subgroup for the district will be pulled for review); files will be reviewed again in the summer of 2018 (five percent will be pulled, just as in 2017).

[24] A copy of the IEP evaluation rubric, titled "Attachment 4—IEP Review Rubric," is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360.

	Process Evaluation Questions		
14	What is the change in the percent of students with an SLD in the general education setting 80 percent or more of the day?	**Year 1:** 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 the first year of implementation. **Year 2 and Onward:** There is no regression the percentage of students with an SLD in grades 3–8 in general education 80 percent or more of the day within participating districts from the baseline 2015-16 school year to the end of the second year of implementation.	**Year 1:** • ***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> • ***Implementation Comparison Data*** To be gathered on May 1, 2017. **Year 2 and Onward:** Data gathered on May 1, 2017 for participating districts will serve as new baseline data for comparisons to data that will be pulled on May 1, 2018. Such processes will take place each subsequent year of implementation.
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?	There is an increase the rate of improvement outlined in the IEP in place prior to implementation of EBPs (prior to 2017-18) and the IEP in place after the first year of implementation (after 2017-18). 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.	**Year 1:** <u>N/A</u> Baseline data on specific student deficits (for those students educated by participating teachers) collected in the summer 2017 will be compared to these same student records and reported deficits in the summer of 2018. Two students records from each participating school. **Year 2 and Onward:** Baseline data on specific student deficits (for those students educated by participating teachers) collected in the summer prior to the next school year and will be compared to these

			same student records and reported deficits in the following summer.
		Process Evaluation Questions	
16	Is the percentage of students with an SLD in grades 3–8 taking scoring at or above basic on the statewide ELA assessment increasing?	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.	**Year 1:** N/A 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. **Year 2:** Baseline assessment data will be available in the summer of 2017. Comparison data will be available in the summer of 2018. **Year 3 and Onward:** Data will be available for comparison the summer after every subsequent school year.

Change to Baseline Data

To date, the only change to baseline data that occurred is related to the assessment baseline for the SiMR itself. This is not to say that as more data become available there won't be modifications to baselines for other key measures, but at this point in implementation it is too soon to anticipate other such changes. The baseline data for the SiMR—percentage of students with an SLD in grades 3–8 scoring at or above basic on the statewide ELA assessment—came from the 2013-14 school year data. This was the penultimate year of this assessment, which was redesigned for the 2015-16 school year. The department anticipated resetting the baseline based on the new assessment results in the 2015-16 school year; however, due to technical challenges with the new assessment vendor in this school year, students in grades 3–8 did not participate in any of the statewide assessments. More information about the absence of assessment data and implications for the SSIP can be found in the "Data Quality Issues" section.

Changes to Implementation and Strategies

Given challenges with the release of the SPDG funds, Tennessee had to delay implementation of strategies outlined in Phase II of the SSIP (more information in the "Implementation" section). This decision was made due to circumstance rather than to data evidence, as the department, with advice from its stakeholders, felt it important to wholly dedicate the first year of implementation to one thoroughly developed strategy and delay implementation of the second coherent improvement strategy—special education as the most intensive intervention in a continuum of service model—until year two of Phase III. The full implementation of the third improvement strategy addressing skill deficits has been postponed to year two as well. This was done because much of the work outlined in this strategy and its EBP are inextricably intertwined with the second strategy and its EBPs.

There have been several changes made to the activities implemented to date for the first coherent improvement strategy of increasing access to core instruction. In response to concerns from participants in the test cohort of 30 districts, the department will revise the CoP format planned in both the SPDG and in Phase II of the SSIP. While the CoPs were originally required to be in-person meetings held monthly within each district, the logistics of such a format have, in practice, been cumbersome. Indeed, it is has been difficult for participating staff to allocate time for meetings given demanding teaching and school schedules. Also, due to the distance between participating schools within the same district, it has been difficult for districts to convene informally in a centralized space that is convenient for all parties. For this reason, participation in these CoPs has suffered in participating districts across Tennessee.

Issues with participation were identified through feedback from the SPDG interventionists in their respective regions as well as the responses to surveys CoP attendees were asked to complete. The responses from CoP attendees have dwindled over the last several months, with 97 attendees responding in September 2016, 89 attendees responding in October 2016, 81 attendees responding in November 2016, 45 attendees responding in January 2017, and 26 attendees responding in February 2017. Clearly, the diminished responses underscore a pervasive issue in the current process. Such concerns with the minimal responses were presented to the Governor's Advisory Council for feedback, and they concurred with the department that revisions to the process of connecting district staff were necessary.

To address this challenge with the CoPs, the department has begun revisiting their frequency and the format by which they must be held. Currently, staff are securing an online platform so that CoPs can be hosted virtually. This will mitigate travel problems that were cited as particularly problematic for participants. Indeed, due to the large size of many counties, schools are in such distant locations that travelling to a central location is difficult and time-consuming. By providing alternative methods of communication and reconsidering the frequency of such meetings, the department anticipate that there will be increased attendance for these CoPs that promote collaboration and engagement.

Based on feedback from special education supervisors in the test cohort's 30 participating school districts, in-person supervisor CoPs were also developed to supplement the CoPs being offered to educators. The SPDG interventionists and representatives from the department participate in these CoPs to facilitate communication between supervisors across the state and talk through problems of practice. In addition, the department will be developing monthly newsletters to provide information and guidance between these in-person CoPs.

Moving Forward

Once data are available for the SSIP's key measures, the department will conduct analyses to determine how to proceed with SSIP implementation. Just as the department responded to concerns relative to CoPs and engagement of the special education supervisors, the department plans to harness data in decisions regarding how to proceed with SSIP implementation. For example, if data on the activities and strategies implemented in the 2016-17 school year do not show the anticipated improvements in key measures, the evaluation team will reconvene to identify areas upon which to improve strategies and their EBPs. In addition to meeting internally, the department will share the information with external stakeholders to garner their feedback and insight. The intent is to ensure that implementation activities and strategies are successful before scaling up the work to other schools and districts. Tennessee intends the data to serve as the barometer highlighting successes and areas for improvement in the SSIP.

Data will also be instrumental in all decisions to be made around the evaluation plan developed in Phase II. Indeed, the department recognizes the dangers of remaining rigid in implementation of set strategies and activities should they not be effective. Equally precarious would be the blind pursuit of the outcomes and SiMR outlined in the theory of action should data support alternatives or adjustments. The evaluation will convene as data is made available to consider whether there are opportunities for modification. Also engaged in this decision-making process will be leadership within both the division of special populations and student support and department leadership, as well as a broad array of stakeholders.

Stakeholder Involvement in Evaluation

Throughout the development of the SSIP, the department has made a concerted effort and utilized a range of strategies to engage as many stakeholders as possible throughout the state to engage in two-way communication around implementation of the plan. Engagement strategies have included conferences, presentations, written communications, surveys, and posting information on the department's website. Such efforts will continue during the evaluation process of the SSIP, as stakeholders will be integral assessors of evaluation components. Indeed, many of the evaluation questions and metrics ultimately included in the SSIP were suggested by stakeholders in various forums, including the survey highlighted in Phase II. Thus, these same stakeholders will be crucial for effective evaluation of the SSIP.

Stakeholders will receive 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 fully 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
As noted in the "Stakeholder Involvement in Implementation" section, the executive director of data services will lead a summit with the Advisory Council in April 2017. This summit will cover not just the implementation activities of the SSIP, but will also provide information on initial data points available. The Council will serve as a partner in: reflecting on this initial data and discussing areas of concern; considering potential opportunities for improvement to the plan; and assisting in decision-making

concerning evaluation practices in year two of SSIP Phase III. While this summit is intended to address only data readily available for evaluation in April, the department intends to engage the council as more information becomes available, both through written communication as well as through presentations at subsequent meetings.

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 2017. By this date, all initial implementation work denoted in the "Implementation Activities" section will have concluded, 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.

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

Throughout the inaugural year of implementation, the department has wrestled with several data quality issues, both small and large in scale. Some data quality concerns are a result of the metrics used to capture data (e.g., self-reporting, surveys), while some are a result of unique challenges with the statewide assessment. Based on the initial information that has been gleaned thus far, the department has identified data of concern and will continue working with internal staff as well as external stakeholders to brainstorm solutions to data quality issues that manifested themselves during the 2016-17 school year.

Self-Reporting and Surveys

To measure efficacy of implementation for strategies and their EBPs implemented to date, the department developed process evaluation questions explicated in the "Data on Implementation" section. While such evaluation questions are crucial to ensure effective implementation of strategies and their EBPs, limitations remain concerning ways to effectively capture data. Indeed, when such questions ask about changes to behavior, knowledge, and ability, it is difficult to gather such information outside of self-reporting.

For the first coherent improvement strategy of increasing access to core instruction, the following process evaluation questions must be addressed:

Question 1.b: Did the team members feel the training was relevant and prepared them for next steps?

Question 2: 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?

Question 3: 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?

For the third coherent improvement strategy of addressing skill deficits, the following process evaluation questions must be addressed:

Question 11.a: Did the team members find the training and PD sessions valuable, high-quality, and relevant?

Question 12:   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 from their trainings when completing IEPs?

Data for these questions are contingent on participants' own opinions and evaluation of their thoughts and abilities. Unfortunately, this leads to inherent bias that may contaminate the results for such questions. While this bias does present data quality issues, there remains little that can be done to attenuate it. As a way to counter this possible bias, the department has been intentional in ensuring that fidelity monitoring conducted by experts be included as part of the evaluation of the strategies overall. Fidelity monitoring serves as an excellence resource by which to assess whether the perceptions self-reported are indeed accurate in practice.

Intertwined with data quality concerns around self-reporting are the tools by which the self-reporting is completed. Surveys have been developed for both the SPDG and SSIP to evaluate training impact and evaluation of the implementation process for the SSIP. While the questions asked in the survey are viable and necessary to address the process evaluation questions provided above, response rate to such surveys has proved problematic. Indeed, subsequent to the fall trainings on access to core instruction, only 64.4 percent of the training participants completed the surveys. In the winter trainings (some of which are still being completed), only 59.2 percent of the training participants completed the surveys.

This low survey response rate can yield skewed data that may not be fully indicative of the whole participating cohort. Indeed, those who responded may be the people who were extremely engaged in the work and thus reporting positive outcomes as a result of the trainings. However, those who might not respond could be disengaged and perhaps would not report the same positive outcomes as a result of the trainings. Without comprehensive knowledge of how all participants have responded to the questions, it is hard to have complete confidence in the results.

To address the survey response concerns, members of the evaluation team will be meeting in the late spring to discuss possible solutions to improve response rates. This will also be a topic presented to stakeholders to gain their insight and feedback in upcoming presentations and communications. Based on the input from all parties, the department will work to develop solutions to issues relative to response rate. Such solutions may include providing surveys in a different format, and having them completed at the training rather than after the training.

Statewide Assessment Data

The largest data concern that has impeded progress in evaluating the SSIP has been the absence of statewide assessment data to measure the SiMR. In the 2015-16 school year, a new assessment was designed to align with state standards, develop skills in line with college and work expectations, promote real-world problem solving, and provide better information for teachers and parents. Due to technical challenges with the assessment vendor contracted to provide the assessment, no statewide assessments in any subject area were completed for any students in grades 3–8. Given this unique situation, the United States Department of Education granted Tennessee a waiver[25] of the statutory requirements relative to assessments.

Without assessment data the department is unable to evaluate the SiMR or identify a new baseline, which has significant implications for evaluation of the SSIP. Indeed, the baseline assessment data from the 2013-14 school year that was used during the development of Phase I is no longer germane to the SiMR and must be reset. But no baseline data for the new assessment will be available until the summer of 2017, a year after initial implementation of the SSIP. Thus, there is a risk of contamination of assessment data, as it becomes difficult to discern whether data were possibly impacted by the application of interventions through the SSIP and thus do not represent a pure baseline.

The department discussed the possible alternatives available to address this quandary. Some members of the evaluation team postulated the use of progress monitoring data to evaluate progress in the 2016-17 school year, given the absence of assessment results. Others contended this solution would be imperfect, given that a diverse array of progress monitoring tools were utilized by participating districts and suggested using 2016-17 statewide assessment data for the baseline. To ensure stakeholders and the public were able to weigh in on possible solutions, an online survey was made available through various newsletters and to interest groups like the Advisory Council.

The survey was sent in the fall of 2016 so the department could utilize input to inform modifications to the SiMR and evaluation. The survey was comprised of two questions; for the first question, stakeholders were asked if they agreed with one of three options being considered by the states:

- Utilize progress monitoring data to measure improvement from the beginning of the 2016-17 school year to the end of the 2016-17 school year (a crosswalk for this progress monitoring data will be developed to determine assessment outcomes of below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced, so a comparable data set is available as a baseline.

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[25] A copy of the waiver granted by the United States Department of Education, titled "Attachment 6—USDOE Waiver," is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360.

- Utilize 2016-17 school year statewide assessment data as a baseline. It will not be a true baseline, but it will provide a starting point that can be compared to statewide assessments for the 2017-18 school year and onward.
- Other

The second question asked if they thought there was any other information or suggestions the respondent would like to provide. Figure 3.1 below shows the final results gathered from the survey. While the response rate was very low, with only 45 stakeholders responding, the responses echoed many of the concerns and conversations in the department.
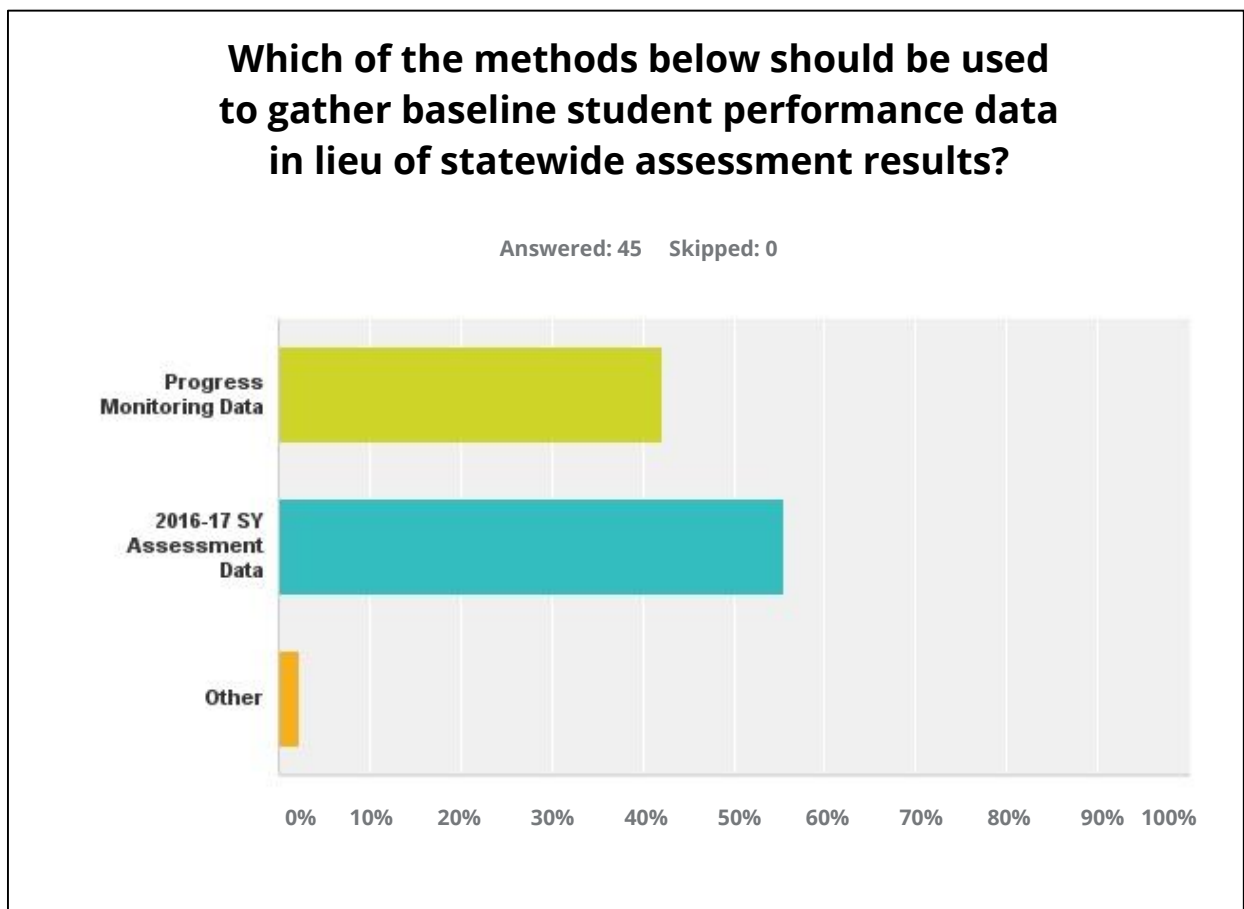
Figure 3.1. Baseline data survey results

The department also solicited feedback from federal technical assistance centers and OSEP to gain insight into whether other states have faced similar problems and possible solutions. Based on the information gleaned from these resources, and the feedback from stakeholders, the department elected to change the baseline for the SiMR to the assessment data that will be compiled for the 2016-17 school year. While there are some data quality concerns with this decision, it ensures that the data

sets to be utilized will be consistent year to year moving forward. Also, because the SSIP was not fully implemented as intended in the 2016-17 school year, the department anticipates that the impact of the work on assessment outcomes will not be as profound as it otherwise might be.

In addition, because growth is the major tenet of the SiMR, the imperfection of the baseline data is not necessarily as deleterious to overall evaluation of the SSIP. Indeed, growth should occur over the years as implementation of the plan becomes more pervasive and enhanced by participants. Thus, the baseline serves more as a starting point upon which to build rather than a definitive data point that must accurately reflect performance before and after any plan implementation.

To mitigate further issues with assessment moving forward, the department secured a new contract with a vendor who has deployed large scale statewide assessments in other states. In addition, Tennessee developed its own questions for use to ensure that if vendor issues arise again, the state owns the questions for the assessment and can seek another vendor as needed. Finally, the department developed a plan that was also approved by the United States Department of Education to ensure high-quality assessments are implemented in the 2016-17 school year.

Progress Toward Improvements

While during this initial year of SSIP implementation it is difficult to fully ascertain progress toward all the intended improvements, there are still some vital improvements that have been made and noteworthy outcomes as a result of implementation. Indeed, there have been improvements to infrastructure to augment the scope of supports the department is able to provide to districts. There are also fidelity checks that are in progress to certify that strategies and their EBPs are indeed being accurately employed. Finally, some of the data available for process evaluation questions are beneficial to address outcomes and the progress toward objectives that are necessary to achieve the SiMR.

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. Indeed, current staff on both the targeted support team and the instructional programming team for the division of special populations and student support have been and will continue playing a vital role in supporting and supplementing the work of the SSIP in the 30 participating school districts.

The three SPDG interventionists hired to serve districts in the three grand divisions of the state have also been instrumental in guiding the work of the SSIP and its strategies and EBPs. They have provided a wealth of knowledge to those participating schools and districts, have attended the district-led trainings to support staff both leading and attending the trainings, and have evaluated the fidelity of implementation of trainings and the SSIP strategies in the classroom. These interventionists consistently work with one another to discuss the concerns they hear from their respective districts and to brainstorm solutions, adjustments to the work, and opportunities for further support.

The participating districts and schools in this test cohort for the SSIP have developed an infrastructure to guide their work. Through the mini-grants awarded by the department to these 30 participating districts, teams have been able to purchase materials to supplement the trainings provided relative to SSIP improvement strategies and their EBPs. They have also identified coaches to provide the three annual trainings and support to all staff implementing activities in their classrooms.

Structural changes and modifications both within the department and the participating districts have been vital to develop a foundation that ensures the sustainability of the SSIP and presents opportunities for scalability. While the test cohort of districts will be followed throughout the duration of the SSIP for evaluation purposes, the end goal is to have all districts in the state participating in the SSIP strategies at the conclusion of the five-year plan. The infrastructure established by the

department will ensure that there are appropriate staff and resources available to districts as the cohorts expand, particularly with regard to the dedicated SPDG staff that will aid the work. However, the infrastructure improvements that have been promoted in districts will also be instrumental in sustaining the work of the plan and increasing participants.

Progress in Theory of Action

As outlined on page 22 under the "Implementation" section, the theory of action is an excellent resource by which to measure progress in implementation and evaluation of the SSIP. Each of the activities for the theory of action have their own instrumental preliminary steps necessary to complete the activity. The preliminary steps for the "provide" and "produce" phases are essential for implementation, while information on the "assess" phase is more germane to progress. Figure 4.1 delineates the preliminary steps necessary to assess the next set of intermediate outputs relative to the two implemented strategies. As in Figures 1.9 and 1.10, the two coherent improvement strategies implemented to date have been outlined in blue to highlight that the steps completed for the "assess" phase of the theory of action. It should be noted that while the preliminary steps have been completed for this section, the actual activities listed under the "assess" column have not yet been conducted at this point in implementation and review.
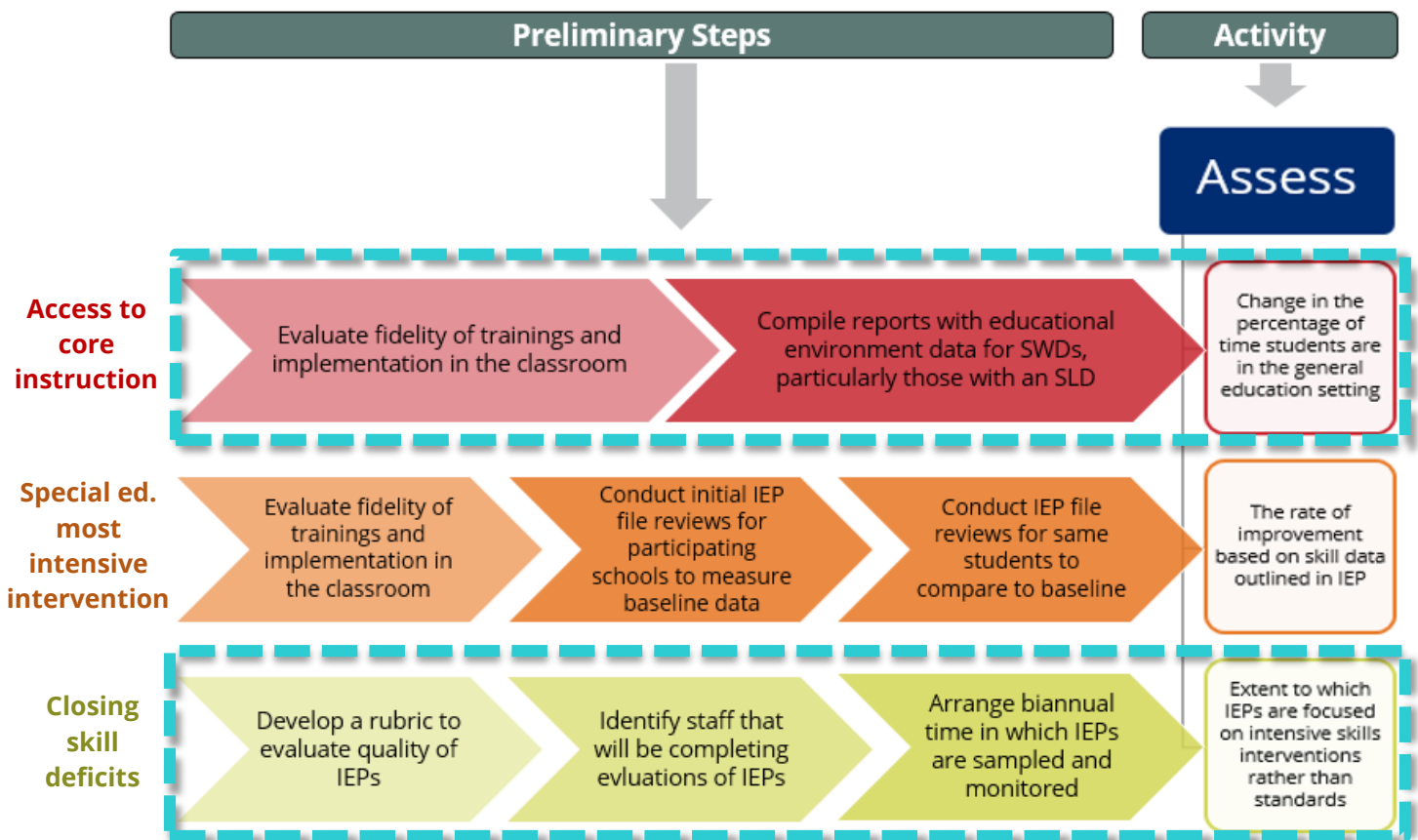

Figure 4.1. The preliminary steps necessary to achieve the activities detailed in the "assess" phase.

Strategy One: Access to Core Instruction

By effectively completing the preliminary steps in Figure 4.1, the department anticipates achieving the intermediate outcome of changing the percent of time students with an SLD are in the general education setting through the access to core instruction strategy. In the 2016-17 school year, trainings on implementing this strategy and its EBPs began; currently special education supervisors and state staff are conducting fidelity monitoring data to evaluate program implementation. In addition, baseline data to evaluate change in percent of time students with an SLD are in the general education setting will come from the Dec. 1, 2015 federal census count. The department anticipates achieving the intermediate output of increasing access to core instruction for all SWDs, including those with an SLD, once data is pulled in May 2017 to measure improvement. This information will be compiled and finalized in early summer 2017.

Strategy Three: Addressing Skill Deficits

In the 2015-16 school year, the department developed a rubric to assess whether IEPs being written across the state were indeed instructionally appropriate. While implementation of trainings and development of resource guides serve as crucial cursory steps toward improving the quality of students IEPs and attenuating skill deficits, evaluation of what is actually occurring across the state in practice is essential. Indeed, such evaluation is imperative to know where districts are struggling, where there are opportunities for refinement of the EBP of writing IAIEPs, and where to provide targeted support. Staff on the instructional programming team for the division of special populations and student support have utilized this rubric for their analyses. The biannual times during which the team will continue utilizing the tool will be in the summer and winter. Initial evaluations for the SSIP will take place in the summer of 2017, during which the test cohort of participating districts will have student records sampled for review.

Fidelity of Implementation

To monitor the fidelity of implementation of the SSIP activities in the 2016-17 school year, the department has utilized several practices to certify the success of learned strategies. To be sure, 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 indeed working and eliciting the intended result.

Train-the-Trainer Trainings

Academic Coaches

Prior to the beginning of the 2016-17 school year, the department hosted a train-the-trainer event in Nashville, during which the academic coaches selected for each participating school district received

training on how to redeliver the first coherent improvement strategy and its EBPs in their respective districts. Of the 30 academic coaches in attendance, 29 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 4.2.

As a result of the session:	Mean
My understanding of the importance of developing a vision and culture for meeting the needs of all students has increased. (n=29)	3.76
My knowledge of how to support students with disabilities in their least restrictive environment has increased. (n=29)	3.72
My ability to train teachers to support students with disabilities in the general education classroom has increased. (n=29)	3.69
My understanding of Universal Design for Learning strategies has increased.	3.69
My ability to train teachers to apply appropriate accommodations/accessibility features to assessments has increased. (n=29)	3.69
My ability to train teachers to differentiate lesson content based on student data has increased. (n=29)	3.66
My ability to train teachers to plan effective lessons that differentiate activities to achieve learning targets has increased. (n=29)	3.66
My ability to train teachers to design differentiated assessments for students to demonstrate mastery has increased. (n=29)	3.62
My ability to train teachers and administrators to establish structures to support a vision of inclusiveness has increased. (n=29)	3.62
My confidence to train teachers to support students with disabilities in the general education classroom has increased. (n=29)	3.59
My ability to train teachers to identify and define accessibility features like accommodations or modifications has increased. (n=29)	3.59
Overall Mean	3.66

Figure 4.2. Fidelity rating scale is as follows: 4-Strongly Agree, 3-Agree, 2-Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree

On the last day of the training, facilitators were given a post-test of 20 True False items as a part of demonstrating their capacity to train the content. All of the facilitators scored 95 percent or above on the post-test and were certified to re-deliver the training. The items missed most frequently were "The work involved in preparing students to operate within a small group instruction model is minimal" and "Using UDL does not reduce the need for singling out individual students to provide accommodations."

Special Education Supervisors

Special education supervisors for participating school districts were required to attend at least one day of training during the train-the-trainer event. Their training was focused on utilizing the fidelity checklists developed to assess implementation of district-level trainings and implementation of

strategies in classrooms. These participants were asked to complete a paper survey designed to elicit their feedback on the impact of the training, the fidelity of the training, and suggestions for future improvement. Of the 33 supervisors in attendance, 29 completed the survey instrument. On a four point Likert scale (with 4 indicating "Strongly Agree" and 1 indicating "Strongly Disagree"), participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with eight survey items concerning the impact of the training. Without exception, participants agreed that the training improved their knowledge and confidence in all eight areas; 100 percent of participants either strongly agreed or agreed with all eight items, and the overall mean rating was 3.62. Mean ratings for all eight items are provided in Table 4.3.

Please indicate which of the following training elements occurred during the professional development sessions you attended:	Percentage Agreed
An overview of the TN SPDG activities was provided.	96.6 percent
The importance of evaluation was explained.	96.6 percent
The grant requirements for classroom observations were discussed.	96.6 percent
The use of the training fidelity feedback forms was explained.	96.6 percent
The Differentiation Inventory: Classroom Observation tool was presented.	96.6 percent
Data collection logistics were explained.	96.6 percent
We practiced using the Differentiation Inventory: Classroom Observation tool.	93.1 percent
We practiced using the training fidelity feedback forms.	82.8 percent

Figure 4.3. Fidelity rating scale is as follows: 4-Strongly Agree, 3-Agree, 2-Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree

District-led Trainings

First, to ensure that the three annual trainings provided by academic coaches are indeed being completed with fidelity, members of the department's evaluation team have and will continue attending the sessions to make sure the items in the training fidelity checklist. The items in this checklist can be seen in Figures 4.4 and 4.5 below.

As shown in Figure 4.4, SSIP/SPDG evaluators monitored the fall 2016 training sessions for each district (led by district academic coaches) and reported whether the appropriate items were covered in the training. As of March 2017, fidelity monitoring data was available for all but one of the districts that held sessions in the fall. On the whole, the monitoring results of these trainings were very positive.

Item	Percentage Yes
The term inclusion was clarified.	97.1 percent
My school team discussed how placement decisions were made within our school.	86.4 percent
My team worked together in a brainstorming exercise to develop a collective vision for differentiation in our school.	93.8 percent
The Bridge to Practice Operational Vision Template to be completed before the Winter session was introduced.	95.5 percent
Universal Design for Learning was explained.	97.1 percent
Differentiation was defined.	97.3 percent
We used a graphic organizer to align TEAM and the Differentiation Rubric.	96.2 percent
A differentiated learning environment was described.	97.3 percent
We analyzed a classroom video using the Differentiation Rubric.	85.5 percent
We engaged in a case study on the differentiation needs of a particular student.	89.3 percent

Figure 4.4. Baseline data survey results on trainings.

As shown in Figure 4.5, SSIP/SPDG evaluators monitored the spring 2017 training sessions for each district (led by district academic coaches) and reported whether the appropriate items were covered in the training. As of March 2017, fidelity monitoring data was available for all but five of the districts, which have not yet held winter trainings. The monitoring results of these spring trainings were very positive, and improved upon the results reported in the fall sessions.

Item	Percentage Yes
School teams' Operational Visions were assessed.	95.8 percent
The difference between differentiation and scaffolding was explained.	95.2 percent
The concept of KUDs (Know, Understand, Do) was explained.	99.4 percent
Methods for determining student needs were discussed.	96.7 percent
School teams developed a grade-level KUD based on classroom roster data.	96.7 percent
The importance of teaching and enforcing routines for small group instruction was discussed.	97.6 percent
The difference between accommodations and modifications was defined.	99.7 percent
Participants analyzed a classroom video of small group instruction using the Differentiation Rubric.	92.5 percent
Participants engaged in a case study on the differentiation needs of a particular student.	97.3 percent
The trainer explained the Bridge to Practice activity for the spring training.	95.5 percent

Figure 4.5. Baseline data survey results on trainings.

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 detailed on page 80 in the "Train-the-Trainer Trainings" section, special education supervisors received detailed training on the differentiation inventory checklist to assess quality of implementation. As of Feb. 22, 2017, 154 classrooms had been observed utilizing the differentiation inventory. which is 68 percent of the 227 general education teachers that participated in the fall trainings. Figure 4.6 shows the preliminary results of this fidelity monitoring, with the mean based on the scoring metrics outlined on page 62 in the "Demonstrating Progress and Making Modifications" Section. The mean score provided is based on the following scale: 0 = Not Adopted; 1 = Installing; 2 = Installed; 3 = Refining; and 4 = Full Implementation.

Checklist Item	Count of Classrooms	Mean
Teacher trusts students	147	2.78
Professional trust is automatic, visible in conversations, planning, and the structure of the school day	140	2.63
School staff are provided time and space for coplanning	130	2.59
Teacher and students learning partnership	146	2.54
Student goals are established based on a continuum of support based on all educator input	131	2.53
Lesson planning for engagement	135	2.47
Collaborative problem solving related to routines and processes	125	2.42
General and special education teachers communicate regarding the needs of all students	135	2.41
Collective growth mindset	143	2.38
Teacher harnesses student voice	141	2.38
Flexible grouping	127	2.36
Student ownership of learning	141	2.33
Feedback to students is actionable (must be clear)	126	2.32
Students allowed autonomy	138	2.31
Teacher attends to readiness, interest, learning profile	132	2.30
Time and support for thinking	134	2.30
Assessment informs instructional planning	102	2.17
Assessment as learning	106	2.15
Time and support for meaning	130	2.15
Teaching Up	120	2.11

Rich conversations with students about differentiation	90	2.00
Assessments are differentiated	96	1.99
Clearly defined KUDs (Know, Understand, Do)	123	1.96
Assessment aligned to KUDs	104	1.80
Students set goals	75	1.61

Figure 4.6. Rating scale is as follows: 4-Full Implementation, 3-Refining, 2-Installed, 1-Installing, 0-Non-Adopted

Current the data for the 2016-17 school year reviews are being collated and finalized, with thresholds being established to measure overall fidelity of implementation.

Outcomes

To date, the department is still in the process of compiling data and preparing to gather additional data relative to outcomes. While some information is currently available for process evaluation questions 1.a, 2, 3, 11.a, and 12 (see Table 3.c), most of the data necessary to address the outcomes evaluation question will not be available until the summer of 2017 or the summer of 2018. Once this information is available, it will be invaluable to assess whether the strategies were implemented appropriately and are yielding the desired outcomes in the data relative to the three coherent improvement strategies of the SSIP.

To date, the department has conducted analysis on the information relative to process evaluation questions 1-5 that is readily available. To evaluate the efficacy of district-led trainings in participating schools, staff from the department and/or SPDG interventionists and SSIP evaluation team members attended the trainings and utilized a checklist to ascertain whether the trainings were held with fidelity. This checklist was tailored to address the fall,[26] winter,[27] and spring[28] trainings. In addition, surveys were sent to participants subsequent to the fall and winter trainings and will be sent for the spring. These surveys[29] were designed to elicit information both about the training impact and training fidelity from the participant perspective. As well, participants were able to cite what additional supports might be needed in their respective districts to implement the training content.

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[26]A copy of the fall training observation checklist, titled "Attachment 7—Fall Training Observation Checklist," is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360.

[27] A copy of the winter training observation checklist, titled "Attachment 8—Winter Training Observation Checklist," is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360.

[28] A copy of the fall training observation checklist, titled "Attachment 9—Spring Training Observation Checklist," is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360.

[29] A copy of the post-training surveys, titled "Attachment 10—Post Train-the-Trainer Event Survey Questions," is available under the "Phase 3 SSIP" tab in GRADS 360.

Improvements in the SiMR

As denoted in the data quality section, the assessment data germane to the evaluation of the SiMR will not be available to conduct evaluation of change and improvement until the summer of 2018. The statewide assessment underwent a complete overhaul and revision to better align the assessment with department priorities in the 2015-16 school year. However, due to challenges with the assessment vendor during this school, statewide assessments were not conducted for students in grades 3-8. This very grade band is the one specified in the SiMR.

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 has 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

During the 2017-18 school year, the initial implementation of the second coherent improvement strategy—ensuring special education is the most intensive intervention in a continuum of service model—and its relevant EBPs will begin in the participating schools and districts that implemented the first coherent improvement strategy (increasing access to core instruction) in the 2016-17 school year. In addition, the department will be providing more intensive analysis of and support around the third coherent improvement strategy (addressing skill deficits) in the coming 2017-18 school year. While these new strategies are being employed, there will be continued use and training on the first coherent improvement strategy of increasing access to core instruction. For more information on the timeline of implementation, please see Figure 5.1.

Evaluation Activities

In the summer of 2017, much of the analysis of data from the 2016-17 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 4 and 5:

Question 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?

Question 5:   Are staff who participated in trainings and PD sessions on access to core instruction indeed implementing interventions with fidelity?

Comparisons will also be completed for outcomes evaluation question 14:

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?

Throughout the implementation of the second coherent strategy in the 2017-18 school year, the department will be able to address process evaluation questions 6-10:

Question 6: 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 RTI[2], multi-sensory approaches, and data-based decision-making?

Question 6.a: Did the requisite staff attend the training and PD sessions (special education supervisor and special education teacher)?

Question 6.b: Did the team members find the training and PD sessions valuable, high-quality, and relevant?

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?

During the 2017-18 school year, comparisons will also be completed for outcomes evaluation question 15:

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?

The measures and expected outcomes for all of these evaluation questions can be seen in Table 2.c (page 63). Figure 5.1 (page 89) is the timeline originally established for the SSIP in Phase II. Revisions and updates to the implementation and evaluation activities have been highlighted in red.

Figure 5.1

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Winter 2017

- Hold second workshop training on increasing access to core instruction.
- Continue gathering information from fidelity checks to address evaluation questions 4 and 5
- Gather information from surveys to address evaluation questions 11 and 12.
- Provide quarterly SSIP update for stakeholders.
- Present an update on the SSIP at the Partners in Education (PIE) conference in Feburary.
- 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.

Spring 2017

- Hold third and final workshop training on increasing access to core instruction.
- 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.
- Continue gathering information from fidelity checks to address evaluation questions 4 and 5
- Provide quarterly SSIP update for stakeholders.
- Release survey for stakeholder feedback aligned to the questions asked in survey disseminated in Nov. 2015.
- Gather post-implementation surveys to address evaluation question 4.
- SPDG evaluation team will continue providing monthly updates on progress toward evaluation questions and targets.
- Engage parent stakeholders through STEP trainings and communications.

Summer 2017

- Gather post-implementation survey data to address all training-specific evaluation questions.
- SPDG evaluation team will continue providing monthly updates on progress toward evaluation questions and targets.
- Conduct file reviews on IEPs being written in test cohort of districts and schools to measure instructional appropriateness and measure skill deficits.
- Develop content for second improvement strategy
- Evaluate the percent of the day students educated in schools implementing strategies spend in core instruction.
- Evaluate referral data as compared to the baseline year of implementation.
- Evaluate assessment results to determine baseline.
- Provide quarterly SSIP update for stakeholders.
- Assess overall effectiveness of the first year of implementation and consider whether changes or adjustments need to be made.
- Evaluate results based on baseline data compared to end of year data and then school-level data compared to district-level data.

Fall 2017

- Begin SPDG-funded trainings on ensuring special education is the most intensive intervention in a continuum of service model.
- Gather information from trainings to address evaluations questions 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.
- Provide supports as needed to the test cohort of districts as they continue implementation of the strategy around increasing access to core instruction.
- Identify districts that require further support on writing IAIEPs based on responses to evaluation questions 11 and 12 and file reviews. Begin follow-up trainings on this strategy
- 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.
- SPDG evaluation team will continue providing monthly updates on progress toward evaluation questions and targets.

Winter 2018

- Hold second SPDG-funded workshop on ensuring special education is the most intensive intervention in a continuum of service model
- Gather information from trainings to address evaluations questions 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10
- Provide supports as needed to the test cohort of districts as they continue implementation of the strategy around increasing access to core instruction.
- 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.
- SPDG evaluation team will continue providing monthly updates on progress toward evaluation questions and targets.

Spring 2018

- Hold third and final SPDG-funded workshop on ensuring special education is the most intensive intervention in a continuum of service model .
- Provide supports as needed to the test cohort of districts as they continue implementation of the strategy around increasing access to core instruction.
- Gather baseline data to address evaluation questions 14, 15, 16, and 17.
- 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.
- SPDG evaluation team will continue providing monthly updates on progress toward evaluation questions and targets.

Summer 2018

- Gather post-implementation survey data to address all training-specific evaluation questions.
- SPDG evaluation team will continue providing monthly updates on progress toward evaluation questions and targets.
- Conduct file reviews of same student records from summer 2017 to measure change in skill deficits to address evaluation question 16.
- Gather all observation data to answer evaluation questions 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10
- Gather data from randomly sampled IEPs in participating districts to address evaluation question 13.
- Evaluate referral data as compared to the baseline year of implementation to address evaluation question 15.
- Assist participating districts in scalability opportunities and expansion of the cohort.

Fall 2018-2020

- 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, referrals, 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 does not anticipate significant barriers in the coming implementation activities. Those identified thus far in the plan (e.g., delay of SPDG funds, missing assessment data) now have solutions in place. Indeed, with the appropriate staff and resources now able to support the work of the SPDG, such barriers that plagued the implementation of the SSIP at the beginning of the 2016-17 school year have been attenuated. While the assessment data that will be gathered in 2016-17 will not provide a perfect, unadulterated baseline, it will be a measure upon which progress can be monitored. This has resolved the problems associated with missing assessment data from the 2015-16 school year.

This is not to imply that possible barriers do not exist. Certainly, there are unique crcumstances that create challenges and require planning adjustments. To address such barriers as they present themselves, the department will continue to utilize internal stakeholders, evaluation team members, participating districts in the test cohort, and external stakeholders, just as was done in the 2016-17 school year.

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. Given some of the concerns denoted in the "Data Quality" section, information on how to mitigate issues with measures that require self-reporting and thoughts on how to improve low survey response rates will be extremely beneficial. Also, lessons learned from other states with similar SiMRs and/or strategies or EBPs will be resources to consult throughout Tennessee's implementation of the SSIP. Indeed, learning from peers facing similar challenges can be helpful, and such engagement with other states presents the possibility to stave off problems before they occur.

As noted in Phase II, guidance on scaling-up SSIP activities will also be necessary as the work expands during the second year of implementation. Tennessee recognizes the importance of ensuring that the EBPs continue intensifying to encourage success for all students across the state, but this can be a daunting and cumbersome task. Internal questions about how to best scale-up activities, what scaling-up looks like in different districts, and how to maintain successes in smaller samples on a larger scale will likely need to be communicated with both OSEP and technical assistance centers. The acumen that these agencies can provide will allow the department to prepare more successfully for expansion of SSIP activities.

Finally, the department has made great strides to solicit stakeholder feedback and encourage engagement. Through presentations across the state in front of audiences ranging from district staff to the state's Advisory Council members, the department has worked to collaboratively develop the SSIP and account for the unique knowledge and vision stakeholders bring. The department has worked to engage stakeholders throughout the course of the 2016-17 school year and engage them in conversations both about implementation of the SSIP and in decision-making about the evaluations. That being said, there are always more ways to engage stakeholders and create a larger public presence. The department would like information from OSEP and technical assistance centers on ways to further engage stakeholders throughout the evaluation phase.