Connecticut State Department of Education

Part B State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)

State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report

Indicator 17 - Phase III

April 2017

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A. Summary of Phase III Report

1. INTRODUCTION: THEORY OF ACTION, LOGIC MODEL, AND SIMR

The State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR) for the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) is to increase the reading performance of all third-grade students with disabilities statewide, as measured by Connecticut's English Language Arts (ELA) Performance Index. The SIMR was selected in 2014 as part of Phase I implementation after a broad state-level analysis of three SPP/APR indicators (graduation, dropout and academic achievement), a more focused root cause analysis of reading achievement data, and extensive consultation with internal and external stakeholders. A theory of action was subsequently developed to focus the State's collaborative efforts (see page 6), and a logic model was then constructed to define in more detail how the State would fulfill its theory of action (see page 7). The logic model illustrates the tactical approach the CSDE is taking to make change happen by explicitly linking the SSIP's improvement strategies to intended outputs, short-term and mid-term outcomes, and the long-term SIMR of increased reading performance for 3rd grade students with disabilities.

2. IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES EMPLOYED DURING THE YEAR

Since its Phase II submission in April 2016, the State has employed a variety of strategies and activities to improve its infrastructure, and support local education agencies (LEAs) as they work toward improving the reading performance of third grade students with disabilities. These activities are outlined below, with a full discussion of each activity provided in Section B.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Established a SSIP Leadership Team

The CSDE formed a SSIP Leadership Team to spearhead implementation efforts of its SSIP. The team is led by three SSIP Consultants from the Academic Office, Bureau of Special Education (BSE). Members also include representatives from three offices within the Department (Academic, Performance, and Turnaround) and representatives from the State Education Resource Center. The Leadership team is responsible for guiding the SSIP work, overseeing the development of state infrastructure and LEA tiered supports, and regularly updating the CSDE leadership of both progress and setbacks.

Aligned Accountability Systems and Methodologies

The State chose to express its SIMR in a numeric form that would be consistent with the methodology used in its new Next Generation Accountability System. Connecticut's SIMR is directly aligned with the new system's first indicator, with district academic achievement in reading expressed as the ELA Performance Index. Both the Next Generation Accountability results and SIMR data are now published annually for all LEAs on the State's education and reporting website, EdSight.

Integrated SSIP into the CSBE Five-Year Comprehensive Plan

The Connecticut State Board of Education's (CSBE) five-year comprehensive plan, Ensuring Equity and Excellence for All Connecticut Students, represents the CSDE's commitment to its ongoing efforts to pursue excellence and equity for all Connecticut students. The SSIP has been incorporated into the CSDE's actionable implementation plan as a key strategy that is expected to produce measurable outcomes in support of the plan's four goals: 1) ensure students' non-academic needs are met so they are ready to learn; 2) support schools and districts in staying on target with learning goals; 3) give students access to great teachers and school leaders; and 4) make sure students learn what they need to know to succeed in college, career, and life.

Leveraged Existing Professional Learning Initiatives

The SSIP Leadership Team prioritized two statewide professional learning opportunities to leverage support for the SSIP, the Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)/Dyslexia Initiative and the K-3 Reading Professional Learning Initiative known as ReadConn. Several members of the SSIP Leadership Team, including consultants from the BSE, the Academic Office, and the State Education Resource Center (SERC) have served in either a management or advisory role on both initiatives.

Determined Professional Learning and Technical Assistance Needs

As part of its SSIP work, the CSDE has begun several efforts to assess and address the professional learning needs of educators providing K-3 literacy instruction for students with disabilities. These efforts have represented various modalities of support, including refining an existing self-assessment instrument for assessing evidence-based practices in literacy; developing a professional learning needs assessment survey; constructing a web-based repository of open-sourced materials, and pursuing federal grant funding aimed at improving the State's system for personnel preparation and professional development of individuals providing early literacy instruction to all students, including students with disabilities.

Tiered LEA Support

Provided SSIP Tiered-Intervention Support: Pilot Year (2015-16)

The CSDE designed its SSIP technical assistance and support model based on a three-year cycle whereby approximately one-third of the State's 170 LEAs (i.e., Cohort A, B, and C) are reviewed annually for consideration and assignment across three tiers of intervention. The model was piloted during the 2015-16 school year, and following a thorough analysis of the 2014-15 SIMR data for the 56 districts that comprise Cohort A, 21 districts were identified to participate in pilot Tier 2 activities. These districts were asked to submit an electronic data wall addressing their SIMR data, and consultants from the CSDE and SERC evaluated the submissions to identify districts as either a continuing Tier 2 district or a promoted Tier 3 district.

Districts continuing in Tier 2 (n=16) were asked to submit an improvement plan to address their SIMR data. Districts promoted to Tier 3 supports (n=5) were asked to form a district team to participate in four onsite technical assistance sessions. The sessions, which were facilitated by a state consultant team, included a comprehensive review and root cause analysis of the district's

SIMR data; an examination of the district's infrastructure; and development of an action plan to improve early literacy outcomes for students with disabilities. Tier 3 districts were also expected to report on their ongoing efforts to implement their plans via three follow-up teleconference sessions scheduled at six month intervals with state consultants.

Provided SSIP Tiered-Intervention Support: Year One (2016-17)

Similar to the pilot year, in 2016-17, the BSE again conducted a thorough analysis of districts' SIMR data. This year, the review included 2015-16 SIMR data for the 51 districts that comprise Cohort B. However, in an effort to significantly increase the support provided to Tier 2 districts, the BSE reduced the number of districts selected from 21 to 12 districts. In late December 2016, District Superintendents were notified of their status as a SSIP Tier 2 district. They were asked to identify a district administrator to serve as the SSIP District Lead, and then collaborate with the District Lead to identify a district team comprised of both general and special education staff. They were also asked to distribute the District Literacy Evaluation Tool (DLET) to each district team member to individually complete and submit to the CSDE by late January 2017.

Following the submission of the DLET data, SSIP Tier 2 Support Teams conducted half-day site visits in February-March 2017 with each district. During the visits, state consultants worked with district teams to review individual DLET scores and come to a consensus implementation score for each of the indicators. Brief data summaries of the visits, including consensus results from the DLET and identified strengths and focus areas for improvement are currently being prepared and will be distributed to each district in late March. Consultants will also use the DLET data to inform next steps of the tiered-intervention model, including districts' responsibilities as either a continuing Tier 2 district or their promotion to a Tier 3 district. Decisions on the promotion of district to Tier 3 status (or continuing Tier 2 status) are expected within the first few weeks of April 2017.

3. EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES IMPLEMENTED TO DATE

Connecticut's SSIP work in promoting the use of evidence-based practices (EBP) exists within the context of the CSDE's System for Effective Reading Instruction. The System includes four central, overarching components: implementation of 1) a school-wide comprehensive literacy assessment; 2) a comprehensive core classroom reading instructional program; 3) small group interventions that supplement core instruction for students experiencing reading difficulties; and 4) a parent engagement program that builds parents' awareness of the family's role as a partner in reading success. The goal is for all districts to have a multi-tiered, coordinated system of reading instruction and assessment, through which children will have access to the personalized structures and individualized supports needed to become proficient, engaged, and active readers by the end of third grade.

During the past year, the CSDE has spent significant time developing an instrument to assess fidelity of implementation of evidence-based practices in reading at the district level. The self-assessment, known as the District Literacy Evaluation Tool (DLET) was modified from an earlier tool, the Literacy Evaluation Tool (LET), developed and used as part of Connecticut's past two State Personnel Development Grants (SPDG). As mentioned above, the DLET has been rolled-out this

year as part of the State's newly revised Tier 2 SSIP support process, and baseline results are being used to help district personnel target and prioritize early literacy efforts across their elementary schools. Post-assessment data will be collected as districts exit Tier 3 SSIP supports in order to assess changes in fidelity of implementation of evidence-based practices in reading.

4. OVERVIEW OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation plan relies on the widely-utilized Context, Input, Process, and Product evaluation model.[1] The model was seen as a good fit for the SSIP as it is designed to address all phases of an education program – needs assessment, planning, implementation and outcomes – and emphasizes "learning by doing" to identify corrections to implementation. Phase III of SSIP implementation focuses on the last two components of the CIPP model: process evaluation, which has been conducted collaboratively (i.e., internal and external evaluation), and product or outcome evaluation, which has been directed by the external evaluation team.

All evaluation activities and methods have been directly aligned with the activities, outputs, and outcomes outlined in the logic model. Data sources utilized to date include extant documents and professional learning data; qualitative data from SSIP Leadership Team interviews; SSIP Tier 2 and Tier 3 documentation, such as TA materials, protocols, and participation information; satisfaction data from the State's Tier 2 visits; DLET self-assessment and consensus scores; and SIMR data from the 2014-15 and 2015-16 school year. Progress findings written by the external evaluator are listed below, with a full discussion of each finding provided in Section E.

EVALUATION QUESTION 1: To what extent has the SSIP improved state-level capacity for supporting districts and school in implementing and scaling-up evidence-based practices to improve reading for students with disabilities?

∝ The CSDE has established a strong inter-office/inter-agency SSIP Leadership Team that is committed to the vision of the SSIP, and has been able to effectively spearhead SSIP implementation efforts to date.

∝ The CSDE has made significant inroads during the past year to embed the SSIP within the State's larger education improvement strategies in an effort to ensure equity and excellence for all Connecticut students, including students with disabilities.

∝ While early strides were made to involve stakeholders in SSIP implementation and evaluation decision-making, the stakeholder voice has been more focused during the past year.

EVALUATION QUESTION 2: To what extent has the SSIP improved district and school-level capacity for implementing and sustaining evidence-based practices to improve reading for students with disabilities?

∝ Modification to the SSIP tiered-LEA intervention model, specifically introducing the District Literacy Evaluation Tool (DLET) as part of Tier 2 supports, has helped state consultants better understand, target, and prioritize the early literacy needs of each district.

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[1] Stufflebeam, D. L. (2003). The CIPP Model for Evaluation. In D. L. Stufflebeam, & T. Kellaghan, (Eds.), *The International Handbook of Educational Evaluation* (Chapter 2). Boston, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

∝ The SSIP Tier 2 technical assistance visits were well received by the district teams, with team members consistently reporting that the DLET consensus process was an effective approach for assessing district needs with respect to early literacy practices.
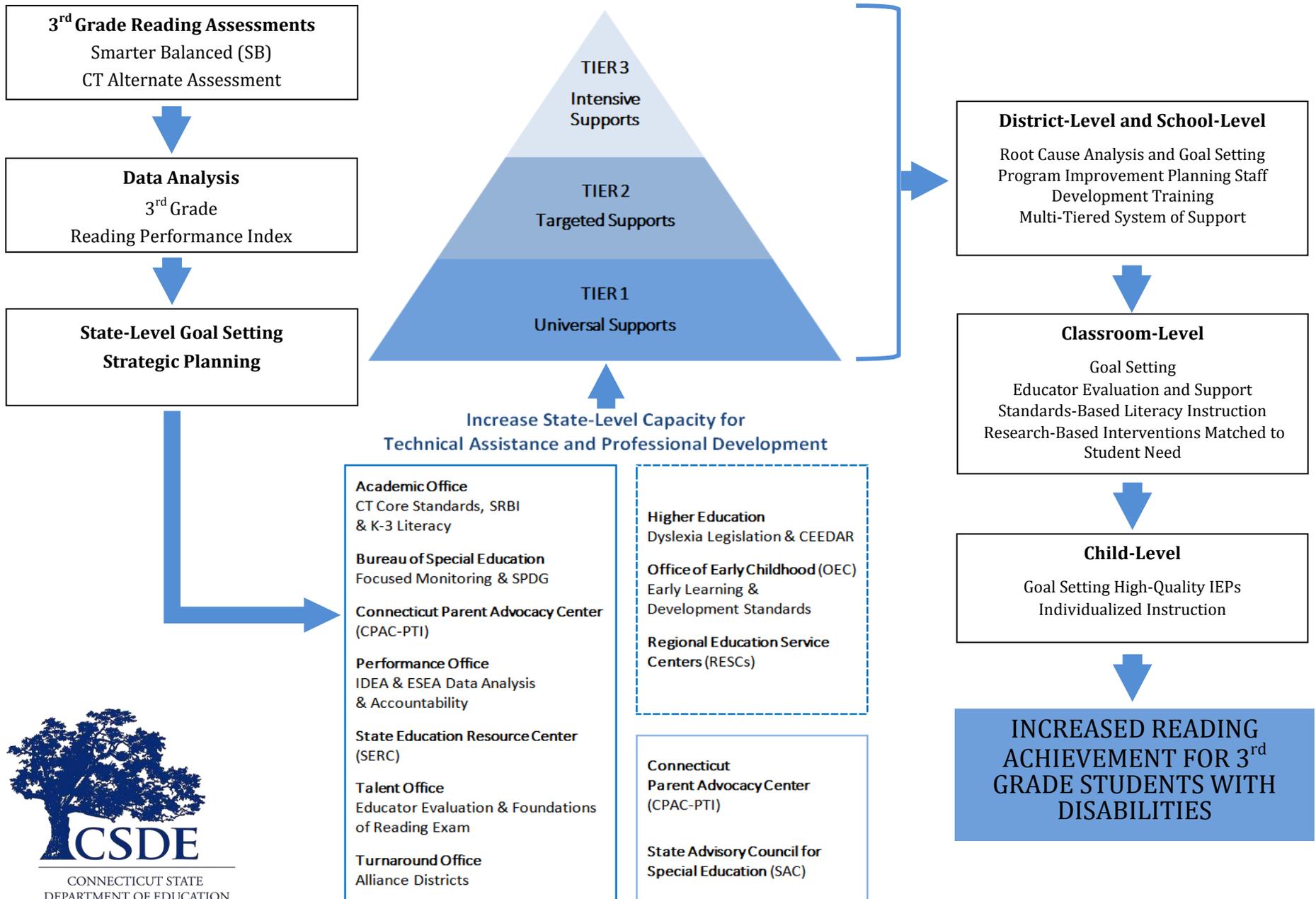
EVALUATION QUESTION 3: To what extent has the SSIP increased the reading performance of third-grade students with disabilities?

∝ The SIMR increased from 50.1 in FFY 2014 to 51.4 in FFY 2015, exceeding this year's target of 50.1.

∝ SIMR data at the LEA level increased from FFY 2014 to FFY 2015 for approximately 58% of districts statewide, and roughly the same percentage (58%) of districts improved their gap in performance between third-grade students with disabilities and their nondisabled peers.

∝ SIMR data for districts that participated in the pilot year of Tier 2 and Tier 3 SSIP supports provides preliminary information as to the intervention's effectiveness towards improving the reading performance for 3rd grade students with disabilities.

5. KEY CHANGES TO IMPLEMENTATION

During the past year, the SSIP Leadership Team has reviewed data and stakeholder feedback on an ongoing basis in order to facilitate program refinements and inform decisions regarding future planning. Monthly team meetings, in addition to standing weekly meetings of the SSIP Lead Consultants and bi-weekly meetings with the SSIP Support Team Lead from SERC, has ensured that data are reviewed in a collaborative and timely manner. The information has been used to inform the CSDE leadership of both progress and setbacks, and to effect positive changes to implementation activities and planned next steps.

Perhaps the most notable example of the SSIP Leadership Team's use of data to support positive change was the decision to enhance the support provided to Tier 2 districts during the 2016-17 school year. More nuanced but still key changes have included changes to the way the CSDE communicates information about the SSIP to districts (i.e., from BSE Consultant to District Special Education Director in 2015-16 to CSDE Interim Chief Academic Officer to District Superintendent in 2016-17), and changes to the way responsibilities for SSIP implementation are delegated (i.e., solely BSE consultants in 2015-16 to inter-office/inter-agency consultants in 2016-17).

SSIP – THEORY OF ACTION

3rd Grade Reading Assessments
Smarter Balanced (SB)
CT Alternate Assessment

↓

Data Analysis
3rd Grade
Reading Performance Index

↓

State-Level Goal Setting
Strategic Planning

TIER 3
Intensive Supports

TIER 2
Targeted Supports

TIER 1
Universal Supports

↑

Increase State-Level Capacity for Technical Assistance and Professional Development

District-Level and School-Level
Root Cause Analysis and Goal Setting
Program Improvement Planning Staff
Development Training
Multi-Tiered System of Support

↓

Classroom-Level
Goal Setting
Educator Evaluation and Support
Standards-Based Literacy Instruction
Research-Based Interventions Matched to
Student Need

↓

Child-Level
Goal Setting High-Quality IEPs
Individualized Instruction

↓

INCREASED READING ACHIEVEMENT FOR 3rd GRADE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Academic Office
CT Core Standards, SRBI
& K-3 Literacy

Bureau of Special Education
Focused Monitoring & SPDG

Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center
(CPAC-PTI)

Performance Office
IDEA & ESEA Data Analysis
& Accountability

State Education Resource Center
(SERC)

Talent Office
Educator Evaluation & Foundations
of Reading Exam

Turnaround Office
Alliance Districts

Higher Education
Dyslexia Legislation & CEEDAR

Office of Early Childhood (OEC)
Early Learning &
Development Standards

Regional Education Service
Centers (RESCs)

Connecticut
Parent Advocacy Center
(CPAC-PTI)

State Advisory Council for
Special Education (SAC)

── Leveraged during SSIP Phase 1 & 2
┄┄ To be leveraged in SSIP Phase 2
── Advisory & Support

CSDE
CONNECTICUT STATE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Connecticut State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP): LOGIC MODEL

Strategies | Activities | Outputs | Outcomes

Infrastructure Development

Coordination and Monitoring

Activities:
- Dedicate time and staff to SSIP implementation.
- Collaborate with internal and external partners.
- Integrate SSIP work into related initiatives.
- Build internal/external SSIP team members' capacity.
- Promote global message regarding SSIP.

Outputs:
- Updated SIMR targets using SB data.
- Revised PPRs and LEA-APRs to include SIMR data.
- Revised Alliance District application to include K-3 reading goal.
- PL opportunities for SSIP team members.
- Interagency communication and guidance.

Professional Learning

Activities:
- Conduct LEA PL needs assessment and gap analysis.
- Update existing and develop new web-based resources and modules.
- Update existing and develop new onsite PL events.
- Create a centralized web-based repository of resources and events.

Outputs:
- Results of LEA PL needs assessment/gap analysis.
- Revised and new web-based resources and modules.
- Revised and new onsite PL events.
- New centralized web-based repository, including regular updates.

Technical Assistance

Activities:
- Create Tier 2 and Tier 3 SSIP TA materials and protocols.
- Provide assistance on use of TA materials as self-study.
- Identify Tier 2 and Tier 3 SSIP support teams.
- Define Tier 2 and Tier 3 SSIP progress monitoring methods.

Outputs:
- New comprehensive set of SSIP TA materials and protocols, with revisions as need.
- Instructions and protocols for instrument use.
- Well-defined Tier 2 and Tier 3 teams in place.
- Tier 2 and Tier 3 progress monitoring methods in place.

Tiered LEA Support

Tier 1 Universal

Activities:
- Conduct annual review of SIMR data for one-third of districts.
- Select LEAs for Tier 2 support.
- Educators access PL web-based resources.
- Educators attend PL events.
- LEAs use SSIP TA protocols as self-study.

Outputs:
- 3rd grade ELA SWD DPIs, DPIs' Gap (All-SWD).
- Results of Tier 1 review communicated to LEAs.
- Data collected from web-based resources (hits, downloads, satisfaction).
- Data collected from PL events (reach/scope, attendance, satisfaction).

Tier 2 Targeted

Activities:
- LEAs identify a SSIP district lead and district team.
- District team members individually complete the DLET self-assessment.
- Conduct consensus visit with district teams.
- Select LEAs for Tier 3 support.

Outputs:
- SSIP district teams established.
- Data collected from individual DLET self-assessment; preliminary analysis by SEA.
- DLET consensus data and summary reports; consensus visit satisfaction data.
- Results of Tier 2 review communicated to LEAs.

Tier 3 Intensive

Activities:
- District teams attend 2 days of onsite TA in year one.
- District teams develop an action plan to support improved fidelity of EBP and reading achievement.
- District teams participate in 4-8 days of PL in year two.
- District teams provide progress monitoring data for 2 years.

Outputs:
- Data collected from TA (attendance, satisfaction).
- Action plans for all Tier 3 LEAs.
- Data collected from PL (reach/scope, attendance, satisfaction).
- Progress monitoring data.

Outcomes

- Sufficient operating support is available to enable the SSIP to fulfill its responsibilities.
- EB learning structures and TA assistance are embedded in the work of the SSIP.
- CSDE institutional policies and practices evolve to support the goals of the SSIP.
- Increased educator awareness and knowledge of EB reading instruction, interventions, and supports.
- LEA improvement efforts demonstrate systematic evaluation of current literacy practices in order to drive SRBI in schools.
- Improved fidelity of implementation of EB reading instruction, interventions, and supports based on the principles of SRBI.

Increased reading performance of 3rd grade students with disabilities.

Inputs

Bureau of Special Education	Academic Office	Performance Office	Talent Office	Turnaround Office	Office of Early Childhood	Partners
Focused Monitoring	SRBI	IDEA/ESSA Data	CEEDAR	Alliance Districts	CT ELDS	SERC
SPDG	CT Core Standards	PPRs	Foundations of Reading Exam			CPAC
Dyslexia Workgroup	K-3 Literacy	SLDS				IHEs
	Foundations of Reading Survey					RESCs
						SAC

B. Progress in Implementing the SSIP

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE'S IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

Since its Phase II submission in April 2016, the State has employed a variety of strategies and activities to improve its infrastructure, and support local education agencies (LEAs) as they work toward improving the reading performance of third grade students with disabilities – Connecticut's State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR). This section of the report describes the planned activities the State has carried out and the intended outputs that have been accomplished as a result of its implementation activities. It is organized by the two overarching improvement strategies outlined in the State's logic model (Infrastructure Development and Tiered LEA Support).

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Established a SSIP Leadership Team

The CSDE has formed a SSIP Leadership Team to spearhead implementation efforts of its State Systemic Improvement Plan (see Table B.1). The team is led by three SSIP Lead Consultants from the Academic Office, Bureau of Special Education (BSE). Members also includes representatives from three offices within the Department (Academic, Performance, and Turnaround) and one representative from the State Education Resource Center (SERC). The Leadership Team is responsible for guiding the SSIP work, overseeing the development of state infrastructure and LEA tiered supports, and regularly updating the CSDE leadership of both progress and setbacks. The larger team meets monthly, while the three SSIP Lead Consultants have standing weekly meetings, and also meet bi-weekly with the SSIP Support Team Lead from SERC to discuss implementation progress regarding the SSIP LEA tiered-intervention support model.

Table B.1: SSIP Leadership Team

SSIP Leadership Team Members	2016-17 Meeting Dates	Sample Agenda Items
• SSIP Lead Consultants (n=3), Academic Office, Bureau of Special Education (BSE) • Director of Reading, Academic Office • Literacy Consultant, Academic Office • SPP/APR Indicator 3 Manager, Academic Office, BSE • Special Education Data Consultant, Performance Office • Statewide Assessment Data Consultant, Performance Office • Alliance District Liaison, Turnaround Office • SSIP Support Team Lead, State Education Resource Center (SERC)	• September 28, 2016 • October 26, 2016 • November 23, 2016 • December 21, 2016 • February 21, 2017 • March 22, 2017	• Discuss revisions to the LET and preview new DLET • Review stakeholder feedback on the DLET • Discuss professional learning needs assessment • Discuss revisions to the Tier 2 support process, including DLET reconciliation process • Provide updates on Tier 2 communication and activities • Get group feedback on the DLET summaries for districts • Continue to brainstorm and refine Tier 3 activities

During Phase II, increasing collaboration between the Bureau of Special Education and the larger Academic Office, and the CSDE Offices of Performance and Turnaround, was identified as a critical

component of deploying resources and providing intervention supports in a coordinated and coherent manner. As such, the SSIP Leadership Team was intentionally formed as an interoffice team that could promote a shared vision for school improvement efforts, including a common language and examples of evidence-based interventions and practices in reading. As is outlined in Table B.2 (and described in more detail following the table), the team has been able to cooperate across internal offices (Performance and Academic) and external partners (SERC) on several infrastructure building activities and outputs. It should be noted that while planned activities with the Turnaround Office (e.g., revised Alliance District application, integrated Tier 3 improvement and turnaround plans) have not been accomplished to date, these activities remain as priority action items for the SSIP Leadership Team.

Table B.2: Interoffice-Interagency Collaboration Efforts of the SSIP Leadership Team

Performance Office	Academic Office	SERC
• Profile and Performance Reports (PPRs) • Annual Performance Reports (APRs) • SIMR data and targets	• CSBE 5-Year Comprehensive Plan • ReadConn PL Series • Development of DLET • PL/TA Needs Assessment • Web-based Repository of EBP	• SLD/Dyslexia Initiative • PL/TA Needs Assessment • Tiered LEA Support Model • PL/TA Needs Assessment • Web-based Repository of EBP

Aligned Accountability Systems and Methodologies

Over the past several years, the State has been working diligently to use the same measures of student academic achievement across all monitoring and improvement initiatives, including the SSIP work with students with disabilities. To this end, the State chose to express its SIMR in a numeric form that would directly align with its new Connecticut Next Generation Accountability System. The Next Generation Accountability System is a broad set of 12 indicators, that measure not just academic achievement, but also student growth, and more holistic measures such as absenteeism, physical fitness, and arts access. Connecticut's SIMR is directly aligned with the new system's first indicator, with district academic achievement in reading expressed as the ELA Performance Index.

Figure B.1: Aligned Methodologies for Next Generation and SSIP Accountability Systems

Next Generation Accountability System Indicator 1	State Systemic Improvement Plan SIMR
Individual student scale scores on the SB ELA Assessment and Connecticut Alternate ELA Assessment are converted to an index value of 0-110.	Individual student scale scores *of 3rd grade SWD* on the SB ELA Assessment and Connecticut Alternate ELA Assessment are converted to an index value of 0-110.
An ELA Performance Index is calculated by averaging the index points earned by all students.	An ELA Performance Index is calculated by averaging the index points earned by all *3rd grade SWDs*.
The Index is compared to a state target.	The Index is compared to a state target.

Source: Connecticut State Department of Education, *Using Accountability Results to Guide Improvement*, March 2016, Revised February 2017.

Both the Next Generation Accountability Results and SIMR data are now published annually on the State's education and reporting website (www.edsight.ct.gov). Indicator results and targets from both accountability systems are provided in the Profile and Performance Reports (PPRs). The PPRs include Next Generation Accountability results, SIMR data, and graduation rates, as well as descriptive information on student enrollment and demographics, educator demographics, and instruction and resource information. The Annual Performance Reports (APRs), which provide information on each LEA's performance on targets set forth by the State Performance Plan (SPP), have also been updated to include annual SIMR data.

Integrated SSIP into the CSBE Five-Year Comprehensive Plan

The Connecticut State Board of Education's (CSBE) five-year comprehensive plan, Ensuring Equity and Excellence for All Connecticut Students, adopted in July 2016, represents the CSDE's commitment to its ongoing efforts to pursue both excellence and equity for all Connecticut students. Following the plan's adoption, the CSDE worked with technical assistance providers from the Council for Chief State Officers to develop an actionable implementation plan for delivering results on the plan's four goals: 1) ensure students' non-academic needs are met so they are healthy, happy, and ready to learn; 2) support schools and districts in staying on target with learning goals; 3) give students access to great teachers and school leaders; and 4) make sure students learn what they need to know to succeed in college, career, and life. CSDE Senior Leadership were asked to put forth key strategies that could produce measurable outcomes in support of these goals, and identify Strategy Leaders responsible for making sure implementation happens. Strategy Profiles were then documented in support of the CSBE's five-year implementation timeline. An SSIP Strategy Profile, summarized in Table B.3 below, was one of roughly eight strategies included as part of the Board's comprehensive five-year plan (2016-21).

Table B.3: SSIP Strategy Profile Summary

Name of Strategy:	State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP): Early Literacy by Grade 3
Strategy Leader:	Director of Reading, Academic Office
Definition of Success:	Districts will have a multi-tiered, coordinated system of reading instruction and assessment, through which children will have access to personalized structures and individualized supports necessary to become fully literate. Teachers will be able to reliably and systematically identify students' individual needs related to critical early literacy skills. Teachers will provide explicit instruction that utilizes culturally responsive, scientifically research-based literacy practices to provide all students with the skills and tools necessary to be lifelong readers.
Major Activities:	• Support all districts in understanding K-3 literacy standards, valid and reliable reading assessments and scientifically research-based reading instruction. • Develop highly effective teachers and administrators skilled in utilizing student assessment data to drive scientifically research-based reading instruction. • Assist districts in systematically assessing and evaluating current literacy practices, interventions, materials and systems to increase literacy outcomes for all students including English Learners (ELs) and students with disabilities. • Support districts' systemic early literacy improvement efforts related to building infrastructure and capacity to create conditions and sustain effective literacy practices over time.
Scale:	By 2021, scientifically research-based early literacy teaching and learning will be put into practice for all K-3 students and reduction of targeted achievement gaps.

Source: Excerpted from the Connecticut Consolidated State Plan, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) – draft plan for public input, February 2017.

Leveraged Existing Professional Learning Initiatives

There are a variety of existing professional learning initiatives in the state that directly relate to and support the SSIP. During the 2016-17 school year, the SSIP Leadership Team prioritized two initiatives to leverage support for the SSIP by either adding or revising content specific to students with disabilities. Brief descriptions of each initiative are provided below.

SLD/Dyslexia Initiative

In 2014, the CSDE formed a Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)/Dyslexia Workgroup to explore issues surrounding the identification and instruction of students with SLD/Dyslexia; review pertinent legislation and implementation practices; and identify evidence-based practices for the screening, identification, and instruction of students with SLD/Dyslexia. A Lead Consultant from the Bureau of Special Education (BSE) has overseen the workgroup with support provided by a Logistics Coordinator from the State Education Resource Center (SERC). Other workgroup members have included additional staff from the BSE and Academic Office (including two members of the SSIP Leadership Team) and SERC, as well as representatives from higher education, local districts, and several other external organizations (e.g., RESC Alliance, Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center, State Advisory Council on Special Education).

As an outgrowth of this Workgroup, the CSDE and SERC have collaborated to provide a series of online professional learning opportunities for general and special education teachers, administrators, specialists, paraeducators, and families. The courses, which reside on the SLD/Dyslexia Initiative website (www.ctserc.org/dyslexia) include live and archived webinars of basic content, as well as self-paced online modules of more in-depth topics and advanced learning applications (see Table B.4). The website itself also includes numerous informational documents, resource guides, and related links for practitioners and families, as well as fee for service sessions available to schools and districts.

Table B.4: Online PL Opportunities for the Specific Learning Disability/Dyslexia Initiative

Title	Type	Available	Length	Online Hits
Increasing Awareness of SLD/Dyslexia: Implications for Connecticut Educators	Archived Webinar	March 12, 2015-present	2.5 hrs.	1,939
Identifying Students with SLD/Dyslexia	Self-Paced Course	September 23, 2015-June 30, 2016	6.5 hrs.	441
Connecticut Forum on Promising Practices in SLD/Dyslexia	Archived Webinar	December 2015-present	1 hr.	305
Identifying Students with SLD/Dyslexia	Self-Paced Course	September 21, 2016-June 30, 2017	6.5 hrs.	232
SLD/Dyslexia: Connecting Research to Practice	Self-Paced Course	September 21, 2016-June 30, 2017	12 hrs.	148
How to Motivate and Teach Older Struggling Readers with SLD/Dyslexia	Self-Paced Course	November 3, 2016-June 30, 2017	2.5 hrs.	90
Using Literacy Screening Data to Support Students with Reading Difficulties	Archived Webinar	January 10, 2017-present	2.5 hrs.	485

ReadConn

In 2016-17, the CSDE launched a new K-3 Reading Professional Learning Initiative known as ReadConn to support the implementation of the Connecticut Core Standards in English Language Arts. The series is designed to support school-based teams consisting of one K-3 school-based

literacy leader, three K-3 teachers, and one building administrator. There are currently 78 school-based teams (roughly 390 educators) across 43 districts participating in ReadConn, including 19 teams from 11 of the state's 30 lowest performing districts (i.e., Alliance Districts) (see Table B.5). The CSDE plans to repeat the initiative on an annual basis through the 2019-20 school year.

Table B.5: Districts Participating in the 2016-17 ReadConn Series

Districts with School-Based Teams Enrolled in ReadConn			
• Bethany (n=2)	• East Windsor* (n=1)	• Norwich* (n=2)	• Somers (n=1)
• Bethel (n=2)	• EASTCONN (n=1)	• Old Saybrook (n=1)	• South Windsor (n=2)
• Bloomfield* (n=3)	• Essex (n=1)	• Portland (n=2)	• Stafford (n=2)
• Bozrah (n=1)	• Griswold (n=1)	• Putnam* (n=2)	• Thomaston (n=1)
• Bridgeport* (n=4)	• Groton (n=1)	• Region 04 (n=1)	• Tolland (n=2)
• Brookfield (n=3)	• Hartford* (n=1)	• Region 06 (n=2)	• Torrington (n=1)
• Cornwall (n=1)	• Killingly* (n=2)	• Region 12 (n=3)	• Wallingford (n=14)
• CREC (n=2)	• Ledyard (n=1)	• Region 15 (n=1)	• Waterbury* (n=1)
• East Granby (n=1)	• Middletown* (n=1)	• Region 18 (n=1)	• Winchester* (n=1)
• East Hampton (n=1)	• Montville (n=1)	• Seymour (n=1)	• Windsor* (n=1)
• East Lyme (n=2)	• Newington (n=2)	• Sherman (n=1)	

Note: A (*) indicates an Alliance District. The "n's" represent the number of school-based teams from each district.

The school-based teams have their learning supported through online modules, face-to-face events, virtual coaching, and webinars (see Table B.6). The components of reading, addressed through each module, include: phonological awareness and language; phonics; advanced word recognition and fluency; and comprehension and vocabulary. The intent is to increase educators' knowledge and expertise in identifying necessary foundational skills, determining student skills gaps, providing direct instruction, and monitoring students' progress. As ReadConn is intended to reach a wide audience and benefit all students, including students with disabilities, staff members from across the CSDE have collaborated in the process of reviewing its materials. Several members of the SSIP Leadership Team, including consultants from the Academic Office, Bureau of Special Education, and external partners have reviewed content for both the online modules and the regional sessions to ensure their appropriateness for use with students with disabilities.

Table B.6: Who and What of ReadConn 2016-17

2016-17 School Year	ReadConn Components	Intended Participants			
		Literacy Leaders	Teachers	Principals	District Admins
Fall	Launch (9/20/16)	✓		✓	✓
	ReadConn Kickoff (9/20-9/21/16)	✓			
Winter	Regional Workshops	✓	✓		
	Online Modules 1 & 2	✓	✓		
	ReadConn Mid-Year	✓		✓	
Spring	Regional Workshops	✓	✓		
	Online Modules 3 & 4	✓	✓		
Summer	ReadConn Capstone (7/19/17)	✓	✓	✓	✓

Note: Principals also participate in two webinars (October and January) focused on their role in supporting teachers and literacy leaders, and Literacy Leaders also participate in ongoing virtual collaborations.

Determined Professional Learning and Technical Assistance Needs

The CSDE recognizes that defining and designing effective professional learning opportunities for educators is vital to the effective implementation of new knowledge, skills, and strategies that lead to increased learning for students. As such, as the CSDE continues its statewide rollout of SSIP support and intervention, it has begun several efforts to assess and address the professional learning needs of educators providing K-3 literacy instruction for students with disabilities. As is described in more detail below, these efforts represent various modalities of support, including refining an existing self-assessment instrument, implementing a needs assessment survey, constructing a web-based repository of open sourced materials, and pursuing federal grant funding.

District Literacy Evaluation Tool

During the past year, the CSDE has spent significant time developing an instrument to assess fidelity of implementation of evidence-based practices in reading at the district level. The work has been a collaborative effort of several members of the SSIP Leadership Team, specifically the three SSIP Lead Consultants from the Bureau of Special Education, and the Director of Reading and ReadConn Program Manager from the Academic Office. The self-assessment, known as the District Literacy Evaluation Tool (DLET) was modified from an earlier school-based tool, the Literacy Evaluation Tool (LET), developed and used as part of Connecticut's past two State Personnel Development Grants (SPDG).

The tool has 45 indicators designed to measure the implementation status of the districts' K-3 literacy program across seven areas (see Table B.7 for a summary and Appendix A for the full instrument). It is completed in two steps. First, district team members complete the DLET individually. Each indicator is rated according to a 3-point rubric, where 0=not in place, 1=partially in place, and 2=fully in place. Individuals can also select "no response" for indicators that may be outside their role or scope of knowledge about the district. Next, an external facilitator works with the team to review individual scores and come to a consensus implementation score for each of the indicators.

Table B.7: District Literacy Evaluation Tool (DLET)

Section	# of Indicators
Assessing Students	6
Reading Curriculum/Core Literacy Instruction	5
Scientific Research-Based Interventions	7
Students with Disabilities	9
Family Engagement	4
Professional Learning	6
Systems	8
DLET	45

The DLET was rolled-out early this year as part of the State's newly revised Tier 2 SSIP support system, and baseline results are currently being used to help district personnel target, prioritize, and act on early literacy efforts across their elementary schools. Post-assessment results will be

used to assess improved fidelity of implementation of evidence-based practices in reading upon districts exit from Tier 3 SSIP supports.

Professional Learning Needs Assessment Survey

A needs assessment survey is currently being developed by the SSIP Leadership Team in an effort to gauge professional learning needs related to providing K-3 literacy instruction for students with disabilities (see Table B.8 for an initial draft). The brief online survey will be distributed in fall 2017 to Special Education Directors in the 63 Cohort C districts eligible to receive SSIP tiered intervention support during the 2017-18 school year. The information will be used to inform future and existing professional learning and technical assistance resources and opportunities across all three tiers of the SSIP intervention framework.

Table B.8: Draft SSIP Cohort C PL Needs Assessment Survey

Question 1: Tell us about the professional learning opportunities your district has offered to staff related to K-3 literacy instruction for students with disabilities during the past two years. (Use as many rows as needed)			
Topic of PD	Type of PD	Was it Effective?	Who Provided It?
• Assessing Students • SRBI • Reading Curriculum • Comprehensive Core Literacy Instruction • Early Literacy • Family Engagement • Specialized Literacy Instruction • Reading Foundational Skills (Phonics, Phonological Awareness, Fluency) • Reading Comprehension • Writing • Other	• Workshop • Statewide Conference • Online Module • Job-Embedded • Coaching • PLC • Book Study • Case Study • Other	• Yes • No • Unable to rate	• CSDE • CREC • ACES • CES • EdAdvance • LEARN • EastConn • SERC • Independent Consultant • Other
Question 2: With regard to K-3 literacy instruction for students with disabilities, which topics would you like to see covered in more professional learning opportunities? (Check all the apply)			
☐ Assessment ☐ SRBI ☐ Comprehensive Core Literacy Instruction (K-3) ☐ Specialized Literacy Instruction ☐ Reading Foundational Skills		☐ Reading Comprehension ☐ Writing ☐ Family Engagement (related to reading) ☐ Other (please specify)	

Web-Based Repository of Evidence-Based Resources

A web-based repository of universal resources and supports relative to early literacy is currently under development by the CSDE. A preliminary review of resources has resulted in an initial list of best practice documents, professional learning modules, and fidelity instruments (see Table B.9 on the following page). The repository is also expected to include links to local, state, and national resources, as well as a statewide calendar of professional learning events. The repository is expected to be available in 2017-18, when the migration to a new CSDE website platform is completed; with a plan to add and expand resources each year.

Table B.9: Evidence-Based Resources for Tier 1 Supports

Resource Title	Date	Type	Source
Effective Literacy and English Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades	2007	Practice Guide	Institute of Education Sciences
Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards (CT ELDS)	2014	Learning Standards	Connecticut Office of Early Childhood
Evidence-Based Reading Instruction for Grades K-5	2014	Innovation Configuration	CEEDAR Center
Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade	2010	Practice Guide	Institute of Education Sciences
Assisting Students Struggling with Reading: Response to Intervention (RtI) and Multi-Tier Intervention in the Primary Grades	2009	Practice Guide	Institute of Education Sciences
Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten Through 3rd Grade	2016	Practice Guide	Institute of Education Sciences
District Literacy Evaluation Tool (DLET)	2017	Fidelity Instrument	Connecticut State Department of Education
Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) Self-Assessment	2013	Fidelity Instrument	Connecticut State Department of Education
Improving Practice: Four Essential Components of Quality Reading Instruction	2015	Online Toolkit	U.S. Department of Education
Early Learning Language and Literacy Series Professional Development Modules	2015	Online Self-Paced Modules	USDE Office of Early Learning

State Personnel Development Grant

The CSDE is in the process of applying for the U.S. Department of Education's State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG). With the State's focus of improving its infrastructure by coordinating efforts, the proposed project is purposefully aligned to Connecticut's SSIP work and has been designed to increase literacy achievement of elementary students, particularly students with disabilities, through the use of evidence-based practices. Expected outcomes are: 1) increased state-level capacity for supporting the sustained and broad-scale implementation of comprehensive literacy instruction within an MTSS framework; 2) enhanced LEA capacity for implementing and sustaining a comprehensive literacy approach using a MTSS framework; and 3) improved reading achievement of all students, particularly students with disabilities in participating schools.

The professional activities provided by this project will address two main components: state trainer capacity development and LEA capacity development focusing on evidence-based multi-tiered reading instruction and interventions. If funded, the CSDE will be partnering with a variety of literacy experts to accomplish these components through a series of clearly defined job-embedded training and support activities. State level trainers will receive two years of support and LEAs will receive three years of support. The project will also involve a comprehensive evaluation approach to monitor measurable outcomes of identified objectives, focusing on qualitative and quantitative indicators of training effectiveness and student growth.

TIERED LEA SUPPORT

The CSDE designed its SSIP technical assistance and support model based on a three-year cycle whereby approximately one-third of the State's LEAs are reviewed annually for consideration and assignment across three tiers of intervention. The three LEA cohorts (A, B, and C) comprise between 51-63 districts and are the same groupings used for the Child Count/Individual Education Program (IEP) Desk Audit, Assessment Modifications/Accommodations Audit, General Supervision IDEA Compliance Review, and Indicator 8 Parent Survey. The SSIP tiered-intervention support model was first piloted during the 2015-16 school year. Findings from the pilot were used to make considerable refinements and enhancements to the supports provided to LEAs during the most recent year. As such, the following section begins with a description of the pilot year, followed by the SSIP LEA support activities currently being conducted as part of the 2016-17 school year.

SSIP Tiered-Intervention Support: Pilot Year (2015-16)

As proposed in the State's Phase II report, the Bureau of Special Education conducted a thorough analysis of the 2014-15 SIMR data for the 56 districts that comprise Cohort A. The analysis considered: 1) the number of third grade students with disabilities taking the statewide assessment (i.e., Smarter Balance ELA and the Connecticut Alternate ELA Assessment); 2) the performance of third grade students with disabilities, as indicated by the ELA Performance Index (i.e., SIMR data); and 3) the gap in performance between third grade students with disabilities and their nondisabled peers. As a result of this analysis, 21 districts were identified as having data of concern related to the SIMR, and were selected to participate in pilot Tier 2 activities (see Table B.10).

Table B.10: 2015-16 SSIP Tier 2 Districts (n=21)

Cohort A Districts Selected for Tier 2 Pilot Activities in 2015-16		
• Cromwell	• Montville	• Region 14
• East Hampton	• Naugatuck*	• Rocky Hill
• East Windsor*	• *Norwich**	• *Southington*
• Enfield	• Plainfield	• *Wallingford*
• Glastonbury	• Plymouth	• *West Haven**
• Hartford*	• Preston	• Wethersfield
• *Hebron*	• Region 13	• Windsor*

Note: A (*) indicates an Alliance District. Italicized districts were later promoted to Tier 3 supports.

In late fall 2015, the 21 districts identified for Tier 2 were asked to submit an electronic data wall addressing their SIMR data. The primary function of the data walls was to allow districts to review their identified data of concern, explain nuances of the data, identify strategies that the district had used and were using to address the identified data of concern, and outline improvement activities for moving forward. Consultants from the CSDE and SERC evaluated submissions, and in late December 2015, districts were informed of their responsibilities as either a continuing Tier 2 district or their promotion to a Tier 3 district.

Tier 2 Districts (n=21)

Districts submit an electronic data wall
(November 2015)

Continuing Tier 2 Districts (n=16)   **Promoted Tier 3 Districts (n=5)**
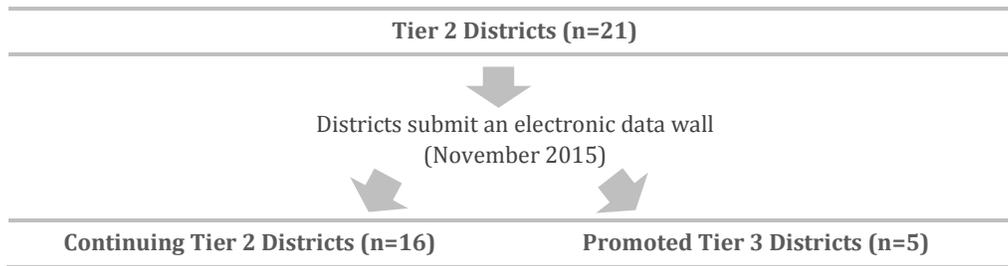
Continuing Tier 2 Districts (n=16)

Districts continuing in Tier 2 were asked to submit an improvement plan to address their SIMR data. A SSIP Tier 2 template (i.e., Theory of Action Implementation Plan Form 11-c) was provided as a resource, but districts could choose to integrate their goals into an existing district or department improvement plan as long as they indicated the resources needed to achieve the goal, the staff responsible for leading and monitoring the work related to the goal, and the manner in which each goal would be progress monitored and evaluated. Districts were asked to submit at least two, but no more than four goals related to the following areas, with each goal encompassing a time frame of at least two years:

- The use of a universal screening measure for literacy, selected from the CSDE's menu of research-based universal screening reading assessments.
- The use of a multi-tiered system of support process (SRBI) that includes the identification of current instruction and intervention techniques being used in district and a determination of the need to make changes in the process through the use of the CSDE's SRBI Self-Assessment.
- The alignment of IEP goals and objectives in literacy to the Connecticut Core Standards.
- The development of student-specific intervention plans that match each student's profile and the monitoring of each student's progress in order to individualize and adjust instruction.
- The use of an established functional process for the analysis of literacy data for the purpose of instructional planning.
- The development and implementation of a plan for parent engagement in supporting student reading.

Promoted Tier 3 Districts (n=5)

Districts promoted to Tier 3 supports were asked to form a district team to participate in four onsite technical assistance sessions. The teams were to include the Director of Special Education; Director of Curriculum, Assistant Superintendent, or Superintendent; principals; and at least one representative from special education, general education, and literacy/reading. The sessions, which were facilitated by a state consultant team, included a comprehensive review and root cause analysis of the district's SIMR data; an examination of the district's infrastructure; and development of an action plan to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Districts also completed a reflective self-report (i.e., District Self-Report Form FM-8) as homework to the TA sessions; documenting and summarizing their findings from the technical assistance activities. In addition, and similar to Tier 2 districts, the five Tier 3 districts were required to develop and submit an

improvement plan to address their SIMR data (i.e., Theory of Action Implementation Plan Form 11-c). Lastly, three follow-up teleconference sessions were scheduled (January and June 2017, and January 2018) to monitor districts' efforts to implement their plans.

Table B.11: 2015-16 Tier 3 In-District TA Sessions

Summary of Agenda Items	Hebron	Norwich	Southington	Wallingford	West Haven
Day One: Reaffirm the SIMR. Conduct data review, including a root cause analysis of the districts SIMR data. (9am-3pm)	1.26.16	1.27.16	1.29.16	1.26.16	1.28.16
Day Two: Conduct infrastructure analysis. Facilitate development of the district Theory of Action and discuss Theory of Action Implementation Plan. (9am-3pm)	2.23.16	2.24.16	2.26.16	2.23.16	2.24.16
Day Three: Review the District Self-Report. Continue to facilitate the development of the Theory of Action Implementation Plan. (9am-12pm)	3.18.16	3.16.16	3.31.16	3.22.16	3.30.16
Day Four: Complete the Theory of Action Implementation Plan. (9am-12pm)	4.19.16	4.13.16	4.22.16	4.19.16	4.21.16

SSIP Tiered-Intervention Support: Year One (2016-17)

Similar to the pilot year, the Bureau of Special Education conducted a thorough analysis of districts' SIMR data - this year, the 2015-16 SIMR data for the 51 districts that comprise Cohort B. However, in an effort to significantly increase the support provided to Tier 2 districts, the BSE reduced the number of districts selected from 21 to twelve (see Table B.12).

Table B.12 2016-17 SSIP Tier 2 Districts (n=12)

Cohort B Districts Selected for Tier 2 Activities in 2016-17		
• Bloomfield*	• Milford	• Region 10
• East Haven*	• Newington	• Seymour
• Lebanon	• New Milford	• Tolland
• Middletown*	• Norwalk*	• Torrington

Note: A (*) indicates an Alliance District.

In late December 2016, letters were sent from the CSDE Interim Chief Academic Officer to District Superintendents notifying them of their status as a SSIP Tier 2 district. They were asked to identify a district administrator to serve as the SSIP District Lead, and then collaborate with the District Lead to identify a district team that included a District Curriculum/Literacy Administrator; Director of Special Education/Pupil Personnel Services; and five elementary level (K-3) positions (principal, general education teacher, special education teacher, reading teacher/interventionist, and speech language pathologist). They were also asked to distribute the District Literacy Evaluation Tool (DLET) to each district team member to individually complete and submit to the CSDE by late January 2017.

Following the submission of the DLET data, SSIP Tier 2 Support Teams, comprised of two SSIP Leads and one consultant from the SERC, conducted half-day site visits in February and March 2017 with each district (see Table B.13). During the scheduled visits, the SSIP Tier 2 Support Team worked with district teams to review individual DLET scores and come to a consensus

implementation score for each of the indicators. Lastly, districts were asked to provide feedback on the visit via an online feedback form.

Table B.13: 2016-17 Tier 2 District Visits

District	# to complete DLET	Date of district visit	# to attend district visit	# to complete visit feedback form
Bloomfield*	6	3.8.17	6	2
East Haven*	9	2.28.17	8	6
Lebanon	11	2.22.17	8	5
Middletown*	7	2.14.17	7	5
Milford	8	2.16.17	8	8
Newington	9	2.23.17	7	6
New Milford	17	3.23.17	10	0
Norwalk*	7	3.6.17	7	2
Seymour	9	3.10.17	8	0
Tolland	12	3.22.17	12	0
Torrington	7	3.9.17	7	4
Region 10	9	2.15.17	9	9

Note: A (*) denotes an Alliance District. Feedback form data are as of 3.17.17.

State-level consultants from the SSIP Tier 2 Support Teams are currently finalizing brief summaries of their visits, which will be sent to individual districts in late March. The summaries provide consensus results from the DLET, identified strengths and focus areas for improvement, and a list of potential documents and professional learning resources that could supplement the district's improvement efforts in the area of early literacy instruction. Consultants will also use the DLET data to inform next steps of the tiered-intervention model, including districts' responsibilities as either a continuing Tier 2 district or their promotion to a Tier 3 district.

Figure B.3: 2016-17 Selection Criteria for Continuing Tier 2 and Promoted Tier 3 Districts

Tier 2 Districts (n=12)

Individual district team members complete the DLET

Team members participate in an onsite TA visit to reconcile DLET scores

(January-March 2017)

Continuing Tier 2 Districts (n=TBD)   **Promoted Tier 3 Districts (n=TBD)**
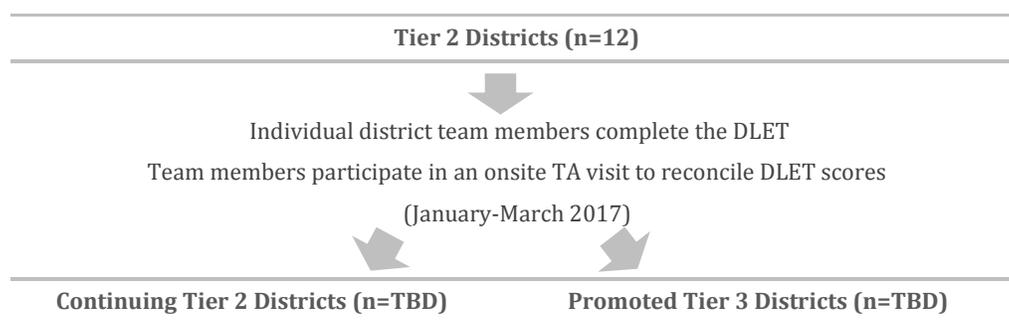
Continuing Tier 2 Districts/Promoted Tier 3 Districts

Decisions on the promotion of districts to Tier 3 status (or continuing Tier 2 status) have not been made at this time, but are expected within the first weeks of April 2017. The extent to which continuing Tier 2 districts will be asked to provide additional data or information on their improvement efforts is still under discussion by the SSIP Leadership Team. With respect to Tier 3, the current expectation is that districts will receive two days of state-provided technical assistance

during the 2016-17 school year. The planned activities align with the State's theory of action and are meant to address issues at the district, school, and classroom level, as well as the individual child level (see Table B.14). Subsequently, 4-8 days of professional learning and/or onsite technical assistance related to the districts' action plans will be provided to Tier 3 districts in 2017-18. Progress monitoring of the Tier 3 districts is expected to continue through the 2018-19 school year, with the exact nature of follow-up requests for data and information undetermined at this time.

Table B.14: SSIP Tier 3 Activities for 2017 TA Days

Day 1 (April 2017)	Day 2 (May 2017)
• Review D-LET Summary	• Review activities to date
• Prioritize areas for improvement	• Introduce IEP rubric
• Complete obstacles and opportunities activity	• Complete whole-group IEP review
• Develop SMART goals	• Facilitate team members review of student IEPs using the IEP rubric
• Write action plan	• Review outcomes and set goals for future IEP development

Note: See Appendix B for the IEP rubric instrument.

2. STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN SSIP IMPLEMENTATION

Over the past year, the SSIP Leadership Team has leveraged and benefited from the ongoing advice and feedback of two longstanding advisory groups: the Connecticut State Advisory Council on Special Education (SAC) and the Connecticut Council of Administrators of Special Education (ConnCASE). Feedback from the SAC represents the perspectives of parents, advocacy groups, and other state agencies, as well as public, private and charter school educators. ConnCASE provides input relative to the perceived needs of students and districts representative of the state's demographic diversity. SSIP Lead Consultants have regularly attended both groups' meetings during the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school year, providing regular updates on SSIP progress and requesting feedback on specific aspects of implementation (see Table B.15).

Table B.15: Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholder Group	Meetings Attended	Sample Feedback Requests
State Advisory Council on Special Education (SAC)	• March 16, 2016 • November 16, 2016 • March 15, 2017	• Feedback on revision of the SIMR • Input on SIMR targets • Feedback on the Theory of Action and Logic Model
Connecticut State Advisory Council on Special Education (ConnCASE)	• September 23, 2016 • November 18, 2016 • January 27, 2017 • February 24, 2017 • March 24, 2017	• Evaluation to include multiple measures, above and beyond the state assessment • Suggestions regarding pilot year activities • Feedback on the DLET instrument • Suggested contacts for district correspondence

C. Data on Implementation and Outcomes

1. How the State Monitored and Measured Outputs

During Phase II, the CSDE worked closely with internal partners and an external evaluator to develop a comprehensive SSIP evaluation plan. The plan, submitted in the State's Phase II report, was designed as a mixed methods approach, to be implemented collaboratively as a hybrid model of internal and external evaluation. This section of the report begins with a brief summary of that plan, including minor refinements to the evaluation based on the evolution of SSIP implementation in the State. Data sources for key measures are also provided, followed by a description of how the State has used data to support modifications to the SSIP, and informed stakeholders of the ongoing evaluation.

Evaluation Plan

The evaluation plan as previously detailed in the State's Phase II submission relies on the widely-utilized Context, Input, Process and Product evaluation model.[2] The model was seen as a good fit for the SSIP as it is designed to address all phases of an education program – needs assessment, planning, implementation and outcomes – and emphasizes "learning by doing" to identify corrections to implementation. As is depicted in Figure C.1, the intent during Phase III of SSIP implementation was to focus on the last two components of the CIPP model, with the process evaluation conducted collaboratively (i.e., internal and external evaluation) and the product or outcome evaluation directed by the external evaluation team.

Figure C.1: CIPP Evaluation in the Context of SSIP Implementation

C — Context Evaluation: What needs to be done?
Phase I: Data Analysis, Analysis of Infrastructure to Support Improvement and Build Capacity, and SIMR
Phase II: Infrastructure Development and Support for LEA Implementation of EBP

I — Input Evaluation: How should it be done?
Phase I: Selection of Coherent Improvement Strategies and Theory of Action
Phase II: Infrastructure Development and Support for LEA Implementation of EBP

P — Process Evaluation: Is it being done?
Phase II: Infrastructure Development and Support for LEA Implementation of EBP
Phase III: Evidence of Progress

P — Product Evaluation: Is it working?
Phase III: Evidence of Progress

Adapted from Stufflebeam, 2003.

The process evaluation has largely been carried out as planned, though the collaboration with the external evaluator was more limited than had been anticipated. Because of a late start with the competitive bidding process, the CSDE was not able to bring an external evaluator on board until February 2017. As such, process data were collected exclusively by members of the SSIP

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[2] Stufflebeam, D. L. (2003). The CIPP Model for Evaluation. In D. L. Stufflebeam, & T. Kellaghan, (Eds.), *The International Handbook of Educational Evaluation* (Chapter 2). Boston, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Leadership Team. However, the external evaluator was able to assist with analysis of these process data, and the written progress summary of SSIP implementation that was provided in Section B. The CSDE intends to work with the external evaluator going forward to refine, enhance, and expand the collection of these data.

Similarly, the outcome evaluation – the results of which are mostly reported in Section E of this report – has also been carried out as planned, except for its brevity due to the delayed engagement of the external evaluator. The outcome evaluation questions, designed to align with the State's theory of action and logic model, the intended outcomes to be measured, and the data sources that will be used to continuously evaluate the State's progress toward achieving these outcomes are presented in Table C.1.

Table C.1: Connecticut SSIP Evaluation Plan

Evaluation Question	Intended Outcomes	Data Sources
EQ1: To what extent is the SSIP improving state level capacity for supporting districts and schools in implementing and scaling-up evidence-based practices to improve reading for students with disabilities?	• Sufficient operating support is available to enable the SSIP to fulfill its responsibilities. • EB learning structures and TA assistance are embedded in the work of the SSIP. • CSDE institutional policies and practices evolve to support the goals of the SSIP	• Extant documents (e.g., CSDE general communication materials, PL literature, and guidance documents; stakeholder meeting minutes) • Extant PL data (e.g., dates, attendance, evaluation data) • SSIP Leadership Team interviews • Stakeholder/key informant interviews* • PL needs assessment survey*
EQ2: To what extent is the SSIP enhancing district- and school-level capacity for implementing and sustaining evidence-based practices to improve reading for students with disabilities?	• Increased educator awareness and knowledge of EB reading instruction, interventions, and supports. • LEA improvement efforts demonstrate systematic evaluation of current literacy practices in order to drive SRBI in schools. • Improved fidelity of implementation of EB reading instruction, interventions, and supports based on the principles of SRBI.	• SSIP project documents (e.g., Tier 2/Tier 3 communication; TA materials and protocols) • DLET • Tier 2/Tier 3 TA visits (e.g., dates, attendance, evaluation data) • Tier 2/Tier 3 district survey or focus group* • Tier 2/Tier 3 progress monitoring documents (e.g., pre-post improvement plans)*
Q3: To what extent is the SSIP increasing the reading performance of third-grade students with disabilities statewide?	• Increased reading performance of 3rd grade students with disabilities.	• Smarter Balanced (SB) and Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA) (e.g., SIMR data statewide and by district) • Additional SB/CTAA data (e.g., SPI, DPI, Next Generation Indicator 1 and 2)* • Universal screening data for Tier 2/Tier 3 districts*

Note: A (*) indicates planned data collection sources.

DATA SOURCES FOR KEY MEASURES

Brief descriptions of data sources that have been utilized to date are provided below. Included within each description are the associated data collection procedures and timelines, and as applicable, data analysis methods. Baseline data from these sources, as well as evidence of change from the baseline data, are discussed throughout Sections B and E. Planned data collection sources are outlined in Section F.

Extant Documents

In February 2017, SSIP Lead Consultants shared various extant documents with the evaluation team via email and Dropbox. These materials generally included information that either informed the SSIP design and implementation process, or illustrated evidence of state capacity building efforts to align SSIP with existing professional learning activities and statewide improvement initiatives (see Table C.2).

Table C.2: Extant Documents

Examples:	
• Connecticut State Board of Education Five Year Comprehensive Plan, 2016-21 • Connecticut Consolidated State Plan Under the Every Student Succeeds Act, 2017 • Connecticut State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Reports, FFY 2013-2015 • Using Accountability Results to Guide Improvement, CSDE, March 2016, Revised February 2017 • Evidence-based early literacy resources for web-based repository	• Profile and Performance Reports (PPRs) • Annual Performance Reports (APRs) • Presentations and meeting minutes from the State Advisory Council on Special Education (SAC) • Presentations and EB early literacy resources from the 2016 Back to School Day • ReadConn promotional brochures and module content descriptions • SLD/Dyslexia course descriptions

Extant Professional Learning

The SSIP Lead Consultants, in consultation with external (e.g., SERC) and internal (e.g., Academic Office) partners from the SSIP Leadership Team also provided the evaluation team with statewide professional learning participation data for the Specific Learning Disabilities/Dyslexia and ReadConn Initiatives. This included course names, dates, and online hits for the SLD/Dyslexia Initiative and district registration information for the 2016-17 ReadConn series.

SSIP Leadership Team Interviews

In the final weeks of February 2017, the evaluation team conducted phone interviews with three members of the SSIP Leadership Team. Interview protocols included a set of semi-structured questions designed to gather members' perceptions about the SSIP's implementation progress to date, including successes, challenges, and lessons learned. Team members were asked to comment on the SSIP's improvement strategies with respect to both infrastructure development and tiered intervention support; the adequacy of resources dedicated to the work; and the level of stakeholder involvement. The interviews lasted an average of 30 minutes. Transcripts were analyzed for recurring themes and were subsequently used to generate several of the progress findings presented in Section E.

SSIP Project Documents

SSIP project documents provided by the SSIP Lead Consultants to the evaluation team included a selection of TA materials and protocols related to the Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports offered to districts during the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years (see Table C.3).

Table C.3: SSIP Project Documents

2015-16	2016-17
• District notification letter of participation in 2015-16 SSIP Tier 2 supports	• District notification letter of participation in 2016-17 SSIP Tier 2 supports
• Data wall board instructions (FM 1-a)	• Tier 2 TA visit agenda
• District notification letter of participation in 2015-16 SSIP Tier 3 supports	• District Literacy Evaluation Tool (LET) instrument and instructions
• Theory of Action Implementation Plan Form FM-11c	• DLET Summaries
• District Self Report Form FM-8	• Tier 3 TA agenda topics – days one and two
• Tier 3 TA visit agendas – days one and two	

Tier 2/Tier 3 Technical Assistance Visits

Site visit dates and attendance information for the Tier 3 visits in 2015-16 and the Tier 2 visits in 2016-17 were collected by the SSIP Lead Consultants, and provided to the external evaluation team in February 2017. Evaluation data were also collected for this year's Tier 2 visits via a brief online feedback form developed by the external evaluator. Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with six Likert-type items on a four-point agreement scale, and respond to four open-ended items. As of March 17, 47 SSIP district team members from 9 of the 12 Tier 2 districts had completed the online form. Feedback reports, overall and by district, were available in "real-time" to the SSIP Leadership Team via an online survey system.

District Literacy Evaluation Tool (DLET)

The DLET is a self-assessment fidelity instrument developed to help district personnel target, prioritize, and act on current early literacy efforts across their elementary schools (see Appendix A for a copy of the instrument). The tool has 45 indicators across seven areas, and is completed in two steps. First, district team members complete the DLET individually. Each indicator is scored on a scale from 0 to 2, where 0=not in place, 1=partially in place, and 2=fully in place. Individuals can also select 'no response' for indicators that may be outside their role or scope of knowledge about the district. Next, an external facilitator works with the district team to reconcile individual scores, and come to a consensus implementation score for each of the indicators.

Between January and March 2017, 111 educators in the 12 Tier 2 districts completed the DLET. As of March 17, individual scores had been reconciled in state-facilitated district site visits in 9 of the 12 districts. All DLET data (individual and consensus scores) were entered into excel spreadsheets, and shared with the external evaluation team. State-level consultants from the SSIP Tier 2 Support Teams are in the process of finalizing brief summaries of their visits, which will be provided to the district teams in late March. Consultants also plan to use the DLET data to inform next steps of the tiered-intervention model.

SIMR Data

Connecticut's SIMR is measured by the English Language Arts (ELA) Performance Index (PI). The index is calculated from student ELA scale scores on the Smarter Balanced (SB) Assessment and the Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA). The indices are computed and validated by the Performance Office, and then provided in Excel to the SSIP Leadership Team and external evaluation team on an annual basis. Data files include, at the state- and district level: 1) the number of third-grade students taking the SB or CTAA ELA Assessments and the ELA PI for these students; 2) the number of third-grade students *with disabilities* taking the SB or CTAA ELA Assessments and the ELA PI for these students; and 3) the number of third-grade students *without disabilities* taking the SB or CTAA ELA Assessments and the ELA PI for these students. These data are used to identify districts for Tier 2 supports, measure progress towards established SIMR targets, and evaluate the SSIP's long-term goal of improved reading achievement for third-grade students with disabilities.

2. HOW DATA SUPPORT MODIFICATIONS TO THE SSIP

Since the State's Phase II submission, the SSIP Leadership Team has reviewed data on an ongoing basis to determine progress towards achieving intended improvements. Monthly team meetings, in addition to standing weekly meetings of the SSIP Lead Consultants and bi-weekly meetings with the SSIP Support Team Lead from SERC, has ensured that data are reviewed in both a collaborative and timely manner. Information has been used to inform the CSDE leadership of both progress and setbacks, and to effect positive changes to implementation activities and planned next steps. Examples have included changes to the way the CSDE communicates information about the SSIP to districts (i.e., from BSE Consultant to District Special Education Director in 2015-16 to CSDE Interim Chief Academic Officer to District Superintendent in 2016-17), and changes to the way responsibilities for SSIP implementation are delegated (i.e., solely BSE consultants in 2015-16 to inter-office/inter-agency consultants in 2016-17).

Perhaps the most notable example of the SSIP Leadership Team's use of data to support positive change was the decision to enhance the support provided to Tier 2 districts during the 2016-17 school year. As discussed in Section B, the 21 districts identified for Tier 2 intervention in 2015-16 did not receive onsite technical assistance support. They were asked to submit an electronic data wall addressing their SIMR data and state-level consultants reviewed these data to select districts for Tier 3 intervention. After reflecting on the pilot year process and considering feedback from the field, the SSIP Leadership Team suggested critical changes be made to increase the quality of the data submitted, and the level of support provided to Tier 2 districts. CSDE leadership approved the change, resulting in the current SSIP tiered-intervention model (i.e., use of the DLET and onsite technical assistance in Tier 2). Although the increased support has meant fewer districts are selected for Tier 2, the SSIP Leadership Team members are confident that the new model provides more significant and impactful support (see Section E for further discussion).

3. STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN THE SSIP EVALUATION

As mentioned in Section B, the SSIP Leadership Team has leveraged and benefited from the ongoing advice and feedback of two longstanding advisory groups: the Connecticut State Advisory Council on Special Education (SAC) and the Connecticut Council of Administrators of Special Education

(ConnCase). Specifically, in terms of the evaluation component, these two teams have provided input on the State's theory of action and logic model, the DLET instrument, and the SIMR (e.g., selection and targets). Hearing the voices of special education administrators, special education teachers, and parents of children with special needs has provided an important perspective to the SSIP work, and has helped to spur additional conversations within the department regarding potential refinements to evaluation tools. It is expected that stakeholder involvement in the SSIP evaluation will continue to grow as the evaluation naturally evolves.

D. Data Quality Issues

1. DATA LIMITATIONS

Given the emergent nature of the SSIP, and the delayed start of the external evaluation, the SSIP Leadership Team and the external evaluation team are still in the process of developing and implementing a detailed plan for how, when, and what data will be collected, analyzed, and reported for the SSIP going forward. Because of this, there have been some data limitations in terms of the amount of data collected thus far. As mentioned in Section C, the evaluation team was not able to assist with the ongoing collection of process data during the current reporting period (i.e., outputs related to the scale and intensity of infrastructure development and tiered LEA support activities). The intent is to develop and implement a more detailed process data collection plan for the 2017-18 school year. Similarly, there was not sufficient time between the evaluation team's start data and this report to fully implement the outcome evaluation plan. However, the evaluation team does anticipate some additional data collection activities occurring before this school year is out, and more extensive outcome evaluation activities are scheduled to take place during the 2017-18 school year.

Fortunately, the internal-external evaluation partnership is already well-established, as the external evaluation team has worked with the CSDE for many years on several related initiatives (e.g., SPDG, Indicator 8 Parent Survey, SCTG). As such, the SSIP Leadership Team and the external evaluation team are confident they can leverage these long-standing working relationships to move forward quickly and efficiently. The teams intend to continue to streamline selected data collection and reporting elements across multiple initiatives in a way that conserves resources (i.e., shared data collection tools/templates), decreases the data and reporting burden on certain respondent groups (i.e., data used across initiatives), and makes data more accessible. The focus has been, and will continue to be on sustainable evaluation practice – developing systems, processes, and protocols that embed evaluation into the State's everyday work.

E. Progress Toward Achieving Intended Improvements

1. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS TOWARD INTENDED IMPROVEMENTS

This section of the report describes the CSDE's progress toward achieving the intended improvements of the SSIP. It is organized by the three evaluation questions presented in Section C, namely, the extent to which the SSIP has 1) improved state-level capacity for supporting districts and schools in implementing and scaling-up evidence-based practices in reading; 2) enhanced district- and school-level capacity for implementing and sustaining evidence-based practices in reading; and 3) increased the reading performance of third-grade students with disabilities. The progress findings have been written by the external evaluator following a review and analysis of the various data sources previously outlined in this report.

EVALUATION QUESTION 1: To what extent has the SSIP improved state-level capacity for supporting districts and school in implementing and scaling-up evidence-based practices to improve reading for students with disabilities?

> **Progress Finding**: The CSDE has established a strong inter-office/inter-agency SSIP Leadership Team that is committed to the vision of the SSIP, and has been able to effectively spearhead SSIP implementation efforts to date.

As mentioned in Section B, the SSIP Leadership Team is led by three SSIP Lead Consultants from the Bureau of Special Education (BSE), and includes representatives from three offices within the Department (Academic, Performance, and Turnaround), and one representative from the State Education Resource Center (SERC). The Leadership Team is responsible for managing the SSIP work, including efforts to build the State's capacity to support districts and schools in implementing evidence-based practices in reading. The larger team meets monthly, with subgroups (e.g., Lead Consultants, Tier 2 Support Teams) meeting on a more frequent basis.

When the external evaluation team interviewed select team members this February, interview participants regularly discussed the important role the team has played in keeping the SSIP work on track and moving forward. They noted the group's cohesiveness, and ability to reflect openly and honestly about what is working and not working, and problem-solve implementation barriers as they arise. The team's diversity (i.e., inter-office/inter-agency composition) was also mentioned as a particular strength of the group, with participants noting it has increased the visibility and importance of the SSIP work; promoted a shared vision and common language; and made it easier to capitalize on educational infrastructure already in place.

> *"What works with this group, and what has really pulled me in, is this cross-department communication. I think that is really important – the coordination of services and knowing what is going on where."*
>
> SSIP Leadership Team Member

With that said, interview participants did express some concerns about resource capacity in the coming years. The 2017-18 school year will be the first year in which the current SSIP tiered-intervention model, which now includes one-year of onsite technical assistance to Tier 2 districts and two-years of onsite technical assistance to Tier 3 districts, will include multiple district cohorts.

Interview participants noted that the SSIP Leadership Team, in conjunction with CSDE leadership, will need to consider if the SSIP has adequate staff time dedicated to the growing number of districts included under the umbrella of SSIP supports. To this end, team members indicated that increased collaboration with the Turnaround Office (i.e., the office responsible for supporting the 30 lowest performing districts in the state) could help alleviate resource concerns by coordinating services (e.g., including Turnaround consultants on SSIP support teams), and eliminating duplicated efforts (e.g., allowing districts to submit one improvement plan for both initiatives). It should also be noted that the while planned activities with the Turnaround Office have been somewhat limited to date, these activities have been identified as priority action items for the SSIP Leadership Team.

> *"I think in terms of the need for time and people, we are all running as fast as we can but it hasn't been an obstacle. But, as we move forward, the need becomes cumulative. We have had brief conversations about that – we keep asking, 'what will we be able to continue to do?'- but naturally we have been more in the now of things. We will need to address this more thoroughly at some point down the road."*
>
> SSIP Leadership Team Member

Progress Finding: The CSDE has made significant inroads during the past year to embed the SSIP within the State's larger education improvement strategies in an effort to ensure equity and excellence for all Connecticut students, including students with disabilities.

Over the past couple of years, the State has been focused on utilizing cross-divisional work within the CSDE to identify duplicative approaches and barriers to implementation of effective and efficient programming. As part of this focus, the Department underwent a reorganization plan in 2016, a plan that ultimately "moved" the Bureau of Special Education into the Academic Office, and elevated the Bureau of Special Education Chief to the position of Interim Chief Academic Officer. Connecticut's SSIP has been a natural fit for this "new" cross-divisional focus, and has in fact both benefited from and facilitated the State's progress in this area.

As noted earlier in this report, Connecticut's SSIP has thus far included efforts to align and integrate special education and general education improvement efforts in a variety of ways, including unified state plans (i.e., SSIP and the CSBE 5-year plan), aligned accountability systems (i.e., SIMR and Next Generation), enhanced professional learning opportunities (e.g., ReadConn, SLD/Dyslexia), and increased evidence-based literacy resources and tools (e.g., DLET, web-based repository). Interview participants noted that the timing and intensity of the SSIP work has put the initiative at the forefront of continued efforts to streamline and consolidate work across departments. They also attributed the department's new organizational structure with helping them break down barriers and silos that use to hinder progress, noting they now have access to a greater pool of consultants working together to affect positive change for all students, not just special education or general education students.

> *"At this point, the SSIP work sits at the center of the collaboration. It has prompted conversations across departments and provided the opportunity to be on top of things in a more proactive way."*
>
> SSIP Leadership Team Member

Progress Finding: While early strides were made to involve stakeholders in SSIP implementation and evaluation decision-making, the stakeholder voice has been more focused during the past year.

Connecticut convened its first external stakeholder meeting in October 2014 to introduce stakeholders to the SSIP process, and to present the Department's broad data analysis pertaining to all SPP/APR indicators available for SIMR consideration. The external stakeholder meeting included, in addition to CSDE staff, representatives from the State Education Resource Center (SERC), Parent Training and Information Center – Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC), Connecticut Council of Administrators of Special Education (ConnCase), and the Connecticut State Advisory Council on Special Education (SAC). Later that same year, the State invited many of the same stakeholders to participate in a two-day OSEP technical assistance meeting intended to assist the State in analyzing strengths and challenges in infrastructure alignment, resources, organizational capacity, and readiness. The State continued to engage this external stakeholder group throughout the Phase I process, ultimately resulting in the selection of Connecticut's SIMR and targets.

This external stakeholder group disbanded after the completion of Phase I, and during Phases II and III, stakeholder engagement has been more limited. It has primarily consisted of SSIP Lead Consultants sharing SSIP information at standing stakeholder meetings (e.g., ConnCase, SAC) or at the CSDE's annual "Back to School" event. While these avenues have certainly helped to solicit stakeholder input and disseminate information, interview participants suggested that the SSIP Leadership Team may need to dedicate more time to ensuring adequate and regular channels of stakeholder communication are in place. It was noted that it may be unrealistic (or unnecessary) to reconvene a separate SSIP stakeholder group, but instead, alternative strategies, such as the recent evaluation form used to collect feedback from district stakeholders could be expanded and enhanced. Strategies being considered include a focus group or survey with district stakeholders, and interviews or a survey with external stakeholder organizations.

> *"We don't really have authentic stakeholder representation as I would envision and would optimally want to have. We have defaulted to existing groups that are accessible and represent a wide range of constituents. "*
>
> SSIP Leadership Team Member

EVALUATION QUESTION 2: To what extent has the SSIP improved district and school-level capacity for implementing and sustaining evidence-based practices to improve reading for students with disabilities?

Progress Finding: Modifications to the SSIP tiered-LEA intervention model, specifically introducing the District Literacy Evaluation Tool (DLET) as part of Tier 2 supports, has helped state consultants better understand, target, and prioritize the early literacy needs of each district.

As described in Section B, the SSIP Tier 2 intervention model was revamped in 2016-17 in an effort to better support districts in identifying their strengths and areas for improvement with respect to early literacy instruction, and to help target districts in need of more intensive Tier 3 intervention support. The DLET has played a critical role in this new model of support, as has several more nuanced efforts by the SSIP Leadership to improve district buy-in to the SSIP process. As noted in interviews with SSIP Leadership Team members, the group was much more intentional in their

communication with districts this year, both in an effort to formalize district expectations and to encourage districts to view the intervention as supportive versus punitive. Districts were asked to be more proactive (e.g., identify a district administrator to serve as the SSIP District Lead, identify a district team and have team members individually complete the DLET in advance of the state's visits), and the State responded by trying to offer more meaningful and timely assistance (e.g., conducting a half-day onsite review of DLET scores, providing brief written summaries highlighting DLET consensus scores, strengths, and areas for improvement). Interview participants reported that these deliberate changes have resulted in a noticeably improved Tier 2 process marked by collegial and respectful dialogue focused on improving early literacy outcomes for all students, including students with disabilities.

> *"We worked very hard, and were very thoughtful and very deliberate about the manner in which we were going to communicate with districts and engage them in this process. The reception on the part of the districts has been one of appreciation."*
>
> SSIP Leadership Team Member

Figure E.1 below provides an example of one Tier 2 district's DLET consensus results (i.e. following the state's visit to reconcile individual scores). As can be seen, the simple figure provides the district with a quick visual snapshot of areas of strength (e.g., Section E: Family Engagement) and areas for improvement (Section B: Core Literacy Instruction). Similarly, viewing these data across the 12 Tier 2 districts provides the SSIP Leadership Team with comparison data that can be used to inform their selection of districts for Tier 3 intervention. Likewise, items analyses, such as those presented in Figure E.2, provides district with more detailed information that can be used to identify high (and low) priority items, either within a particular area of the tool or across the entire instrument.

Figure E.1: 2016-17 Sample District DLET Consensus Scores - % of Points by Section and Overall
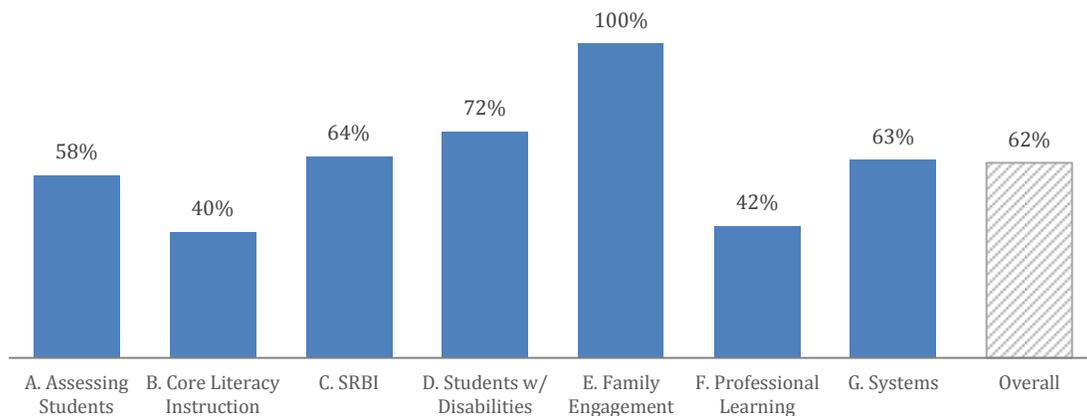
Note: The scores represent the percentage of points earned in each section, and overall. The number of available points in each section is equal to the number of indicators in that section multiplied by 2 (the maximum score for each indicator). The maximum overall score on the DLET (i.e., all 45 indicators) is 90. See Appendix A for a copy of the DLET instrument.

Figure E.2: 2016-17 Sample District DLET Indicator Scores for Section C

Section C: Scientific Research-Based Interventions	
1. The district has clearly articulated K-12 curriculum documents that incorporate the vertical progression of the CCS to guide literacy instruction across the tiers of instruction.	1.0
2. Three well-defined tiers of instruction/intervention have been established with increasing levels of intensity.	1.0
3. Data are regularly reviewed to monitor the percentage of students at each level of intervention.	0.0
4. Interventions for struggling readers consistently begin within Tier 1 instruction (e.g., through flexible small groups and evidence-based instructional materials matched to students' needs and abilities).	2.0
5. Desired student outcomes are defined in specific language; are observable and measurable; and are tied to grade-level standards.	2.0
6. Intervention plans include strategies, materials, frequency, duration, setting, and the person(s) responsible.	2.0
7. School staff members regularly collaborate to analyze progress monitoring data to match appropriate interventions to students' needs, modify or substitute new interventions as needed, and identify students not responding to intervention efforts.	1.0

Note: Indicators are rated on a scale from 0-2, where 0=not in place, 1=partially in place, and 2=fully in place.

Progress Finding: The SSIP Tier 2 technical assistance visits were well received by the district teams, with team members consistently reporting that the DLET consensus process was an effective approach for assessing district needs with respect to early literacy practices.

In February and March 2017, a brief online feedback form was distributed to SSIP Tier 2 district team members to gather their feedback regarding the district's half-day onsite meeting with state consultants. At the time of this report, there had been 47 responses to the form from 9 of the 12 Tier 2 districts. Respondents included district administrators (n=17), such as curriculum/literacy, special education, and pupil services directors; elementary school principals (n=4); general education and special education teachers (n=11); and instructional support staff (n=15), such as reading interventionists and speech language pathologists. As can be seen in Figure E.3, at least 89% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with each of the six items on the feedback form. Almost all (97.9%) agreed or strongly agreed that the CSDE team was receptive to the districts' input and opinions; the purpose of the meeting was clear; and the goals of the SSIP were well-articulated. In addition, 60% or more of respondents strongly agreed with these three statements.

To what extent do you agree with the following statements:

The CSDE team was receptive to our input and opinions. [1.d]	97.9%
The purpose of our recent SSIP meeting with the CSDE were clear to me. [1.b]	97.9%
The goals of the SSIP have been well articulated to our district team. [1.a]	97.9%
The next steps in the SSIP process have been well articulated to our district team. [1.f]	95.8%
The District Literacy Evaluation Tool (DLET) consensus process was an effective approach to assessing our district's needs with respect to early literacy practice. [1.c]	93.7%
The CSDE was knowledgeable about our district. [1.e]	89.4%

AGREE   STRONGLY AGREE

Respondents' comments provided additional context for their ratings. In general, comments were overwhelmingly positive, with participants' describing the process as collaborative, non-threatening, and insightful (see Table E.1 for a few representative remarks). Specific aspects of the visits mentioned as beneficial included the involvement of various district stakeholders, the non-judgmental facilitation by state consultants, and the willingness of participants to reflect honestly on the districts' DLET scores. Most felt the open discourse resulted in a more global understanding of current literacy practices district-wide, and helped the team prioritize areas for improvement. Although suggestions for improvements to the visits were requested on the form, very few were noted. The few mentioned included allowing more team members to participate in the DLET process, especially in larger districts; informing team members in advance about the purpose of the meeting (i.e., the importance of everyone coming prepared to explain their DLET scores); and incorporating a debrief with administrators as part of the onsite technical assistance visit.

Table E.1: Tier 2 Participant Feedback Form Comments

What was the most beneficial aspect of the meeting?	What actions will you take as a result of the meeting?
• *To gather with fellow educators, principals, supervisors, teachers, and directors with various perspectives and collaboratively communicate with students' literacy remaining the focus.*	• *We will review our universal screening process. While we currently assess all students three times per year, we are not using any of the CSDE's recommended assessments.*
• *Being able to share thoughts, concerns and progress in each domain. Helpful to have teachers and administrators on the panel to ensure that each topic was discussed through multiple lenses.*	• *We will continue to work towards stronger coherence across departments for PL opportunities, and continue to build bridges between multiple departments so we are working in sync during the instructional day.*
• *The lead facilitator did an excellent job allowing the team to discuss challenges relative to each of the rubric indicators. There was good conversation and reflection on current practice.*	• *We will monitor the fidelity of progress monitoring and ensure that the measures directly match students' instructional profile to provide teachers with data to adjust their instruction or approach.*

Table continues on the next page.

What was the most beneficial aspect of the meeting?	What actions will you take as a result of the meeting?
• *Working with a diverse district team in collaboration with the CSDE to ensure effective practice in SRBI.* • *Being able to gain perspective from all levels and positions throughout the district. Although I know what happens in my school, I didn't have much insight into what happens within the special education department as well as central office.* • *The CSDE team established right from the beginning that transparency was critical, and they were very appreciative and welcoming of all responses. Our team was comprised of stakeholders from many schools and positions, which gave us the ability to discuss issues in a very comprehensive manner.* • *The consensus process was not necessarily comfortable but necessary if a change is going to occur. The facilitators did a phenomenal job in keeping our team focused and summarizing key points.*	• *I already had a discussion with the building principal and the director of curriculum regarding SRBI times, and how they contrast with special education services. We'll take a close look at this moving into next year in order to facilitate greater access of services for all students.* • *We will continue to ensure that the district is providing interventions at all levels, and that students receiving special education are provided with intervention in addition to their special education accommodations.* • *I already spoke with the literacy coach on trying to train more of our staff on some of the resources that we already have available.* • *We will review our data team processes to be sure we are clearly articulating student goals to those that are administering instruction, and then monitoring and responding to the effectiveness of that instruction. Ensure that school-wide assessment data are included in all IEPs as indicators of progress.*

EVALUATION QUESTION 3: To what extent has the SSIP increased the reading performance of third-grade students with disabilities?

Progress Finding: The SIMR increased from 50.1 in FFY 2014 to 51.4 in FFY 2015, exceeding this year's target of 50.1.

The State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR) for the Connecticut State Department of Education's State Systemic Improvement Plan is to increase the reading performance of all third-grade students with disabilities (SWD) statewide, as measured by Connecticut's English Language Arts (ELA) Performance Index. The methodology for calculating the ELA Performance Index starts by taking the scale score on the statewide ELA assessments: the Smarter Balanced (SB) Assessment and the Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA), and converting that scale score into an appropriate index point value that ranges from 0 to 110. The ELA Performance Index is then calculated by averaging the index points earned by all participating third grade students with disabilities.

As is shown in Table E.2, the state's SIMR increased from a baseline ELA Performance Index of 50.1 in FFY 2014 to an ELA Performance Index of 51.4 in FFY 2015. The SIMR exceeded the FFY 2015 target of 50.1, with 96 of 127 (75.6%) LEAs exceeding the statewide target.[3] It is worth nothing that the State did consider revising its SIMR targets upward for FFY 2016-FFY 2018. However, assessment experts from the Performance Office advised that changes to the targets would be premature at this time for several reasons, including the relatively "new" assessment (i.e., FFY 2014

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[3] SIMR data are suppressed in districts where fewer than six third-grade students with disabilities take the Smarter Balance ELA Assessment or the Connecticut Alternate ELA Assessment. In FFY 2015, 43 districts did not have published data due to small n sizes, including some districts that do not have elementary schools.

was the first year the SB assessment was conducted statewide), as well as recent changes to the alternate assessment participation rules.

Table E.2: SPP Indicator 17 Data

FFY	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
SIMR Data	33.7	50.1 (n=4,877)	51.4 (n=4,897)			
Target ≥	baseline	new baseline	50.1	50.3	50.7	51.1

Note: FFY 2013 baseline data is not comparable to FFY 2014 baseline data due to the adoption of new statewide assessments (standard and alternate) in FFY 2014.

Progress Finding: SIMR data at the LEA level increased from FFY 2014 to FFY 2015 for approximately 58% of districts statewide, and roughly the same percentage (58%) of districts improved their gap in performance between third-grade students with disabilities and their nondisabled peers.

As noted above, SIMR data are published for individual LEAs if the district has more than five third-grade students with disabilities who take the Smarter Balance ELA Assessment or the Connecticut Alternate ELA Assessment. As is shown in Table E.3, SIMR data for 58.3% of these districts increased from FFY 2014 to FFY 2015, and close to the same percentage (57.5%) improved their gap in performance between third-grade students with disabilities and their nondisabled peers. The cohorts (A, B, and C) in the table denote the three-year cycle whereby approximately one-third of the State's LEAs are reviewed annually for consideration and assignment to tiered SSIP supports and intervention. Cohort A was part of the 2015-16 pilot year and districts in Cohort B were eligible to begin receiving SSIP support this year.

Table E.3: SIMR Data by LEA Cohorts

	# of LEAs	SIMR increased from FFY 2014 to FFY 2015	ELA PI Gap declined from FFY 2014 to FFY 2015
Cohort A	40	60.0%	55.0%
Cohort B	39	64.1%	61.5%
Cohort C	41	51.2%	56.1%
Statewide	120	58.3%	57.5%

Note: The number of LEAs includes only those districts with unsuppressed SIMR data in FFY 2014 and FFY 2015. The SIMR is the performance of third-grade students with disabilities, as indicated by the ELA Performance Index (PI). The ELA PI Gap is the difference in performance between third-grade students with disabilities and their nondisabled peers.

Progress Finding: SIMR data for districts that participated in the pilot year of Tier 2 and Tier 3 SSIP supports provides preliminary information as to the intervention's effectiveness towards improving the reading performance for 3rd grade students with disabilities.

Table E.4 provides SIMR data for individual LEAs from Cohort A – the districts that were eligible to receive tiered intervention support during the SSIP's pilot year (2015-16). As such, FFY 2014 SIMR data represents baseline data (i.e., prior to SSIP) and the FFY 2015 SIMR data represents year one

progress. As is shown, SIMR data increased from the baseline year for 4 of the 5 (80.0%) districts that received Tier 3 SSIP supports during the 2015-16 school year. Similarly, 80% of Tier 3 districts improved their gap in performance between third-grade students with disabilities and their nondisabled peers. These percentages are higher than those in Tier 2 (73.3%), and substantially higher than the percentage of Tier 1 districts to demonstrate the same improvements (45.0% and 35.0%).   Although these data can't be interpreted as casual, they do provide preliminary information as to the effectiveness of increased supports at the Tier 2 and Tier 3 levels, and also the need to continue to strengthen the universal supports that are offered to Tier 1 districts.

Table E.4: SIMR Data by SSIP Tiers of Intervention for Cohort A LEAs

Cohort A	# of LEAs	SIMR increased from FFY 2014 to FFY 2015	ELA PI Gap declined from FFY 2014 to FFY 2015
SSIP Tier 1	20	45.0%	35.0%
SSIP Tier 2	15	73.3%	73.3%
SSIP Tier 3	5	80.0%	80.0%

Note: The number of LEAs includes only those districts with unsuppressed SIMR data in FFY 2014 and FFY 2015. The SIMR is the performance of third-grade students with disabilities, as indicated by the ELA Performance Index (PI). The ELA PI Gap is the difference in performance between third-grade students with disabilities and their nondisabled peers.

F. Plans for Next Year

1. IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES

Table F.1 briefly outlines the planned implementation activities of the SSIP Leadership Team during the next reporting period. Activities for the current school year are fairly specific, and the timelines are relatively well-defined. The activities and timelines that follow (i.e., after June 2017) are purposely more general, as those details will be discussed in full at the team's last meeting of the year, and finalized during the summer months.

Table F.1: Planned Implementation Activities

Activity	Timeline
• Finalize DLET summaries for the 12 Tier 2 districts and distribute summaries to Tier 2 district teams.	• Late March 2017
• Review DLET data in order to select Cohort B districts for continuing Tier 2 or promoted Tier 3 intervention support.	• Late March 2017
• Determine the extent to which continuing Tier 2 districts will be asked to provide additional data or information on their improvement efforts. Finalize SSIP Support Teams for promoted Tier 3 districts, and finalize agendas for the 2017 onsite technical assistance visits. Notify districts of their tiered assignments.	• Early April 2017
• Conduct two days of technical assistance to Cohort B Tier 3 districts. Finalize the scope of professional learning and/or onsite technical assistance that will be provided to Cohort B Tier 3 districts in 2017-18.	• April-May 2017
• Conduct a SSIP Leadership Team debriefing in order to reflect on the 2016-17 school year, discuss potential implementation adjustments, and construct a detailed implementation plan for the 2017-18 school year.	• June 2017
• Finalize the professional learning needs assessment survey for Cohort C Special Education Directors, and distribute the survey.	• Summer/Fall 2017
• Complete the professional learning repository for the CSDE website.	• Fall 2017
• Revise items on the District Literacy Evaluation Tool (DLET).	• Fall 2017
• Develop professional learning offerings related to literacy data teams, SRBI, and/or IEP development. Deliver professional learning offerings to Cohort B Tier 3 districts.	• Ongoing 2017-18
• Support ongoing capacity-building of CSDE staff related to literacy data teams, SRBI, IEP development, and implementation science.	• Ongoing 2017-18
• Provide progress monitoring support to Cohort B Tier 2 and Tier 3 districts.	• Ongoing 2017-18
• Review SIMR data of all Cohort C districts, and select districts for initial Tier 2 support. Collect individual DLET data and conduct onsite meeting to reconcile scores.	• December 2017-March 2018
• Review DLET data in order to select Cohort C districts for continuing Tier 2 or promoted Tier 3 intervention support. Notify districts of their tiered assignments.	• March 2018

2. PLANNED EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

As was noted in Section C, because of the late engagement of the external evaluator, the evaluation team has not had a chance to clearly define data collection plans with respect to all data sources previously identified in the evaluation plan. However, anticipated timelines have been included in Table F.2, and initial discussions focused on clearly delineating internal and external responsibilities for the collection of these data have already begun. The external evaluation team intends to work with the SSIP Leadership Team in the coming months to develop a process data collection plan that will ensure adequate output data (e.g., information on the scale and intensity of activities) and implementation outcome data (e.g., information on the extent to which activities have been implemented as originally intended) are collected. Similarly, the external evaluation team will consult with SSIP Leadership Team members to solidify a few outstanding data sources with respect to the outcome evaluation (e.g., items noted as "to be determined" in the table).

Table F.2: Planned Evaluation Activities

Evaluation Question	Intended Outcomes	Data Sources	Anticipated Timeline
EQ1: To what extent is the SSIP improving state level capacity for supporting districts and schools in implementing and scaling-up evidence-based practices to improve reading for students with disabilities?	• Sufficient operating support is available to enable the SSIP to fulfill its responsibilities. • EB learning structures and TA assistance are embedded in the work of the SSIP. • CSDE institutional policies and practices evolve to support the goals of the SSIP	• Extant documents (e.g., CSDE general communication materials, PL literature, and guidance documents; stakeholder meeting minutes) • Extant PL data (e.g., dates, attendance, evaluation data) • SSIP Leadership Team interviews • Stakeholder/key informant interviews* • PL needs assessment survey	• Ongoing 2017-18 • Ongoing 2017-18 • February 2018 • To be determined • September 2017
EQ2: To what extent is the SSIP enhancing district- and school-level capacity for implementing and sustaining evidence-based practices to improve reading for students with disabilities?	• Increased educator awareness and knowledge of EB reading instruction, interventions, and supports. • LEA improvement efforts demonstrate systematic evaluation of current literacy practices in order to drive SRBI in schools. • Improved fidelity of implementation of EB reading instruction, interventions, and supports based on the principles of SRBI.	• SSIP project documents (e.g., Tier 2/Tier 3 communication; TA materials and protocols) • DLET • Tier 2/Tier 3 TA visits (e.g., dates, attendance, evaluation data) • Tier 2/Tier 3 district survey or focus group* • Tier 2/Tier 3 progress monitoring documents (e.g., pre-post improvement plans)*	• Ongoing 2017-18 • January-March 2018 • Ongoing 2017-18 • To be determined • To be determined

Table continues on the next page.

Evaluation Question	Intended Outcomes	Data Sources	Anticipated Timeline
Q3: To what extent is the SSIP increasing the reading performance of third-grade students with disabilities statewide?	• Increased reading performance of 3rd grade students with disabilities.	• Smarter Balanced (SB) and Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA) (e.g., SIMR data statewide and by district)	• January 2018
		• Additional SB/CTAA data (e.g., SPI, DPI, Next Generation Indicator 1 and 2)*	• To be determined
		• Universal screening data for Tier 2/Tier 3 districts*	• To be determined

Note: A (*) indicates tentative data collection sources that will be further investigated during the next reporting period.

3. ANTICIPATED BARRIERS

Barrier	Steps to Address Barrier
• CSDE staff time/capacity to commit to current plan based on anticipated retirements and current hiring freeze.	• Assess current proposed staffing to consider reassignment/reduction of personnel devoted to activities; consideration of need for reduction of districts served at Tier 2/Tier 3.
• Ongoing availability of resources at current levels to sustain proposed activities.	• Increase internal department capacity in the provision of professional learning to reduce reliance on external partners; consideration of grouping districts for the provision of professional learning.
• Competing interests of SSIP partners that affect the scheduling of activities.	• Establish an annual SSIP implementation calendar for internal and external partners.
• District capacity to effectively manage multiple program improvement efforts	• Assist districts in aligning SSIP with existing program improvement plans.
• Ability to sustain current intra-office partnerships	• Expand current levels of communication and collaboration throughout the calendar year.

4. NEED FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

The state has appreciated and benefited from the technical assistance provided through the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI). We look forward to additional opportunities to network with other states with similar early literacy SIMRs. While there exist multiple sources of resources (including those accumulated by NCSI on NING), it would be beneficial to have access to a list/directory of resources by topic that would reduce the need for searching.

Additionally, as we move beyond Phase III of the SSIP, we would appreciate support in developing strategies to "scale up" the work that we've been able to do in a limited number of districts.

Appendix A: District Literacy Evaluation Tool (DLET)

CONNECTICUT STATE SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SSIP)

Early Literacy and Reading Achievement for Students with Disabilities

District Literacy Evaluation Tool

SAMPLE DISTRICT

Directions:

Page 2: Enter your name next to the position you hold in the district.

Page 3: Review the provided district demographic data.

Page 4: Review the provided district assessment data.

Page 5: Universal Screening Data. A district administrator who is responsible for curriculum, instruction and assessment needs to complete this page.

Pages 6 – 12:
- ➢ Review the indicators in Sections A through G, and based on your knowledge and perspective, mark the box that corresponds to the district's level of implementation for each item.

- ➢ If you select a score of (2) "Yes, Fully in Place", please also mark the box in the column to the right if you believe there is evidence that is readily available to support that score. Respondents may still select a score of (2) even if they don't think (or don't know if) there is supporting evidence. In these cases, the box in the column to the right would remain blank.

- ➢ Some of the indicators may focus on topics that are "outside of your role" or for which you have no knowledge. If this is the case, please mark "No Response" for those items.

Once you have independently completed the DLET, please e-mail your completed form to james.moriarty@ct.gov by Friday, January 27, 2017.

Thank you.

DISTRICT STAFF

District Curriculum/Literacy Administrator: Click here to enter text.

Director of Special Education/Pupil Personnel Services: Click here to enter text.

The following elementary level (K-3) positions:

    Principal: Click here to enter text.

    General Education Teacher: Click here to enter text.

    Special Education Teacher: Click here to enter text.

    Reading Teacher/Interventionist: Click here to enter text.

    Speech-Language Pathologist: Click here to enter text.

    Other (provide position and name): Click here to enter text.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

For the purpose of this evaluation tool, "students with disabilities" refers to students with individualized education programs (IEPs) and does not include students receiving accommodations through a 504 Plan.

Total number of K-12 students in the district (2015-16): 3,312

Total number of K-12 students with disabilities in the district (2015-16): 439

Number of students receiving special education services by grade and disability type (as of 10/1/2015):

Grade	Autism	ED	ID	OHI & OHI-ADD	SLD & SLD/Dyslexia	Speech/ Language	Other	TOTAL
K	6	0	0	1	2	5	5	19
1	2	0	2	4	1	8	2	19
2	6	0	0	6	4	5	0	21
3	2	0	1	5	8	7	1	24

ASSESSMENT DATA

Preliminary 2015-16 Accountability Data for Grade 3 Students:

SWD ELA DPI = 47.4   Not SWD ELA DPI = 67.7   Gap between SWD and Not SWD = 20.3

2016 Smarter Balanced Assessment Grade 3 ELA/Literacy Data:

All Students			
Number at Level 1	Number at Level 2	Number at Level 3	Number at Level 4
54	58	47	37

Students with Disabilities			
Number at Level 1	Number at Level 2	Number at Level 3	Number at Level 4
13	2	0	0

2016 Alternate Assessment Grade 3 ELA/Literacy Data: (To be completed by the district)

Students with Disabilities			
Number at Level 1	Number at Level 2	Number at Level 3	Number at Level 4

NOTE: Page 5 needs to be completed by a district administrator who is responsible for curriculum, instruction and assessment.

2015-16 Universal Screening Data for Students with Disabilities Grade K-3:

Grade	Screening Assessment Code*		Fall				Winter				Spring		
			Benchmark	# Met	# Did Not Meet		Benchmark	# Met	# Did Not Meet		Benchmark	# Met	# Did Not Meet
K													
1													
2													
3													

*Universal Screening Assessment Codes:

A. AIMSweb Tests of Early Literacy or Reading

B. Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS, 6th Ed.)

C. Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills Next (DIBELS Next) and mCLASS with DIBELS Next

D. NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

E. STAR Reading Assessment

F. i-Ready Diagnostic Reading Assessment

ADDITIONAL DISTRICT DATA

Provide the name(s) of one or two additional sources of literacy data collected by the district:

1. **Click here to enter text.**

2. **Click here to enter text.**

Section A: Assessing Students

For each indicator, please choose the level of implementation that most closely reflects the current status of the district's K-3 literacy program.

Indicator	No Response	No, Not in Place (0)	Sometime/Somewhat, Partially in Place (1)	Yes, Fully in Place (2)	Check if evidence exists to support a score of (2) "Yes, Fully in Place"
1. Universal screening assessments are in place for identifying student reading levels, identifying general needs, and gauging overall progress relative to grade level standards.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Specific criteria (e.g., assessment publisher's cut scores) are applied to assessment results to determine student need for reading intervention.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Diagnostic assessments are used to clarify and target the difficulties of individual students when the information provided by universal screening assessments is not sufficient to do so.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Assessment data are analyzed regularly to determine the effects of instruction and intervention and to guide future instruction.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Assessment data are used consistently in conjunction with other inputs (e.g., student work samples) to inform grouping of students for instruction.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Literacy assessments have been developed/selected to align with the district's literacy curriculum.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section B: Reading Curriculum/Core Literacy Instruction

For each indicator, please choose the level of implementation that most closely reflects the current status of the district's K-3 literacy program.

Indicator	No Response	No, Not in Place (0)	Sometime/Somewhat, Partially in Place (1)	Yes, Fully in Place (2)	Check if evidence exists to support a score of (2) "Yes, Fully in Place"
1. The district has a core literacy curriculum that is evidence-based and aligned with the CT Core Standards (CCS).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Evidence-based materials have been purchased or developed to support the core literacy curriculum.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Literacy instruction is consistently differentiated (i.e., addressing a range of learning needs by adapting instruction or instructional materials in a variety of ways) to support individual students' learning needs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Tier 1 supports are provided in the general education setting to address individual student needs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Evidence-based materials addressing specific skills have been purchased or developed to supplement core instruction.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section C: Scientific Research-Based Interventions

For each indicator, please choose the level of implementation that most closely reflects the current status of your district's K-3 literacy program.

Indicator	No Response	No, Not in Place (0)	Sometime/Somewhat, Partially in Place (1)	Yes, Fully in Place (2)	Check if evidence exists to support a score of (2) "Yes, Fully in Place"
1. The district has clearly articulated K-12 curriculum documents that incorporate the vertical progression of the CCS to guide literacy instruction across the tiers of instruction (e.g., curriculum guides, scope and sequence for units of study).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Three well-defined tiers of instruction/intervention have been established with increasing levels of intensity.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Data are regularly reviewed to monitor the percentage of students at each level of intervention.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Interventions for struggling readers consistently begin within Tier 1 instruction (e.g., through flexible small groups and evidence-based instructional materials matched to students' needs and abilities).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Desired student outcomes are defined in specific language; are observable and measureable; and are tied to grade-level standards.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Intervention plans include strategies, materials, frequency, duration, setting, and the person(s) responsible.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. School staff members regularly collaborate to analyze progress monitoring data to match appropriate interventions to students' needs, modify or substitute new interventions as needed, and identify students not responding to intervention efforts.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section D: Students with Disabilities

For each indicator, please choose the level of implementation that most closely reflects the current status of your district's K-3 literacy program.

Indicator	No Response	No, Not in Place (0)	Sometime/Somewhat, Partially in Place (1)	Yes, Fully in Place (2)	Check if evidence exists to support a score of (2) "Yes, Fully in Place"
1. Students with disabilities have access to core reading instruction within the general education setting.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Students with disabilities have access to SRBI Tier 2 and Tier 3 reading interventions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Comprehensive special education evaluations for children suspected of having a reading-related disability (including Specific Learning Disabilities/Dyslexia) address the following components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. The district offers a continuum of special education programming.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Students with disabilities receive reading intervention from staff with specific training, skills and knowledge in the teaching of reading in Grades K-3.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Instructional planning for students with disabilities incorporates universal design for learning (UDL) principles.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Assistive technology and accessible educational materials are appropriately selected and effectively used to support reading instruction for students with disabilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Reading achievement data are used to identify IEP Present Levels of Performance and to inform the development of annual goals and objectives.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. PPT teams consider the CCS when developing students' IEP reading goals and objectives.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section E: Family Engagement

For each indicator, please choose the level of implementation that most closely reflects the current status of your district's K-3 literacy program.

Indicator	No Response	No, Not in Place (0)	Sometime/Somewhat, Partially in Place (1)	Yes, Fully in Place (2)	Check if evidence exists to support a score of (2) "Yes, Fully in Place"
1. The district provides parents with information relative to their child's skills as a reader.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. The district explains the provision of services (e.g., Tier 2 intervention, IEP reading goals) the child is receiving.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. The district engages parents in a variety of ways to support their child's reading development at home (e.g., newsletter, parent training, accessible resources).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Family members are provided opportunities and encouraged to participate in reading-related activities at school.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section F: Professional Learning

For each indicator, please choose the level of implementation that most closely reflects the current status of your district's K-3 literacy program.

Indicator	No Response	No, Not in Place (0)	Sometime/Somewhat, Partially in Place (1)	Yes, Fully in Place (2)	Check if evidence exists to support a score of (2) "Yes, Fully in Place"
1. Assessment data are used to inform planning of professional learning and acquisition of resources.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. School staff members have received training in the literacy core curriculum and intervention programs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. As appropriate, teachers receive classroom-level coaching to support implementation of literacy core instruction and Tier 1 interventions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Culturally relevant pedagogy is addressed through professional learning and implemented during classroom instruction. NOTE: Characteristics of culturally responsive teaching include positive perspectives of families and parents, communication of high expectations for all students, the inclusion of content that is relevant to students, and the understanding that learning occurs within the context of culture.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. The district provides teachers with professional learning to support their understanding of formal and informal methods for assessing reading development.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. The district provides, or supports individual schools in providing, professional learning in the areas of reading development addressed in the Foundations of Reading Survey (i.e., phonemic awareness, the alphabetic principle, phonics, vocabulary development, and comprehension skills).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section G: Systems

For each indicator, please choose the level of implementation that most closely reflects the current status of your district's K-3 literacy program.

Indicator	No Response	No, Not in Place (0)	Sometime/Somewhat, Partially in Place (1)	Yes, Fully in Place (2)	Check if evidence exists to support a score of (2) "Yes, Fully in Place"
1. Literacy instruction and intervention is part of district and school improvement plans.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. The district-level leadership/data team meets regularly to identify data trends and district-level needs to inform programmatic changes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. The district-level leadership/data team monitors the efficacy of school-based teams.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Each school's instructional schedule includes sufficient time for the provision of interventions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. School-based teams are in place to guide the implementation of tiered literacy instruction.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. School-based teams meet regularly to identify data trends and school-level needs to inform programmatic changes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. A building administrator is a regular member of the school-based team.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Administrators regularly observe teachers, using review protocols, to monitor the fidelity of literacy instruction and intervention.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Appendix B: Individualized Education Program (IEP) Rubric

State Education Resource Center

IEP Rubric

Developed by SERC, Middletown, Connecticut
Revised 2013

SERC
EQUITY. EXCELLENCE. EDUCATION.

The Overview

Connecticut's State Education Resource Center (SERC) has developed an Individualized Education Program (IEP) Rubric that measures the quality of IEP development for students with disabilities in the following categories:

- Gap Analysis of Present Level of Performance
- Levels of Support: Supplemental Instruction, Accommodations, and Modifications
- IEP Goals and Objectives
- Types of Support and Placement

The IEP Rubric defines fourteen indicators needed for quality IEP development. The rubric is designed to be analyzed holistically as well as in the four categories and their individual indicators. A school data team can analyze the data in a variety of ways to discern trends in practices, which can be used to inform professional learning and systemic strategic planning. The rubric is constructed on the premise that all students are entitled to the general education curriculum within the least restrictive environment, and therefore the design of an IEP is focused on student outcomes based in the general education curriculum. Supports operate on a continuum specifically targeted to meet the unique needs of a student. The purpose of the rubric is to provide educators and families a means to assess the quality of an IEP by shifting the IEP from a mere list of legal or compliance tasks to an instructional tool that can be used to guide teams of people in how to support a student in achieving the same general education standards as nondisabled peers.

The Quality Levels

SERC's IEP rubric has four levels of measure: promising practice, progressing, emerging, and unacceptable. The highest level, **promising practice**, is the measure of quality that promotes genuine access, participation, and progress in the general education curriculum and settings, while actively supporting the unique needs of a student. High expectations are set for each student, and the IEP actively seeks to close academic gaps. Since educational practices are continuously evolving, promising practice purposefully denotes an endless ceiling of quality. **Progressing** is the measure of quality by which an IEP supports educational benefit to facilitate a student's access to, participation in, and progress in the general education curriculum and settings. The IEP incorporates the elements of effective instructional practices into the design of how supports are organized and implemented. **Emerging** is the measure of quality by which the IEP meets a low threshold of compliance and educational benefit. The IEP is often missing critical elements needed to support its use as an instructional plan. The IEP also focuses on "special education" as a separate support system, rather than an embedded support system within the context of the general education curriculum. **Unacceptable** is the measure that generally does not meet even the basics of procedural compliance for an IEP or merits any educational benefit.

The Scoring

SERC's IEP Rubric uses an analytical rubric scoring method. A range of points are used to score each indicator: 3) promising practice, 2) progressing, 1) emerging and 0) unacceptable. Each indicator is scored and then totaled within each of the four category areas for a category score. The four category scores are then totaled for a single score.

The Training of Scorers

Using this tool with fidelity requires scorers to be trained. The training provides scorers with a working knowledge of the content of the rubric and the technical knowledge to use the instrument with reliability. The training sessions include a process for calibration of scorers that estimates their inter-rater reliability as a means to check for fidelity. For further information on the training process, contact Kimberly Mearman, Ph.D,, Assistant Director for Program Development & Research/Program Evaluation, SERC, at (860) 632-1485, ext. 289 or at mearman@ctserc.org.

Gap Analysis of Present Level of Performance

Indicator 1

The IEP uses comprehensive general education-driven assessments and benchmarks to isolate and target specially designed instruction to address missing concepts, skills, or strategies that assist students in making progress in general education.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
• The assessments are not based on the age-appropriate grade-level general education curriculum. • The assessments are not technically sound or reliable. • The IEP uses a narrow scope of assessments. • The assessment process uses only standardized assessments, making no reference to general education or does not use a comprehensive assessment process to determine the unique needs of the student. • There is no evidence of a comparative analysis between the demands of the general education standards and the unique needs of the individual student. • There are no or very vague statements of the student's present level of performance as it relates to the general education curriculum.	• The assessments are based on the age-appropriate grade-level general education curriculum. • The assessments are technically sound and reliable. • The IEP uses an assessment process mostly reliant on standardized assessments. • The assessment process makes references to general education assessments, but relies on standardized assessments that determine the unique needs of the student. • There is little evidence of a comparative analysis between the demands of the general education standards and the unique needs of the individual student. • There are general statements of the student's present level of performance as it aligns to the general education curriculum.	• The assessments are based on the age-appropriate grade-level general education curriculum. • The assessments are technically sound and reliable. • The IEP uses a comprehensive assessment process, including general education curriculum-based assessments and standardized assessments. • The assessment process uses a mix of general education assessments and standardized assessments to determine the unique needs of the student. • There is some evidence of a comparative analysis between the demands of the general education standards and the unique needs of the individual student. • There are specific statements of the student's present level of performance as it relates to the general education curriculum.	• The assessments are based on the age-appropriate grade-level general education curriculum. • The assessments are technically sound and reliable and provide continuous monitoring information. • The IEP uses a relevant, comprehensive assessment process driven by general education curriculum-based assessments, district-wide formative and summative assessments, and standardized assessments. • The assessment process focuses on general education assessments, supplemented with additional assessments that can isolate and determine the unique needs of the student related to the disability. • There is extensive evidence of a comparative analysis between the demands of the general education standards and the unique needs of the individual student. • There are specific statements of the student's present level of performance as it specifically relates to the student's access to, participation in, and progress in the general education curriculum.
☐	☐	☐	☐
Majority of the elements = 0	**Majority of the elements = 1**	**Majority of the elements = 2**	**Majority of the elements = 3**

Indicator 2

The IEP contains explicit statements determining the student's strengths as related to the student's progress in the general education curriculum.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
• There are no or vague, superficial statements about the student's strengths.	• There are general statements about the student's strengths related to academic learning.	• There are general statements about the student's capacity and strengths to participate and progress in general education curriculum.	• There are explicit statements about the student's capacity and strengths to participate and progress in general education curriculum.
• There are no statements about how the student can participate in the general education settings or curriculum.	• There are vague statements about the student's strengths and how the student can participate in general education settings.	• There are general statements about how the student can be successful in general education curriculum.	• There are statements about the student's strengths that can be useful to a general education teacher in understanding how the student can progress in general education curriculum.
• The student's strengths have no relationship to the general education curriculum, instruction, or environment and are comparative to peers.	• The student's strengths have no relationship to general education curriculum, instruction, or environment and are not comparative to peers.	• The student's strengths are relative to how he or she can participate in general education curriculum and are not comparative to peers.	• The student's strengths are relative to how he or she can participate in general education curriculum and are not comparative to peers.
☐	☐	☐	☐
Majority of the elements = 0	**Majority of the elements = 1**	**Majority of the elements = 2**	**Majority of the elements = 3**

Indicator 3

The IEP has an explicit statement of how the dynamic between manifestation of the student's disability and general education curriculum, instruction, or environment affects access to, participation in, and progress in the general education curriculum.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
• The assessment process lists concerns, but is not necessarily related to the disability. • The assessment process states that the disability in and of itself affects access to, participation in, and/or progress in the general education curriculum. • There is a vague statement of the impacts related to the disability itself and/or services needed.	• The assessment process determines concerns related to the disability. • The assessment process states how the disability affects access to, participation in, and/or progress in the general education curriculum. • There is a vague statement of how the disability impacts participation and progress in the general education curriculum.	• The assessment process generally lists manifestations of the disability. • The assessment process states how the manifestations of the disability affect access to, participation in, and/or progress in the general education curriculum. • The statement of impact connects to specially designed instruction listed in the IEP.	• The assessment process specifically isolates the manifestations and the instructional and environmental barriers of the disability. • The assessment process specifically states how the manifestations of the disability interact with environmental and instructional barriers to access, participate, and/or progress in the general education curriculum. • The statement of impact explicitly leads the IEP in the determination of the specially designed instruction.
☐	☐	☐	☐
Majority of the elements = 0	**Majority of the elements = 1**	**Majority of the elements = 2**	**Majority of the elements = 3**

☐ **/9 Total Score for Gap Analysis**

Quality Level	Score	Interpretation
Promising Practice	8-9	The assessment process is driven by examining how the student performs within the general education curriculum. The assessment process explicitly identifies barriers that affect access to, participation in, and progress in the general education curriculum. The unique needs of the student are specifically isolated and defined. There a number of assessment tools used that can serve to continuously monitor student progress over time. The information in the IEP is recorded clearly with specific statements that are useful and explicitly lead to the development of the specially designed instruction.
Progressing	5-7	The assessment process contains a comprehensive examination of how the unique profile of the student compares to the general education curriculum. There is a mix of assessment tools and types used to determine areas of strength and need, but the recorded information can appear disjointed. The information flows logically, and it is predictable as to what the IEP goals should contained based on this information.
Emerging	2-4	The assessment process relies heavily on standardized assessments and with a focus on aspects of the disability. The assessment process references the general education curriculum or assessments, but does not provide a full picture of how well the student is performing in the general education curriculum. The information recorded provides some broad understandings, but is vague.
Unacceptable	0-1	There is one or more of the following concerns with the assessment process: the process does not use the age-appropriate assessments or curriculum; there are very little or no technically reliable assessments used; and/or the assessment process is very narrow in scope and does not meet the standards for comprehensive assessment. The assessment process is disability-driven with little to no reference to the general education curriculum. Information recorded is superficial, very vague, and maybe comparative to peers.

Levels of Support: Supplemental Instruction, Accommodations, Modifications

Indicator 1

Based on the gap analysis and areas of need, direct supplemental instruction is designed to address missing skills, concepts, or strategies that will assist the student in participating and making progress in the general education curriculum.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
• The gap analysis does not list skills, concepts, and/or strategies.	• The gap analysis vaguely lists skills, concepts, and/or strategies.	• The gap analysis states the student's missing skills, concepts, and/or strategies that are needed to participate or make progress in the general education curriculum.	• The gap analysis specifically isolates the student's missing skills, concepts, and/or strategies that are needed to participate or make progress in the general education curriculum.
• The IEP states instruction on skills, concepts, and/or strategies that do not align with the gap analysis or does not state any instruction on skills, concepts, and/or strategies.	• The IEP states instruction on skills, concepts, and/or strategies that loosely aligns with the gap analysis.	• The IEP states instruction on skills, concepts, and/or strategies that aligns with the gap analysis.	• The IEP states explicit instruction on skills, concepts, and/or strategies that directly connect with the gap analysis.
• The IEP states instruction for skills, concepts, and/or strategies that is instead of the core general education curriculum.	• The IEP states instruction for skills, concepts, and/or strategies that is in addition to the core general education curriculum.	• The IEP states instruction for skills, concepts, and/or strategies that is in addition to the core general education curriculum and expands learning for the student.	• The IEP states instruction for skills, concepts, and/or strategies that expands the methods and intensity of the core general education curriculum, explicitly connected to closing the gaps, and expands the depth of instruction and learning for the student.
• The IEP states supplemental instruction that is not sound.	• The IEP states supplemental instruction that is sound.	• The IEP states supplemental instruction that is sound, evidence-based practice and likely to result in student progress.	• The IEP states supplemental instruction that is sound, evidence-based practice and strongly connected to student progress in the general education curriculum.
☐	☐	☐	☐
Majority of the elements = 0	**Majority of the elements = 1**	**Majority of the elements = 2**	**Majority of the elements = 3**

Indicator 2 A

Based on the gap analysis and areas of need, accommodations are designed to assist the student in access to, participation in, and making progress in the general education curriculum.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
• The gap analysis does not state barriers for the student. • The IEP states accommodations that do not align with the gap analysis. • The IEP does not provide details on how, when, how often, and to what degree accommodations will be used. • The IEP does not state how the student will use the accommodations. • The IEP states accommodations that are not sound.	• The gap analysis vaguely states barriers for the student. • The IEP states accommodations that loosely align with the gap analysis. • The IEP provides vague details on how, when, how often, and to what degree accommodations will be used by educators. • The IEP states how the student will use the accommodations. • The IEP states accommodations that are sound.	• The gap analysis generally states barriers for the student to participate or make progress in the general education curriculum. • The IEP states accommodations that align with the gap analysis. • The IEP provides general details on how, when, how often, and to what degree accommodations and assistive technology will be used in the general education curriculum and/or settings. • The IEP states how the student will use the accommodations to participate in the general education curriculum. • The IEP states accommodations that are sound, evidence-based practice.	• The gap analysis specifically isolates barriers for the student to participate or make progress in the general education curriculum. • The IEP states explicit accommodations that directly connect with the gap analysis. • The IEP provides specific details on how, when, how often, and to what degree accommodations and assistive technology will be used in instruction of the core general education curriculum explicitly connected to access to the general education curriculum. • The IEP states how the student will learn to use the accommodations independently to participate meaningfully in the general education curriculum. • The IEP states accommodations that are sound, evidence-based practice and strongly connected to student progress in the general education curriculum.
☐	☐	☐	☐
Majority of the elements = 0	**Majority of the elements = 1**	**Majority of the elements = 2**	**Majority of the elements = 3**

Indicator 2 B

Based on the gap analysis and areas of need, assistive technology is designed to assist the student in access to, participation in, and making progress in the general education curriculum.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
• The gap analysis does not state barriers for the student.	• The gap analysis vaguely states barriers for the student.	• The gap analysis generally states barriers for the student to participate or make progress in the general education curriculum.	• The gap analysis specifically isolates barriers for the student to participate or make progress in the general education curriculum.
☐ *The next one is marked as **Not Applicable** if there is assistive technology used*			
• The IEP has no statements, other than the check box, that demonstrate that assistive technology was considered not necessary or that the gap analysis infers that assistive technology is needed to address the barriers.	• The IEP has vague inferences that demonstrate that assistive technology was considered not necessary or that the gap analysis infers that assistive technology is not needed to address the barriers.	• The IEP has general statements that demonstrate that assistive technology was considered not necessary and/or that the gap analysis demonstrates that assistive technology is not needed to address the barriers.	• The IEP has specific statements that demonstrate that assistive technology was considered not necessary and that the gap analysis clearly demonstrates that assistive technology is not needed to address the barriers.
☐ *The next four are marked as **Not Applicable** if there is **no** assistive technology used*			
• The IEP states assistive technology that does not align with the gap analysis. • The IEP does not provide details on how, when, how often, and to what degree assistive technology will be used. • The IEP does not state how the student will use the assistive technology. • The IEP states the use of assistive technology that is not sound.	• The IEP states assistive technology that loosely aligns with the gap analysis. • The IEP provides vague details on how, when, how often, and to what degree assistive technology will be used by educators. • The IEP states how the student will use the assistive technology. • The IEP states the use of assistive technology that is sound.	• The IEP states assistive technology that aligns with the gap analysis. • The IEP provides general details on how, when, how often, and to what degree assistive technology and assistive technology will be used in the general education curriculum and/or settings. • The IEP states how the student will use the assistive technology to participate in the general education curriculum. • The IEP states the use of assistive technology that is sound, evidence-based practice.	• The IEP states explicit assistive technology that directly connects with the gap analysis. • The IEP provides specific details on how, when, how often, and to what degree assistive technology will be used in instruction of the core general education curriculum explicitly connected to access to the general education curriculum. • The IEP states how the student will learn to use the assistive technology independently to participate meaningfully in the general education curriculum. • The IEP states the use of assistive technology that is sound, evidence-based practice and is strongly connected to student progress in the general education curriculum.
☐ **Majority of the elements = 0**	☐ **Majority of the elements = 1**	☐ **Majority of the elements = 2**	☐ **Majority of the elements = 3**

Indicator 3

Based on the gap analysis and areas of need, modifications are designed to assist the student in access, participation, and making progress in the general education curriculum.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
• The gap analysis does not state areas where the general education content or standards need to be adjusted.	• The gap analysis vaguely states areas where the general education content or standards need to be adjusted.	• The gap analysis generally states areas where the general education content or standards need to be adjusted in order for the student to participate or make progress in the general education curriculum.	• The gap analysis specifically isolates areas where the general education content or standards need to be adjusted in order for the student to participate and make progress in the general education curriculum.
• There is no evidence that the use of supplemental instruction and accommodations are used before the need for modifications, the IEP almost exclusively relies on modifications as the specially designed instruction, and the modifications do not align with the gap analysis.	• There is little or loose evidence that the use of supplemental instruction and accommodations are used before the need for modifications that loosely align with the gap analysis.	• There is general evidence that the use of supplemental instruction and accommodations, including assistive technology, are used before the need for modifications, and modifications are few and used only because they are necessary and align with the gap analysis.	• There is strong evidence that the use of supplemental instruction and accommodations, including assistive technology, are used before the need for modifications, and modifications are few, targeted, and used only because they are absolutely necessary to close gaps in the general education curriculum that directly connect with the gap analysis.
☐ *The next two are marked as **Not Applicable** if there are no modifications used*			
• The IEP does not state how, when, how often, and to what degree the modifications will be used.	• The IEP provides vague details on how, when, how often, and to what degree the modifications will be used by educators.	• The IEP provides general details on how, when, how often, and to what degree the modifications will be used in the general education curriculum.	• The IEP provides specific details on how, when, how often, and to what degree the modifications will be used in instruction of the core general education curriculum, explicitly connected to making progress in the general education curriculum.
• The IEP states modifications that are not sound and/or do not relate to the general education curriculum.	• The IEP states modifications that are sound and connect with the general education curriculum.	• The IEP states modifications that are sound, "promising practice" connected to progress in the general education curriculum.	• The IEP states modifications that are sound, "best practice" and are strongly connected to student progress in the general education curriculum.
☐	☐	☐	☐
Majority of the elements = 0	**Majority of the elements = 1**	**Majority of the elements = 2**	**Majority of the elements = 3**

Indicator 4

The IEP states supports that are needed for school personnel to implement the supplemental instruction, accommodations, and modifications.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
• The IEP does not state supports that are needed for school personnel to implement the IEP. • The supports for personnel are not connected to the supplemental instruction, accommodations, and modifications.	• The IEP vaguely states supports that are needed for school personnel to implement the IEP. • The supports for personnel are vaguely connected to the supplemental instruction, accommodations, and modifications.	• The IEP generally states supports, such as consultation, professional learning, or indirect student supports that are needed for school personnel to implement the IEP. • The supports for personnel are connected to the supplemental instruction, accommodations, and modifications.	• The IEP specifically states supports, such as consultation, professional learning, or indirect student supports that are needed for school personnel to implement the IEP. • The supports for personnel are explicitly connected to the supplemental instruction, accommodations, and modifications with explicit connections as to how those supports provide for the student's progress in the general education curriculum.
☐ **Majority of the elements = 0**	☐ **Majority of the elements = 1**	☐ **Majority of the elements = 2**	☐ **Majority of the elements = 3**

Scoring for Levels of Support: Supplemental Instruction, Accommodations, Modifications

☐ **/15 Total Score for Levels of Support**

Quality Level	Scores	Interpretation
Promising Practice	12-15	There are explicit links between the specific barriers and gaps isolated in the gap analysis and the selected specially designed instruction. The supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology are supported by solid research that indicates success in promoting progress in the general education curriculum. They are recorded with very specific details on when, how, and where they are to be implemented. The plan includes specific supports that are needed to support educators in implementing the plan with fidelity. The design of the supplemental instruction expands the core general education instruction and has the potential to close instructional gaps. The design of accommodations/assistive technology removes environmental and instructional barriers. The plan supports the student's independent use of accommodations/assistive technology. Modifications are only as necessary, if at all. The plan clearly outlines how modifications are used to close instructional gaps, rather than increase them.
Progressing	8-11	There is alignment between the gap analysis and the selected specially designed instruction. The supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology are supported by research that indicates potential growth in the general education curriculum. They are recorded with general details on when, how, and where they are to be implemented. The plan includes general supports that are needed to support educators in implementation. The design of the supplemental instruction is clearly in addition to the core general education instruction and will support learning and growth for a student aligned with the general education curriculum. The design of accommodations/assistive technology supports the removal of environmental and instructional barriers. The plan supports the student's use of accommodations/assistive technology to participate in instruction and socially. Modifications are used sparingly, if at all.
Emerging	4-7	There is loose alignment between the gap analysis and specially designed instruction. The supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology are logical in their use to support growth and learning. They are recorded with vague or unclear details on when, how, and where they are to be implemented. The plan includes vague description of supports that are needed to support educators in implementation. The design of the supplemental instruction is in addition to the core general education instruction. The design of accommodations/assistive technology provides some the removal of environmental and instructional barriers. The plan lists how the student can use the accommodations/assistive technology. Modifications, if listed, are throughout the plan.
Unacceptable	0-3	There is no alignment between the gap analysis and specially designed instruction. The supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology tend to feel more like a checklist or a set program of items provided for many students rather than individualized to needs. They are recorded with little or no details on when, how, and where they are to be implemented. The plan includes little or no description of supports that are needed to support educators in implementation. The design of the supplemental instruction replaces the core general education instruction or is not present in the plan. The design of accommodations/assistive technology is not connected to any barriers or is not present in the plan. Modifications are relied upon heavily throughout the plan and even replace the use of supplemental instruction and accommodations.

IEP Goals & Objectives

Indicator 1

IEP goals and objectives are: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time Specific.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
• IEP goals and objectives are not written in observable and measurable language. • IEP goals and objectives do not have defined mastery of learning that encompasses a scope of growth over the course of one year.	• IEP goals and objectives are written in observable and measurable language. • IEP goals and objectives use appropriate criteria of measurement and broad methods of assessment that measure the learning as defined in the IEP goals and objectives.	• IEP goals and objectives are written in observable and measurable language that defines what the student will learn and the conditions for the instruction. • IEP goals and objectives use appropriate criteria of measurement and methods of assessment that specifically measure the learning as defined in the IEP goals and objectives.	• IEP goals and objectives are written in observable and measurable language that explicitly defines what the student will learn and the conditions for the instruction. • IEP goals and objectives use specific and appropriate criteria of measurement and methods of student progress monitoring that specifically measure the learning as defined in the IEP goals and objectives.
☐ **Majority of the elements = 0**	☐ **Majority of the elements = 1**	☐ **Majority of the elements = 2**	☐ **Majority of the elements = 3**

Indicator 2

IEP goals and objectives detail specific conditions for learning, a statement of how the student will demonstrate the learning, and a performance measure that is relevant to this demonstration of learning.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
• IEP goals and objectives are not written with details as to where, when, how, how often, and to what degree the IEP goals and objectives will be implemented. • IEP goals and objectives do not provide details about the conditions under which the goal and objectives will be taught and implemented. • IEP goals and objectives do not provide details on how the student will perform or demonstrate the skills, concepts, or strategies. • IEP goals and objectives do not use specific and appropriate criteria of measurement or define methods of assessments that measure the learning as defined in the IEP goals and objectives.	• IEP goals and objectives are written with vague or missing details as to where, when, how, how often, and to what degree the IEP goals and objectives will be implemented. • IEP goals and objectives provide vague details about the conditions under which the goal and objectives will be taught and implemented. • IEP goals and objectives provide vague details on how the student will perform or demonstrate the skills, concepts, or strategies. • IEP goals and objectives have defined mastery of learning loosely based on present level of performance and benchmarks that encompasses an achievable scope of growth over the course of one year.	• IEP goals and objectives are written with general details as to where, when, how, how often, and to what degree the IEP goals and objectives will be implemented. • IEP goals and objectives provide general details about the conditions under which the goal and objectives will be taught and implemented. • IEP goals and objectives provide general details on how the student will perform or demonstrate the skills, concepts, or strategies. • IEP goals and objectives have defined mastery of learning based on present level of performance and specific benchmarks that encompasses a relevant and achievable scope of growth over the course of one year.	• IEP goals and objectives are written with explicit details as to where, when, how, how often, and to what degree the IEP goals and objectives will be implemented. • IEP goals and objectives provide explicit details about the conditions under which the goal and objectives will be taught and implemented. • IEP goals and objectives provide explicit details on how the student will perform or demonstrate the skills, concepts, or strategies. • IEP goals and objectives have clearly defined definition of mastery of learning based on baseline assessment and targeted, well-defined, specific benchmarks that encompasses a robust, relevant, and achievable scope of growth over the course of one year.
☐	☐	☐	☐
Majority of the elements = 0	**Majority of the elements = 1**	**Majority of the elements = 2**	**Majority of the elements = 3**

Indicator 3

IEP goals and objectives use specially designed instruction to directly support access to, participation in, and progress in the general education curriculum.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
• IEP goals and objectives do not use the age-appropriate grade-level general education curriculum.	• IEP goals and objectives are loosely aligned with the age-appropriate grade-level general education curriculum.	• IEP goals and objectives are aligned with the age-appropriate grade-level general education curriculum.	• IEP goals and objectives are driven by the age-appropriate grade-level general education curriculum.
• The IEP goals and objectives do not connect the specially designed instruction with the gap analysis.	• The IEP goals and objectives loosely connect the specially designed instruction with the gap analysis.	• The IEP goals and objectives connect the specially designed instruction with the gap analysis and connect with the barriers, missing skills, concepts, and strategies.	• The IEP goals and objectives directly connect the specially designed instruction with the gap analysis by isolating the barriers, missing skills, concepts, and strategies that need to be taught in order for the student to make progress in the general education curriculum.
• IEP goals and objectives do not capture any clear or specific supplemental instruction.	• The supplemental instruction is broadly described in the IEP goals and objectives.	• The supplemental instruction is described in the IEP goals and objectives.	• The supplemental instruction is explicitly described in the condition for learning and/or the student's demonstration of learning.
• IEP goals and objectives do not capture any clear or specific accommodations.	• Accommodations loosely connect with IEP goals and objectives.	• Accommodations are located in IEP goals and objectives.	• Accommodations are specifically embedded in IEP goals and objectives as conditions for learning and/or the student's demonstration of learning.
☐ *The next one is marked as **Not Applicable** if there are no modifications used*			
• IEP goals and objectives do not capture any clear or specific modifications.	• Modifications, if needed, are loosely described in the IEP goals and objectives.	• Modifications, if needed, are described in the IEP goals and objectives.	• Modifications, if needed, are explicitly described in the conditions for learning and/or the criteria for measurement of learning.
☐	☐	☐	☐
Majority of the elements = 0	**Majority of the elements = 1**	**Majority of the elements = 2**	**Majority of the elements = 3**

☐ **/9 Total Score for IEP Goals & Objectives**

Quality Level	Score	Interpretation
Promising Practice	8-9	The goals and objectives are written in specific, measurable, and observable language. There are clear and specific details as to the design and delivery of the instruction in terms of what, when, and how. There are clear, specific, and observable details of how the student will demonstrate his or her learning. There are clear measures to track growth from a baseline to a specific target. These measures use methods and tools that can track growth daily, weekly, or at least monthly using a progress monitoring graph. The goals and objectives are driven by the general education curriculum. Supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology, and modifications, if used, are embedded within goals and provide explicit details of when and how they are used.
Progressing	5-7	The goals and objectives are written in specific, measurable, and observable language. There are general details as to the design and delivery of the instruction in terms of what, when, and how. There are general details of how the student will demonstrate his or her learning. There are measures to track growth to a specific target. These measures use methods and tools that can track growth at least monthly. The goals and objectives are aligned with the general education curriculum. Supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology, and modifications, if used, are embedded within goals.
Emerging	2-4	The goals and objectives are written in measurable and observable language. There are vague details as to the design and delivery of the instruction in terms of what, when, and how. There are vague details on how the student will demonstrate his or her learning. There are measures that could track growth. These measures use methods and tools that can note growth at least quarterly. The goals and objectives are loosely aligned with the general education curriculum. Supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology, and modifications, if used, are connected to goals.
Unacceptable	0-1	There is one or more of the following concerns with the goals and objectives: they are not written in measurable and observable language; they are vague; and/or there are no real measures that could track growth. The goals and objectives are not aligned with the general education curriculum. Supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology, and modifications, if used, are not connected to goals.

Types of Support & Placement

Indicator 1

Special education service hours and site of service delivery are designed to assist the student in making progress in the general education curriculum.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
• The IEP does not provide evidence that the general education setting is considered. • The IEP goals and objectives are not appropriately aligned with the service delivery. • The IEP does not provide evidence that it examines the use of supports for the student in relation to the general education curriculum. • There is evidence of overreliance on non-certified staff or that special education staff are to provide instruction for the IEP.	• The IEP provides some evidence that the general education setting is considered. • The IEP goals and objectives are appropriately aligned with the service delivery. • The IEP provides some evidence that it will include supports for the student in relation to the general education curriculum. • There is evidence that certified educators are used to provide instruction for the general education standards and have shared responsibility in implementing the IEP.	• The IEP provides evidence that the general education setting is considered. • The IEP provides evidence that the IEP goals and objectives were used to make decisions about service delivery options. • The IEP provides general evidence that the focus for the IEP is to include supports for the student to be successful in the general education curriculum. • There is evidence that highly qualified certified educators are used to provide instruction for the general education standards and have shared responsibility in implementing the IEP.	• The IEP provides strong evidence that the general education setting is considered the first placement option. • The IEP provides strong evidence that the IEP goals and objectives drive the service delivery options. • The IEP provides strong evidence that the primary focus for the IEP is to provide supports for the student to achieve general education curriculum standards. • There is strong evidence that highly qualified content experts and certified educators are used to provide instruction for the general education standards and have active responsibility in implementing the IEP as part of that general education instruction.
☐	☐	☐	☐
Majority of the elements = 0	**Majority of the elements = 1**	**Majority of the elements = 2**	**Majority of the elements = 3**

Indicator 2

Supports and services are provided in a manner that focuses on authentic learning that occurs in the natural settings and under the natural conditions that are typical for any student of the same-age peer group.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
• The IEP provides evidence that the goals and objectives are written to meet the elements of a "special education program."	• The IEP provides evidence that the focus of services is to provide support to meet the student's IEP goals and objectives.	• The IEP provides evidence that the focus of services is to provide support in the student's general education setting and/or the natural settings or under natural conditions where the type of learning specified in the IEP typically occurs for nondisabled peers.	• The IEP provides strong evidence that the primary focus of services is to provide support in the student's general education setting and/or the natural settings or under natural conditions where the type of learning specified in the IEP typically occurs for nondisabled peers.
• The IEP provides evidence that the focus of implementation of the IEP goals and objectives uses contrived and tightly controlled elements of learning opportunities, materials, tasks, and supports for learning or relies heavily on a program script for learning.	• The IEP provides evidence that the implementation of the IEP goals and objectives have few elements of authentic learning opportunities, materials, tasks, and supports for learning.	• The IEP provides evidence that the instruction and implementation of the IEP goals and objectives use some elements of authentic learning opportunities, materials, tasks, and supports for learning.	• The IEP provides strong evidence that the instruction and implementation of the IEP goals and objectives actively use authentic learning opportunities, materials, tasks, and supports for learning.
☐	☐	☐	☐
Majority of the elements = 0	**Majority of the elements = 1**	**Majority of the elements = 2**	**Majority of the elements = 3**

Indicator 3

The IEP organizes all supports and services in a comprehensive, flexible, coherent manner that focuses on the student achieving general education standards.

Unacceptable	Emerging	Progressing	Promising Practice
• The IEP reflects that various types of supports and services are isolated and disjointed from one another. • IEP goals and objectives do not relate to one another. • There is evidence that the IEP provides services that support separate and isolated programs.	• The IEP reflects that various types of supports and services share common themes across IEP goals and objectives. • IEP goals and objectives relate to one another. • There is evidence that the IEP provides services that support the scope and sequence of the general education instruction, while supporting the student's unique needs.	• The IEP reflects that various types of supports and services share responsibility for implementing the same IEP goals and objectives. • IEP goals and objectives connect with one another to provide a comprehensive plan. • There is evidence that the IEP provides flexible services that mirrors the scope and sequence of the general education instruction, while providing effective responses to the student's unique needs.	• The IEP reflects that all of the determined supports and services share a sense of collective responsibility for implementing the IEP as one comprehensive plan. • IEP goals and objectives interconnect and are interdependent with one another to provide one comprehensive and coherent plan. • There is strong evidence that the IEP provides a flexible service plan that flows with the scope and sequence of the general education instruction, while providing real-time, effective responses to the student's unique needs as they could grow and change over the course of the year.
☐ **Majority of the elements= 0**	☐ **Majority of the elements = 1**	☐ **Majority of the elements = 2**	☐ **Majority of the elements = 3**

☐ **/9 Total Score for Supports & Services**

Quality Level	Scores	Interpretation
Promising Practice	8-9	The focus of the IEP is general education, even if more restrictive settings are needed. The services and supports are driven by the IEP goals. For each goal area, highly qualified certified staff are used to provide the instruction, with a strong presence of general education-certified content experts being actively involved in the implementation of the IEP. There is a sense of collective partnership among a team of educators. The tone of the IEP is the use of authentic learning occurring in the natural environments for that learning. The IEP reflects a comprehensive, flexible plan that is driven by the student's needs and promoting progress in the general education curriculum.
Progressing	5-7	General education is referenced throughout the IEP, even if more restrictive settings are needed. The services and supports are connected to the IEP goals. For each goal area, highly qualified certified staff are used to provide the instruction, which include a presence of general education certified content experts. There is evidence of a team approach to the implementation of the IEP. The IEP includes the use of authentic learning occurring in the natural environments for that learning. The IEP reflects a comprehensive plan that is driven by the student's needs.
Emerging	2-4	General education is loosely referred to in the IEP. The services and supports are aligned to the IEP goals. For each goal area, certified staff are used to provide the instruction, although there is overreliance on special education teachers and student support services professionals. The IEP uses a focus of special education programming and controlled tasks and settings for learning. The IEP reflects a plan that feels disjointed in the scope of the goals and services.
Unacceptable	0-1	The IEP is focused on segregated programming, services, and/or settings. The services and supports are not aligned to the IEP goals, and it appears that the services and special education programming are driving how the goals were written. There is overreliance on paraprofessionals, special education teachers, and student support services professionals to implement the IEP with very little if any mention of general education teachers. The IEP uses contrived tasks for learning. IEP goals and services appear isolated from one another and there is evidence they are not related or connected to one another.

☐ /42 Total Score

Quality Level	Scores	Interpretation
Promising Practice	37-42	The IEP is driven by the general education curriculum and provides only necessary specially designed instruction or services. There is a clear use of the continuum of supports and services that moves from general education to more restrictive special education. The gap analysis explicitly identifies the environmental and instructional strengths, barriers, and gaps. The flow of the IEP explicitly links the gap analysis to targeted supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology, and modifications. The IEP goals and objectives are written in language that allows for clear instruction. The assessments used throughout the IEP can be used to easily track student progress at least monthly from a specific baseline to a specific set of targets. The supports and services are designed to implement the IEP with fidelity and the intentions of closing gaps and addressing barriers. The IEP is written in very clear and precise language that allows for any educator or family member to fully understand what needs to occur on a daily basis without the need for any further clarification.
Progressing	22-36	The IEP is closely aligned with the general education curriculum. There is a continuum of supports and services that moves from general education to more restrictive special education. The gap analysis identifies the environmental and instructional gaps. The flow of the IEP links the gap analysis to supplemental instruction, accommodations/assistive technology, and modifications. The IEP goals and objectives are written in language that leads instruction. The assessments used throughout the IEP can be used to track student progress at least quarterly. The supports and services are designed to implement the IEP with fidelity. The IEP is written in language that is clear enough for an educator or family member to understand what needs to occur.
Emerging	8-21	The IEP is loosely connected with the general education curriculum. It is unclear if a continuum of supports and services is used, or the IEP seems to flow from special education to general education. The gap analysis is vague and provides only broad understanding of the gaps. The flow of the IEP is disjointed and choppy from gap analysis to goals to services. The IEP goals and objectives are vague and broad. The IEP is not always clear for educators or family members.
Unacceptable	0-7	The IEP has no or very little connection with the general education curriculum. The IEP seems to focus on special education programming and services and may over-support the student. The IEP appears isolated and unconnected between gap analysis, goals, and services. Goals and objectives seem to have been written for specific special education programs versus addressing unique needs. The determination of service seems to be set for implementation of programs versus individualized supports. The IEP is written in vague and unclear language that makes it difficult to understand what needs to occur to implement the IEP.

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