Connecticut State Department of Education

Part B State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)

State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report

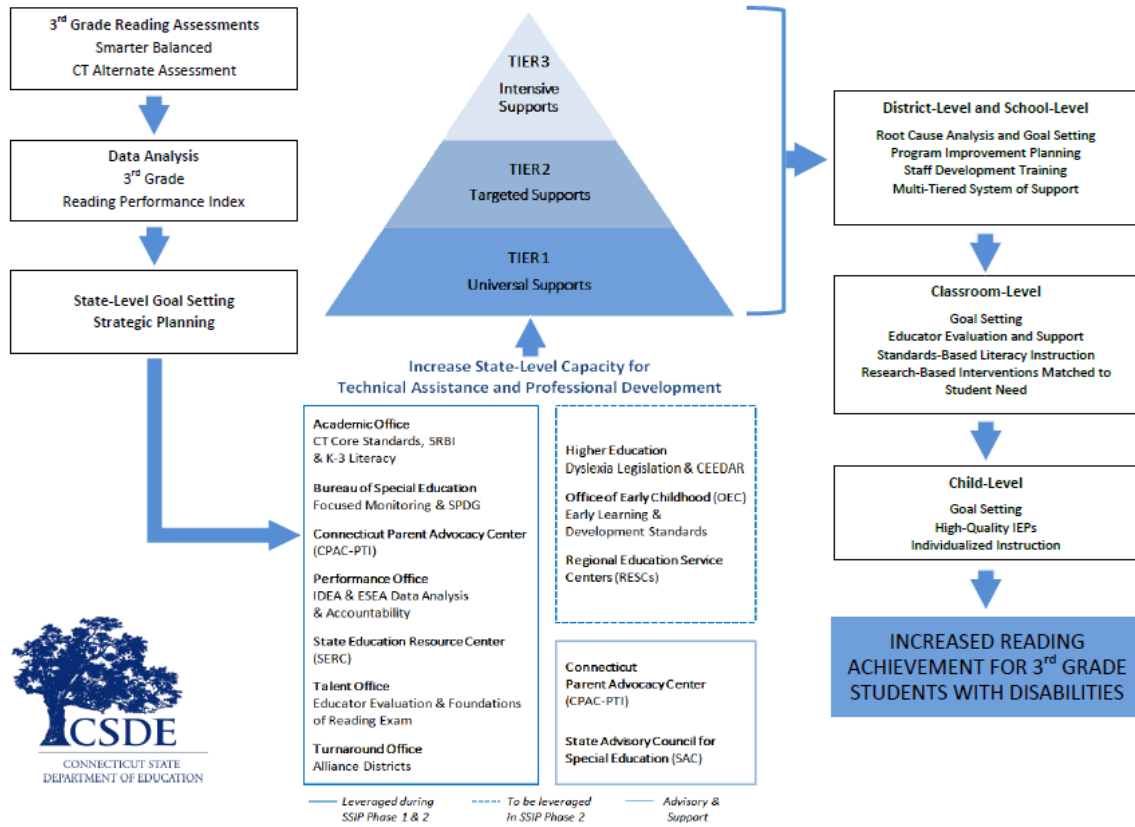### Indicator 17 – Phase III (Year 2)

April 2018

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CSDE
CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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INCREASED READING ACHIEVEMENT FOR 3rd GRADE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

<u>An Overview: Connecticut's Tiered Cohort Model</u>
Connecticut's SSIP Implementation Plan is based on a tiered cohort model in which each district in the state has been assigned to one of three cohorts (A, B and C). Districts in each cohort are further identified to receive different levels of support (Tier 1 – Universal, Tier 2 – Targeted, Tier 3 – Intensive). Because SSIP district activities (i.e., technical assistance, monitoring and professional learning) span more than one school year for each cohort, the following table is being provided to clarify the activities for each school year during Phase III.

SSIP Phase III Activities for each School Year (SY)			
2015-16 SY	2016-17 SY	2017-18 SY	2018-19 SY
Cohorts A, B and C – Tier 1 Universal Support (Pilot)	Cohorts A, B and C – Tier 1 Universal Support	Cohorts A, B and C – Tier 1 Universal Support	Cohorts A, B and C – Tier 1 Universal Support
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Improvement Strategies

In order to establish the necessary infrastructure and to adapt/develop materials for the Cohort A pilot activities, more attention was given to state-level activities during SSIP Phase 1, Phase 2 and the first year of Phase 3. While state-level activities continued over the past year, there has been a deliberate shift in focus to district-level activities since the April 2017 Phase III submission.

State-Level Activities

SSIP Leadership Team
The SSIP Leadership Team continued to meet to analyze data, plan professional learning opportunities and review input from stakeholders which informed the SSIP processes over the past year. Due to the nature of the work this past year, half of the SSIP Leadership Team meetings were replaced with collaborative meetings between CSDE and State Education Resource Center (SERC) staff.

Special Education Bureau Chief
In the spring of 2017, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) hired a new bureau chief to lead the Bureau of Special Education (BSE). The bureau chief assisted in planning professional learning activities associated with the SSIP and was instrumental in helping to facilitate collaboration with other bureaus in the agency.

Web-based Repository of SSIP Resources
The repository of resources (Tier 1 – Universal Supports) was activated this year. The Web page holds resource documents focusing on evidenced-based instructional practices and best practices for evaluating and instructing students with specific learning disabilities/dyslexia and can be found at: http://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Special-Education/State-Systemic-Improvement-Plan-SSIP.

District Literacy Evaluation Tool (DLET) Revision
Based on stakeholder input, the SSIP Leadership Team made revisions to the District Literacy Evaluation Tool (DLET), which is the self-assessment fidelity instrument used to help district personnel target, prioritize, and act on current early literacy efforts across their elementary schools (see Appendix). The results of the DLET reconciled responses by Tier 2 districts are also used to inform the selection of districts that receive Tier 3 support.

Increased Intra-agency Collaboration
Since the last submission, there has been an increase in the collaboration between the BSE and other offices in the agency. Two of the districts selected to receive Tier 3 SSIP support during the 2017-18 SY were previously identified as Alliance Districts and were already receiving support through the CSDE's Turnaround Office. Collaboration between the BSE and Turnaround Office staff is essential to ensuring a coordinated effort for district improvement planning strategies.

Data Analysis and Selection of Cohort C Tier 2
FFY 2016 Smarter Balanced (SB) assessment data were analyzed to select 12 districts to receive SSIP Tier 2 support. Data were analyzed using a two-part decision rule. First, districts in Cohort C were rank ordered from highest to lowest for the performance of third grade students in the statewide literacy assessment. Next, an ordering of the achievement gap between SWDs and their typical peers was overlaid on the rank ordering to identify districts with the lowest achievement for SWDs in combination with the largest gap between SWDs and students not receiving special education and related services.

Data Analysis and Selection of Cohort C Tier 3
The District Literacy Evaluation Tool (DLET) self-assessment results were reviewed to select the districts for which Tier 3 support is currently being provided. After each district received support to review the district team members' individual scores and come to consensus on a reconciled score for each of the indicators on the self-assessment instrument, the total scores were ordered. Districts with a mean of less than 70 percent total implementation were selected to receive Tier 3 supports (n=5).

SSIP Evaluation
The CSDE was informed in the fall of 2017 that the agency with which the State Education Resource Center (SERC) had contracted to act as an external evaluator for the SSIP was ceasing operation in December 2017. Considering the timing of this action, a determination was made that the 2018 SSIP Phase III report would be completed internally by BSE staff.

District-Level Activities and Evidence-Based Practices

This past year saw an increased focus on developing and providing professional learning activities to increase district staff's understanding and use of evidence-based practices (EBPs).

ReadConn
As reported in the 2017 SSIP Phase III report, in FFY 2016 the CSDE launched a new K-3 reading professional learning initiative known as ReadConn to support the implementation of evidence-based literacy instruction aligned to the Connecticut Core English/language arts Standards. Since the April 2017 Phase III submission the 78 school-based teams (roughly 390 educators) across 43 districts completed the inaugural year of the ReadConn professional learning series. The ReadConn initiative uses a combination of in-person meetings and online modules to address the following components of reading:

- Phonological Awareness and Language
- Phonics
- Advanced Word Recognition and Fluency
- Vocabulary and Comprehension

Topical Professional Learning Sessions
The SSIP Leadership Team collaborated with SERC staff to develop a series professional learning sessions designed to address the common needs revealed through an analysis of the Cohort B Tier 2 DLET results. These sessions promoted the use of evidence-based practices and were made available at no cost to the 12 Tier 2 districts. The sessions focused on:

- Differentiated Literacy Instruction
- Using Assessment Data to Target Instruction
- Using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Principles
- Assistive Technology and Accessible Educational Materials

Level One Dyslexia Specialist Certificate
The CSDE also collaborated with the Capitol Region Education Center (CREC) to provide a professional learning series for the 12 Cohort B Tier 2 districts. The four-day workshop provided participants an opportunity to learn about Structured Language Instruction and receive a Level One Dyslexia Specialist Certificate.

Assistive Technology and Accessible Educational Materials
This in-district professional learning opportunity was designed to assist schools in reviewing their infrastructure around assistive technology (AT) and accessible educational materials (AEM) in terms of philosophy, policies, structures and practices.

IEP Development
Consistent with the CSDE's Theory of Action, this professional learning activity focused on familiarizing Cohort B Tier 3 district general education and special education staff on the IEP Rubric tool and reviewing individualized education programs (IEPs) for students with an annual goal in the area of reading. Developed by SERC, the IEP Rubric tool is designed to measure the quality of IEP development for students with disabilities. The IEP Rubric defines 14 indicators needed for quality IEP development. The rubric is designed to be analyzed holistically as well as by individual indicator. CSDE consultants shared the IEP Rubric tool and discussed how it is used to support the SSIP work at the NCSI Part B Language and Literacy Learning Collaborative Meeting in November 2017.

Literacy Data Teams
Also consistent with the CSDE's Theory of Action, this professional learning activity was designed to increase classroom teachers' capacity in using common formative assessment (CFA) and providing standards-based literacy instruction to all students, including students with disabilities. This professional learning series was made available at no cost to the six Cohort B Tier 3 districts.

Technical Assistance for Cohort C Tier 2
Due to a 93.7 percent approval rating for the DLET reconciliation/consensus activity in the Cohort B stakeholder survey; this activity remained the same for this year. CSDE and SERC staff facilitated this session with teams from the 12 Tier 2 Cohort C districts. Following the in-district session, each of the districts receives its own summary document containing (1) the reconciled scores for the DLET indicators, (2) a list of areas of strength and areas for improvement based on the conversation during the session, (3) data considerations and (4) related resources.

Technical Assistance for Cohort C Tier 3
This session is designed to take a deeper look into the district's early literacy practices by examining information from the DLET summary and discussing possible opportunities and obstacles around specific focus area(s) for improvement. Time is also spent discussing how potential action steps can be integrated into existing district improvement efforts.

Overview of the Evaluation

The CSDE's SSIP Evaluation Plan is based on the following three evaluation questions:

Evaluation Question 1: 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?

> The SSIP has been the lever to improve agency practices. Since April 2017, the SSIP Leadership Team has used the Cohort B DLET results along with stakeholder input to develop targeted professional learning activities in order to support the implementation of evidence-based literacy practices in districts throughout the state. The SSIP work also continues to be incorporated into existing initiatives (e.g., Dyslexia Training, ReadConn). The increase in intra-agency collaboration at the state-level has supported coordinated efforts between the BSE and the Turnaround Office to support Alliance Districts that were identified to receive SSIP technical assistance and professional learning as part of Cohort C.

Evaluation Question 2: 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?

> As stated previously, much of the time over the past year was spent on developing and providing professional learning opportunities to enhance district-and school-level capacity for implementing and sustaining evidence-based practices to improve reading for students with disabilities. Training session evaluation data indicate that many participants reported that their practices improved or that their current practices were validated by the training content.

Evaluation Question 3: To what extent is the SSIP increasing the reading performance of third-grade students with disabilities statewide?

> Data analysis of the Smarter Balanced assessment data shows that the reading performance of third-grade students with disabilities has slightly increased over the FFY 2014 baseline. Further analysis shows that the gap in performance between SWDs and their typical peers has decreased each year for the past three years. Child-level outcome data taken from the Literacy Data Team training series (Cohort B – Tier 3) shows an increase in the number of students meeting or exceeding the grade-level standard that the district staff selected as a focus for the professional learning activity.

Key Changes to Implementation and Improvement Strategies

During the past year the SSIP Leadership Team reviewed stakeholder input, and, as a result, revised the DLET self-assessment instrument. A decision was also made to modify the Tier 3 technical assistance session to promote more integration between the SSIP work and current district improvement efforts. Originally, development and administration of an LEA PL needs assessment was planned. This activity was replaced by an item analysis of the Cohort B Tier 2 DLET results. One of the most prominent changes to SSIP implementation this year was completing the evaluation and Phase III Year 2 report in-house as opposed to using an external evaluator.

B. Progress in Implementing the SSIP

The SSIP Leadership Team, in collaboration with consultants from SERC, reviewed the feedback that was provided by Cohort B districts as well as the anecdotal notes taken by facilitators during the DLET reconciliation process for the purpose of revising the tool. Revision of the DLET was accomplished prior to the start of the 2017-2018 school year. In addition, that collective team analyzed the composite Cohort B DLET results to identify topic areas for which professional learning could be developed/provided. SERC consultants further developed the six-session series focusing on Literacy Data teams as a professional learning opportunity that was offered to Cohort B Tier 3 districts. Finally, the SSIP Leadership team worked collaboratively with the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), one of the state's regional educational service centers, to develop an additional professional learning series leading to a Level One Dyslexia Specialist Certificate.

Once a new Special Education Bureau Chief assumed leadership, a standard means of sharing accurate and timely communication across Department offices was established. Such communication provided a consistent voice regarding the SSIP work on the Department's administrative team. Further, an efficient system was put into place for the sharing of information with and gathering feedback from education professionals across the state who represent the wide range of Connecticut's demographics.

After an unanticipated delay in the original timeline for the activation of a new CSDE Web site, the completed migration to a new platform allowed the launch of the planned SSIP resource page. The Web site went live and SSIP Tier 1 resources were made available to the general public early in 2018.

The revised DLET was presented to district personnel in a breakout session at the Bureau's annual Back to School event in September 2017. The purpose of the presentation was to familiarize districts with the tool and to showcase its potential as a self-assessment instrument. Once the SSIP's resource Webpage was established, the DLET was posted as one of the Tier 1 universal supports for all school districts.

While the Alliance District application form has yet to be revised to include a mandatory K-3 reading goal, the TA teams working with SSIP districts have been expanded to include staff from the Department's Turnaround Office who have been assigned to work with the specific districts. Furthermore, regular meetings continue to take place between the Bureau of Special Education and the Turnaround Office, in the interest of aligning improvement efforts.

The notification of Cohort C Tier 2 districts included an explanation of the process through which such districts were identified. In addition, demographic and accountability data were shared with districts for the purpose of review/analysis and to further inform the DLET reconciliation process. All Cohort C Tier 2 districts were provided with a summary document to reflect the outcome of that process, including the identification of strengths, potential areas of focus as well as a list of resources targeted to the district's identified needs.

Tier 1 Support

While originally planned to begin in the fall of 2017, the commencement of ReadConn (Year 2) was delayed due to issues with the State budget. Despite great efforts, the State Legislature and Governor were not able to agree on a budget until several months after the July 1, 2017 deadline. Once the budget was signed in November 2017, CSDE staff reviewed the ReadConn initiative and its intersection with the SSIP work. Time was also needed to work with our external partners contracted to facilitate ReadConn activities in order to develop a plan for scheduling activities with the districts in the second ReadConn cohort. Ultimately, it was decided that the second year of ReadConn would begin in the spring 2018 and be completed in the fall of 2018.

Tier 2 Support

The following professional learning sessions designed to address the common needs revealed through an analysis of the Cohort B Tier 2 DLET results were made available at no cost to the 12 Tier 2 districts:

Using Assessment Data to Target Instruction
This session reviewed how diagnostic assessments can be used to clarify and identify the specific point of instruction and/or intervention (DLET Indicator A3). Participants analyzed authentic student data to more clearly identify focus areas for improvement and present levels of performance for learners with special needs.

Differentiated Literacy Instruction
This session focused on how differentiated instruction, and in particular, culturally relevant pedagogy, can be used to address a range of learning needs in the classroom (DLET Indicators B3 & F4). There was a facilitated discussion on ways to incorporate aspects of culturally relevant pedagogy into differentiated lesson plans in order to scaffold literacy instruction and meet the individual needs of learners with special needs.

Using UDL Principles to Increase Access to Learning
This session addressed the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and how assistive technology (AT) and accessible education materials (AEM) can be used to enhance instructional planning (DLET Indicators D6 & D7). Participants practiced using universal design for learning principles to select effective AT/AEM to support reading instruction for learners with special needs.

Assistive Technology and Accessible Educational Materials
An in-district professional learning opportunity that assisted schools in reviewing their infrastructure around assistive technology (AT) and accessible educational materials (AEM) in terms of philosophy, policies, structures and practices (DLET Indicator D7). The sessions addressed: the development of an AT Team, the establishment of an AT cycle (consideration-assessment-documentation-implementation and evaluation), the evaluation of existing inventory, as well as the consideration of best practices for the documentation of AT in the IEP. Further, participants practiced the decision-making process around the provision of AEM, considered how to provide equitable access to

educational materials through the use of AEM, and developed an action plan to implement AEM and build a sustainable system to ensure the delivery of accessible materials in a timely manner and on a regular basis.

Additionally, a session focusing on specific family engagement practices that can be used to foster reading achievement was offered. Using the Dual-Capacity Framework as a foundation, participants learned a variety of ways district staff are able to engage parents to support their child's learning and reading development at home.

The CSDE also collaborated with the Capitol Region Education Center (CREC) to provide a professional learning series for Cohort B Tier 2 districts. The four-day workshop provided participants an opportunity to learn about Structured Language Instruction and receive a Level One Dyslexia Specialist Certificate.

> Structured Language Series: Level One Dyslexia Specialist Certificate Four-Day Workshop
> Participants learn systematic, structured methods for teaching decoding, encoding, and oral and written expression to students with learning disorders and specific language disabilities. Participants will have the opportunity to apply new skills in practice simulations and receive implementation coaching by experts. Participants will receive the books "Speech to Print: Language Essentials for Teachers" by Louisa Moats P.D. and Multisensory Teaching of Basic Language Skills" by Beverly J. Wolf M.Ed. and Judith Birsh Ed.D. Participants define and model strategies to teach reading and spelling to students who have specific learning disabilities in reading; and identify skills needed to develop basic proficiency in reading and spelling.

Tier 3 Support

In addition to having the option of accessing the Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports, the six Cohort B districts identified to receive Tier 3 support were offered in-district training on using common formative assessment (CFA) to plan instruction and assess student learning.

> Literacy Data Teams
> In this professional learning activity, grade-level data teams (K-3) met six times during 2017-18 to examine student data and student work in order to identify evidence-based instructional strategies targeted to student need. In an effort to improve student achievement, the session objectives focused on increasing district staff knowledge on (1) assessing student strengths and challenges, (2) selecting and implement instructional strategies, and (3) determining the effectiveness of instructional strategies.

Stakeholder Involvement in SSIP Implementation

> BSE Back to School Meeting
> At this annual event, attended by approximately 375 LEA Directors, district staff members, representatives of Approved Private Special Education Programs parents and other interested parties, participants were provided with a written update regarding Phase

III of the SSIP. Additionally, a breakout session was presented to provide district personnel with the opportunity to review the components of the DLET and to learn how to use the tool as a means of supporting school and district-level literacy efforts.

SSIP Web page
The annual SSIP reports have been posted on the CSDE's SSIP Web page. Stakeholders and interested parties have access to the reports for the first three phases of the SSIP work. SSIP implementation information on data analysis, the State-identified Measureable Result (SiMR) infrastructure development, tiered district support activities and the on-going stakeholder involvement are included in these reports.

State Advisory Council on Special Education
Since the April 2017 report, Connecticut's State Advisory Council (SAC) on Special Education has undergone a reorganization resulting in some new membership. As part of the orientation/training process, information on the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) indicators was reviewed with all of the council members. Included in the information was a description of SPP/APR Indicator 17 (SSIP).

C. Data on Implementation and Outcomes

The State used its SSIP Evaluation Plan to monitor and measure outputs to assess the effectiveness of implementation activities. Consistent with the State's Theory of Action, the evaluation plan was designed to assess progress at the state-level, district- and school-level and student-level.

Evaluation Question 1: 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?

Rather than continuing with the development of previously planned professional learning needs assessment survey, SSIP Leadership Team members, in collaboration with SERC staff, analyzed the data that resulted from the DLET reconciliation activity conducted with the twelve Cohort B Tier 2 districts during the 2016-2017 school year. These data served the intended purpose of the needs assessment and were used to identify topics for follow-up professional learning offerings for Cohort B Tier 2 and Tier 3 districts. A mean implementation level score was calculated from the data generated by all twelve districts and among the indicators with the lowest implementation level scores (on a scale of 0 – 2) were:

Indicator	Implementation level
A3: 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.	1.25
B3: Literacy instruction is consistently differentiated to support individual student needs.	1.25

Indicator	Implementation level
D6. Instructional planning for students with disabilities incorporates universal design for learning (UDL) principles.	1.0
D7. Assistive technology and accessible educational materials area appropriately selected and effectively used to support reading instruction for students with disabilities.	1.25

Based on these informative data, the SSIP Leadership Team collaborated with SERC staff to develop a series professional learning sessions that promoted the use of evidence-based practices in the following areas:

- Differentiated Literacy Instruction
- Using Assessment Data to Target Instruction
- Using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Principles
- Assistive Technology and Accessible Educational Materials

❖ **OUTPUTS ACHIEVED:**

- **Results of DLET item analysis (Revised from: Results of LEA PL needs assessment)**
- **Revised and new onsite PL events**

As indicated in the Theory of Action, one strategy to increase state-level capacity for technical assistance and professional development was to coordinate strategic planning between the Bureau of Special Education and the Turnaround Office. The increased collaboration at the state-level between the BSE and the Turnaround Office has been leveraged to support Alliance Districts that were identified to receive SSIP technical assistance and professional learning as part of Cohort C. This year, staff from the Turnaround Office have joined the BSE's SSIP Technical Assistance team for in-district visits. This level of collaboration did not occur last year and is viewed as an important step in progress for effective implementation.

❖ **OUTPUT ACHIEVED: Intra-agency communication and guidance**

Evaluation Question 2: 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?

As a result of the focus this year to provide multiple professional learning opportunities for improving literacy instruction, training session evaluation data were collected and used to assess the efficacy of the session curriculum against its intended purpose as well as participants' understanding of evidence-based practices.

Since this was the first year these professional learning sessions were offered, a comparison to previous sessions is not possible; however, as indicated in the below tables, the majority of participants either Agree or Strongly Agree that intended outcomes were met and that their knowledge of specific evidence-based practices had expanded.

<u>Summary of *Differentiated Literacy Instruction* Evaluations</u>

Participants: 13 participants including: General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Reading Consultants, Reading Interventionists, and Instructional Specialists; Representing: 1 Tier 3 and 4 Tier 2 Districts.

Survey Item	Percent Agree	Percent Strongly Agree
1. Our time today was productive.	70	30
2. Outcomes for the session were met	60	30
3. The SERC Consultant presented material and offered suggestions that were helpful to my teaching of literacy.	50	40
4. My knowledge about differentiated literacy instruction to support individual students' learning needs has deepened today.	50	30
5. My knowledge of culturally relevant pedagogy and how to incorporate it into literacy instruction has deepened today	70	30
6. I feel prepared to implement what I learned today in my classroom or building.	60	30

<u>Summary of *Using Assessment Data to Target Instruction* Evaluations</u>

Participants: 28 participants including: Assistant Superintendent, Special Education Directors, General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Reading Consultants, Reading Interventionists, Social Worker, and Instructional Specialists; Representing: 2 Tier 3 and 5 Tier 2 Districts.

Survey Item	Percent Agree	Percent Strongly Agree
1. Our time today was productive.	4	96
2. Outcomes for the session were met	25	75
3. The SERC Consultant was resourceful.	21	79
4. I understand how diagnostic assessments can be used to identify student strengths and needs and clarify next steps for instruction.	21	79
5. I can analyze student data to more clearly identify present level of performance and focus area for improvement for students with disabilities.	43	57

Survey Item	Percent Agree	Percent Strongly Agree
6. I feel prepared to implement what I learned today in my classroom or building.	37	63

Summary of
Using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Principles to Increase Learning Evaluations

Participants: 8 participants including: Special Education Director, General Education Teachers, Special Education Teachers, Literacy Coach;
Representing: 2 Tier 3 and 1 Tier 2 Districts.

Survey Item	Percent Agree	Percent Strongly Agree
1. As a result of today's session, I have a better understanding of the principles of universal design for learning (UDL).	20	80
2. As a result of today's session, I have a better understanding of how assistive technology (AT) and accessible educational materials (AEM) can be used to support instructional planning.	60	40
3. As a result of today's session, I have a better understanding of ways to apply UDL, AT, and AEM to instructional planning in the classroom.	20	80

Summary of *Structured Literacy* Evaluations
Participants: 15 special educators   Representing: 3 Tier 3 and 1 Tier 2 Districts

Evaluation Question	Average Participant Rating 1=Disagree through 4=Agree
1. Session goals were clearly communicated and aligned to workshop goals and/or initiatives	3.9
2. Session information and/or learning will increase my effectiveness in working with my students	3.97
3. Sessions provided resources that will allow me to effectively implement the information and/or learning	3.97
4. Session information and/or learning was supported by data, work samples, lesson examples or other artifacts	3.97
5. The presentation included interactive opportunities and strategies to meet the needs of a variety of learners	3.9

In addition to rating the above statements, participants had an opportunity to provide comments. This qualitative feedback included the following:

- *I will re-evaluate what I teach to reflect targeted instruction with research-based strategies.*
- *I am more informed on research-based reading instruction and will be able to immediately apply strategies with my students.*
- *(The session) helped me to reflect on what I do with my students and to integrate more multisensory explicit systematic teaching.*
- *(The session) reminded me about the key components of a structured literacy lesson which will impact my lesson plans for students with special needs.*

Summary of *Data Literacy Team* Evaluations
Participants: 31 general and special educators   Representing: 3 Tier 3 Districts

Participant feedback:

Most valuable aspects of Data Team Process…
- Time to analyze student work collaboratively
- Identifying patterns across grade level as focus areas for improvement
- Collectively sharing instructional strategies and determining next steps

Impact on practice and student achievement…
- Use of data to target individual and collective student needs
- Informed differentiation/strategy groups with greater intentionality
- Growth for most students, including students with IEPs, evidencing what students benefit from for future success

Format enhanced/hindered learning in the following ways…
- Time to collaboratively learn, analyze data, strategize, and instruct accordingly was beneficial
- Need to find greater balance in time between sessions (some spoke to too much time, others spoke to too little)

❖ **OUTPUT ACHIEVED: Data collected from PL events (reach/scope, attendance, satisfaction)**

Evaluation Question 3: To what extent is the SSIP increasing the reading performance of third-grade students with disabilities statewide?

Data analysis of the Smarter Balanced assessment data shows that the reading performance of third-grade students with disabilities has slightly increased over the FFY 2014 baseline. Further analysis shows that the gap in performance between SWDs and their typical peers has decreased each year for the past three years. Child-level outcome data taken from the Literacy Data Team

training series (Cohort B – Tier 3) shows an increase in the number of students meeting or exceeding the grade-level standard that the district staff selected as a focus for the professional learning activity (see Section E).

Universal screening data were gathered from five of the Cohort B Tier 3 districts for the purpose of setting baseline. As each district uses a measure selected off the CSDE's approved list of universal screening tools, assessments may vary from district to district. In some instances, the reporting schedule(s) for districts vary as well.   Districts were asked to provide data relative to the number of special education students, in grades one, two and three who did or did not meet benchmark. The 2016-2017 results were as follows:

District	Assessment	Grade	Fall # met	Fall # not met	Winter # met	Winter # not met	Spring # met	Spring # not met
1.	NWEA MAP*	1	1	5	0	5	2	4
		2	1	3	1	3	1	3
		3	2	5	3	4	3	4
2.	NWEA MAP	1	4	33	2	34	4	30
		2	3	27	2	29	5	26
		3	26	9	13	24	25	14
3.	NWEA MAP	1			13	23	21	14
		2			14	25	15	24
		3			15	30	20	25
4.	NWEA MAP	1	3	8	4	7	2	9
		2	7	21	3	25	4	24
		3	4	21	10	15	10	15
5.	NWEA MAP	1	6	29	5	30	6	27
		2	6	39	5	39	4	40
		3	2	67	9	66	11	62

*NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)

At the conclusion of the 2017-2018 schoolyear, similar baseline data will be collected from the Cohort C Tier 3 districts. Districts will be required to continue to submit such data for the remaining SSIP cycles.

❖ **OUTPUT ACHIEVED: Progress monitoring data**

Stakeholder Involvement in the Evaluation of the SSIP
Stakeholders from Cohort B Tier 2 and Tier 3 districts were asked to provide feedback to the SSIP Leadership Team to inform decision-making regarding future SSIP activities. Surveys were distributed each district team member after each technical assistance/professional learning session and results were reviewed and discussed at SSIP Leadership Meetings. The respondents represented a cross-section of district staff serving in the following positions:

- Assistant Superintendents
- District Curriculum/Literacy Administrators
- Directors of Special Education/Pupil Personnel Services
- Elementary School Principals
- General Education Teachers
- Special Education Teachers
- Literacy Coaches
- Reading Teachers/Interventionists
- Speech and Language Pathologists

Cohort B Stakeholders (Tier 3 Districts – Spring 2017)
The CSDE sent an evaluation to the Cohort B Tier 3 districts (n=6) seeking input from these stakeholders on the technical assistance and professional learning sessions provided to the districts.

Technical Assistance Activity
This technical assistance activity focused on assisting district staff in identifying priority areas in regard to developing district infrastructure to support improved reading outcomes for students with disabilities. Each of the stakeholders was asked to indicate their level of agreement (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree) with six statements. The responses from participants to select Agree or Strongly Agree are provided in the following table:

Survey Item	Percent Agree	Percent Strongly Agree
1. The DLET summary review provided useful information regarding our district's needs with respect to early literacy practices.	33.3	61.9
2. The SSIP Early Literacy Action Plan will be a beneficial tool to guide the district's early literacy improvement efforts over time.	42.9	57.1
3. The session reflected careful planning and organization.	38.1	57.1

Survey Item	Percent Agree	Percent Strongly Agree
4. The CSDE/SERC team was knowledgeable about the content presented.	33.3	66.7
5. The CSDE/SERC team was receptive to our input and opinions.	23.8	76.2
6. The next steps in the SSIP process were well articulated to our district team.	38.1	52.4

❖ OUTPUT ACHIEVED: Data collected from TA

Professional Learning Activity

This professional learning activity focused on familiarizing district general education and special education staff on the IEP Rubric tool and reviewing student individualized education programs (IEPs) for students with an annual goal in the area of reading. For this activity, each of the stakeholders was asked to indicate their level of agreement (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree). The responses from participants to select Agree or Strongly Agree are provided in the below table:

Survey Item	Percent Agree	Percent Strongly Agree
1. The IEP analysis activity was helpful and informative.	41.5	53.7
2. The IEP rubric will be a beneficial tool to inform the district's IEP development efforts over time.	41.5	53.7
3. The session reflected careful planning and organization.	41.5	46.3
4. The CSDE/SERC team was knowledgeable about the content presented.	35.0	57.5
5. The CSDE/SERC team was receptive to our input and opinions.	34.1	58.5
6. The next steps in the SSIP process were well articulated to our district team.	39.0	43.9

Stakeholders from Cohort B Tier 3 Districts were also able to provide feedback on the following open-ended response items:

1. What was the most beneficial aspect of the Tier 3 SSIP session(s)?
2. What, if any, direct actions will you take as a result of these session(s)?
3. Please share your suggestions for improving these session(s) for other district teams.
4. Please share your suggestions for additional professional learning opportunities for your district team during the 2017-18 school year.

Comments provided additional context for the ratings. In almost all cases, the stakeholder comments were positive. Some representative examples are provided in the following table:

What was the most beneficial aspect of the Tier 3 SSIP session(s)?	Please share your suggestions for improving these session(s) for other district teams.
▪ *The rubric was very informative in coming to understand what indicators need to be present to write a quality IEP.*	▪ *All those that write IEP goals and objectives should be invited to the session.*
▪ *Going over the IEP with the rubric. I so wish every general ed teacher had the opportunity to go over the IEP in such detail.*	▪ *The IEP Rubric training could conceivably be a two day training. I feel more time to compare the rubric to how it is scored would have been valuable.*
▪ *Developing the action plans was most beneficial.*	▪ *The action planning piece was most beneficial and more time should have been devoted to it.*
▪ *It was beneficial to outline the action plan for the district. The conversation around that plan was meaningful.*	▪ *I thought they were intentionally designed and purposefully delivered. I wouldn't change anything.*
What, if any, direct actions will you take as a result of these session(s)?	Please share your suggestions for additional professional learning opportunities for your district team during the 2017-18 school year.
▪ *Have more staff trained in the IEP rubric.*	▪ *I would like more training on this very topic. More time to score sample IEPs and to have time to work on one section (for our own student) and then bring it in and have a peer review.*
▪ *I will work with my special education co-teacher to develop goals for the students that are specific.*	▪ *More training for all staff on Structured Literacy Instruction*
▪ *We will strengthen our core reading instruction, our screening process, and better target interventions, as well as strengthen our IEPs.*	▪ *I think our district team would benefit from professional learning opportunities around early literacy development, particularly ways to support teachers in identifying and addressing difficulties in phonological awareness and phonics.*
▪ *I have already shard information I learned with staff at my school.*	▪ *Efficient data review teams with a specific purpose.*

❖ **OUTPUT ACHIEVED: Data collected from PL**

A review of the outputs achieved over the past year indicate that the planned implementation of SSIP activities is on track and producing the desired results (e.g., increasing district staff capacity in the use of evidence-based practices).

D. Data Quality Issues

As was indicated in the state's 2017 submission, the identification of an external evaluator occurred well into Phase III of the SSIP cycle. While the relationship between that evaluator and the CSDE was a longstanding one, much time was devoted to providing that evaluator with a context for the work and reviewing the history of the state's SSIP development through that point in time, while still collaborating to build an evaluation plan and prepare the 2017 submission. At the time of last year's submission, a more detailed process for data collection was identified as a goal.

In the fall of 2017, the CSDE was informed of intent of its external evaluator to cease operation, effective at the end of that calendar year. From the time of that notification through the time that the office closed, the focus for both the evaluator and the CSDE was the transfer of information, documentation, and data to both the CSDE and SERC. The SSIP Leadership Team, in consultation with the Bureau Chief for Special Education, deliberated the feasibility of securing and orienting a new evaluator to conduct evaluation activities and prepare a report by the April 2nd deadline. It was determined that BSE consultants would, for this year, prepare the State's submission.

While a sufficient amount of data has been collected and analyzed to adequately evaluate the progress of SSIP implementation, reduced capacity within the BSE combined with the loss of the external evaluator has made it a challenge to analyze the SSIP-related data to the preferred level of review. The fact that the task has fallen to two individuals is also significant as it relates to the Bureau's and the Department's longstanding challenges with regard to capacity. At this time last year, the Bureau's SSIP efforts were being supported by a third consultant who decided to pursue other employment at the end of last school year. In fact, since this time last year, five individuals have left the BSE to pursue either other employment or retirement.

It is the SSIP Leadership Team's intention to secure the services of a new external evaluator over the course of the next few months. It is the Team's goal to identify an evaluator who also is familiar with and has a history with the agency in the hopes of avoiding the need to conduct a lengthy orientation. Additionally, the Team will be strongly considering that evaluator's ability to review prior submissions and the evaluation plans currently in existence as well as to propose suggestions, revisions, or improvements to the process, plan and format.

E. Progress Toward Achieving 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-graders with disabilities. The progress findings have been prepared 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 schools implementing and scaling-up evidence-based practices to improve reading for students with disabilities?

As indicated previously, SSIP efforts are directed by the SSIP Leadership Team (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 was particularly challenged this year, to build the state's capacity to support districts and schools in implementing evidence-based practices, in light of the state's financial

situation, having operated without a budget from July 1 through November 2017. The lack of available resources to devote to improvement activities resulted in the delay of the planning and provision of at least some of the state's anticipated activities.

The hiring of a Chief for the Bureau of Special Education, with responsibilities devoted solely to the operation of the Bureau, has provided a closer level of support for the SSIP work. And while the Bureau continues to exist within the Academic Office, allowing for the closer collaboration of those two entities, those two offices are no longer being overseen collectively by one individual. The presence of the Bureau Chief has allowed for more timely communication and collaboration with the Leadership Team and the lead Consultants and has also, in many instances, streamlined the process of making decisions and implementing plans. In addition, the devoted focus of the Bureau Chief has, to some degree, made it possible to compensate for the financial challenges referenced earlier, as he has been able to access IDEA funds to help support the State's SSIP efforts.

The CSDE has had a longstanding association with SERC, but that relationship has expanded in light of the work related to SSIP. SERC increased its level of support this year by providing a fourth consultant to participate in the Tier 2 and Tier 3 district technical assistance efforts and to assist in the development and provision of professional learning sessions. The BSE lead consultants and their SERC counterparts have met monthly for the purpose of both planning and evaluating our collective work. Additionally, SERC has taken responsibility for managing and warehousing many of the materials that were transferred from the prior external evaluator.

The CSDE also, this year, secured the services of one of its regional educational service centers (RESCs) to support the SSIPs professional leaning. The Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), in collaboration with the Bureau's work in specific learning disability (SLD)/dyslexia provided a four-day Level One Dyslexia Specialist Certificate training to Cohort B Tier 2 and Tier 3 districts.

It was anticipated that the ongoing collaboration between the BSE and the Academic Office through their sponsorship of ReadConn would continue to support the State's efforts to align and integrate special education and general education improvement efforts. The delay in providing support through ReadConn (Year 2) affected the timeline for these collaborative efforts. While it appears that the technical assistance sessions for Tier 2 and Tier 3 prompt districts to consider greater integration between general education and special education, more work needs to be done at the state-level to promote this important work. The SSIP Leadership Team thinks that ReadConn still has the potential to be the catalyst for increased integration between general education and special education in an effort to improve literacy achievement for students with disabilities. Preliminary discussions have already occurred regarding (1) changing district team participant requirements to prompt greater special education presence, and (2) the potential to revise training content to include information deliberately focused on special considerations for students with disabilities including students with specific learning disabilities (SLD)/dyslexia.

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?

Through its SSIP work to date, the BSE has had the opportunity to work with twenty-four of the state's school districts in the administration and reconciliation of results related to the District Literacy Evaluation Tool (DLET). Additionally, that tool has been made available to districts for use as its own self-assessment measure. Through the technical assistance activities associated with that tool, districts have been able to identify their own levels of implementation relative to supporting the literacy needs of students with disabilities as they relate to: Assessment, Core Literacy Instruction, Scientific Research-Based Family Interventions, Students with Disabilities, Professional Learning, Systems, and Family Engagement. The process of responding to the self-assessment and reviewing individual results for the purpose of coming to district consensus has brought together district staff members with diverse backgrounds and responsibilities. Feedback provided after those sessions suggests that such groups of individuals don't typically gather for such a purpose, resulting in discussions that district personnel find universally beneficial.

The summary of the DLET reconciliation process provides districts with the opportunity to prioritize improvement planning activities to address the improvement of the reading performance of students with disabilities. Districts have, as a result of that process, developed related action plans and/or have embedded improvement activities within existing district- or school-level improvement plans.

Cohort B Tier 3 districts were asked to provide an update on the implementation of their SSIP Action Plans. As of March 29th, the four districts that had responded to the request reported their progress on improvement planning efforts as follows:

District 1

Goal #1: Establishes a clear path (process) for using Assessment Data

> The objectives under this goal are complete and on-going. The assessment and data review system was revised and documented prior to the end of the 2016-17 school year and reviewed with the teachers during August professional development. In addition, grade level data sheets were created on Google Drive for the collection of universal screen, reading, and math data. The SRBI process was updated and the SRBI team now works as both an early intervention team and a school-wide data team that reviews data after each universal screen. Grade levels use two START meetings per month to meet with the reading consultant to use the data team process to analyze assessment data (which is disaggregated by teacher and students with/without IEPs) and plan standards-based instruction.

Goal #2: Enhances its focus on Core (Tier 1) Instruction

> A consultant from LitLife is continuing to provide professional development for writer's workshop; units of study 80% complete. The focus will shift to reader's workshop during the 2018-19 school year. During START data meetings, discussion of standards-based instruction includes ways to differentiate for students. The reading consultant shares evidence-based practices related to the focus of instruction.

Goal #1: District staff will develop and align data teams at the grade, building and district levels to effectively communicate and routinely monitor the progress of all learners.

As of March 2018, we have identified data team membership at each school and grade level. We have reviewed the data team resources and established building level data team structures. Not only have our teachers K-3 been a part of at least three cycles of data team work with SERC consultants, there has also been training K-12 and each building has done two rounds of data teams during their Thursday after school meetings one time per month. There will be time for at least two more rounds prior to the end of the year this year. From there, we will establish needs based on feedback and observation for each school as well as districtwide needs in order to build our professional learning plan for the 2018-2019 school year.

Goal #2: District staff will develop and align a system of formative and summative assessments reflective of the five components of literacy to be used to inform instructional decision making (K-3).

As a district, we inventoried our existing diagnostic assessments. We analyzed the alignment between existing assessments and the five areas of reading resulting in a gap in phonics assessment. We will be piloting in school year 2018-19 two different phonics programs and evaluate which will work best for our district. After the pilot, we will make a determination of what should go to the BOE for approval for purchase in 2019-2020. All teachers will be a part of the pilot, if not directly, through the process. Next year we will be also be implementing the additional Columbia assessments in K and 1st grade. This will complete the screeners we needed where gaps were determined. We will assess staff implementation next year throughout the implementation process and will provide training at the beginning of the year to ensure readiness to implement and consistent, normed implementation. This year, we had developed an assessment calendar, which included administration, collection and review of data. We will complete that process again at the end of this year for next, including the new Columbia assessments that are added as a result of the gaps determined through the assessment audit. A data profile for literacy was created this year and that will be updated as well to align with the new data that will be collected due to changes in assessment(s).

District 3

Goal #1: Create district level leadership team whose purpose is to inform and support school based data teams which allows for varied levels of data analysis and contingent supports.

This goal is on hold until significant revisions can be made to the district's current data warehouse/portal, or a substitute is found. The process was begun to establish a district-level data team, however, when the team attempted to review any district or school level data it was determined that our current data portal was unable to provide timely and user-friendly

reports. Without this information it was determined that the team would postpone their activities until a solution was found. The assistant superintendent and a small team of administrators has been working with the current data portal company on revisions and has been reviewing other options. It is anticipated that a final decision on whether or not to continue with our current company will be made by the end of June 2018.

Goal #2: Refine and systemically implement an SRBI process.

Significant work has been on this goal and significant revisions to our current model are well under way. Under the guidance of the assistant superintendent a small group of central office administrators began a review of current SRBI practices at the elementary level in the fall of 2017. This group identified that there were many positive aspects of the district's process but that there were some inconsistent practices as well. The group then reviewed SRBI documentation from other districts as well as conducted a site visit to a neighboring district which is in the middle of a 5-year SRBI revision.   At this time this central office team has a rough draft of a SRBI manual concentrating on three areas: instruction related to interventions for specific skill areas in reading, mathematics, and behaviors; review of assessments and progress monitoring tools to ensure alignment to identified skills; and decision making protocols to ensure SRBI teams are aligned across the district and have the capacity to address individual student' needs. This spring the revised manual and protocols/processes will be piloted in one elementary building to provide feedback and refine practices. Next steps include alignment to the work of the data portal committee (see below), summer revisions to the manual, moving the manual online for easy access and revision, and a roll out to more elementary buildings in the fall of 2018.   Long range steps include roll out to all elementary buildings by the end of the 2018-19 school year, and piloting in one middle school in either the spring or fall of 2019.

A committee of teachers and administrators has had more success working with our data warehouse/portal company on revision one portion of the portal related to the SRBI process. Over the past 10 months this group has made significant revisions to the portal interface for data entry, student achievement reports at the teacher level, and SRBI intervention tracking. Prior to the work of this committee, most teachers and building administrators found the portal to be user-"unfriendly" and subsequently did not use the portal, instead preferring to use Word or Excel documents. This lack of a unified portal led to inconsistent practices across the district. The work of this committee complements the work of the district on the creation of universal SRBI protocols and will ultimately lead to consistent practices when fully implemented in the fall of 2018.

District 4

Goal #1: Staff working with students with reading disabilities will participate in ongoing literacy professional development consistent with reading intervention best practice. Intervention delivered to students will be based upon the Tiered model.

Building specific teams have been developed. District-wide team is still being developed. Literacy data and SRBI data are tracked at the individual building level at this point in time.

Pupil Services Supervisor was not supported/funded by the town budget. Reading Intervention effort is being supervised by the building assistant principals.

Literacy How/ Structured Literacy PD – all special education and reading interventionists were provided with 30 hours of PD targeting structured literacy PD. In addition, intensive multi-sensory instructional tools have been purchased for special education teachers K-6.

Fundations Training K-3: All certified staff K-2 was trained in Fundations. Fundations was implemented K-2 2017-2018 school year. Grade 3 certified staff will be trained summer 2018 and Fundations will be implemented Grade 3 during the 2018-2019 school year per Wilson recommendation.

Expanded Wilson-based on amount of time invested in the structured literacy PD and Fundations, the district decided to wait on further Wilson training.

Staff Participation in ReadConn: the district has provided for staff to participate in ReadConn. To date, four teams have participated. Two teams have just begun training.

Goal #2: Administrators regularly observe teachers using professional review protocols to monitor the fidelity of instruction in literacy, intervention, and otherwise

Fundations program and progress reviewed monthly: as Fundations has been implemented progress has been reviewed during training days and staff development days. Additionally, data including Fundations data are reviewed three times/year during CARS (collaborating about reading success) meetings. Fundations data is used to establish SRBI cut points at the Primary School.

New curriculum staff is working to enhance the Look-For document to streamline it across the district for fidelity.

Teacher Evaluation Pilot Progress Monitoring: 40 teachers across the district are participating in the Pilot progress monitoring for the teacher evaluation during the 2017-2018 school year.

When appropriate Administrators provides specific and relevant feedback in relation to literacy instruction and assessment.

The ninety seven participants in the professional learning offerings that were made available to Cohort B Tier 2 and Tier 3 districts during the 2017-2018 school year represented eight districts and included the following: Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Special Education Directors/Supervisors, Directors of Technology, Reading Interventionists, Instructional Specialists, Literacy Coaches, Speech Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Special Education Teachers, and General Education Teachers.

Evaluation Question 3: To what extent is the SSIP increasing the reading performance of third-grade students with disabilities statewide?

Measurable improvements in the SIMR in relation to targets

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.

State-Identified Measureable Result (SIMR) Data						
FFY	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
SIMR Data	33.7	50.1	51.4	50.2		
		n=4,877	n=4,897	n=5,088		
Targets	Baseline	New Baseline	50.1	50.3	50.7	51.1

While Connecticut did not meet its FFY 2016 target of 50.3, the SIMR data show an improvement over the baseline that was established in FFY 2014. Further analysis of the SIMR data from the last three years shows a continued decrease in the gap in performance between students with disabilities (SWDs) and their typical peers (FFY 2014 through FFY 2016).

Performance Gap Analysis Between SWDs and their Typical Peers										
FFY 2014				FFY 2015				FFY 2016		
SIMR Data for SWDs	SIMR Data for Not SWDs	Gap Between SWDs and Not SWDs		SIMR Data for SWDs	SIMR Data for Not SWDs	Gap Between SWDs and Not SWDs		SIMR Data for SWDs	SIMR Data for Not SWDs	Gap Between SWDs and Not SWDs
50.1	72.1	22		51.4	72.8	21.4		50.2	71.5	21.3

Child-level Outcomes

Support in the use of Literacy Data Teams was offered to Cohort B Tier 3 Districts to promote the use of common formative assessment (CFA) as a means to analyze and track growth in the mastery of language arts curricular standards at the individual student level. During the six-day

professional learning series, pre- and post-assessment data were collected from five schools. The assessment data, provided in the below tables, show an increase in the number of SWDs approaching, meeting and exceeding the grade-level reading standard selected by the data team members.

School A – Grade 3

Assessment	Percentage of SWDs Approaching Standard	Percentage of SWDs Meeting or Exceeding Standard
Pre	64	29
Post	38	62

School B – Grade K

Assessment	Percentage of SWDs Approaching Standard	Percentage of SWDs Meeting or Exceeding Standard
Pre	80	20
Post	20	80

School B – Grade 1

Assessment	Percentage of SWDs Approaching Standard	Percentage of SWDs Meeting or Exceeding Standard
Pre	25	33
Post	9	82

School B – Grade 2

Assessment	Percentage of SWDs Approaching Standard	Percentage of SWDs Meeting or Exceeding Standard
Pre	0	0
Post	36	27

School C – Grade 1

Assessment	Percentage of SWDs Approaching Standard	Percentage of SWDs Meeting or Exceeding Standard
Pre	50	17
Post	33	50

School C – Grade 2

Assessment	Percentage of SWDs Approaching Standard	Percentage of SWDs Meeting or Exceeding Standard
Pre	50	25
Post	0	100

School D – Grade 1

Assessment	Percentage of SWDs Approaching Standard	Percentage of SWDs Meeting or Exceeding Standard
Pre	14	0
Post	43	14

School D – Grade 2

Assessment	Percentage of SWDs Approaching Standard	Percentage of SWDs Meeting or Exceeding Standard
Pre	36	18
Post	64	8

School E – Grade 1

Assessment	Percentage of SWDs Approaching Standard	Percentage of SWDs Meeting or Exceeding Standard
Pre	50	20
Post	10	80

School E – Grade 2

Assessment	Percentage of SWDs Approaching Standard	Percentage of SWDs Meeting or Exceeding Standard
Pre	37	16
Post	22	44

F. Plans for Next Year

Implementation Activities	
Activity	Timeline
Complete Technical Assistance visits (District Improvement Planning) for Cohort C Tier 3	Spring 2018
Provide Professional Learning (IEP Rubric Training) for Cohort C Tier 3	Spring 2018
SSIP Leadership Team (Review 2017-18 district activities)	June 2018
Retain the services of an external evaluator	Summer 2018
Finalize Cohort C Follow-Up Professional Learning Offerings	Summer 2018
Review role of ReadConn as part of the SSIP implementation plan	Summer 2018 through the 2018-19 school year
Progress Monitoring of Cohort B (Tier 3) and Cohort C (Tier 3)	2018-19 School Year

Activity	Timeline
Provide Cohort C Follow-Up Professional Learning Offerings	2018-19 School Year
Review SIMR data for Cohort A districts and select districts for Tier 2 support	Fall 2018
Provide Cohort A Tier 2 Support (DLET Reconciliation)	Winter 2019
Begin Technical Assistance visits (District Improvement Planning) for Cohort A Tier 3	Winter – Spring 2019

Planned Evaluation Activities		
Activity	Data Collection	Expected Outcome
Contract with an external evaluator	Request for Proposal Applications	Use external evaluator to support ongoing SSIP evaluation and report writing for Phase III (Year 3)
Track district-level trend data	Universal Screening data from Cohort B and Cohort C Tier 3 Districts	Year-to-year analysis of achievement for students with disabilities will be used as a factor in determining effectiveness of instruction and interventions
ReadConn Evaluation Item Analysis	ReadConn Participant Evaluation	New data source to evaluate statewide capacity in the use of evidence-based practices with SWDs

Anticipated Barriers	
Barrier	Steps to Address Barrier
CSDE staff time/capacity to commit to current plan	Assess current proposed staffing assignments and consideration of the need to review the number of districts receiving Tier 2 and Tier 3 support
Availability of external partners to support SSIP professional learning activities	Consider increasing the role of ReadConn to address SSIP professional learning support
Balancing general professional learning opportunities with district-specific needs	SSIP Leadership Team brainstorming of potential strategies to provide differentiated professional learning opportunities to Tier 3 districts

Barrier	Steps to Address Barrier
Ability to sustain current intra-agency partnerships	Expand current levels of communication and collaboration throughout the calendar year

The State has benefitted from the technical assistance provided by the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) and appreciates this additional support. We plan to continue our involvement with the Language and Literacy Collaborative and engage with other states in an effort to best support the SSIP and the reading achievement of students with disabilities.

APPENDIX

District Literacy Evaluation Tool (DLET) - Revised

CONNECTICUT STATE SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SSIP)

Early Literacy and Reading Achievement for Students with Disabilities

District Literacy Evaluation Tool (DLET)

CONNECTICUT STATE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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.

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 (2016-17)

Total number of K-12 students with disabilities in the district (2016-17):

Number of students receiving special education services by grade and disability type (as of 10/1/2016):

Grade	Autism	ED	ID	OHI & OHI-ADD	SLD & SLD/Dyslexia	Speech/ Language	Other	TOTAL
K								
1								
2								
3								

ASSESSMENT DATA

Preliminary 2016-17 Accountability Data for Grade 3 Students:

SWD ELA DPI =   **Not SWD ELA DPI =**   **Gap between SWD and Not SWD =**

2017 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**

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

2017 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.

2016-17 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.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Instructional planning incorporates universal design for learning (UDL) principles.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Culturally relevant pedagogy is 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.) *See Indicator 4 in Section E.*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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 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. Assistive technology and accessible educational materials are appropriately selected and effectively used to support reading instruction for students with disabilities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Reading achievement data are used to identify IEP Present Levels of Performance and to inform the development of annual goals and objectives.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. PPT teams consider the CCS when developing students' IEP reading goals and objectives.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section E: 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. (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 F: 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.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section G: 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 specific 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.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐