

State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)

Office of Special Education

June 11, 2015

State Board of Education

Vision

To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens

Mission

To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global community

State Board of Education Goals

5-Year Strategic Plan for 2016-2020

- ✓ All Students Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas
- ✓ Every Student Graduates High School and is Ready for College and Career
- ✓ Every Child Has Access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program
- ✓ Every School Has Effective Teachers and Leaders
- ✓ Every Community Effectively Using a World-Class Data System to Improve Student Outcomes

Alignment of Training to Strategic Plan

This training is designed to provide participants with the details of the alignment of the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) to the Strategic Plan and other State initiatives, including the Literacy Promotion Act. The State-Identified Measurable Result (SIMR) will be discussed and improvement strategies that have been designed to increase reading proficiency on the 3rd grade assessment.

State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)

- The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) revised its approach to monitoring and supporting states with the goal of improving educational and functional outcomes for students with disabilities.
- To place a greater emphasis on monitoring for results, OSEP has added a new indicator (17) to the State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) that requires states to develop a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) focused on improving results for students with disabilities.

State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)

- A comprehensive, multi-year plan is based on high expectations for students with disabilities and is focused on building the capacity of local districts to implement and scale-up evidence-based practices in reading with a focus on improving third grade reading proficiency.

State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)

The SSIP is completed in three different phases:

- **Phase I-** Collection and analysis of data
Identification of focus area for improvement
Analysis of state infrastructure to support improved results in focus area
Theory of action that describes plans for improvement
- **Phase II-** Infrastructure development to improve results
Support for LEA implementation of improvement strategies and evidence-based practices
Evaluation plan
- **Phase III-** Results of state's on-going evaluation of the strategies included in the SSIP State progress in implementing improvement strategies and any revisions that have been made to SSIP

Stakeholder Involvement

- MDE received input from a variety of stakeholder groups, engaged in a problem-solving process to assist in the development of the SSIP Phase 1 Components.
- Included a broad analysis of state data to identify areas of low and high performance for students with disabilities.
- Compliance data were also reviewed to determine if compliance issues were impacting performance of students with disabilities.

Stakeholder Involvement

- MDE staff and their stakeholders were also conducting a broad analysis of each of the infrastructure components to identify overall strengths, weaknesses, and coordination of the components.
- Stakeholders included staff from other MDE divisions and external stakeholders including the Special Education Advisory Panel, the Special Education Directors' Workgroup, and the Special Education Task Force.

State-identified Measurable Result (SIMR)

- Low reading performance of students with disabilities, was identified and was proposed as the state SIMR.
- State staff and key stakeholders then reviewed current MDE priorities, goals and initiatives to determine if the proposed SIMR area (i.e. reading proficiency) was aligned to them.
- The results of the broad infrastructure analysis revealed that the state's infrastructure was adequate to build capacity in districts to implement, scale-up and sustain the use of evidence based practices.

SIMR

- The State will increase the percentage of third grade students with Specific Learning Disability and Language/Speech rulings in targeted districts who score proficient or higher on the regular statewide reading assessment to 68 percent by FFY 2018.

Root Causes

- The external and internal stakeholders and MDE Office of Special Education identified multiple contributing factors that are impacting reading proficiency for students with disabilities. Those factors are:
 - Limited Capacity of Staff to Provide High Quality Evidence-based Reading Instruction
 - Low Expectations for Students with Disabilities
 - Inconsistent Implementation of Multi-tiered System of Supports
 - Access to the General Education Curriculum
 - Inconsistent Delivery of Evidence-based Instruction in Reading

Limited Capacity of Staff to Provide High Quality Evidence-based Reading Instruction

- Institutes of higher education are not preparing future educators and administrators to plan, deliver, and monitor high quality, evidence-based universally designed instruction to address the needs of students with disabilities.
- The requirements in the Process and Performance Review for Licensure for elementary and secondary general education do not adequately address disability-related content including Universal Design and Reading instruction.
- The requirements in the Process and Performance Review for Licensure in special education do not adequately address content related to Reading.

Limited Capacity of Staff to Provide High Quality Evidence-based Reading Instruction (cont.)

- There are no Reading specific requirements for Continuing Education Units for currently employed educators to maintain educator licensure.
- Although the MDE has designed a comprehensive system of professional development and follow-up technical assistance including coaching, these resources are not consistently available to all districts. Some special education teachers have not been able to participate in the Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling professional development.

Low Expectations for Students with Disabilities

- Administrators and teachers often have low expectations for students with disabilities.
- These low expectations impact courses in which students are enrolled and the rigor of instruction they receive.

Inconsistent Implementation of Multi-tiered System of Supports

- A multi-tiered system of supports has not been consistently implemented in all schools.
- Administrators and teachers have not been consistently trained on MTSS to provide a coherent continuum of evidence-based practices to support a rapid response to academic and behavioral needs with frequent data-based monitoring for instructional decision-making to empower each student to achieve high standards.
- An accountability structure is not developed and monitored to ensure fidelity of implementation of MTSS for all students

Access to the General Education Curriculum

- Although students with disabilities are placed in general education settings, low performance data suggests they are not accessing the general education curriculum at acceptable levels.
- Effective inclusive practices are not being implemented with fidelity to enable all students with disabilities to achieve their highest potential.
- Resources on inclusive practices including professional development and technical assistance are not readily available to all Mississippi educators and families.
- The number of students allocated to special education teachers serving students in general education settings is too high.

Inconsistent Delivery of Evidence-based Instruction in Reading

- Core reading instruction is not rigorous in all schools.
- Students with disabilities are not consistently receiving high quality evidence-based instruction in Reading that incorporates the following components as identified by the National Reading Panel: Explicit instruction in phonemic awareness; systematic phonics instruction; methods to improve reading fluency; and ways to enhance comprehension.

Primary Root Cause

- The primary root cause of low reading performance is students with disabilities are not consistently receiving rigorous core instruction in reading with appropriate supplemental instruction and individualized supports.

Improvement Strategies

- Coherent improvement strategies were identified to address those contributing factors to low reading performance and a Theory of Action was developed to show the relationship between the established improvement activities and the specified SIMR.

Strategy One

Collaborate with other offices in the MDE, to provide literacy professional development for educators to support the delivery of high quality, evidence-based literacy instruction for students with disabilities.

Strategy One Activities

- Increase the number of special education teachers who participate in Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS).
- Offer additional professional development for special education teachers in targeted schools in a language-based, multi-sensory reading methodology.
- Provide professional development on inclusive practices for teachers and administrators in targeted schools.
- Add reading and mathematics-specific requirements for CEUs to maintain educator licensure (at least 50%).

Strategy Two

Collaborate with other offices in the MDE to align efforts and resources to support the delivery of aligned, differentiated technical assistance to targeted districts to improve high quality, evidence-based literacy instruction for students with disabilities.

Strategy Two Activities

- Fund literacy coaches in targeted districts to support teachers in providing evidence-based reading instruction.
- Re-purpose the technical assistance unit in the OSE to focus on the provision of differentiated technical assistance with a focus on literacy.
- Collaborate with the Office of Curriculum and Instruction to revise the Response to Intervention (RtI) process to a multi-tiered support system (MTSS) that includes academics and behavior.

Strategy Two Activities (cont.)

- Revise State Board Policy 4300 to provide comprehensive supports, including instructional strategies (Universal Design for Learning) and behavioral interventions, to ALL students through MTSS.
- Provide training for administrators and teachers to support a coherent continuum of evidence based system-wide practices to support a rapid response to academic and behavioral needs, with frequent data-based monitoring for instructional decision-making to empower each student to achieve high standards.
- Develop and monitor an accountability structure to ensure fidelity for implementation of MTSS for all students.

Strategy Three

Develop and disseminate resources to support districts in implementing inclusive practices.

Strategy Three Activities

- A common definition of “inclusion” and “access” will be developed and provided to districts and parents via MDE website, social media, and in MDE supported trainings.
- An online resource will be developed similar to the Florida Inclusion Network at <http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/whats-new/> on the MDE website to include strategies, and webinars parents, para-professionals, general education teachers, special education teachers, and school and district administrators.

Strategy Three Activities (cont.)

- A self-assessment similar to the Best Practice for Inclusive Education will be developed that will be completed with the district's Project Application and utilized in monitoring visits. This self-assessment tool and process is used to identify and prioritize areas of need for inclusive practices that enable all students with disabilities to achieve their highest potential. The purpose of the self-assessment is to lead the development of district improvement goals that increase effective inclusive practices in all schools.
- Develop a differentiated (tiered) results-focused monitoring system that is aligned with other MDE monitoring activities and targets improved outcomes for students with disabilities, with a focus on reading.

SSIP Application

- The application will be sent to Special Education Directors via the SPED Directors' listserv on Monday, June 15.
- The application will be due back to MDE July 2.
- The application must be completed by the district leadership team.
- The MDE will choose 32 districts to participate in the SSIP.

District Leadership Team

- The district leadership team must be comprised of:
 - Superintendent
 - Special Education Director
 - Curriculum Director
 - Federal Programs Director

District Leadership Team

- Additional district leadership team members may include:
 - School Administrator Representative
 - Teacher Representative (General/SPED)
 - PD Coordinator
 - Literacy Specialist
 - Behavior Specialist
 - Parent Representative
 - Etc.

Application

- The application consists of:
 - Basic district information
 - District accreditation level
 - District total enrollment
 - Schools currently in school improvement
 - Trainings provided in-district (special education teachers, administrators, parents)

Application

- The application consists of:
 - Current district initiatives (word walls, working on the work, learning walks, uninterrupted reading time, etc.)
 - Dedicated PLCs
 - Special Education Teachers that have completed LETRS training
 - PBIS schools
 - Funding for literacy coach

Application

- The application consists of:
 - Description of how your district is able to commit to a five-year plan
 - Data review (low performance areas, area of concern, proposed cause of low performance)
 - Current programs in district
 - Commitment to on-going professional development provided by MDE
 - Commitment to results-focused monitoring

Selection of Districts

- The MDE will select 32 districts from across the State with various enrollment groups.
- The MDE will notify the Superintendent and Special Education Director by mail July 17.

Contact Information

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Division of District Support