Arkansas Special Education State Advisory Council Report
State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) and
State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG)
August 7, 2018

Changes in Key Personnel:

SSIP- July 1, 2018 New Coordinator- Jeff Adams

SPDG- June 2, 2018 Assistant Director moved to Director- Tiah Frazier

The two improvement strategies and updates for the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) are as follows:

Strategy One: Create a system of support that is aligned with other ADE Units and is differentiated based on LEA's needs as evidenced by data.

Update: On May 15, 2018 support staff from the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) met with the Cross Unit Team to facilitate an evaluation of the team's work. Twelve members of the Cross Unit Team from seven different units within the Arkansas Department of Education were part of the reflection process. The goal was to think about how far we had come as a team in learning about the work of other units in order to align efforts and serve school districts in a more purposeful way. The following rubric was used to facilitate the discussion around practices and behaviors of the team.
Rubric: https://drive.google.com/open?id=1YvnGeIPUDuHtIz5IWkyvoHh3BBX6QQtF

The decision was made to dissolve the existing Cross Unit Team due to some restructuring within the ADE. The School Improvement Unit merged with Standards for Accreditation to form a new unit known as the Standards and Systems Support Team. The State Personnel Develop Grant Director and SPDG staff will work with the SSIP Coordinator through the ADE Strategic Plan to collaborate with units that support literacy and behavior efforts, including the Standards and Systems Support Team.

Strategy Two: In collaboration with other ADE Units, restructure Arkansas' Response to Intervention (RTI) model using evidence-based personnel development to implement a multi-tiered system of support for behavior and academics, with focus on literacy.

Strategy Two focuses on RTI. This evidence-based practice is being implemented in SSIP targeted districts and intensively supported by the State through the RTI Arkansas initiative. The Arkansas SPDG was written to directly align and support the SSIP. The SPDG functions as the "boots on the ground" for the RTI implementation in targeted SSIP LEA's.

Goals for the State Personnel Development Grant

- Develop statewide RTI resources and tools in the areas of behavior and literacy
- Increase the capacity of regional and district teams to deliver high quality RTI professional development
- Improve educators' ability to implement RTI with a focus on evidence-based literacy and behavior support practices
- Improve literacy and behavior outcomes for all students, especially students with disabilities

SPDG continues to make purposeful connections to support the science of reading as it relates to R.I.S.E. In the summer of 2018, a new cohort of teachers began training to address reading instruction. The SPDG Literacy Coordinator and Coach have participated in these trainings in order to align initiatives for greater coherence.

The SSIP Coordinator and the SPDG Literacy Coordinator attended the Solution Tree PLC Institute in July of 2018. Solution Tree focuses on supporting Professional Learning Communities (PLC's), and Response to Intervention (RTI) is one of the seven components of an effective PLC. It is the intent of the SPDG Team to make purposeful content connections to further promote ADE's focus on literacy and integrate behavior supports in content development.

The State Personnel Development Team released a district application through a Commissioner's Memo in May of 2018. Eight districts applied for the project and six of those decided to move through the phases of implementation to develop capacity in the areas of literacy and behavior. SPDG continues to support SSIP LEA's from cohorts 1 and 2 of the project. SPDG has maintained consistency with contracted partners to provide additional support for LEA's. The SSIP Coordinator and the SPDG Director are collaborating to formalize a process to consistently monitor performance measures for internal communication and impact.