Arkansas Department of Education - Special Education Unit
Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities
State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) and
State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG), July 2019

Strategy 1: Create a system of support that is aligned with other Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) Units and is differentiated based on Local Education Agencies (LEA's) needs as evidenced by data.

Strategy One continues to focus on creating a coordinated system of support that outlines the necessary organizational structures for the way in which LEA services and supports are identified, managed, and differentiated at the state-level. This strategy focuses on building the infrastructure needed for the ADE to be more effective in leveraging resources that will improve services for all students (including students with disabilities) and increasing the reach and impact of its work with LEAs.

To broaden the exposure of the cross unit work of the agency for students with disabilities, it was decided that the ADE Strategic Performance Management (SPM) Team would replace the Cross Unit Team. The SPM Team's vision is to support the implementation of an aligned system within the ADE that is responsive to LEAs in personalizing student learning. The team goals are explicitly outlined in the ADE Strategic Plan, which provides a foundation for Arkansas' Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan. In addition, the shift to the SPM Team has increased the awareness of the SSIP, and promoted information exchange between units.

Update:

Aligning the work of the SSIP to the frameworks of Professional Learning Communities and High Reliability Schools continues to be a focus of the SSIP Coordinator and with the technical assistance providers of the Arkansas Collaborative Consultants. The following agencies and/or consultants comprise the Arkansas Collaborative Consultants (ACC):

- **Arkansas Co-Teaching Project** - Scaling up the Boundless Learning Collaboration with Johns Hopkins University's Center for Technology in Education
- **Arkansas Transition Services (ATS)** - Scaling up work to build Transition teams to ensure that students with disabilities have a post secondary plan
- **Behavior Support Specialists (BSS)** - Accepted eight new districts into Cohort II of the BX3 Project
- **Brain Injury Services** - Supporting school teams serving students with brain injuries through the CIRCUIT system. *Aleecia Starkey is retiring in June, so ADE-SEU will be seeking a new brain injury consultant for this role
- **Children and Youth with Sensory Impairments (CAYSI)** - see separate report

- **Easterseals Arkansas Outreach Program and Technology Services (ESOPTS)** - Scaling up work to build additional Assistive Technology (AT) Teams to support consideration, assessment and implementation of AT for students with disabilities.
- **Educational Audiology/Speech Resources (EARS)** - Providing supports with hearing technology and best practices, as well as aural habilitation/rehabilitation.
- **Educational Services for Visual Impairments (ESVI)** - Scaling up ongoing work related to building school-level teams for students with visual impairment.
- **Speech-Language Pathology Services and Assistant/Aide Program** - Working with stakeholders to complete a guidance document for speech-language pathologists working in public schools in Arkansas

Strategy 2: 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.

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.

Update:

Annual Performance Report filed with Office of Special Education Program (OSEP) on May 1, 2019 for the 2017-2018 School Year

Results of the 2017-2018 implementation included:

·   Reaching an overall score on the SISEP State Capacity Assessment (SCA) of 35/50 (70%); this represents a 27% increase in score over the last year.

·   The overall score for the three participating districts on the District Capacity Assessment (DCA) for 2018 was 69%, an 18% increase over 2017.

·   Of 19 schools, 14 (74%) met the School Leadership Team goals by either achieving a total score of 80% on the SWPBIS Tiered Fidelity Inventory or increasing their score by 10% from the previous year's assessment.

·   Eleven of 13 schools (85%) met the implementation components indicated in the Reading Tiered Fidelity Inventory (RTFI) with a score of 80% or an increased score of 10% over the previous year's score.

·   Across 14 participating schools, there was an overall decline in office discipline referrals (ODRs) by more than 2,200 referrals between the 2016–2017 and 2017-2018 school years.

This represents an overall 15% decrease in ODRs. Nine of the 14 (64%) schools within districts that demonstrated through the SWPBIS Tiered Fidelity Inventory showed an annual reduction in ODRs.

· The SPDG Core Management Team (CMT) examined literacy scores for participating schools using the statewide literacy assessment tool. While schools have reported increased fidelity of implementation of literacy interventions, no schools have met the performance metric related to improved student outcomes. The performance measure, an increase of at least six percentage points on end-of-year literacy assessments, is an aggressive goal and may take multiple years to realize.

· The AR SPDG CMT worked to formalize RTI and PBIS training modules and has increased efforts to gather feedback from training respondents. To date, over 300 survey responses have been collected to assess:
- The effectiveness of the training team and materials
- The usefulness of the training content in implementing RTI and other school improvement efforts
- The impact on the knowledge level of participants
- Other training needs and interests

· The Center for Exceptional Families, with support from the CMT, developed a Families and Communities training module and conducted train-the-trainer sessions with parent coordinators from participating districts and schools. The training module includes a pre- and post-training assessment to determine the impact training has on parent/caregiver beliefs, behaviors, and understanding of RTI. All training participants surveyed, demonstrated increased agreement on the importance of their regular communication and involvement at the school as well as a supportive learning environment at home in ensuring student success. Participants also reported an increased understanding of and support for RTI.

For the first time in the grant period, the CMT completed the Appendix A assessment of professional development components using the SPDG rubric as a team. This provided an opportunity, as a team, to identify strengths and vulnerabilities of the implementation effort. The team also built consensus on the priority activities and areas of focus in the coming year to continue building capacity of districts and schools in support of improved student outcomes.