

ARKANSAS

Department of Education
Division of Elementary and Secondary Education
Office of Special Education



PART B

Indicator 17: State Systemic Improvement Plan

Phase III Update

FFY 2020-21

Submitted February 1, 2022

Indicator 17: State Systemic Improvement Plan

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: General Supervision

The State's SPP/APR includes a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) that meets the requirements set forth for this indicator.

Measurement

The State's SPP/APR includes an SSIP that is a comprehensive, ambitious, yet achievable multi-year plan for improving results for children with disabilities. The SSIP includes each of the components described below.

Instructions

Baseline Data: The State must provide baseline data that must be expressed as a percentage and which is aligned with the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities.

Targets: In its FFY 2020 SPP/APR, due February 1, 2022, the State must provide measurable and rigorous targets (expressed as percentages) for each of the six years from FFY 2020 through FFY 2025. The State's FFY 2025 target must demonstrate improvement over the State's baseline data.

Updated Data: In its FFYs 2020 through FFY 2025 SPPs/APRs, due February 2, 2022, the State must provide updated data for that specific FFY (expressed as percentages) and that data must be aligned with the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities. In its FFYs 2020 through FFY 2025 SPPs/APRs, the State must report on whether it met its target.

Overview of the Three Phases of the SSIP

It is of the utmost importance to improve results for children with disabilities by improving educational services, including special education and related services. Stakeholders, including parents of children with disabilities, local educational agencies, the State Advisory Panel, and others, are critical participants in improving results for children with disabilities and should be included in developing, implementing, evaluating, and revising the SSIP and included in establishing the State's targets under Indicator 17. The SSIP should include information about stakeholder involvement in all three phases.

Phase I: Analysis:

- Data Analysis;
- Analysis of State Infrastructure to Support Improvement and Build Capacity;
- State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities;
- Selection of Coherent Improvement Strategies; and
- Theory of Action.

Phase II: Plan (which, in addition to the Phase I content (including any updates) outlined above:

- Infrastructure Development;
- Support for local educational agency (LEA) Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices; and
- Evaluation.

Phase III: Implementation and Evaluation (which, in addition to the Phase I and Phase II content (including any updates) outlined above:

- Results of Ongoing Evaluation and Revisions to the SSIP.

Specific Content of Each Phase of the SSIP

Refer to FFY 2013-2015 Measurement Table for detailed requirements of Phase I and Phase II SSIP submissions.

Phase III should only include information from Phase I or Phase II if changes or revisions are being made by the State and/or if information previously required in Phase I or Phase II was not reported.

Phase III: Implementation and Evaluation

In Phase III, the State must, consistent with its evaluation plan described in Phase II, assess and report on its progress implementing the SSIP. This includes: (A) data and analysis on the extent to which the State has made progress toward and/or met the State-established short-term and long-term outcomes or objectives for implementation of the SSIP and its progress toward achieving the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities (SiMR); (B) the rationale for any revisions that were made, or that the State intends to make, to the SSIP as the result of implementation, analysis, and evaluation; and (C) a description of the meaningful stakeholder engagement. If the State intends to continue implementing the SSIP without modifications, the State must describe how the data from the evaluation support this decision.

A. Data Analysis

As required in the Instructions for the Indicator/Measurement, in its FFYs 2020 through 2025 SPP/APR, the State must report data for that specific FFY (expressed as actual numbers and percentages) that are aligned with the SiMR. The State must report on whether the State met its target. In addition, the State may report on any additional data (e.g., progress monitoring data) that were collected and analyzed that would suggest progress toward the SiMR. States using a subset of the population from the indicator (e.g., a sample, cohort model) should describe how data are collected and analyzed for the SiMR if that was not described in Phase I or Phase II of the SSIP.

B. Phase III Implementation, Analysis and Evaluation

The State must provide a narrative or graphic representation, e.g., a logic model, of the principal activities, measures and outcomes that were implemented since the State's last SSIP submission (i.e., Feb 2021). The evaluation should align with the theory of action described in Phase I and the evaluation plan described in Phase II. The State must describe any changes to the activities, strategies, or timelines described in Phase II and include a rationale or justification for the changes. If the State intends to continue implementing the SSIP without modifications, the State must describe how the data from the evaluation support this decision.

The State must summarize the infrastructure improvement strategies that were implemented, and the short-term outcomes achieved, including the measures or rationale used by the State and stakeholders to assess and communicate achievement. Relate short-term outcomes to one or more areas of a systems framework (e.g., governance, data, finance, accountability/monitoring, quality standards, professional development and/or technical assistance) and explain how these strategies support system change and are necessary for: (a) achievement of the SiMR; (b) sustainability of systems improvement efforts; and/or (c) scale-up. The State must describe the next steps for each infrastructure improvement strategy and the anticipated outcomes to be attained during the next fiscal year (e.g., for the FFY 2020 APR, report on anticipated outcomes to be obtained during FFY 2021, i.e., July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022).

The State must summarize the specific evidence-based practices that were implemented and the strategies or activities that supported their selection and ensured their use with fidelity. Describe how the evidence-based practices, and activities or strategies that support their use, are intended to impact the SiMR by changing program/district policies, procedures, and/or practices, teacher/provider practices (i.e., behaviors), parent/caregiver outcomes,

and/or child outcomes. Describe any additional data (i.e., progress monitoring data) that was collected to support the on-going use of the evidence-based practices and inform decision-making for the next year of SSIP implementation.

C. Stakeholder Engagement

The State must describe the specific strategies implemented to engage stakeholders in key improvement efforts and how the State addressed concerns, if any, raised by stakeholders through its engagement activities.

Additional Implementation Activities

The State should identify any activities not already described that it intends to implement in the next fiscal year (e.g., for the FFY 2020 APR, report on activities it intends to implement in FFY 2021, i.e., July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022) including a timeline, anticipated data collection and measures, and expected outcomes that are related to the SiMR. The State should describe any newly identified barriers and include steps to address these barriers.

17 - Indicator Data

Section A: Data Analysis

What is the State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR)?

The State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR) is the percent of students with disabilities (SWD) in grades 3-5, from the targeted schools, whose value-added score (VAS) in reading is moderate or high for the same subject and grade level in the state.

Has the SiMR changed since the last SSIP submission? (yes/no)

NO

Is the State using a subset of the population from the indicator (e.g., a sample, cohort model)? (yes/no)

NO

Is the State's theory of action new or revised since the previous submission? (yes/no)

YES

Please provide a description of the changes and updates to the theory of action.

The State's theory of action has been revised to reflect updates to the strands of action. Strand one, Collaboration, has been updated from "create" to "expand" a system of support aligned with other DESE Units and differentiated based on student needs to reflect the evolution of Phase III of the SSIP with scaling and capacity building.

Two updates were made to strand two which is Professional Development/Technical Assistance and Dissemination. The changes include the addition of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and a shift from "professional development" to "professional learning". Through stakeholder feedback around professional learning, educators requested additional support on strategies and practices to work with students with disabilities. To address this need, UDL was added to strand two in the State's theory of action so that Arkansas' system produces educators that are more efficacious in designing and implementing inclusive classroom practices. Stakeholder feedback regarding the SSIP Theory of Action revealed that educators prefer access to ongoing and job-embedded learning opportunities, with access to peer coaches. The updated language to strand two marks a shift towards a nested professional learning system and away from a traditional "sit and get" model of professional development. Additionally, the changes emphasize that Arkansas' professional learning system is designed to intentionally support all learners.

Please provide a link to the current theory of action.

<https://arksped.ade.arkansas.gov/documents/ssip/SSIP-SPDG-OSE-TOA.pdf>

Does the State intend to continue implementing the SSIP without modifications? (yes/no)

NO

If no, describe any changes to the activities, strategies or timelines described in the previous submission and include a rationale or justification for the changes.

The Arkansas SSIP has been modified and expanded to include schools that are implementing the Professional Learning Communities Inclusive Practices Project. This project has an intentional focus on inclusive practices, ensuring that students who are IEP eligible as well as other groups of struggling learners have meaningful access to core instruction and established systems of intervention. This initiative aligns very well with ongoing work of Professional Learning Communities in Arkansas, and the SSIP focus on RTI. The project focuses on facilitating collaboration and data-driven decision making between general and special educators with purposeful inclusive principal leadership. Participating schools in this work are now included in the SiMR data set regarding student growth. Including the important variables of collaboration and leadership in developing, implementing, and sustaining robust RTI systems make this initiative an important component of the SSIP moving forward.

Progress toward the SiMR

Please provide the data for the specific FFY listed below (expressed as actual number and percentages).

Select yes if the State uses two targets for measurement. (yes/no)

NO

Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2016	59.53%

Targets

FFY	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target>=	60.66%	61.50%	62.33%	63.16%	63.37%	64.50%

FFY 2020 SPP/APR Data

Number of SWD with a high or moderate VAS in reading at participating schools and grade levels.	Number of SWD with a VAS in reading at participating schools and grade levels.	FFY 2019 Data	FFY 2020 Target	FFY 2020 Data	Status	Slippage
533	828		60.66%	64.37%	Met target	N/A

Provide the data source for the FFY 2020 data.

The data is the RLA value added score based on the State's approved ESSA plan. Upon the receipt of the data file from the Office of Innovation for Education (OIE) at the University of Arkansas (state contractor for accountability), student level records are filtered based on the participating school buildings. Only students with value added scores (VAS) for RLA are included.

Please describe how data are collected and analyzed for the SiMR.

The data is the RLA value added score based on the State's approved ESSA plan.

In the first step, a longitudinal individual growth model is used to produce a predicted score for each student. The individual growth model uses as many years of prior scores for each student to maximize the precision of the prediction (best estimate) and accounts for students having different starting points (random intercepts). In the value-added model, each student's prior score history acts as the control/conditioning factor for the expectation of growth for the individual student. In the second step, the student's predicted score is subtracted from his or her actual score to generate the student's value-added score (actual – predicted = value-added score). The magnitude of value-added scores indicates the degree to which students did not meet, met, or exceed expected growth in performance. Student value-added scores are averaged for each school. School value-added scores indicate, on average, the extent to which students in the school grew compared to how much they were expected to grow, based on how the students had achieved in the past. The school value-added scores answer the question, "On average, did students in this school meet, exceed, or not meet expected growth?" (Arkansas ESSA Plan p. 45) While the school average tells us about the building, it does not tell us about how the individual student is doing compared to their peers. Therefore, to look at an individual student's growth in relation to their peers, the Office of Innovation for Education (OIE) at the University of Arkansas (state contractor for accountability) ranked the value-added scores of all students and categorized them into low, moderate, or high based on the percentile rank of students' growth scores, or residuals. This is commonly Percentile Rank of the Residual (PRR). An explanation of each category is as follows:

- Low indicates that a student's VAS, based on the PRR, was in the bottom 25% of all student VAS for same subject and grade level in the state
- Moderate indicates that a student's VAS, based on the PRR, was between 25% and 75% of all student VAS for the same subject and grade level in the state
- High indicates that a student's VAS, based on the PRR, was in the top 25% of all student VAS for the same subject and grade level in the state

Optional: Has the State collected additional data (i.e., benchmark, CQI, survey) that demonstrates progress toward the SiMR? (yes/no)

NO

Did the State identify any general data quality concerns, unrelated to COVID-19, that affected progress toward the SiMR during the reporting period? (yes/no)

NO

Did the State identify any data quality concerns directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic during the reporting period? (yes/no)

NO

Section B: Implementation, Analysis and Evaluation

Please provide a link to the State's current evaluation plan.

<https://arksped.ade.arkansas.gov/documents/ssip/Arkansas-SSIP-Evaluation-Plan-Infrastructure-Tool.pdf>

Is the State's evaluation plan new or revised since the previous submission? (yes/no)

NO

Provide a summary of each infrastructure improvement strategy implemented in the reporting period:

Strategy One: Expand a system of support that is aligned with other DESE Units and is differentiated based on LEAs' needs as evidenced by data. This phase of the SSIP focused on expanding a coordinated system of support that provides the necessary organizational and teaming structures for the way in which LEA services and supports are identified, managed, and differentiated at the state-level. This strategy is reflected in DESE's Theory of Action. Through intentional alignment and infrastructure expansion, the DESE is more effective in leveraging resources that will improve services for all students (including students with disabilities) and in increasing the reach and impact of the work with LEAs. The State Performance Management Team is directly involved with agency leaders in all initiatives reflected in the theory of action, including High Reliability Schools (HRS), Professional Learning Communities (PLC), High-Leverage Practices (HLPs) for Inclusive Classrooms, Inclusive Principal Leadership, Reading Initiative for Student Excellence (R.I.S.E.), Response to Intervention (RTI) and the Strategic Instructional Model (SIM™). The SSIP Theory of Action reflects Arkansas' commitment to ensuring that all students have access to highly reliable schools that are safe, supportive, collaborative and that provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum with effective teaching in every classroom (High Reliability Schools). Through a multi-tiered system of support (RTI Arkansas) general and

special educators build collective efficacy via team-based and action-oriented coaching, modeling and support with intentional focus on four critical questions: 1) What is it we expect students to learn? 2) How will we know when they have learned it? 3) How will we respond when they don't learn? 4) How will we respond when they already know it? (PLC at Work™ and Inclusive Practices PLC Project). RTI is directly aligned to critical question number three. The system of support in Arkansas is dependent upon administrators who advance inclusive leadership and practices (Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership). The Arkansas SSIP includes knowledge and implementation of high-leverage and other evidence-based practices that promote inclusive classrooms to facilitate novice and experienced educators' self and collective efficacy to meet the needs of diverse learners (R.I.S.E., HLPs and SIM™). The focus on alignment and expansion of these initiatives in the SSIP reflects a continuous evolution towards a single, coherent and collaborative system where students with disabilities are considered general education students first. This system coalesces around DESE's mission to promote inclusive practices.

Strategy Two: In collaboration with other DESE Units, expand Arkansas' Response-to-Intervention (RTI) and inclusive practices model including UDL and using evidence-based personnel development to implement a multi-tiered system of supports for behavior and academics, with a focus on literacy. This strategy has evolved to focus on RTI, UDL and inclusionary practices and is being implemented and supported in SSIP targeted districts by the State through the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG), with intentional alignment to R.I.S.E., Inclusive Principal Leadership, and the PLC Inclusive Practices initiatives. The SPDG is focused on the following goals:

- Promote statewide RTI resources and tools in the areas of behavior and literacy
- Increase the capacity of regional and LEA teams to deliver high quality RTI professional development
- Use competency-based learning to empower teachers and other personnel to have choice in professional learning to meet individual needs
- Improve literacy and behavior outcomes for all students, especially students with disabilities

The most recent State Personnel Development Grant, awarded in the fall of 2020, is bridging the work of the previous SPDG, to embed competency-based professional learning (PL) to empower teachers and other personnel to have choice in professional learning to meet their individual needs. This PL will increase the knowledge, skill, and implementation of UDL and high-leverage practices for general and special educators to support all students, especially students with disabilities. The RTI Framework provides the model to organize and assess LEAs' literacy and behavior/SEL services and supports through the lens of multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS). With the increased emphasis around inclusive practices and access to quality core instruction for all students, UDL principles are key to improving teacher efficacy for meeting the needs of diverse learners. Cross-collaborative work within DESE has been explored to address job-embedded PL leading to the acquisition of micro-credentials in UDL, RTI and HLPs.

The purposeful selection of these strategies aligns well with the extant evidence base, and with DESE's mission and vision to lead the nation in student-focused learning.

Describe the short-term or intermediate outcomes achieved for each infrastructure improvement strategy during the reporting period including the measures or rationale used by the State and stakeholders to assess and communicate achievement. Please relate short-term outcomes to one or more areas of a systems framework (e.g., governance, data, finance, accountability/monitoring, quality standards, professional development and/or technical assistance) and explain how these strategies support system change and are necessary for: (a) achievement of the SiMR; (b) sustainability of systems improvement efforts; and/or (c) scale-up.

Relative to strategy one, the State Performance Management Team (SPMT) met monthly to improve the LEA system of support. This strategy, collaboration, involves multiple overlapping agency systems, including governance, data, accountability/monitoring, and quality standards. Representatives from the SPMT participated in NCSL's Cross-State Learning Collaboratives focused on scaling evidence-based practices (EBPs) and low-performing school systems (LPSS) with a focus on students with disabilities. To measure change across multiple agency initiatives in the SSIP, Arkansas continued to utilize the SSIP Infrastructure Development Planning and Progress Management Tool: Using Implementation Drivers and Stages of Implementation. Consideration of all initiatives reflected in the SSIP Theory of Action for this improvement strategy resulted in ratings that remained stable. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = pre-exploration and 5 = full implementation) Arkansas SSIP Infrastructure Tool ratings revealed the following implementation scores: Competency drivers of training (4.5) and coaching (4.0), Organizational drivers in facilitative administration (4.5) and systems intervention (4.5). Overall performance assessment of the Arkansas system coherence also remained stable at (4.5) as did the technical & adaptive leadership drivers (4.0). Multiple initiatives are included in the SSIP and some initiatives are more developed with regard to stages of implementation. Ratings reflect the intentional focus on coherence among multiple initiatives at multiple stages of implementation. The SPMT continued interdepartmental collaboration and coordination through regular involvement and initiative alignment presentations at DESE Learning Services Unit Leaders' Meetings, and Quarterly Content Specialists Meetings at each regional cooperative and with The Center for Exceptional Families (TCFEF), Arkansas' PTI Center. By focusing on strand one, DESE is increasingly modeling for LEAs the collaborative accountability and decision making that is needed to meet the needs of all learners. This strand assists with facilitating information exchange and reducing the organizational silos that can be obstacles to sustainable systemic change. A coherent message of how multiple initiatives work together in the system to serve all students promotes uniformity of messaging and prioritization of needs. Increasing collaboration and coherence is expected to narrow the focus on what matters most and positively impact the SiMR. This strategy was expanded to include Inclusive Practices PLC Project schools during this reporting cycle, and future scaling of this initiative is expected in subsequent cycles.

Relative to strategy two, statewide RTI implementation supports relate to the professional development and technical assistance system. During this reporting cycle, the State Implementation Team reviewed RTI data from districts receiving RTI support and continued to meet with the RTI State advisory to gain stakeholder feedback on RTI implementation strengths and barriers. Complete RTI modules and facilitator guides for academics and behavior have now been accessible on the DESE website for over a year for statewide educator use. The academic modules are aligned with R.I.S.E., the statewide initiative to implement the science of reading, and with High Reliability Schools. This alignment promotes equity in access to high quality professional learning, and sustainability of the ongoing initiative for inclusive practices. The behavior modules promote implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and this work is directly aligned to the work of the Arkansas Behavior Support Specialists and their work to install sustainable systems for behavior. Module overviews were provided to all Arkansas Regional Education Cooperatives to ensure equity of educator access to these materials, and RTI discussions were held at inclusive practices trainings at every educational service cooperative. The website for the SPDG work around RTI was revised to highlight the academic and behavior modules, and these supports continue to help guide broader agency discussions around multi-tiered systems of support. The SPDG serves as the implementation team for strategy two of the SSIP, and systemic improvements are measured through the SISEP State Capacity Assessment (SCA) tool. Due to reframing RTI alongside a broader focus on inclusive practices and UDL, scores for this SCA are not directly comparable to the previous year's SCA results. State Capacity Assessment results from the spring of 2021 were as follows: Leadership (33%), Infrastructure and Resources (58%), Communication and Engagement (50%), and SCA Total Score (46%). Percentages represent the number of SCA items in place and will serve as the baseline for future SCA administrations with the expanded focus of DESE and SPDG on UDL, and inclusive practices including RTI. It is expected that by implementing RTI for academics and behavior with fidelity, that the SiMR will improve as students with disabilities receive the necessary interventions, while also receiving access to quality core instruction in their least restrictive environments.

Did the State implement any new (newly identified) infrastructure improvement strategies during the reporting period? (yes/no)

NO

Provide a summary of the next steps for each infrastructure improvement strategy and the anticipated outcomes to be attained during the next reporting period.

Arkansas plans to continuously improve upon the two infrastructure strategies by utilizing supports from agency initiatives to expand a statewide culture of inclusive practices.

Relative to strategy one, intensified efforts to facilitate initiative collaboration between high-leverage and evidence-based practices, inclusive principal leadership, and the Strategic Instructional Model outlined in the SSIP Theory of Action will be a focus.

Inclusive Practices Professional Learning Communities Project:

While mentioned as a exploration activity in the previous reporting of the SSIP, initial pilot implementation of the Inclusive Practices PLC Project occurred during this current reporting cycle. The DESE and Solution Tree will continue a partnership to expand the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) at Work® process within select SSIP schools. This PLC improvement strategy focuses on building a culture of shared responsibility and collective teacher efficacy between general and special educators to maximize learning for all students. Through collaborative PLC efforts between general and special educators, it is expected that school and district LRE percentages will improve. With greater access to quality core instruction, students will experience moderate to high growth in literacy as measured by the statewide assessment.

High Leverage Practices:

Survey data acquired during this phase of the SSIP revealed improvement in year-to-year comparisons for Arkansas novice special educators' self-efficacy with applying high-leverage practices (HLPs) in their everyday work. In FY 19, only 22% of novice special educators indicated that they felt confident applying HLPs in their everyday work. Contrastively, FY20 survey data indicated an increase in special educators' self efficacy with 35% indicating confidence in the application of HLPs. In FY19, 49% of survey respondents indicated low or no confidence applying HLPs. In FY20, only 28% of respondents indicated low or no confidence with HLP application. As next steps, the SSIP will continue to leverage agency infrastructure and supports to increase state-level capacity and knowledge of HLPs, with a focus on agency unit leaders, regional content specialists, agency technical assistance providers, IHEs and the state's parent training center. The SSIP will also continue to intentionally collaborate with DESE Educator Effectiveness and IHEs around efforts to mentor all novice general and special educators with HLPs, and to align this work with the Arkansas Special Education Resource Academy, a DESE partnership with IHEs to increase the number of special educators in Arkansas. It is expected that the scaling of work around HLPs will better equip general and special educators to be more confident in knowledge and skills of working with diverse learners, and that improved self-efficacy will encourage more novice teachers to remain in the profession. Additionally, the SSIP will partner with The Center for Exceptional Families to highlight how families can engage with teachers and how teachers can engage with families to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership:

Arkansas recognizes that administrators play an important role in guaranteeing that students and teachers have access to necessary supports. DESE has been directly supported by CCSSO's Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership (AIPL) initiative, and the SSIP SiMR will continue to be the overarching goal for this AIPL work. An integral component of AIPL has been related to embedding HLPs into statewide professional learning for principals and school leadership teams. DESE and the work of the SSIP will partner with the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators (AAEA) to provide inclusive practices trainings for principals involved in the AAEA Beginning Administrators Academy. In addition, DESE plans to invest in inclusive principal leadership through the expansion of the Inclusive Practices PLC Project. Promotion and expansion of new inclusive practices branding and an inclusive practices website will be an additional next step. With improved website access to resources that align with state initiatives, LEAs will be able to see that this work stretches beyond special education and is important for all stakeholders, including principals. Beyond improvements to the SiMR, DESE anticipates a principal-led continuous cultural shift at the building level that promotes the Least Dangerous Assumption, and ensures that all Arkansas students will be considered general education students first.

Strategic Instructional Model:

Though the SSIP SiMR is focused on literacy value-added growth scores for SWD in grades 3-5, Arkansas recognizes the need to provide supports for all students regardless of grade. Arkansas will continue to expand supports for the Strategic Instructional Model, with an emphasis on the following SIM Learning Strategies and Content Enhancement Routines: Inference Strategy, Proficiency in Sentence Writing Strategy, Main Idea Strategy, Listening and Note-taking Strategy, Vocabulary LINCing Routine/Strategy, Fundamentals of Sentence Writing Strategy, Unit Organizer Routine, and the Framing Routine. Trainings on these strategies and routines have been offered via face-to-face and virtually by content specialists through a partnership with the University of Central Arkansas Mashburn Center for Learning. The next steps for this work will be to partner with the DESE Digital Learning Unit to scale the reach and sustainability of SIM professional learning opportunities via a learning management system, followed by job-embedded coaching. It is expected that providing resources and support for strategy instruction and content enhancement will empower teachers with the knowledge and skills needed help diverse students become self-directed learners.

Relative to Strategy two, expanding the supports for RTI to include UDL and Inclusive Practices will occur during the next reporting period.

State Personnel Development Grant

Arkansas will leverage the SPDG to build upon previous work around RTI for academics and behavior, and embed HLPs and other EBPs to directly align with the SSIP. A Synthesis of Feedback and Recommendations from the Field was completed by the Office of Innovation for Education at the University of Arkansas in April of 2020. Multiple educator focus groups provided perspectives for the development of future professional learning in Arkansas. Given the need for educators to increase their self-efficacy, knowledge, and skills in educating students with various learning needs, the SPDG will support strategy two of the SSIP by focusing on the following: 1. Transform and expand Arkansas' statewide coherent system of supports through competency-based professional learning and coaching that will increase the implementation of high-leverage and other evidence-based practices (including RTI), which will result in improved outcomes for SWD. 2. Through personnel development and ongoing assistance, increase the capacity of regional and LEA teams to offer high-quality professional learning with a focus on implementing and sustaining integrated HLPs and other EBPs within a coherent system of support. 3. Increase the knowledge, skill, and implementation of UDL, HLPs and EBPs by offering general and special educators choice in competency-based professional learning with the added goal of certification, micro credential, and/or badge-recognition as well as a potential educator stipend. In addition to improving the SiMR, outcomes from this work are anticipated to promote improvements with LRE and teacher efficacy. Schools involved in direct SPDG support will be included in the SiMR data set.

List the selected evidence-based practices implement in the reporting period:

High Leverage Practices for Inclusive Classrooms - HLPs
Collaboration - Inclusive Practices PLC Project
Response to Intervention - Inclusive Practices
Strategic Instructional Model - Content Enhancement Routines/Learning Strategies
Inclusive Administrative Support - Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership

Provide a summary of each evidence-based practices.

High Leverage Practices for Inclusive Classrooms, as defined by the the Council for Exceptional Children, offers a set of practices that are essential to the support of student learning, and that can be systematically taught, learned and implemented by novice and experienced educators. HLPs have been supported by research to have significant potential for improving academic or behavioral outcomes for students with disabilities and other learners. These practices are best utilized through a tiered system of support with decision making that is based on data to meet individual student needs.

The Inclusive Practices PLC Project has an intentional focus on the promotion of inclusive practices, ensuring that students who are IEP eligible, as well as other groups of struggling learners, have meaningful access to core instruction in established systems of intervention. Through the installation and implementation of collaborative structures and a relentless focus on learning, student outcomes will improve, including achievement and growth performance measured by district and state assessments. Collaboration leads to collective teacher efficacy which is a highly influential factor for improving student outcomes.

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-component, general education model, designed to identify students who may be at risk for learning or behavior challenges, offer support, and monitor progress.

The Strategic Instructional Model (SIM) is a formal model of cognitive and metacognitive interventions for struggling learners designed to focus on the following three broad areas of learning: Acquisition, storage, and/or expression/demonstration. The goal of SIM is for students to grow in executive functioning skills for self-directed learning.

Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership is a DESE initiative in partnership with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The focus of this initiative is to develop Inclusive principals who are well prepared to serve students with disabilities and support teachers across general and special education in order to improve outcomes. Inclusive leaders create learning environments where all students. can excel at high levels and promote distributive leadership to support and retain effective teachers of students with disabilities.

Provide a summary of how each evidence-based practice and activities or strategies that support its use, is intended to impact the SiMR by changing program/district policies, procedures, and/or practices, teacher/provider practices (e.g. behaviors), parent/caregiver outcomes, and/or child /outcomes.

Arkansas recognizes the need to improve access for SWD to receive instruction in least restrictive environments. The evidence-based practices outlined in the SSIP support systemic change with the overarching goal of improving students' access to quality core instruction in least restrictive environments. When educators are supported and empowered through quality professional learning that deepens knowledge and skills to serve diverse learners, and when general and special educators, and related services collaborate together around student data, students will demonstrate significant growth in literacy scores which is the Arkansas SSIP SiMR. As reflected in the SSIP Logic outputs and changes to LEA systems include the following:

- SSIP schools reflect a collaboratively designed multi-tiered system of supports for academics and behavior
- SSIP school building leadership teams build and increase capacity as measured by a Systems Analysis Tool and/or the Professional Learning Communities Continuums Survey
- Educators in SSIP schools build and increase capacity to implement HLPs and other evidence-based practices as measured by the Self-Efficacy Inventory
- SSIP schools evidence an increase of students with disabilities with moderate or high growth as measured by the DESE and as reflected in the SiMR
- SSIP schools meaningfully engage and collaborate with families to improve outcomes for students with disabilities

The evidence-based practices that will enable and implement the above-listed changes include:

High Leverage Practices for Inclusive Classrooms, as defined by the the Council for Exceptional Children, offers a set of practices that are essential to the support of student learning, and that can be systematically taught, learned and implemented by novice and experienced educators. HLPs have been supported by research to have significant potential for improving academic or behavioral outcomes for students with disabilities and other learners. These practices are best utilized through a tiered system of support, and based data and individual student needs.

The Inclusive Practices PLC Project has an intentional focus on the promotion of inclusive practices, ensuring that students who are IEP eligible, as well as other groups of struggling learners, have meaningful access to core instruction in established systems of intervention. Through the installation and implementation of collaborative structures and a relentless focus on learning, student outcomes will improve, including performance measured by district and state assessments. Collaboration leads to collective teacher efficacy which is a highly influential factor for improving student outcomes.

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-component, general education model, designed to identify students who may be at risk for learning or behavior challenges, offer support, and monitor progress.

The Strategic Instructional Model (SIM) is a formal model of cognitive and metacognitive interventions for struggling learners designed to focus on the following three broad areas of learning: Acquisition, storage, and/or expression /demonstration. The goal of SIM is for students to increase self-direction in learning how to learn.

Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership is a DESE initiative in partnership with the Council of Chief State School Officers. The focus of this initiative is to develop Inclusive principals who are well prepared to serve students with disabilities and support teachers across general and special education to improve outcomes. Inclusive leaders create learning environments where all students can excel at high levels and promote distributive leadership to support and retain effective teachers of students with disabilities.

Describe the data collected to monitor fidelity of implementation and to assess practice change.

To measure change across multiple agency initiatives in the SSIP, Arkansas continued to utilize the SSIP Infrastructure Development Planning and Progress Management Tool: Using Implementation Drivers and Stages of Implementation. Consideration of all initiatives reflected in the SSIP Theory of Action for this improvement strategy resulted in ratings that remained stable. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = pre-exploration and 5 = full implementation) Arkansas SSIP Infrastructure Tool ratings revealed the following implementation scores: Competency drivers of training (4.5) and coaching (4.0), Organizational drivers in facilitative administration (4.5) and systems intervention (4.5). Overall performance assessment of the Arkansas system coherence also remained stable at (4.5) as did the technical & adaptive leadership drivers (4.0). Multiple initiatives are included in the SSIP and some initiatives are more developed with regard to stages of implementation. Ratings reflect the intentional focus on coherence among multiple initiatives at multiple stages of implementation.

The evaluation of improvement for the SSIP aligns with the SPDG evaluation plan. The SPDG's comprehensive evaluation system measures RTI capacity, fidelity of implementation, and student outcomes. The SPDG serves as the implementation team for strategy two of the SSIP, and systemic improvements are measured through the SISEP State Capacity Assessment (SCA) tool. The State Implementation Team completed the SISEP State Capacity Assessment with a focus on RTI. The SCA is designed to support scaling up of evidence-based practices by providing a regular measure of state capacity, a structured process for completing a state action plan, information on progress towards goals, and a common infrastructure for implementation. Due to reframing RTI alongside a broader focus on inclusive practices and UDL, scores for this SCA are not directly comparable to the previous year's SCA results. State Capacity Assessment results from the spring of 2021 were as follows: Leadership (33%), Infrastructure and Resources (58%), Communication and Engagement (50%), and SCA Total Score (46%). Percentages represent the number of SCA items in place and will serve as the baseline for future SCA administrations with the expanded focus of DESE and SPDG on UDL, and inclusive practices including RTI. Historically SSIP reporting included the Regional Capacity Assessment (RCA), the District Capacity Assessment, the PBIS Tiered Fidelity Inventory, and the Reading-Tiered Fidelity Inventory. These measures are designed to assist stakeholders within the system in their efforts to effectively gauge change in implementation.

Describe any additional data (e.g. progress monitoring) that was collected that supports the decision to continue the ongoing use of each evidence-based practice.

As measured by an FY20 survey of Arkansas educators in the DESE-OSE Novice Special Education Mentoring Program, data supports DESE's intensified efforts to provide training and technical assistance with High Leverage Practices. Results from this survey indicated that 82% of novice special educators were interested in receiving more support to embed HLPs. In addition, this survey indicated that more novice teachers (FY 20/29.2%) are gaining exposure to HLPs in pre-service training programs as compared to (FY19/13.9%). Considering that 70% of novice teachers indicated that they did not have extensive coverage of HLPs in their pre-service training, DESE a continuous need to intensify and expand supports around HLPs.

Qualitative survey feedback from Inclusive Practices trainings that occurred with over 1,000 educators and families representing 137 districts from every Arkansas Regional Educational Service Cooperative in FY 20 indicated that district and school teams want more support in how to implement inclusive practices, including UDL, PLCs, RTI and HLPs. LEAs are increasingly requesting DESE support for the "how" of implementing inclusive practices, and each evidence-based practice outlined in the SSIP supports this need.

Provide a summary of the next steps for each evidence-based practices and the anticipated outcomes to be attained during the next reporting period.

Inclusive Practices Professional Learning Communities Project:

Arkansas expects to expand the Inclusive Practices PLC Project with an additional seven schools during the next reporting cycle. DESE and Solution Tree will continue a partnership to develop and expand the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) at Work® process within select SSIP schools in Arkansas based on an application process. This evidence-based practice that focuses on applying PLC structures and building a culture of shared responsibility and collective teacher efficacy between general and special educators in maximizing learning for all students is essential to work of the SSIP. It is anticipated that schools involved in this initiative will install/expand a PLC culture by ensuring that all subgroups of students are addressed collectively. Additionally, it is anticipated that schools will experience increases in the number of students with disabilities being educated in general educated content settings, with access to core instruction. In this PLC culture, it is also anticipated that teachers will grow in self and collective efficacy with knowledge and implementation of UDL, HLPs and innovative service delivery models.

High Leverage Practices:

Survey data acquired during this phase of the SSIP revealed improvement in year-to-year comparisons for Arkansas novice special educators' self-efficacy with applying high-leverage practices (HLPs) in their everyday work. In FY 19, only 22% of novice special educators indicated that they felt confident applying HLPs in their everyday work. Contrastively, FY20 survey data indicated an increase in special educators' self efficacy with 35% indicating confidence in the application of HLPs. In FY19, 49% of survey respondents indicated low or no confidence applying HLPs. In FY20, only 28% of respondents indicated low or no confidence with HLP application. As next steps, the SSIP will continue to leverage agency infrastructure and supports to increase state-level capacity and knowledge of HLPs, with a focus on agency unit leaders, regional content specialists, agency technical assistance providers, IHEs and the state's parent training center. The SSIP will also continue to intentionally collaborate with Educator Effectiveness and IHEs around efforts to mentor all novice administrators and general and special educators with HLPs. It is expected that the scaling of work around HLPs will better equip general and special educators to be more confident in knowledge and skills of working with diverse learners, and that improved self-efficacy will encourage more novice teachers to remain in the profession.

Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership:

Arkansas recognizes that administrators play an important role in guaranteeing that students and teachers have access to necessary supports. DESE has been directly supported by CCSSO's Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership (AIPL) initiative and the SSIP SiMR will continue to be the overarching goal for this AIPL work. An integral component of AIPL has been related to embedding HLPs into statewide professional learning for principals and school leadership teams. In addition, DESE plans to develop and expand the Inclusive Practices PLC Project within additional schools to serve as working laboratories for the PLC at Work® process, conducting action research, and sharing best inclusive practices with other schools throughout the state. This project will continue to have an intentional focus on ensuring that students who are IEP eligible as well as other groups of struggling learners have meaningful access to core instruction and established systems of intervention. Arkansas will also advance strategy one by creating an additional statewide inclusive practices training campaign focused on "the how" of inclusive practices. Promotion and expansion of new inclusive practices branding and an inclusive practices website will be a next step. With improved website access to resources that align with state initiatives, LEAs will be able to see that this work stretches beyond special education and is important for all stakeholders. Beyond improvements to the SiMR, DESE anticipates a continuous cultural shift that follows the Least Dangerous Assumption, where all Arkansas students will be considered general education students first and will be served in Least Restrictive Environments. It is expected that Arkansas' LRE data will continue to improve with this continuous cultural shift. It is also anticipated that principals will grow in self-efficacy of how to serve as an inclusive instructional leader at the building level.

Strategic Instructional Model:

Though the SSIP SiMR is focused on literacy value-added growth scores for SWD in grades 3-5, Arkansas recognizes the need to provide supports for all students regardless of grade. Arkansas will continue to expand supports for the Strategic Instructional Model, with an emphasis on the following SIM Learning Strategies and Content Enhancement Routines: Inference Strategy, Proficiency in Sentence Writing Strategy, Main Idea Strategy, Listening and Note-taking Strategy, Vocabulary LINCing Routine/Strategy, Fundamentals of Sentence Writing Strategy, Unit Organizer Routine, and the Framing Routine. These strategies and routines have been offered via face-to-face and virtual sessions by content specialists through a partnership with the University of Central Arkansas Mashburn Center for Learning Team. The next steps for this work are to partner with the DESE Digital Learning Unit to scale the reach and sustainability of this work by offering SIM professional learning opportunities via a learning management system, followed by job-embedded coaching.

Response to Intervention, UDL, Inclusive Practices:

Relative to strategy two, Arkansas will leverage the SPDG to build upon previous work around RTI for academics and behavior, and embed HLPs and other EBP's to directly continue and align with the SSIP. A Synthesis of Feedback and Recommendations from the Field was completed by the Office of Innovation for Education at the University of Arkansas in April of 2020. Multiple educator focus groups' provided perspectives for the development of future professional learning in Arkansas. Given the need for educators to increase their self-efficacy, knowledge, and skills in educating students with various learning needs, the SPDG will support strategy two of the SSIP by focusing on the following: 1. Transform and expand Arkansas' statewide coherent system of supports through competency-based professional learning and coaching that will increase the implementation of high-leverage and other evidence-based practices (including RTI), which will result in improved outcomes for SWD. 2. Through personnel development and ongoing assistance, increase the capacity of regional and LEA teams to offer high-quality professional learning with a focus on implementing and sustaining integrated HLPs and other EBP's within a coherent system of support. 3. Increase the knowledge, skill, and implementation of UDL, HLPs and EBP's by offering general and special educators choice in competency-based professional learning with the added goal of certification, micro credential, and/or badge-recognition as well as a potential educator stipend. In addition to improving the SiMR, outcomes from this work are anticipated to promote improvements with LRE and teacher efficacy. Schools involved in direct SPDG support will continue to be included in the SiMR data set.

Section C: Stakeholder Engagement

Description of Stakeholder Input

In Spring 2021, Arkansas began developing a plan of action to establish a representative broad stakeholder group from across the state to compliment the work of the Special Education Advisory Council regarding the baseline and target setting for the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR). Invitations were sent to 46 individuals of which many have dual roles. Only one person declined the invitation. This select stakeholder group represented the five regions of the state, multiple race/ethnicities and included both males and females. Further the representation was comprised of 12 parents, 4 related service providers, 8 early childhood providers, 2 early childhood coordinators, 12 district special education supervisors, 7 general/special education teachers, 4 personnel from state agencies, and 4 superintendents/principals. This stakeholder group, as well as advisory members, DESE OSE staff and TA providers, participated in a series of webinars on indicator target setting and improvement activities. Each session was split into breakout rooms so the groups were small enough to encourage discussion. The SSIP Coordinator and the IDEA Data and Research Director served as leaders and facilitators of this process.

In addition to SPP/APR stakeholder group meetings, the SSIP Coordinator was directly involved with seeking stakeholder feedback at each State Special Education Advisory Council meeting. The State Advisory meetings held in April, July, and October 2021, and January 2022 focused on setting new targets and discussion of improvement strategies. The Advisory Council representation includes: Parents (10), Adult Corrections, Advocates (2), AR Rehabilitation Services (2), Career & Technical Education (2), Center for Exceptional Families (PTI), Foster Care, Higher Education, Juvenile Corrections, LEA Special Education Supervisors, McKinney-Vento Administrator, Teachers (4), Private School, and Public Charter Schools. During these meetings, the council members and any public participants were provided updates on the previously held stakeholder input sessions, compliance indicators were discussed, dispute resolution indicators, and the SSIP. The July 2021 meeting provided an overview to the Advisory Council of stakeholder engagement meetings and input on baseline and target setting for Indicators 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 17. The October 2021 meeting discussed the effect of the new graduation and drop out measurements on the local APRs and an update on the SSIP. The January 2022 Advisory Council presentation provided an overview of the APR with the targets set for the next six years, including the SSIP with feedback solicited prior to the final submission.

Opportunities for SSIP stakeholder engagement were also provided at conferences. The Arkansas School-Based Therapy Conference was held in September 2021 with 220 participants, and the Arkansas Collaborative Consultants Fall Convening was held in October 2021 with 84 participants. At both meetings, components of the SSIP improvement strategies were discussed and feedback solicited on the messaging, inclusion of initiatives and overall direction of the plan. Feedback was provided on the SSIP Theory of Action, and as a result, Universal Design for Learning was added as an initiative to explore within Arkansas' coherent system of support.

To gather more family input, a special stakeholder session was held with a group of parents organized by one of State's PTI centers, in December 2021. Although many families were invited to participate only three were available to attend. However, the information shared was also sent to the families who were unable to attend that day with instructions on how they could provide feedback. An overview of previous stakeholder input was provided on Indicator 17, with opportunities to provide additional feedback on the final targets and activities.

A separate Indicator 17 SSIP stakeholder input session was provided with administrators from SSIP targeted school districts in January 2022. This session focused on SSIP updates surrounding state initiatives, and the State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR) targets through FFY2025. Feedback on the SiMR and the initiatives in the SSIP was requested.

The current state initiatives involved with inclusive practices and outlined in the SSIP theory of action are being scaled to include greater numbers of educators and administrators across Arkansas, and to build capacity for job-embedded coaching supports. As more educators are trained in how to implement major initiatives, it is anticipated that progress towards the targets outlined in the SPP/APR will be accelerated.

Describe the specific strategies implemented to engage stakeholders in key improvement efforts.

The stakeholder engagement strategies primarily utilized for the SSIP include clarifying goals, working with partner organizations, using multiple meeting opportunities, communicating often, using multiple means of submitting feedback and identifying key individuals who will champion the work. The SSIP Coordinator, UALR Data and Research Director and State Implementation Team from DESE have provided regular updates to, and requested feedback from, external stakeholders including the Special Education State Advisory Council and Special Education LEA Supervisors to keep these groups informed as well as to solicit their feedback. Increased involvement with the state's family engagement center, The Center for Exceptional Families (TCFEF) was a primary focus during this cycle of the SSIP. The SSIP partnered with TCFEF to gather qualitative data and video vignettes on the educational experiences of 15 diverse families within Arkansas capturing their experiences navigating public schools and the special education process. The data for this project are still being collected for public use at the time of this report, however, the goal is to gain valuable perspectives that will help to refine the Theory of Action for supports and services that best leverage family involvement and engagement. This effort directly aligns with HLP 3, which pertains to Collaborating with Families to Support Student Learning and Secure Needed Services.

The SSIP Coordinator is frequently involved with SPDG and SPMT leadership, as well as with the Arkansas Association of Special Education Administrators' meetings. Feedback on the SSIP is regularly solicited through these collaborations. The SSIP Coordinator also serves as a team member on the AIPL initiative to increase the capacity of administrators to be inclusive leaders. As part of the annual DESE monthly LEA technical

assistance calls, the SSIP Coordinator and the Associate Director of Special Education provide updates to LEA Special Education Supervisors about the infrastructure work taking place as well as solicit their feedback on the process. Continued intentional collaboration between the DESE and the Arkansas Collaborative Consultants (Professional Development Outreach) to better support LEAs has occurred through monthly meetings and the coordinated application of the SSIP theory of action into professional development, coaching and training support and facilitation.

The DESE Director of Special Programs, SSIP Coordinator, SPDG Director, and the DESE-OSE Coordinator for Assessment collaborate monthly with other Division of Learning Services representatives, including all content leaders for DESE. These meetings provide opportunities for the work of the DESE-OSE and the SSIP to be interwoven into broader DESE content initiatives, as well as feedback to be solicited from content experts.

Were there any concerns expressed by stakeholders during engagement activities? (yes/no)

NO

Describe how the State addressed the concerns expressed by stakeholders.

NA

Additional Implementation Activities

List any activities not already described that the State intends to implement in the next fiscal year that are related to the SiMR.

Recognizing the need to calibrate initiatives and supports for all learners, and to ensure that the SSIP is reflective of supports for diverse disabilities, a collaborative group of stakeholders will meet monthly to discuss the evidence-base and application of literacy supports for students with complex learning needs. Two Arkansas Children and Youth with Sensory Impairment (CAYSI) initiatives relate to gaining access to the general education curriculum (GEC), specifically in literacy, and helping educational teams implement appropriate communication systems. This group of stakeholders will examine extant evidence for literacy supports for students with deafblindness, and work to collectively align the evidence with ongoing initiatives, including R.I.S.E..

In addition, the State's Lead R.I.S.E. Specialist, the DESE-OSE Coordinator for Curriculum and Assessment and the SSIP Coordinator will participate in the Standards-Aligned Instruction for Literacy (SAIL) cross-state collaborative addressing the evidence base and literacy supports for students with complex learning needs.

These new activities align well with Universal Design for Learning which was added to the SSIP Theory of Action during this reporting cycle. As Arkansas moves towards a nested system of professional learning, the intended results from the activities listed above will result in a plan for continuous improvement for building capacity in meeting educational needs of complex learners educated in least restrictive environments.

Provide a timeline, anticipated data collection and measures, and expected outcomes for these activities that are related to the SiMR.

The timeline for above-listed additional activities will be monthly literacy group stakeholder meetings beginning in October of 2021 through June 2022. Initially, data collection will be limited to qualitative conversations based on agendas and meeting minutes. As the engagement deepens, it is anticipated that more quantitative data will be captured as needed to respond to stakeholder questions. Aligning the evidence base of the science of reading with UDL, high leverage and evidence-based practices and through the lens of diverse high and low incidence disabilities will guide the development of professional learning supports for LEAs in Arkansas to provide better instruction for students with cognitive/communicative/behavioral or other complex needs. With improved, standards-aligned instruction in the area of literacy, it is anticipated that students' value-added growth scores will yield moderate to high growth, which directly relates to the the Arkansas SiMR.

Describe any newly identified barriers and include steps to address these barriers.

NA

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional).

17 - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

17 - OSEP Response

The State provided targets for FFYs 2020 through 2025 for this indicator, and OSEP accepts those targets.

17 - Required Actions