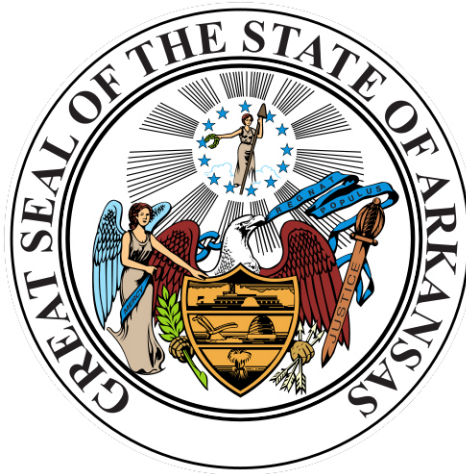


ARKANSAS

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 2023-2024

Submitted February 3, 2025

Indicator 17: State Systemic Improvement Plan

Instructions and Measurement

Monitoring Priority: General Supervision

Results indicator: 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 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 2022 through February 2027, 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) 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 SPPs/APRs, 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., February 1, 2023). 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 2022 APR, report on anticipated outcomes to be obtained during FFY 2023, i.e., July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024).

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 (e.g., behaviors), parent/caregiver outcomes, and/or child outcomes. Describe any additional data (e.g., 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 2022 APR, report on activities it intends to implement in FFY 2023, i.e., July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024) 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)

YES

Provide a description of the subset of the population from the indicator.

Historically, Arkansas has interpreted the population for this indicator as the special education population of grades 3-5 in SSIP-targeted buildings. All students may be exposed to SSIP activities or the results. The SiMR is comprised of value-added growth scores for students with multiple years of data on the regular assessment. The State selected "yes" to reflect that the data are a subset of the special education population in SSIP-targeted buildings since the SiMR does not include students who participate in the alternate assessment.

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 updated SSIP Theory of Action (TOA) continues to focus on the coherent improvement strategies established in previous Phases. These strategies include collaboration and the implementation of professional learning and technical assistance, which remain central to the SSIP's approach. The updates made within the TOA were identified through stakeholder collaboration and feedback, highlighting a need for clarity and additional details to describe the strategies and actions across the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), LEA, educator, and student levels. The updates reflect a more comprehensive understanding of how to best support each level of the system, focusing particularly on aligning efforts, improving educator efficacy, and enhancing student outcomes. By refining these strategies, the updated TOA strengthens the overall system while maintaining a consistent focus on the original strategies and improving outcomes for students with disabilities.

Please provide a link to the current theory of action.

<https://arksped.ade.arkansas.gov/documents/ssip/SSIP-SPDG-OSE-TOA-2025.pdf>

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 (greater than)

FFY	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target >=	62.33%	63.16%	63.37%	64.50%

FFY 2023 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 2022 Data	FFY 2023 Target	FFY 2023 Data	Status	Slippage
1,123	1,618	66.19%	63.16%	69.41%	Met Target	No Slippage

Provide the data source for the FFY 2022 data.

The data is the RLA value added score, as determined by the statewide assessment outlined in 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 Reading Language Arts (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-2025.pdf>

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

YES

If yes, provide a description of the changes and updates to the evaluation plan.

The updated SSIP evaluation plan includes more detailed descriptions of data collection tools, frequency of data collection, and the specific evaluation questions being addressed. The previous evaluation plan listed the assessment tools and the current plan now outlines the frequency of data collection and clarifies the purpose of each tool. This includes annual assessments, ongoing observations, and quarterly data collection. The plan also incorporates new tools to support the evaluation, such as stakeholder meeting notes, coaching observations, and the uPar, Read&Write, and Equatio data, and agency priorities (AR APP), which were not previously detailed. The updated plan outlines a comprehensive approach to evaluating implementation, collaboration, professional development, coaching, and progress toward the SiMR (value-added reading scores), focusing on continuous improvement and sustainability in the SSIP.

If yes, describe a rationale or justification for the changes to the SSIP evaluation plan.

The rationale for the updates to the SSIP evaluation plan is grounded in a commitment to improving the effectiveness and transparency of the evaluation process. Data-driven decision-making played a significant role in refining the plan, as the state sought to ensure that the evaluation tools and methods align with the evolving needs of the SSIP. The previous plan, which only listed assessment tools without detailed descriptions, lacked the necessary clarity and specificity for stakeholders to fully understand how data would be collected and analyzed. Through stakeholder collaboration and feedback sessions, it was identified that more detailed descriptions and clearer explanations were needed, leading to the updates in the plan.

The inclusion of new tools, such as stakeholder meeting notes and coaching observations, was driven by feedback from stakeholders, including educators, administrators, and partners in the SSIP process. These stakeholders emphasized the need for more frequent and comprehensive data collection to better monitor progress and strategies. By incorporating tools like uPar, Read&Write, and Equatio data, and aligning them with agency priorities (AR APP), the state aims to better capture the progress toward the State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR) of value-added reading scores.

This revision of the evaluation plan reflects a data-driven approach, informed by insights and input from various stakeholders involved in the implementation process, ensuring that the evaluation is both robust and actionable for continuous improvement.

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

In this reporting period, Arkansas (AR) implemented two comprehensive infrastructure improvement strategies designed to strengthen support for LEAs, build sustainable systems, & ensure meaningful access to high-quality instruction and services for all students, including those with disabilities. These strategies utilized state & federal resources, technical assistance (TA), professional development/learning (PD), & collaborative structures to drive systemic improvements.

Strategy One: Expand & coordinate a coherent system of support aligned with existing DESE initiatives, differentiating based on LEAs' needs & data, & more effectively leverage resources to increase the reach & impact of the agency's work.

This phase of the SSIP focused on expanding its coordinated system of support to meet LEA needs, aligning efforts with DESE's Theory of Action, organizational standards, values, & priorities. This strategy aimed to improve access to high-quality instruction & services for all students, including students with disabilities, by streamlining state initiatives & focusing on PD, TA, distributive leadership, & evidence-based practices (EBPs).

AR remains committed to promoting safe, supportive, & collaborative school environments that ensure a guaranteed & viable curriculum with effective instruction in every classroom. This commitment, reflected in the SSIP Theory of Action, emphasizes alignment, scaling, & sustainability across initiatives. Aligned with the AR LEARNS Act of 2023, the SSIP aims to improve access to literacy instruction & high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) grounded in the Science of Reading (R.I.S.E).

Collaboration was central to this strategy. The Office of Special Education (OSE) administrative team attended monthly meetings with agency leaders to collaborate & align efforts across DESE initiatives, including those reflected in the SSIP Theory of Action. Additionally, the team partnered with the Arkansas Collaborative Consultants (ACC), who provided statewide, tiered support to LEAs & educators. This collaborative approach leveraged structured feedback loops & data-driven decision-making to align supports with LEA needs. School-based distributive leadership teams worked with general educators, special educators, & related service professionals to implement EBPs & drive innovative service delivery. These efforts strengthened the capacity of individual team members & fostered collective efficacy, empowering teams to work more effectively toward shared goals. By utilizing cycles of inquiry & focusing on data-driven decisions, these teams enhanced their ability to improve outcomes for students.

As outlined in the SSIP Evaluation Plan, robust monitoring tools were employed to ensure quality assurance, to track progress, & guide decision-making & improvement efforts. Data from initiatives & statewide assessments provided valuable insights into educator practices & student outcomes, ensuring accountability across the system.

To drive systemic improvements, key initiatives were implemented in alignment with the SSIP Theory of Action. Frameworks for improvement, such as High Reliability Schools (HRS) & AR's one grant application (AR APP), supported LEAs in building systems of continuous improvement. Administrative leadership initiatives, including Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership (AIPL) & Inclusive Education for Beginning Administrators (IEBA), enhanced administrators' capacity to lead change efforts effectively. Distributive leadership & capacity-building efforts, such as the AR Meaningful Access and Participation (MAP) Project & ALL IN Trainer of Trainers (ToT), empowered school leadership teams through coaching & modeling. Multi-tiered systems of support

(MTSS) frameworks, such as THRIVE & BX3, provided LEAs with tiered intervention strategies to address both behavior & academic needs. Finally, evidence-based instructional practices were advanced through initiatives on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), High-Leverage Practices (HLPs), the Strategic Instructional Model™ (SIM), & the Reading Initiative for Student Excellence (R.I.S.E.), which equipped educators with the tools needed to meet the unique needs of all learners.

Strategy Two: Transform personnel development through a system of competency-based professional learning & technical assistance aligned with DESE initiatives & tailored to LEAs' needs, scaling AR's MTSS & meaningful access model, including UDL & EBPs, to increase student success in behavior & academics, with a focus on literacy.

This strategy transforms personnel development through a system of competency-based PD & TA aligned with DESE initiatives, including HQIM, R.I.S.E., HLPs, SIM™, UDL, THRIVE, & MAP. Tailored to LEA needs, it scales AR's MTSS & meaningful access model to improve student success in behavior & academics, with a focus on literacy. Supported by the SPDG in SSIP-targeted schools, this strategy equips educators with tools to implement UDL, HLPs, & EBPs into daily instruction, fostering sustainable improvement. The SPDG PD model incorporates multi-year, job-embedded training, differentiated coaching, & follow-up supports to build the capacity of educators & administrators while establishing a collaborative & sustainable support system to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

The SPDG team works closely with other DESE units to align PD efforts with statewide priorities. Regular meetings & structured communication protocols enable seamless coordination between leadership & coaches. Additionally, collaborative processes & structures embedded in the MTSS scale-up further foster shared decision-making & feedback loops, ensuring that PD & TA are responsive to LEA needs.

This strategy aligns with the AR LEARNS Act by enhancing literacy outcomes & improving access to high-quality instruction. A key component of this effort is the development & implementation of micro-credentials (MCs), which adhere to DESE's standards for PD, follow established quality assurance criteria, and are used in a variety of ways across the state's career continuum. These MCs verify educator proficiency through evidence-based evaluation processes & provide a flexible, competency-based approach to PD. During this reporting period, DESE expanded MCs to provide educators greater choice & autonomy. Hosted on AR IDEAS, the state's PD learning management system, MCs & virtual tools ensure statewide accessibility for coaching & training, regardless of geographic location.

This strategy builds capacity through job-embedded PD, coaching, & follow-up support tailored to LEA needs. LEAs receive differentiated coaching during planning, implementation, & monitoring stages & through cycles of continuous improvement. The SPDG team provides ongoing guidance to ensure fidelity of implementation, enabling educators to consistently apply UDL, HLPs, & EBPs.

Both SSIP infrastructure improvement strategies focus on alignment, scaling, & sustainability, evolving toward a single, coherent, & collaborative system where students with disabilities are included as general education students with access to additional supports based on data-driven decisions. This comprehensive system ensures meaningful access for all students & while aligning with stakeholder feedback, the extant evidence base, & DESE's Mission & 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.

Strategy One aimed to expand & coordinate a coherent system of support for LEAs by developing tailored plans for coaching, PD & TA. It focused on providing LEAs with targeted support to build leadership capacity, which resulted in increased collaboration among educators & related service professionals. This collaboration proved critical in improving outcomes & meeting student needs.

This strategy aligns with the systems framework by addressing governance, data, PD, & TA, & reinforced collaboration through NCSI's Cross-State Learning Collaboratives & participation in IDC's SSIP Data Quality Peer Group. TA was received from NCEO during the exploration phase to develop a growth measure for students participating in the AA-AAAS. This ongoing TA will continue to inform the potential development of a second SiMR.

Data-driven tools like the SSIP Infrastructure Tool & State Capacity Assessment (SCA) tracked progress across key areas of competency, leadership, & organization capacity. On a scale of 1 (pre-exploration) to 5 (full implementation), the SSIP Infrastructure Tool revealed strong progress with scores in competency drivers (selection 5.0, training 4.0 & coaching 4.5), organizational drivers (data systems 4.0, facilitative administration 5.0 & systems intervention 5.0), and leadership drivers (technical & adaptive leadership 4.0). The overall performance assessment reached 5.0, highlighting significant alignment & system coherence across various stages of implementation.

The MAP Needs Assessment & coaching observations guided schoolwide decision-making to improve student learning outcomes. Each school demonstrated growth across six critical areas: 1) aligning schoolwide policies, procedures, & practices; 2) Fostering collaborative teams & structures; 3) ensuring a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum with aligned instruction & assessment; 4) intentional, proactive instructional planning; 5) developing IEP goals tailored to individual student needs; and 6) strategically developing systems to provide special education services based on student needs. Data-driven decision-making & these tools tracked the impact of improvement efforts, ensuring the strategy's continued effectiveness in driving positive outcomes.

Stakeholder engagement was central to the strategy's success. Monthly meetings, data analysis, & feedback loops ensured the strategy remained responsive to LEA needs. Stakeholders, including OSE leadership team, SPDG, State Advisory Council, & Arkansas's PTI Center (TCFEF) collaborated through various forums, such as DESE Unit meetings, statewide LEA meetings, ACC meetings, & annual conferences. These collaborative efforts modeled a culture of shared accountability & decision-making, reducing organizational silos & supporting systemic change.

LEAs, administrators, educators, & related service professionals received structured coaching, PD, & TA to align school goals with state initiatives & effectively meet the unique needs of students. Topics included implementing improvement frameworks, building capacity for administrative & school leadership teams, as well as integrating UDL, HLPs, and EBPs, into a MTSS to address both behavior and academics.

Strategy One expanded a system of support for LEAs through tailored coaching, PD, & TA. The support & collaborative structures were key to successfully implementing MTSS, driving innovation service delivery, & increasing access to high-quality instruction for students with disabilities within their least restrictive environment. This strategy directly contributes to the SiMR by improving literacy outcomes for students with disabilities. By integrating UDL, HLPs, & EBPs into a MTSS, the strategy ensures educators are equipped to deliver instruction that meets the needs of students with disabilities. By prioritizing these practices, the strategy is facilitating literacy growth & aligning with the overall goal of increasing literacy outcomes as measured by the statewide student assessment.

This strategy supports long-term sustainability by fostering a data-driven, scalable model of LEA support. As the strategy expands, the data-driven approach will continue to provide tailored support to additional LEAs, ensuring the long-term effectiveness of the improvements in systems, leadership, educator practices, & student outcomes, ensuring scalability across the state.

Strategy Two focused on transforming personnel development through a system of competency-based PD/TA aligned with DESE initiatives, increasing statewide access to PD and MCs in UDL, HLPs, and EBPs. Data collection tracked the effectiveness of PD, TA, & coaching, with surveys & evaluations measuring progress & outcomes. The Educator Self-Efficacy Survey revealed that 93% of educators reported increased self-efficacy in improving outcomes for students with disabilities. The SCA showed systemic improvements across Leadership (94%), Infrastructure & Resources (100%), Communication & Engagement (89%), with an overall score of 94%, reflecting alignment & sustainability of effective practices.

Stakeholder engagement included continuous feedback from educators & administrators, collected through MC completion reports, coaching feedback, & surveys, to ensure the PD model remained responsive to educators' evolving needs. Regular feedback loops helped adjust the content & delivery of PD to ensure its effectiveness statewide. Achievements were communicated to stakeholders to maintain transparency & foster a shared understanding of progress and growth areas.

The delivery of high-quality PD, including MCs, provided educators with job-embedded professional learning, enabling them to demonstrate mastery of new strategies, such as UDL, HLPs, & EBPs. This competency-based PD aligned to quality standards, state PD standards, & data components, contributing to the sustainability of effective practices. This approach allowed educators to adapt these strategies to meet the unique needs of their classrooms, directly increasing their ability to support all students. The combination of PD, TA, & coaching led to improved educator practices, with educators more effectively differentiating & specially designing instruction to respond to the individual needs of students. Educators' practices improved with 96% meeting proficiency targets related to PD, and 85% implementing UDL, HLPs, & EBPs with fidelity. The alignment between educator learning & student support led to improved literacy outcomes, as evidenced by ongoing progress monitoring & assessment data.

Strategy two supports the SiMR goal of improving literacy outcomes for students with disabilities by equipping educators with the tools, knowledge, & support needed to implement UDL, HLPs, and EBPs effectively. The integration of assistive & instructional technology (HLP 14) into daily instruction ensures that students, especially those with disabilities, can access grade-level content, leading to better literacy outcomes. The combination of these practices & technologies supports students' ability to engage with high-quality instruction & achieve growth in reading & other academic areas.

By promoting continuous, competency-based professional learning. Strategy Two supports system change & long-term sustainability. As the PD model expands, it will reach more educators, ensuring its scalability & long-term impact. The data-driven approach to PD, coupled with the use of MCs and ongoing TA, ensures lasting effects by equipping educators with the knowledge & skills to implement best practices. The strategy's scalable nature ensures that as more educators engage with this model, the effectiveness of these practices will continue to contribute to improved literacy outcomes statewide, supporting the long-term sustainability of the system.

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.

The next steps for Strategy One and Strategy Two will build on progress made during the current period, with a focus on data-driven decision-making, scalable PD, & collaborative leadership, all critical for improving outcomes for students with disabilities as aligned with the SiMR.

Strategy One will further expand the coherent support system for LEAs by increasing participation in the MAP project & the ToT, offering more tailored coaching, PD, & TA sessions. The MAP and ToT will continue to develop a culture of shared accountability &

responsibility among administrators, general educators, special educators, & related service professionals. These efforts will promote the development of collaborative goals, leading to more innovative service delivery. This will offer students with disabilities increased access to high-quality core instruction and greater opportunities for meaningful participation in their LRE. Broadening the integration of UDL, HLPs, & EBPs into MTSS will provide continued support to LEAs, increasing their ability to serve students with disabilities effectively. By increasing collaboration & student access, students are expected to achieve moderate to high growth in literacy, as measured by statewide assessments, and improvements in LRE participation.

Stakeholder engagement & feedback loops will be streamlined to ensure continuous refinement of support strategies. Additionally, interdepartmental collaboration will be strengthened across OSE, SPDG, ACC, TCFEF, advisory councils, national TA providers & other key stakeholders. In addition, DESE plans to increase collaboration with TCFEF will ensure alignment between family & educator engagement (HLP 3) to improve student outcomes. The integration of these updated practices will enhance educators' capacity to collaborate with families as partners to improve student outcomes.

TA provided by NCEO will continue through the next reporting period. The focus will remain on developing a growth measure for students participating in the AA-AAAS. This support will be used to guide the potential development of a second SiMR.

In the next reporting period, system alignment is expected to improve, as indicated by further gains in competency, organizational, & leadership drivers on the SSIP Infrastructure Tool. The collaborative accountability model will also expand to foster greater cohesion across LEAs & strengthening leadership teams. Data from self-efficacy surveys will show increased educator confidence in implementing UDL, HLPs, & EBPs, and the SCA results will reflect continued growth in leadership, infrastructure, & communication.

DESE will further integrate training on UDL, HLPs, & EBPs, including assistive & instructional technology (HLP 19) tools of uPAR, Read&Write, and Equatio, into the MAP, ToT, & R.I.S.E. initiatives. This will ensure educators are equipped to effectively implement best practices & HQIM and make data-driven decisions to create accessible learning environments. While the SSIP SiMR focuses on literacy growth for students with disabilities in grades 3-5, DESE recognizes the need to support all students. Statewide support for the Strategic Instructional Model (SIM™) will continue, with increased digital access to SIM™ Learning Strategies and Content Enhancement Routines. Training & coaching will be reinforced through a collaborative partnership with the University of Central Arkansas Mashburn Center for Learning. SIM™ PD will be scaled via AR IDEAS, DESE's online learning system, and the OSE Inclusive Education Specialist will pursue certifications to increase the state's capacity for certified trainers & coaches, further integrating SIM™ across statewide programs.

DESE recognizes the critical role of administrators in driving schoolwide change, especially in providing meaningful access to high-quality instruction for students with disabilities. The SiMR will remain the overarching goal, aligning inclusive leadership practices with improving literacy outcomes. To support this, the SSIP will integrate modules from the Inclusive Principal Leadership series, developed by the CEEDAR Center in collaboration with CASSO, into MAP and ToT and form an administrator support network. These modules will equip administrators with the knowledge & skills necessary to lead schoolwide change through the implementation of sustainable systems, structures, & effective practices. Administrative leaders will guide schools in increasing access to core instruction, promoting continuous improvement in LRE for students with disabilities, & further impacting the SiMR.

Strategy Two will focus on expanding access to competency-based PD, including MCs, for UDL, HLPs & EBPs, using the AR IDEAS learning management system for flexibility & educator autonomy. PD on MTSS and meaningful access will be intensified to address both behavioral & academic needs, with an intentional focus on literacy & increased access to tools like uPAR, Read&Write, and Equatio. The coaching model will also be expanded to support educators in applying these practices to effectively differentiate & provide specially designed instruction for students with disabilities.

DESE will enhance communication & feedback loops to ensure PD efforts are responsive to educator needs. Surveys & coaching observations will provide ongoing data to adjust & align PD with state priorities, supporting the scaling of EBPs. DESE expects improvements in educator practices, with more educators meeting proficiency targets for PD & MCs in UDL, HLPs, & EBPs, and increasing fidelity in implementation. This will lead to greater access to high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) & specially designed instruction for students with disabilities, directly impacting the SiMR by improving literacy outcomes. The continued reinforcement of the R.I.S.E. initiative will support statewide PD in reading, focusing on strategies for students with disabilities. In the next reporting period, DESE anticipates measurable improvements in educator practices, as reflected in higher proficiency in MCs & deeper integration of evidence-based instructional strategies into classroom practices, as observed through coaching observations.

With the expansion of PD & TA that incorporate UDL, HLPs, & EBPs, measurable improvements in educator self-efficacy are anticipated. Educators will feel more confident in their ability to provide specially designed instruction for students with disabilities. As SIM™, UDL, HLPs, and EBPs are scaled, students with disabilities will gain better access to high-quality instruction, contributing to improved literacy outcomes.

Both strategies are expected to show measurable improvements in educator self-efficacy, implementation fidelity of UDL, HLPs, and EBPs, and systemic collaboration. DESE expects moderate to high growth in student literacy outcomes, particularly for students with disabilities, as reflected in statewide literacy assessments. With continued PD/TA expansion, particularly around of assistive & instructional technologies, DESE anticipates increased access to high-quality instruction, more opportunities for students with disabilities to engage with rigorous, grade-level content, and further refinement of support systems for sustainability & scalability of these efforts.

By the next reporting period, DESE anticipates measurable improvements in student literacy outcomes, particularly for students with disabilities. These improvements will be reflected in moderate or high growth scores on statewide literacy assessments, as outlined

in the SSIP Theory of Action, Logic Model, and SiMR. The SSIP Logic Model can be viewed at <https://arksped.ade.arkansas.gov/documents/ssip/SSIP-OSE-Logic-Model-2025.pdf>.

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

High Leverage Practices for Inclusive Classrooms (HLPs)
Collaboration
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
Multi-tiered Systems of Support
Strategic Instructional Model (SIM™)
Inclusive Administrator Leadership
Coaching
Job-embedded professional learning
High-Quality Instructional Materials

Provide a summary of each evidence-based practice.

High Leverage Practices (HLPs) for Inclusive Classrooms, as defined by the Council for Exceptional Children, are a set of essential practices identified through research as having a strong, consistent impact on student learning and outcomes, especially for students with disabilities. These practices are designed to be systematically taught, learned, and implemented by both novice and experienced educators across all content areas. HLPs demonstrate significant potential for improving academic and behavioral outcomes for students with disabilities and other learners. To maximize their effectiveness, these practices are best utilized within a tiered system of support, where decision-making is informed by data to address individual student needs.

Collaboration (HLPs 1-3), when applied in structured ways, is evidence-based. Research supports collaboration between educators, related service professionals, and families as a key factor in improving student outcomes. Structured teacher collaboration with a clear focus on relevant, effective practices helps drive improvements in instructional effectiveness. By leveraging the collective expertise of group members, educators can share insights and strategies, elevating the overall performance of the team. Collaboration also promotes a sense of trust and motivation, which is essential for creating a positive learning environment for both students and educators. Additionally, this sense of shared purpose contributes to a more sustainable and effective school culture which has a direct impact on student achievement.

According to ESSA, Universal Design for Learning is recognized as a scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice. UDL provides multiple means of engagement, representation, and action/expression to accommodate unique learning preferences and needs. UDL has a solid evidence base, with research showing that it improves access to learning for all students, including students with disabilities, by offering flexibility in presenting information, allowing multiple ways for students to respond or demonstrate learning, and promoting varied student engagement in the learning process. Additionally, UDL aims to eliminate barriers to instruction, provide appropriate accommodations and supports, and uphold high achievement expectations for all students.

Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is a comprehensive, data-driven general education model designed to identify students who may be at risk for learning and/or behavioral challenges. This model involves multiple components with a focus on timely support and progress monitoring to ensure effective instruction and intervention based on student needs. Research supports MTSS as an effective practice for academic and behavior challenges, particularly for students with disabilities.

The Meaningful Access and Participation Project is strategically designed to develop inclusive administrators and leadership teams. This initiative aims to equip school leaders with the necessary skills to effectively support students with disabilities and collaborate with educators across general and special education, ultimately improving student outcomes. Inclusive leaders foster learning environments where all students can excel and promote distributive leadership to enhance educator support and retention, particularly for those who are highly effective working with students with disabilities. Research indicates that inclusive leadership positively impacts school culture and climate, teacher effectiveness, and student outcomes, especially for students with disabilities.

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. SIM™ has a well-documented evidence base for improving academic outcomes, especially for struggling readers and students with disabilities.

Coaching, when used as part of a professional development/professional learning model, is well-supported by research. Educator coaching, particularly coaching to support the effective implementation of evidence-based strategies, has been shown to improve teaching practices, enhance educator self-efficacy, and positively impact student outcomes. This practice is evidence-based, particularly when it is ongoing, job-embedded, and paired with meaningful feedback.

Job-Embedded Professional Learning, also referred to as competency-based professional learning, is a highly effective model for adult learning. It allows educators to apply new skills and knowledge directly in their classrooms, making it more relevant and sustainable. Research supports the idea that professional development/professional learning is most effective when it is ongoing and embedded in educators' daily work, rather than traditional one-time workshops.

High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) are aligned with rigorous academic standards and research-based methods, designed to support all learners, including students with disabilities. HQIM are grounded in the Science of Reading (SoR) and Universal Design

for Learning (UDL) principles, ensuring accessibility and engagement for all students. Research shows that HQIM improve literacy and academic achievement by providing teachers with structured, evidence-based strategies. When paired with professional development, HQIM help educators implement consistent, high-quality instruction, contributing directly to improved outcomes for students with disabilities, especially in literacy.

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.

AR is committed to providing meaningful to high-quality instruction in the LRE for students with disabilities, focusing on literacy. The EBPs in the SSIP drive systemic change, increasing access to core instruction that supports academic & behavioral growth. Through PD, TA, & coaching, educators develop the skills to support all learners. Collaboration among general educators, special educators, & related service professionals ensure a data-driven approach to improve literacy for students with disabilities, aligned with the SSIP SiMR. This teamwork tailors instruction to student needs & empowers educators to implement effective EBPs.

The intended impact is evident in SSIP schools, where the SiMR target has been exceeded in the past four reporting cycles. The changes & expected impacts across DESE, LEAs, educators, and students are outlined in the SSIP Logic Model and Theory of Action.

DESE has embedded HLPs into statewide PD & MCs, training educators to implement these practices effectively within a data-driven MTSS to address individual student needs. HLPs are incorporated into the MAP & ToT initiatives, offering LEAs & educators ongoing coaching & TA. SSIP and SPDG-supported schools help LEAs incorporate HLPs into teacher observations, fostering a unified instructional approach. Through statewide PD on HLPs, educators will implement these practices effectively, improving instructional consistency & effectiveness. Students with disabilities will experience improved literacy & academic outcomes as educators implement HLPs. Families will benefit from improved collaboration (HLP 3) & involvement in decision-making, leading to better educational experiences.

In alignment with ESSA, DESE supports UDL by integrating it into PD & resources for educators, ensuring flexible & inclusive teaching strategies. UDL principles are embedded in statewide initiatives like MAP, ToT, and R.I.S.E., aligned with statewide literacy goals to increase universal access to grade-level content, especially for students with disabilities. Educators will use UDL principles to adapt instruction, present information flexibly, & promote student engagement in the learning process. This framework will support educators to eliminate barriers, provide appropriate accommodations, & maintain high expectations for all students, improving literacy outcomes. Families will benefit from a more inclusive, accessible learning environment.

DESE promotes collaboration through the MAP & ToT initiatives, encouraging teamwork among educators, service providers, & families. DESE supports cross-functional collaboration at the state & LEA levels, guiding LEAs to integrate collaborative practices across departments to ensure cohesive support for students with disabilities. This collaboration with enhance instructional consistency & provide a more coordinated approach to education, improving literacy & academic success for students with disabilities. Families will benefit from better communication & support as educators & providers work together to meet their child's needs.

DESE promotes statewide MTSS PD & coaching (THRIVE, BX3, and MAP) to help educators use data for early identification of student needs. MTSS is a general education model that addresses learning & behavioral challenges. DESE supports LEAs in implementing MTSS, ensuring structured tiered interventions, progress monitoring, & responsive teaching. Educators collaboratively identify essential standards, frequently review student assessment data, & match interventions to student needs, ensuring high level of learning for all. Students with disabilities will receive timely, tailored interventions based on individual needs, leading to improved literacy & academic achievement. Families will benefit from clear, structured support that helps students succeed academically.

The Meaningful Access and Participation Project aims to develop inclusive administrators and leadership teams. This project prepares leaders to support students with disabilities & educators across general & special education to improve outcomes. Administrators create environments where all students can excel & promote distributive leadership to retain effective teachers of students with disabilities. DESE guides LEAs in developing practices that enhance administrators' efficacy in supporting educators & improving instructional quality, ensuring alignment with the needs of all students, particularly those with disabilities, to improve literacy outcomes.

The Strategic Instructional Model (SIM™) offers cognitive & metacognitive interventions for struggling learners, focusing on acquisition, storage, & expression of knowledge. DESE supports LEAs with SIM™ implementation through PD & coaching, providing educators with structured methods to support literacy development. Educators will be trained to implement SIM™, helping students organize & process information, improving literacy outcomes. Students with disabilities will develop stronger literacy skills & fostering academic independence.

DESE integrates coaching into Strategy One & Strategy Two of the SSIP, offering job-embedded support to educators to enhance instructional practices. DESE encourages LEAs to adopt tailored coaching models, providing educators with targeted, ongoing support to refine teaching strategies, improve self-efficacy, & implement EBPs effectively. With coaching, educators will enhance instructional effectiveness, leading to improved literacy outcomes, especially for students with disabilities, benefiting families higher-quality instruction.

DESE supports job-embedded professional learning through MCs and PD linked to classroom experiences. Integrating MCs, like UDL and HLPs, into the state's professional development system empowers educators to develop new competencies, measure skill

proficiency, & earn recognition along DESE's career continuum. This approach fosters educator ownership, leading to improved instructional & assessment practices. DESE encourages LEAs to formalize job-embedded PD in professional learning plans, ensuring educators continuously improve based on student needs. This ongoing, relevant PD enhances teaching effectiveness, especially in literacy for students with disabilities, resulting in better outcomes for students.

DESE supports High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) by providing access to aligned, evidence-based curricula, ensuring materials are grounded in the SoR and UDL principles to support the needs of all learners. HQIM are integrated into district-level curriculum adoption processes & evaluated for quality/alignment with state standards, ensuring all students, including those with disabilities, access high-quality instruction. Educators are trained to implement HQIM effectively, using strategies that align with the SoR and UDL. Students with disabilities benefit from high-quality, rigorous instructional materials that support literacy growth, contributing to improved outcomes & exceeding SiMR targets in literacy.

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

To assess the fidelity for HLPs, a set of specific criteria has been developed by the SPDG & DESE Educator Effectiveness. These criteria serve as a standardized measure to determine whether HLPs have been implemented with fidelity in the classroom. Educators submit evidence of their implementation, which is then scored against the established criteria. This process ensures that HLPs are being applied effectively & consistently, providing valuable data to gauge the success of implementation & identify areas for further support or improvement. UDL uses a similar method to assess fidelity of implementation. Each UDL principle has its own set of criteria, which educators must demonstrate effective implementation through the submission of evidence. Additionally, coaches conducting classroom observations using the UDL Observation Form to assess implementation fidelity.

Research supports the idea that collaboration between general educators, special educators, and related service professionals is essential for improving instructional effectiveness. Fidelity of implementation for collaboration is assessed through coaching observations, meeting notes, and agendas, which ensure that meetings are focused on relevant, effective practices.

The MAP Needs Assessment & coaching observations guided schoolwide decision-making to improve student learning outcomes. Data-driven decision-making & these tools tracked the impact of improvement efforts, ensuring the strategy's continued effectiveness in driving positive outcomes. To monitor fidelity of MTSS implementation, the MAP Project Needs Assessment is utilized to develop a tailored plan used to evaluate & guide the ongoing implementation of MTSS. This includes coaching observations, where coaches assess how effectively schools are applying MTSS components and provide feedback based on findings. Together, the needs assessment & coaching observations ensure that MTSS is implemented with fidelity, allowing for continuous improvement and better support for students. Also in the MAP Project, inclusive administrator leadership is supported through the tailored school plan. This plan is implemented throughout the school year, with a focus on addressing specific needs & promoting effective systems and practices. During coaching visits, observations are centered on the implementation of this plan, ensuring that administrators are actively leading efforts to support effective practices. Coaching notes are used to track the status of implementation, providing valuable feedback, & ensuring that the plan is being effectively carried out to promote a more accessible and supportive school environment.

Fidelity of SIM™ implementation is assessed through coaching observations & the collection of artifacts related to each content enhancement routine or strategy. Coaches observe educators as they apply SIM™ strategies in the classroom & review evidence of the strategies in action, such as lesson plans, student work, and other artifacts. This process ensures that SIM is implemented with consistency and effectiveness, providing educators with the support they need to improve student outcomes.

Fidelity of implementation for coaching is measured through a combination of structured observations, reflection notes, ongoing feedback, & the Coaching Integrity Self-Assessment. Coaches use the self-assessment to develop goals & action plans for achieving those goals. Reflection notes from those being coached, collected after each coaching session, provide insights into the effectiveness of the coaching, any challenges faced, and progress made. Regular follow-up & feedback ensure that coaching remains aligned with their growth goals, supporting continuous improvement and sustained fidelity of coaching practices. On a scale of 1 (emerging) to 4 (sustaining), data indicated that 93% of coaches scored at a 3 or 4 at the end of the year in regards to the self-assessment supported by evidence.

To ensure that job-embedded professional learning is high-quality and effective, the Observation Checklist for High-Quality Professional Development (HQPD Checklist-3) is used to evaluate fidelity. The HQPD Checklist includes 21 evidence-based adult learning indicators, which are essential for guiding the design and implementation of job-embedded professional learning. During this reporting period, 95% of developed PD fully align and include the adult learning principles as observed by the HQPD. To ensure high quality & alignment of micro-credentials, also job-embedded professional learning, developed by DESE and SPDG, the state adopted Quality Assurance Standards (QAS). These standards provide clear criteria by which earners, developers, assessors, issuers, & recognizers can evaluate the quality of a given MC. The QAS ensure that MCs support educators in acquiring the essential skills needed for effective implementation, while also maintaining rigor & relevance across different educational contexts. 100% of DESE micro-credentials meet or exceed all standards within the QAS.

To measure fidelity of implementation of HQIM, Arkansas utilizes the AR APP to review district plans. The AR APP ensures that districts' plans for HQIM align with state expectations by conducting a thorough review & providing targeted feedback. Districts are expected to revise their plans based on this feedback, with ongoing support provided until the plans meet state-level standards for HQIM. This process helps to ensure that HQIM is implemented with fidelity, consistent with Priority 1, which focuses on enhancing the quality of instruction and student outcomes. Additionally, through the MAP project, coaches support educators in the use of HQIM by documenting observations & next steps for the subsequent coaching meeting, further reinforcing the implementation process and ensuring continuous improvement in implementation. For this reporting period, all SSIP-targeted schools have met the state expectations for HQIM. 100% of SSIP-targeted schools met the state expectations within AR APP for Priority 1 related to

HQIM and PD plans.

To measure change across multiple agency initiatives and practices reflected in the SSIP, Arkansas continued to utilize the SSIP Infrastructure Development Planning and Progress Management Tool: Using Implementation Drivers and Stages of Implementation. On a scale of 1 (pre-exploration) to 5 (full implementation), the SSIP Infrastructure Tool revealed the following scores: Competency drivers selection 5.0, training 4.0 & coaching 4.5), Organizational drivers (data systems 4.0, facilitative administration 5.0 & systems intervention 5.0), and leadership drivers (technical & adaptive leadership 4.0). The overall performance assessment reached 5.0, highlighting significant alignment & system coherence across various stages of 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.

In addition to the fidelity measures previously discussed, Arkansas's SSIP has collected various other types of data to monitor & support the ongoing use of EBPs. These data provide insights into the effectiveness of the strategies being implemented, highlight areas for improvement, & support continuous refinement of the practices to ensure positive outcomes for students with disabilities.

Data-driven tools like the SSIP Infrastructure Tool & State Capacity Assessment (SCA) tracked progress across key areas of competency, leadership, & organization capacity. On a scale of 1 (pre-exploration) to 5 (full implementation), the SSIP Infrastructure Tool revealed strong progress with scores in competency drivers (selection 5.0, training 4.0 & coaching 4.5), organizational drivers (data systems 4.0, facilitative administration 5.0 & systems intervention 5.0), and leadership drivers (technical & adaptive leadership 4.0). The overall performance assessment reached 5.0, highlighting significant alignment & system coherence across various stages of implementation. The SCA showed systemic improvements across Leadership (94%), Infrastructure & Resources (100%), Communication & Engagement (89%), with an overall score of 94%, reflecting alignment & sustainability of effective practices.

Data collection tracked the effectiveness of PD, TA, & coaching, with surveys & evaluations measuring progress & outcomes. The Self-Efficacy Survey revealed that 93% of educators and 100% of administrators reported increased self-efficacy in improving outcomes for students with disabilities. The Professional Learning Impact Survey allows participants to rate their level of knowledge and abilities for the specific learning targets addressed throughout the training session(s). For this reporting period, 96% educators indicated a level of proficiency (average or above-average) in regards to their knowledge and abilities related to the professional development learning targets.

Related to HLP 19, uPAR data was collected in SSIP-targeted schools. Data reflects that 925 students were able to comprehend better with the Read&Write read-aloud feature and approximately 1,800 students were able to access grade-level text or higher with read-aloud accommodations.

The MAP Needs Assessment & coaching observations guided schoolwide decision-making to improve student learning outcomes. Each school demonstrated growth across six critical areas: 1) aligning schoolwide policies, procedures, & practices; 2) Fostering collaborative teams & structures; 3) ensuring a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum with aligned instruction & assessment; 4) intentional, proactive instructional planning; 5) developing IEP goals tailored to individual student needs; and 6) strategically developing systems to provide special education services based on student needs. 100% of participating schools reflected improvements from beginning of the year to end of the year ratings.

Quarterly notes from the SEAC and monthly ACC meetings are collected and used to refine the implementation of SSIP strategies. These notes are shared with other stakeholders to strengthen engagement and collaborative efforts for continuous improvement.

LRE data is collected and reflects 60% of SSIP-targeted schools have an LRE of 80% or higher for 5A.

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

High Leverage Practices: The SSIP will leverage the SPDG's work on MCs for all HLPs & enhance state-level capacity to align UDL & HLPs across initiatives. The SSIP will collaborate with DESE to provide PD to novice administrators, general educators, & special educators in HLPs. Regional training on assistive & instructional technology (HLP17) will be expanded to support student access to high-quality instruction, advancing leadership's commitment to meaningful access for students with disabilities in LRE. Scaling of HLPs will improve educators' confidence & skills in supporting students with disabilities. The SSIP will continue partnering with TCFEF to gather feedback from families & educators on HLPs to improve strategies & outcomes. An increase in LRE is expected as students with disabilities gain better access to quality core instruction. DESE will integrate HLPs into PD & coaching, focusing on classroom practices & school leadership. By the next submission, educators will demonstrate improved proficiency in HLPs, resulting in better student engagement & literacy outcomes for students with disabilities.

Collaboration (HLPs 1-3): DESE will continue to foster collaboration by promoting the use of collaborative teams and enhancing cross-departmental collaboration at the district and school levels. Additional PD will focus on improving collaboration among general educators, special educators, & related service professionals. By the next submission, DESE will provide PD on collaborative goal writing which will result in more cohesive instructional practices across schools, which will improve the quality of support for students with disabilities. This will contribute to improved literacy outcomes & an increase in LRE, as students will benefit from more coordinated teaching and support services.

Universal Design for Learning: The SSIP will leverage the SPDG's work on MCs for UDL & enhance state-level capacity to align UDL across initiatives. Scaling UDL will boost educators' confidence & skills in supporting students with disabilities, leading to increased LRE as students gain better access to quality core instruction. DESE will expand its PD & coaching support for UDL,

providing resources & training for educators on applying UDL principles in lesson planning & instructional practices. DESE will work with LEAs to ensure that consistent incorporation of UDL in school initiatives. By the next SPP/APR, educators will more effectively implement UDL strategies, increasing student participation & engagement, particularly for students with disabilities. This will lead to improved literacy outcomes as students will have better access to grade-level content.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support: DESE will expand its efforts to implement MTSS by providing additional PD & coaching on how to effectively monitor student progress & adjust interventions based on data for both behavior and academics. Emphasis will be placed on ensuring fidelity in the implementation of tiered interventions and data-driven decision making. By the next submission, DESE expects to see more consistent and effective use of MTSS, with educators more confidently using data to inform instructional decisions. This will result in more students receiving targeted interventions, leading to improvements in literacy outcomes for students with disabilities.

Strategic Instructional Model: While the SSIP SiMR focuses on literacy value-added growth for students with disabilities in grades 3-5, AR will expand support for all students by emphasizing the Strategic Instructional Model™ and increasing digital access to SIM™ Learning Strategies & Content Enhancement Routines. Training & coaching will be reinforced through a partnership with the University of Central Arkansas Mashburn Center for Learning. By the next submission, SIM™ PD will include digital access, face-to-face and virtual sessions, & job-embedded coaching. Educators will effectively apply SIM™ strategies, improving engagement & literacy outcomes, particularly for students with disabilities. DESE Inclusive Practices Specialists will become certified in multiple strategies, increasing statewide access to certified trainers. This approach aligns with HLP 14 & empowers educators to support students in becoming self-directed learners.

Inclusive Administrator Leadership: The SSIP will integrate modules from the Inclusive Principal Leadership series, developed by the CEEDAR Center in collaboration with CCSSO, into MAP and ToT and form an administrator support network. These modules will equip administrators with the skills to lead schoolwide change through sustainable systems, structures, & effective practices. Leaders will guide schools in increasing access to core instruction & promoting continuous improvement in LRE for students with disabilities, further impacting the SiMR. The DESE ALL IN website will expand with resources to advance inclusive education & improve outcomes for students with disabilities. LEAs will recognize that this work stretches beyond the scope of special education & involves all stakeholders. DESE anticipates a shift toward considering all students as general education students, served in Least Restrictive Environments. By the next submission, school leaders will more effectively foster inclusive environments, improving access to high-quality instruction, & contributing to improved literacy outcomes for students with disabilities.

Coaching: DESE will expand its coaching model by increasing the number of coaches supporting educators in implementing HLPs, UDL, and EBPs. Ongoing coaching will be integrated into school-based PD to ensure sustainability & implementation fidelity. The SPDG & DESE Educator Effectiveness will increase statewide support through monthly Coaching Collaboratives & Communities of Practice focused on coaching skills & implementation challenges. By the next submission, educators will demonstrate increased proficiency in applying EBPs, leading to improved literacy outcomes for students with disabilities & greater access to high-quality core instruction, resulting in increased LRE.

Job-Embedded Professional Learning: DESE will continue to expand its job-embedded professional learning model, incorporating additional in-person PD and micro-credentialing opportunities for educators focused on UDL, HLPs, and EBPs. This will be integrated with coaching to provide real-time feedback and implementation support. By the next submission, educators will show improved implementation of UDL, HLPs, and EBPs, along with stronger literacy instruction, particularly for students with disabilities, due to sustained, hands-on learning experiences. This will lead to improvements in student literacy outcomes.

High-Quality Instructional Materials: DESE will expand the use of HQIM by offering additional PD sessions, including MCs, & providing support for educators to integrate HQIM into their classrooms. The focus will be on increasing HQIM adoption across districts to provide consistent, evidence-based resources for all educators. DESE will collaborate with LEAs to align HQIM with state standards & student needs. By the next submission, educators will be more proficient in using HQIM to deliver high-quality, standards-aligned instruction, leading to improved literacy outcomes for students with disabilities.

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

YES

If yes, describe how evaluation data support the decision to implement without any modifications to the SSIP.

The above-listed SiMR data indicates that Arkansas has exceeded the target across four reporting cycles in SSIP-targeted LEAs implementing the coherent improvement strategies. Stakeholder feedback and parent engagement sessions indicate that the SSIP is well-calibrated to the needs of Arkansas LEAs. Results from the SSIP Infrastructure Tool, and the State Capacity Assessment indicate that systemic change is occurring throughout the cascade of supports from the SEA to the classroom.

Section C: Stakeholder Engagement

Description of Stakeholder Input

Following the submission of the new targets for the FFY 2020-2025 SPP/APR cycle, the OSE has continued to collaborate closely with numerous partners and through various initiatives to obtain authentic engagement and reciprocal exchange of information regarding the targets, including Indicator 17. These partners and/or initiatives include:

Stakeholders in Arkansas continue to play a critical role in shaping the SSIP through a variety of engagement methods, ensuring the development, implementation, and evaluation of strategies aimed at improving outcomes for students with disabilities. The State Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) holds quarterly meetings in January, April, July, and October. Each meeting provides a forum for collection of feedback regarding SPP/APR targets & the SSIP Theory of Action. SEAC's representation includes 9 parents,

2 advocates, 2 members from Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, 2 members from Career and Technical Education, TCFEF, foster care representatives, higher education, juvenile corrections, adult corrections, LEA special education supervisors, McKinney-Vento administrator, 4 teachers, and representatives from private and public charter schools. During these meetings, the council members and public participants are provided updates on the previously held stakeholder input sessions, compliance indicators, dispute resolution indicators, and the SSIP.

The Center for Exceptional Families (TCFEF) is a Parent Training and Information (PTI) center for the state with the mission of improving educational opportunities for students with disabilities, including students transitioning to adult life beyond high school. The OSE partnered with TCFEF during the target setting for the FFY 2020-2025 SPP/APR cycle and maintains ongoing collaboration to solicit stakeholder feedback regarding indicator target updates and the SSIP. TCFEF is also a contracted partner of the State Personnel Development Grant which directly aligns with the SSIP Theory of Action. Feedback gathered from stakeholders informs target setting, strategy development, and refinement for the SSIP. In the 2023-2024 year, 100 parents attended TCFEF webinars, with recordings made available for broader access, ensuring that families from remote areas could participate. In addition, 15 parents from rural north-central Arkansas were engaged through an in-person presentation of SSIP indicators, further increasing engagement from underserved families. In partnership with SPDG, TCFEF continued its family engagement efforts through weekly webinars and focus groups. During the 2023-24 year, 33 parents attended an in-person training session hosted by TCFEF, receiving a resource binder to help them partner with schools in supporting their children's educational success. The feedback from these sessions will inform the development of future training sessions and resource materials, ensuring that families are well-equipped to contribute to their children's educational outcomes.

The Meaningful Access Project (MAP), a key component of the SSIP, promotes effective practices to ensure students with disabilities have meaningful access to core instruction and systems of intervention. Participating schools engage in a collaborative evaluation process that gathers data regarding student achievement, educator practices, and effective PD. This project directly aligns with several key indicators but is especially integral to supporting Indicator 5 (LRE) and Indicator 17 (SSIP). Schools supported by this initiative are factored into the Arkansas State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR). These LEAs form a key constituency group for ongoing input on targets and revisions.

The Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators (AAEA) is an agency of diverse school leaders that promotes quality public education for all children in Arkansas. AAEA's mission is to ensure high standards of leadership by providing quality professional development, influencing education legislation and policy, stimulating and fostering support and building successful coalitions. The OSE maintains a close partnership with AAEA, and particularly the constituent groups of Beginning Administrators (BA) and Special Education Administrators (AASEA). These partnerships provide avenues for broad stakeholder input on all targets in the SPP/APR, and any need for subsequent revisions to the targets. The BA subgroup has had increasing input over the past year through the OSE and AAEA's Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership (AIPL) and Inclusive Educator for Beginning Administrators initiatives.

The ALL IN Initiative of the OSE promotes meaningful access to core instruction to foster greater opportunities for students to reach college, career, and life goals. The Inclusive Practices website includes an Inclusive Education Toolkit and provides important information for stakeholders in the areas of LRE, UDL, HLPs, Inclusive Principal Leadership, inclusive related services, parent resources, flexible service delivery, scheduling, IEP documentation and videos for implementation support. The Inclusive Practices website also serves a hub for stakeholders, including families, to access resources and build capacity in support of improving outcomes for students with disabilities. Additional information on this initiative can be found on the following website <https://sites.google.com/view/inclusive-practices/home>. As part of the ALL IN Initiative, the statewide ToT provided training for district & building-level teams. The ToT includes surveys and feedback mechanisms to gather input from educators and staff on EBPs and special education services. This initiative, which received over 4,000 responses in this reporting period, ensures that stakeholder feedback is integrated into decision-making and drives ongoing improvement efforts for the SSIP.

The Arkansas Collaborative Consultants (ACC) Convening & ACC Monthly Director Meetings represent key stakeholders for the SSIP. As OSE's technical assistance arm, the ACC plays a vital role in establishing performance measures to meet the targets outlined in the SPP/APR and to prioritize performance measures across each consultant group. These diverse stakeholders provide leadership, support, and service to LEAs in all 75 counties in the state, in alignment with the vision and mission of OSE and the SSIP. Discussions and feedback solicited across the ACC convening and monthly meetings include Indicator 17: SSIP improvement strategies, data, targets, planning, and action steps.

The Arkansas School-Based Therapy Conference is an opportunity for the constituencies of special education administrators, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech-language pathologists to discuss indicator 17 targets and data, and to have meaningful dialogue to connect their roles to the targets when considering flexible service delivery, scheduling, funding, collaborative teaming structures, and high-leverage practices. In this reporting period, the conference had over 650 participants with input shaping the direction of SSIP strategies, training content, service delivery models, and the overall implementation of SSIP goals.

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

To ensure meaningful stakeholder engagement, Arkansas has implemented several key strategies that facilitated the collaboration between stakeholders & the state's infrastructure strategies and EBPs. These strategies have enabled the state to gather input, allocate resources, align initiatives, measure progress, celebrate success, & disseminate findings while actively involving stakeholders in key improvement efforts.

Stakeholder engagement strategies primarily utilized for the SSIP include clarifying goals, working with partner organizations, using multiple meeting opportunities, communicating frequently, providing multiple feedback submission methods, & identifying key individuals to champion the work. The SSIP Coordinator, UALR Data and Research Director, and OSE Leadership Team have

regularly updated and solicited feedback from external stakeholders including the Special Education State Advisory Council, Special Education LEA Supervisors, and TCFEF to keep these groups informed & gather feedback.

The SSIP Coordinator is frequently involved with SPDG and OSE leadership, as well as the Arkansas Association of Special Education Administrators' meetings. Feedback on the SSIP is regularly solicited through these collaborations. In alignment with the SSIP, the SPDG Coordinator serves on the AIPL initiative to increase administrators' capacity to be inclusive leaders. As part of the DESE monthly LEA technical assistance calls, the SSIP Coordinator and Director of Special Programs provide updates to LEA Special Education Supervisors about the infrastructure work taking place & solicit their feedback on the process. Continued collaboration between DESE and the ACC to better support LEAs has occurred through monthly meetings & the coordinated application of the SSIP Theory of Action into PD, coaching, and training support.

Arkansas has also made concerted efforts to allocate resources to support PD, TA, & coaching to enhance EBPs, UDL, HLPs, and MTSS. Resources have been directed toward HQIM, training events, & digital access for educators and families. This resource allocation ensures that stakeholders, including those in remote or underserved areas, have access to necessary supports to actively participate and benefit from the state's improvement efforts.

The OSE partnered with The Center for Exceptional Families during the target setting for the FFY 2020-2025 SPP/APR cycle & maintains ongoing collaboration to solicit stakeholder feedback regarding indicator targets. TCFEF maintains a large database of families of students with disabilities, & engages with them via social media, virtual and in-person meetings, & through email. As part of the target setting, TCFEF, the IDEA Data and Research Manager, and the SSIP Coordinator facilitated a statewide virtual event for families to provide feedback on the setting targets, data analysis, & improvement strategies. For families who could not attend the live virtual session, a link to a recording of this event was sent to TCFEF's broad network of families to review and provide input at their convenience. In the 2023-2024 year, 100 parents attended TCFEF webinars, with recordings made available for broader access, ensuring that families from remote areas could participate. In addition, 15 parents from rural north-central Arkansas were engaged through an in-person presentation of SSIP indicators, further increasing engagement from underserved families. Feedback gathered from these sessions informs target setting, strategy development, & refinement for the SSIP. TCFEF also serves as a partner of SPDG, aligning to the SSIP Theory of Action, & a representative serves on the SPDG Core Management team as the Family and Community Liaison. Through SPDG, TCFEF continued family engagement efforts via webinars and focus groups. During the 2023-24 year, 33 parents attended an in-person training session hosted by TCFEF, receiving a resource binder to help them support their children's educational success. The feedback from these sessions will inform future training and resource development, ensuring that families are well-equipped to contribute to their children's educational outcomes. Additional information can be found on the TCFEF and SPDG webpages at <http://thecenterforexceptionalfamilies.org> & <https://www.arspdg.org/parents-family/>.

Additionally, Arkansas has made a conscious effort to celebrate stakeholder successes. Monthly meetings with various stakeholders, training sessions, annual conferences, and quarterly SEAC meetings, provide platforms to highlight the progress made in the SSIP, showcasing successful partnerships & strategies. Successes are highlighted at these events, recognizing schools and LEAs that have made significant strides in improving student access to core instruction or engaging families in the process. This public acknowledgment reinforces the value of stakeholder engagement & provides models for other districts to emulate. Celebrating achievements ensures continued stakeholder involvement in the SSIP.

During this reporting cycle, the OSE Inclusive Practices website expanded to include information that describes the systemic change occurring within special education in Arkansas, and provides implementation resources and supports. The website effectively delivers information for key stakeholders, including individuals with disabilities, families, educators, administrators, institutions of higher education, & community members. The website can be accessed here <https://sites.google.com/view/inclusive-practices/home>.

The inclusion of DESE and LEA special education staff in initiatives such as Arkansas THRIVE, BX3, ALL IN ToT, and MAP directly affects MTSS for academics & behavior as well as student access to quality core instruction. These initiatives focus on advancing meaningful access & include participant feedback through engagement activities & survey data. Based on LEA and participant needs, training improvements were made in service delivery, scheduling, & data analysis to ensure all students have access to the general education curriculum. These efforts are expected to improve student outcomes in the future by providing greater access to MTSS and rigorous instruction alongside peers with and without disabilities.

To collect input for analyzing data, developing improvement strategies, & evaluating progress, the OSE invites stakeholders to attend meetings, conferences, trainings, & webinars through several methods, including direct invitations, emails to LEAs, newsletters, Commissioner Memos (DESE website), placement on the DESE event calendar, & listserv postings. Stakeholder feedback is collected via notetaking, session recordings, participant surveys, & direct surveys on specific topics.

Opportunities for stakeholder feedback occurred at several state conferences. The ADE Summit provides a forum for stakeholder input on key improvement strategies, including the SSIP. Experts present on UDL, HLPs, master scheduling & collaboration, focusing on the advancement of Arkansas' PD system, which is supported by the SPDG. One session, focused on MCs for UDL and HLPs, directly aligns with the SSIP Theory of Action & solicited feedback on the perceived benefits & potential use of MCs.

Several opportunities for stakeholder input include monthly LEA meetings, meetings with the ACC, yearly ACC Convening, the Arkansas School-based Therapy Conference, the DESE Summit, monthly OSE meetings, meetings with regional education service cooperatives, cross-agency content meetings, & PD such as ToT, THRIVE, & MAP.

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

NO

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.

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

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

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional).

17 - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

17 - OSEP Response

17 - Required Actions