New York State Education Department
Office of Special Education

STATE SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), pursuant to the requirements of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, is a multi-year, achievable plan developed by the State, in consultation with stakeholders, that is designed to increase the capacity of school districts to implement, scale up, and sustain evidence-based practices and to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

In 2014-15, based on a comprehensive data and infrastructure analysis and discussion with stakeholders, the State selected the following State identified measurable result for students with disabilities.

STATE IDENTIFIED MEASURABLE RESULT (SiMR)

Increase the percent of students with disabilities who score at proficiency levels 2 and above on the grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) assessments (including students who take the regular ELA assessment with or without accommodations and students who take the New York State Alternate Assessment).

BASELINE:

Based on 2013-14 data, 31 percent of students with disabilities performed at levels 2 and above on the grades 3-8 ELA regular assessment with accommodations, regular assessment without accommodations and the New York State Alternate Assessment.

TARGETS:

Grades 3 - 8 English Language Arts (including NYSAA[1] results) Percentage of Students with Disabilities at Proficiency Levels	
Year	**% scoring at or above Level 2**
2014-15	35%
2015-16	38%
2016-17	45%
2017-18	48%
2018-19	51%

ACTUAL PERFORMANCE DATA for 2014-15

In 2014-15, 35 percent of students with disabilities performed at levels 2 and above on the grades 3-8 ELA assessments. The State has met its target.

Revisions to SSIP Phase I Report

In Phase I of development of the New York State's SSIP, the State ***identified and analyzed key data, including data from State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) indicators, 618 data collections, and other data, as applicable, to determine the State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR) and the root causes contributing to low performance; described the capacity of the current State system (infrastructure) to support improvement and build capacity in local educational agencies (LEAs) to implement, scale up, and sustain evidence-based practices to improve results for students with disabilities; identified the statement of result(s) the State intends to achieve through implementation of the SSIP; and identified the improvement strategies that the State has preliminarily selected, based on the data and infrastructure analyses and in consideration of stakeholder input, to improve results toward the SiMR. For a copy of the Phase I Report, see (see http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/spp/2015/ny-ssip-2015-indicator-17-report.pdf)***

With stakeholder discussion during Phase II development, the State has made revisions to some of the infrastructure and improvement activities that were identified in NYS' Phase I SSIP. These revisions were determined necessary so that the focus of activities remains on strategies that will have the greatest impact on the SiMR during the time period in which the SSIP is in effect.

Infrastructure Enhancements:

In the Phase I Report, the following were identified as proposed improvement activities. In consultation with Stakeholders, these activities were determined to more appropriately be identified as infrastructure enhancements:

1. Establish a resource for information on best practices in the education of students with learning disabilities.

2. Provide professional development and resources for schools, families and students to promote greater access to assistive technology for students with disabilities.

3. Provide guidance to school districts and schools on appropriate scaffolds for Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS instruction for students with disabilities.

Improvement Activities:

In the Phase I Report, the following improvement activities affecting preschool students with disabilities were reported as infrastructure enhancements. Following consultation with stakeholders, these have been removed from the SSIP because, they would not actually impact data on the SiMR (e.g., preschool students impacted by changes in State policy would not be taking the grades 3-8 assessments during the years covered by this SSIP). However, while not reported in the SSIP, NYSED will still be proceeding to implement these activities.

- Provide regional training and webinars for preschool providers on systems of Recognition and Response at the preschool level.

- Provide regional training and targeted professional development to preschool providers by behavior specialists with expertise in preschool education to improve behavioral supports for preschool students with disabilities.

- Conduct regional forums on preschool least restrictive environment placements, with action plans developed in each region with the highest rates of separate school placements to ensure that students with disabilities have equitable access to regular early childhood programs.

- Develop policy on instruction in the *New Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core Learning Standards* for approved preschool programs for students with disabilities.

- In collaboration with the Office of Early Learning, support inclusion of students with disabilities in its expansion of Universal Prekindergarten Programs.

Theory of Action

As a result of the above revisions, the theory of action has been revised as depicted in the graphic below:

1) If the State …

- Assigns special education specialists to the Diagnostic Tool for School District Effectiveness (DTSDE) reviews; and identifies the root instructional causes for the poor performance of students with disabilities in these schools
- Assigns special education specialists to provide ongoing professional development to low performing schools in the areas of literacy, behavior and/or specially-designed instruction
- Provides statewide and school specific technical assistance to scale up systems of Response to Intervention (RtI)
- Provides schools with technical assistance and coaching to use evidence-based positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS)

2) Then school districts and schools will …

- Provide leadership teams to establish multi-tiered systems of support (RtI and PBIS)
- Identify and develop plans to address the root causes for the low performance of students with disabilities
- Make systemic changes to implement research-based instructional practices in the areas of literacy, specially-designed instruction and behavior

3) In order for teachers to …

- Support students with disabilities to access, participate and progress in the Common Core State Standards
- Use research-based explicit and specially-designed instruction
- Provide research-based literacy instruction for students with disabilities
- Provide targeted levels of early intervening services to students in the areas of reading and positive behavioral supports

4) So that we can realize these MID-TERM OUTCOMES…

- Evidence of improved systems of instructional practice for students with disabilities
- Evidence that more students with disabilities in schools receiving targeted professional development are achieving at levels 2 and above on the ELA 3-8 assessments.

…that produces this LONG-TERM OUTCOME:

By 2018-19, at least 51 percent of students with disabilities statewide will achieve levels 2 or above on the grades 3-8 ELA assessment

Stakeholder input on revisions to Phase I SSIP:

These revisions to improvement activities and, as a result, theory of action, were discussed with the Commissioner's Advisory Panel for Special Education. NYS' current statewide focus on expansion of universal prekindergarten programs; its resources dedicated to Recognition and Response programs and high quality behavior supports for preschool programs; and its current LRE preschool regional meeting initiative, each present opportunities for the New York State Education Department (NYSED) to increase the percentage of preschool children attending high quality regular early childhood programs where they are more likely to have access to instruction to build the foundation for learning the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS). The Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core sets expectations for pre-K instruction in four domain areas, including standards relating to ELA and literacy that prepare students for success in school and lay the foundation for college and career readiness. Stakeholders discussed that, while these activities are important to impact early learning outcomes, they would not actually impact data on the SiMR (e.g., preschool students impacted by changes in State policy would not be taking the grades 3-8 assessments during the years covered by this SSIP).

Stakeholders also considered how other activities would more appropriately be considered infrastructure enhancements in that they would address policy and professional development enhancements in areas impacting use of evidence-based practices, which would ultimately impact use of evidence-based practices to improve literacy results for students with disabilities who will be taking the grades 3-8 ELA assessments in coming years. However, given the time it would take to implement these changes to policy and technical assistance, stakeholders agreed that they are more appropriately identified as infrastructure enhancements.

COMPONENT #1 INFRASTRUCTURE ENHANCEMENTS

1a) Improvements that will be made to the State infrastructure to better support local educational agencies (LEAs) to implement and scale up evidence-based practices to improve literacy results for students with disabilities.

Quality Standards:

- Provide resources to schools related to key principles for improved practices as found in the "Blueprint for Improved Results for Students with Disabilities" http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/publications/2015-memos/blueprint-for-improved-results-for-students-with-disabilities.html. The Blueprint establishes

seven key principles, with evidence statements, for improved practices for students with disabilities to ensure that students with disabilities have the opportunities to benefit from high quality instruction, to reach the same standards as all students, and to leave school prepared to successfully transition to post-school learning, living and employment. This statewide framework is intended to clarify expectations for administrators, policy makers and practitioners to improve instruction and to prepare students with disabilities for success for post-secondary readiness and success.

Professional Development:

- Through contract with a Professional Learning Center[2], provide ongoing professional development and resources to the Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Center (RSE-TASC) specialists to enhance their expertise to support schools in the areas of:
    a. Early and adolescent literacy instruction
    b. Positive behavioral interventions and supports
    c. Specially-designed instruction
    d. Research-based school improvement practices, including "implementation drivers"[3].

- Provide ongoing professional development to the RSE-TASC specialists in "standards-based IEPs" to ensure they have the expertise to assist Committees on Special Education.

- Provide school personnel with information and resources to address the needs of students with learning disabilities. The manner in which these resources will be provided are yet to be determined and will be developed in consultation with stakeholders.

1b) The State will take the following steps to further align and leverage current improvement plans and initiatives in the State, including general and special education, which impact students with disabilities.

Governance:

- Develop policy on **School Climate and PBIS**. Healthy school climates and tiered systems of behavioral support will impact students with disabilities through positive school climates, improved attendance and early identification and supports. "Schools that implement PBIS with high fidelity have shown to improve academic performance, reduce disciplinary problems, increase the sense of

[2]For a description of how this professional development is provided, see http://www.nys-rse-tasc.com/#!professional-development/c70d

[3] Fixsen and Blasé, 2008.

safety on campus, increase parent satisfaction and parent participation, and increase attendance"[4].

- Review Policy on **Academic Intervention Services** to leverage use of multi-tiered systems of support. This will improve literacy instruction and use of data and progress monitoring to improve results for all students, including students with disabilities and lead to the more appropriate identification of students with learning disabilities.

- **Addressing the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs)**- Collaborative policy development and professional development by the Office of Special Education and the Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages (OBEWL) and technical assistance networks to ensure more appropriate identification of students with disabilities who are ELLs and ELLs who are students with disabilities and high quality, culturally-relevant instruction to address literacy development for ELLs with disabilities.

Accountability:

Continuously work to enhance the impact for students with disabilities on the State's aligned Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)/IDEA accountability systems through regular meetings with the Office of Accountability and Office of Special Education.

- **Alignment of IDEA and ESSA Accountability Systems** – criteria for identification of schools with low performance for the subgroup of students with disabilities; collaboration on district and school reviews to include special education specialists; ongoing professional development by special education specialists to scale up evidence-based instructional practices in low performing schools. This work will impact students with disabilities by ensuring that whole school reforms identify root causes and improvement work when the identification of the district or school is related to the results for students with disabilities.

1c) Framework to implement the changes to infrastructure, resources needed, expected outcomes and timelines for completing improvement efforts.

- Who makes up the team that will identify the infrastructure changes critical to implementation of the plan?
  Office of Special Education staff teams: Policy, Data, Program Development and Support Services, Special Education Quality Assurance.
  Cross Office workgroups – see below

[4] Addressing Climate, Safety, and Discipline in Georgia Schools https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-services/Documents/PBIS/PBIS%20Final%20white%20paper_%20Sept%204.pdf Georgia Department of Education Dr. John D. Barge, State Superintendent of Schools

- What resources will be needed to achieve the expected outcomes?
  IDEA funds; IDEA discretionary funds to support technical assistance and professional development; staff resources.

- What are the timelines to complete changes to the infrastructure and build capacity within the State to better support the LEA program?
  Many of the infrastructure enhancements will take 2-3 years for full implementation. Initiation of initiatives will be completed during the 2016-17 school year. See timeline chart below.

Timelines and Evaluation: Infrastructure Enhancement

Activity	Timeline	Responsibility	Evaluation
Provide resources for the Blueprint for Improved Results for Students with Disabilities	Fall 2015	Policy Unit	Did the State disseminate resources relating to each of the principles of the Blueprint?
Establish State TAC on Learning Disabilities	Fall 2016	Program Development and Support Services Unit	Did the State establish a technical assistance resource for schools on LD?
Provide ongoing professional development to RSE-TASC specialists in the areas of evidence based instruction in literacy, specially-designed instruction and behavior.	Fall, winter, spring annual meetings	Program Development and Support Services Unit Contract with Professional Learning Center Contract with NYS PBIS TAC	What professional development sessions were provided? How many attended each session? Did the evaluations report that the knowledge of the RSE-TASC specialists improved as a result of the professional development?
Training on Standards-based IEPs	January 2016 for staff and technical assistance providers Regional training to school personnel annually	Program Development and Support Services Unit Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Centers	Did the State issue guidance and provide tools/resources on standards-based IEPs? Did the State provide professional development on standards-based IEP development to its technical assistance providers? How many regional training sessions were delivered on standards-based IEPs? How many attended?

1d) Involvement of multiple offices within NYSED, as well as other State agencies in the improvement of its infrastructure.

State Accountability Workgroup – led by Office of Accountability
Includes representatives from such offices as Special Education, Information and Reporting Services, Office of Accountability, Charter Schools, Student Support Services and Title I.

- This group discusses a broad range of topics relating to School Accountability to improve results for all students, including students with disabilities.

School Climate Workgroup – led by Office of School Improvement
Includes representatives from Office of School Improvement and Office of Special Education as well as outside stakeholders.

- This group discusses strategies to improve school climate in schools across the State. The work supports efforts of the Office of Special Education relating to PBIS.

616 Workgroup
Includes representatives from the Office of Information and Reporting Services and Office of Special Education Policy, Program Development and Support Services, Special Education Quality Assurance, Preschool Units.

- This group problem solves around all aspects of the State Performance Plan and reviews and discusses data results of the Annual Performance Reports for public reporting, review and revisions to State improvement activities.

Ad Hoc SSIP Evaluation and Implementation Meetings
Includes representatives from the Office of Special Education, Office of Data and Reporting, Office of Accountability.

- This group will include leadership from the respective offices to discuss SSIP implementation problem solve barriers to collaborative work, and review short term and intermediate outcomes.

Stakeholder involvement in the infrastructure development

The Department consulted with its Commissioner's Advisory Panel for Special Education and the State's technical assistance providers on the infrastructure enhancements that are essential to support improved ELA results. All policies are developed with stakeholder/public comment. As a result of stakeholder involvement to date, revisions were made to infrastructure enhancements (as described above), improvement activities and theory of action.

Component #2 - Improvement Activities Support for LEA Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices

2a) The State will support the implementation of the following evidence-based practices that will result in changes in LEA, school and provider practices to achieve the SiMR for students with disabilities:

- Research-based literacy instruction
- Use of research and evidence-based practices in the provision of specially-designed instruction
- Response- to-Intervention
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

To support LEA implementation of these practices, NYSED will provide professional development and technical assistance to selected schools to scale up the use of evidence-based practices. The processes used to select the targeted schools are described under each improvement activity description (pages 12–16):

1. In collaboration with the Office of Accountability, assign SESIS to participate in the DTSDE Accountability Reviews when districts and schools are identified for low performance for the subgroup of students with disabilities. In addition to the DTSDE, use the findings from RSE-TASC instructional walk-through data for evidence-based practices for students with disabilities to inform the focus of systemic change.

2. Assign SESIS to approximately 330 schools annually to provide up to three years of professional development and technical assistance to low performing districts in the areas of literacy, behavior and specially-designed instruction.

3. Assign behavior specialists to approximately 166 schools, primarily in school districts whose data indicates a high or disproportionate rate of suspension and/or other disciplinary actions for students with disabilities to assist schools to develop, implement and sustain high quality systems of positive behavioral interventions and supports.

4. Provide statewide webinars and provide regional training and in-district technical assistance to approximately 183 schools to support them in scaling up high quality RtI programs, with targeted information sessions for parents in these schools, to promote early and appropriate identification of students with learning disabilities and use data to inform instruction.

The timelines for the implementation of these improvement activities and persons responsible are summarized below.

Timelines – Improvement Activities

Activity	Timeline	Persons/entities Responsible
Assignment of SESIS to DTSDE reviews and support to low performing school districts	2015-2020	Office of Accountability Office of Special Education RSE-TASC Coordinators Professional Learning Center (evaluator)
RtI Professional Development support to selected schools	2015-2017	Office of Special Education Program Development Support Services Unit Regional Professional Development Teams NYS RTI TAC University of Minnesota (evaluator)
PBIS technical assistance and professional development to selected schools	2015-2020	Office of Special Education Program Development Support Services Unit RSE-TASC Behavior Specialists NYS PBIS TAC (evaluator)

2(b) The steps and specific activities needed to implement the coherent improvement strategies are described below.

The following information provides a description of the structure of these improvement activities and how they are designed and supported by the State to ensure that they address the "implementation drivers[5]" that research has identified as essential to successful school improvement work.

[5] http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/learn-implementation/implementation-drivers

1. Competency – activities that address the ability to put programs and innovations in place.
2. Organization – activities that are designed to create an environment that supports the use of evidence-based practices.
3. Leadership – Capacity of leaders in the schools to provide direction and vision.

The following section provides information on selection of the evidence-based practices to be used for each improvement activity; how the State considered the school's needs and best fit for the strategies; how the State assessed the readiness and capacity for implementation within LEAs, schools and with personnel/providers; what professional development or technical assistance would be provided; and how the State will support the schools in scaling up these evidence-based practices.

Improvement Activity:

DTSDE Review

State regulations require that each school district/school identified under the State's accountability system participate annually in a diagnostic review using a diagnostic tool of quality indicators as prescribed by the Commissioner that focuses on the accountability group(s) for each accountability performance criterion for which the school district and its schools have been identified as Priority and/or Focus status. Each year, the Commissioner appoints a Team to conduct an on-site diagnostic district review and school reviews of selected Priority and/or Focus Schools within the district to inform the development of the District Comprehensive Improvement Plan and school Comprehensive Education Plan. For schools designated as Focus and Priority in the years in which the State's team does not conduct an on-site diagnostic review, the school district is required to annually use a diagnostic tool, in the form prescribed by the Commissioner, to inform the development of the District Comprehensive Improvement Plan and the school Comprehensive Education Plan. This process compares a school's and district's practices to the optimal conditions of learning, as defined by the Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (DTSDE) rubric. The team uses the rubric to evaluate school and district practices based on six tenets. The six tenets are:

- Tenet 1: District Leadership and Capacity

- Tenet 2: School Leader Practices and Decisions
- Tenet 3: Curriculum Development and Support
- Tenet 4: Teacher Practices and Decisions
- Tenet 5: Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health
- Tenet 6: Family and Community Engagement

For more information on the research basis of this tool, see http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/diagnostic-tool-institute/home.html

When a school district is also identified through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as a District in Need of Assistance or a District in Need of Intervention for student performance reasons, or when the school is identified as a "local assistance plan[6]" school based on the results for students with disabilities, the State assigns (to the extent resources permit) a specialist from the RSE-TASC to be on the Team that conducts the DTSDE review.

All State DTSDE team members, including the SESIS, are trained on the DTSDE review process as are the district team members. Extensive resources are made available by the State to ensure understanding and fidelity in the review process. http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/diagnostic-tool-institute/DTSDEResources.html

As a component of the DTSDE when SESIS participate in the review, the SESIS conducts a walk-through of classrooms to provide additional data to the DTSDE team on the use of evidence-based practices for students with disabilities. The State has ensured that all SESIS have received professional development and practice and clear guidance on how to use the walk-through tool to ensure that there is statewide validity and reliability in reported observations. The walk-through tool is based on identification of selected evidence-practices that research shows to be effective for students with disabilities in the areas of:

a. Safe and Accessible Environment
b. Functions and Elements of Explicit Instruction
c. Specially Designed Instruction

A copy of the tool can be found at
http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/spp/Walkthroughtool-LAPSelfReview.pdf
In addition to conducting the walk-through, SESIS participate in the DTSDE review team debriefing meetings with school/district leadership to provide feedback and recommendations related to improving practices for students with disabilities.

Quality Improvement Process in Low Performing Schools

The State funds ten Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Centers (RSE-TASC). Each RSE-TASC includes a Coordinator and special education specialists to work with schools. For a description of the RSE-TASC network, see http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/techassist/rsetasc/home.html. Statewide, NYSED funds 117 full-time special education school improvement specialists (SESIS) whose

[6] http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/documents/LocalAssistancePlanSchools_082714.pdf

role is to provide professional development, technical assistance and coaching to assist school districts to improve instructional practices for students with disabilities, primarily in the areas of literacy, behavioral supports and specially-designed instruction.

To ensure that all specialists have the capacity and infrastructure support to help schools to scale up evidence-based practices, the State has established the following systems and structure for their work:

The State identifies schools and school districts needing technical assistance to improve results for students with disabilities based on the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) accountability systems. Special Education School Improvement Specialists (SESIS) from the RSE-TASC are assigned by the State to work with these schools. SESIS are regionally based to ensure that they are available to the schools to provide embedded professional development.

The State ensures that each SESIS receives ongoing professional development so that they have the knowledge and skills to support schools to implement evidence-based practices. The State funds the **RSE-TASC Professional Learning Center** http://www.nys-rse-tasc.com/ whose primary purpose is to provide this professional development to RSE-TASC specialists. In addition, the State has provided tools and resources, with professional development on how to use these tools, to ensure a focus on evidence-based practices, including but not limited to Quality Indicator Review and Resource Guides, an Instructional Walk-Through tool, and the Quality Improvement Process manual.

In addition to professional development provided to the SESIS to ensure that they have expertise in the areas of evidence-based practices, the State provides professional development and support to the SESIS to learn facilitation and presentation skills. For example, SESIS have received professional development on coaching skills and participate in Adaptive Schools Training - http://www.nys-rse-tasc.com/#!center-for-adaptive-schools/c18in.

Each SESIS is assigned not more than five school districts/schools. In this way, the State ensures that the professional development resources provided to schools are sufficient in intensity and frequency in order to have access to ongoing and embedded planning, professional development, technical assistance and coaching to support them to implement evidence-based practices. Each school/district receiving SESIS support reaches agreement on a Quality Improvement Process (QIP). This process requires that the SESIS work with a district/school leadership team to guide improvement work that will be supported by the SESIS. The QIP team analyzes school/district data (both quantitative and qualitative) that is available from classrooms, grades, schools and district to establish goals to improve instructional practices and identify the research-based practices that would be the best fit for the school. SESIS provide professional development and coaching in the identified areas to support the school to implement evidence-based practices.

The Quality Improvement Process Plan requires that measureable systems change and student outcome goals be established; and that progress toward meeting those goals is documented and monitored throughout the year to inform the effectiveness of the plan and make adjustments as needed. This planning process also includes a structured component to identify barriers to implementation. The RSE-TASC Coordinators, SESIS and the State's regional Special Education Quality Assurance (SEQA) offices also collaborate to address identified barriers to implementation. The SESIS meets with the QIP team to review data and progress throughout the year, to address barriers to implementation and to make changes to the plan as needed. A copy of the QIP and QIP progress reports are provided to the State.

The professional development and technical assistance provided by SESIS to help schools achieve their QIP goals are based on the State's Quality Indicator (QI) Review and Resource Guide which identify research-based practices in the areas of literacy, behavior and specially-designed instruction. These guides identify factors to assist the QIP team to identify and address a school's 'readiness' and capacity to implement change in instructional practices.
See http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/techassist/QIcover.htm

Response to Intervention (RtI)

The State has contracts for a State RtI Technical Assistance Center (www.nysrti.org) as well as four regionally-based RtI Professional Development Teams[7] to provide technical assistance to schools to implement, support and sustain high quality systems of RtI. The State RtI TAC and the Regional Professional Development (PD) Teams work in collaboration to ensure high quality and consistent professional development and technical assistance is provided to schools. Personnel in the Regional Professional Development Teams were selected to ensure that they had experience and expertise in RtI development and implementation. In addition, the State has State regulations, policy and guidance that identifies the core elements of RtI that must be implemented with fidelity. See http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/RTI/guidance/cover.htm as well as information for parents at http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/RTI/parent.htm. The research on which the State's RtI improvement activities are based is provided at http://www.nysrti.org/page/general-overview-of-interventions/.

For the identified RtI improvement activity in the SSIP, NYSED recruited school districts through a competitive application to ensure commitment of participating schools. Each school was required to sign a letter of commitment with NYSED and to establish a RtI Design Team composed of a district administrator to provide leadership and support for the project, building principal(s), and general education teacher(s). RtI Design Teams may include additional staff members: reading/literacy specialists, data managers, school psychologists, and special educators. Each school's RtI Design Team completed the RtI Self-Assessment Survey
http://www.nysrti.org/docs/NYS_RtI_TAC_Self_Assessment_Readiness_Tool.pdf)/.

[7] Funded through a State Personnel Development Grant

Each participating school is provided five days of professional development followed by three days of on-site technical assistance in the development of systems to support the implementation of RtI. Information sessions for parents are also offered in each region. Professional development sessions are developed in consultation with the State's RtI Technical Assistance Center. Tools to assess RtI implementation can be found at http://www.nysrti.org/page/rti-tools/. Each school receives up to 2½ years of professional development and coaching support.

Each RtI Regional PD team meets individually with schools to discuss and assist with barriers to implementation. The Regional PD Teams from across the State meet periodically with the State and with the NYS RtI TAC to identify and discuss barriers to implementation.

Positive Behavioral Supports and Interventions (PBIS)

NYS funds the PBIS Technical Assistance Center (TAC) and 40 behavior specialists in the RSE-TASC. The research on which the State's PBIS improvement activities are based is provided at http://nyspbis.org/ResearchPage/Research.cfm. The primary function of the PBIS TAC (www.nyspbis.org) is to provide high quality professional development to the State's RSE-TASC behavior specialists to ensure that they have the knowledge, skills and consistent professional development and coaching skills to support schools to develop, implement and sustain high quality systems of positive behavioral interventions and supports.

NYSED prioritizes assignment of its RSE-TASC behavior specialist to school districts where the data indicates high suspension rates and/or disproportionality by race/ethnicity in disciplinary actions, including suspensions of students with disabilities. Schools will be required to enter into an upfront agreement with behavior specialists for the professional development and coaching to be provided by the behavior specialists. Each school assigns teams to address PBIS implementation. Behavior specialists can problem solve with RSE-TASC Coordinators and obtain technical assistance from PBIS TAC when they encounter schools with barriers to implementation. The following assessment tools are utilized to determine a school's readiness and assess implementation progress:

- Self-Assessment Survey
  http://nyspbis.org/EvaluationTools/EarlyChildhood/ECSAS.cfm

- Benchmarks of Quality
  http://nyspbis.org/EvaluationTools/EarlyChildhood/ECBoQ.cfm

- Benchmarks for Advanced Tiers
  http://nyspbis.org/EvaluationTools/Tier2Tier3/BAT/BAT.cfm

- Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI)

https://www.pbis.org/Common/Cms/files/pbisresources/2015_10_7_SWPBIS_Tiered_Fidelity_Inventory.pdf

- NYS PBIS Data Audit Tool
  http://nyspbis.org/EvaluationTools/TIER1/DAT/DAT.cfm

2(c) How will the State involve multiple offices within the NYSED (and other State agencies) to support LEAs in scaling up and sustaining the implementation of the evidence-based practices once they have been implemented with fidelity?

Support to low performing schools: In collaboration with the ESEA Office of Accountability, the Office of Special Education assigns Special Education School Improvement Specialists (SESIS) and other specialists (e.g., behavior specialists, bilingual specialists, etc.), as appropriate, from the State's technical assistance centers to participate in the DTSDE Accountability Reviews when districts and schools are identified for low performance for the subgroup of students with disabilities. In addition to the DTSDE, the review team uses the findings from RSE-TASC instructional walk-through data for evidence-based practices for students with disabilities to inform the focus of systemic change. The Office of Special Education assigns SESIS to provide up to three years of professional development and technical assistance to low performing districts in the areas of literacy, behavior and specially-designed instruction.

RtI: The State's requirements for Academic Intervention Services (administered by the Office of Student Support Services) is under review and possible revision to support use of tiered systems of support (RtI) for students who require additional support to reach the State's learning standards.

PBIS: The Office of Student Support Services' work related to School Climate and Safety provides the opportunity through policy and guidance and ongoing technical assistance to expand use of evidence-based practices relating to PBIS in schools.

Component #3: Evaluation

For each improvement activity, the State will collect and analyze data to answer the following questions:

1. Did the activity occur?
2. Did the activity accomplish its intended outcome(s)? If not, why not?
3. Do practitioners implement the practices with fidelity (i.e. as intended)?
4. Did outcomes/results improve?

3(a) The following displays how the evaluation is aligned to the theory of action and other components of the SSIP and the extent to which it includes short-term and long-term objectives to measure implementation of the SSIP. How the

improvement activities will impact on achieving measurable improvement in the SiMR for students with disabilities is described below.

The evaluation process is depicted in the following evaluation logic model. It is designed to directly align to the theory of action at each level (i.e., State, districts, and schools and teachers). It incorporates a systemic method of collecting, analyzing and using information to ultimately determine the effectiveness of improvement strategies over time.

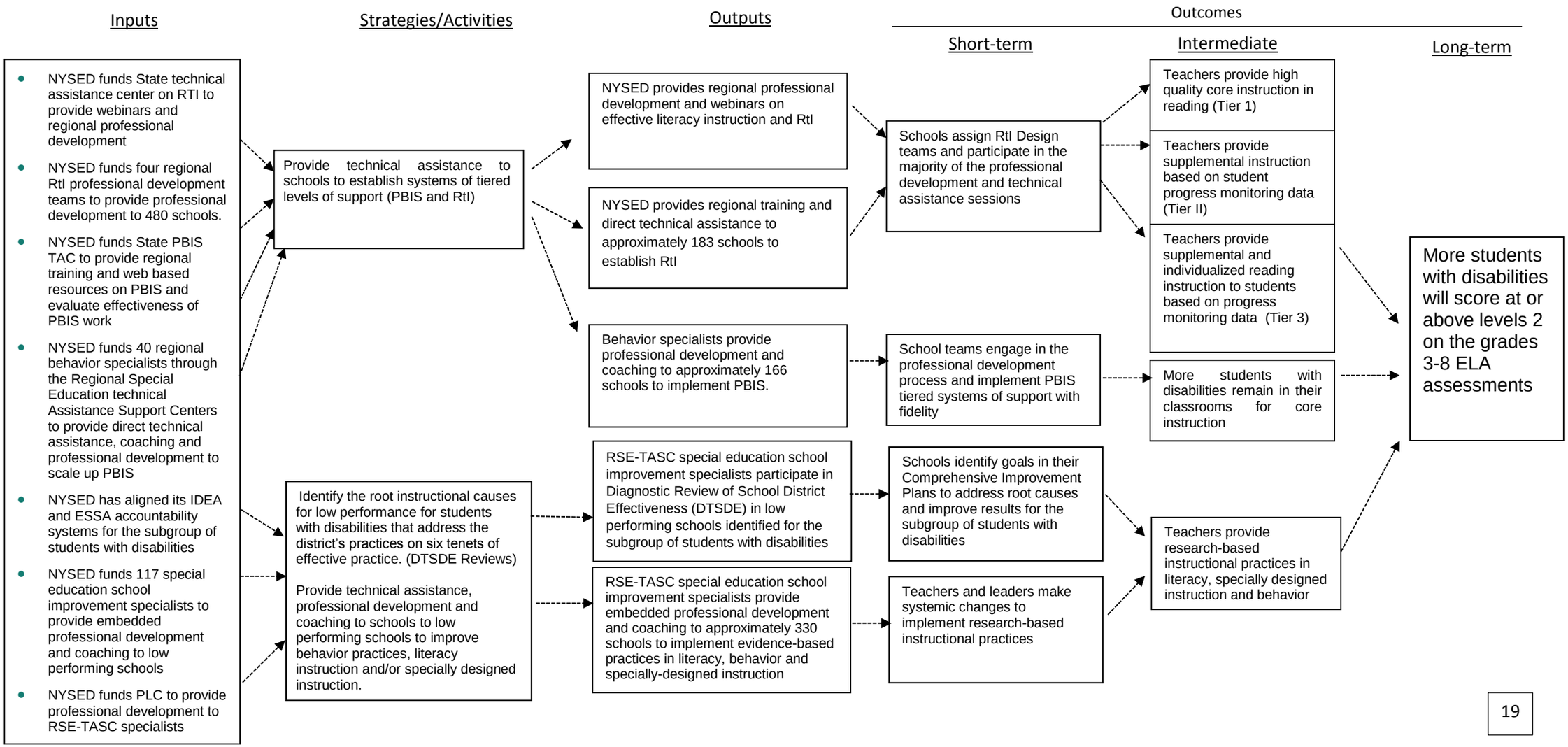
The SSIP logic model for the evaluation process illustrates the inputs, strategies/activities, outputs and outcomes. Inputs include fiscal and staff resources provided by the State. Strategies/activities are implementation efforts that will bring about changes and improvement at teacher and school level (short-term), at student level (intermediate) and ultimately achieving the long-term SiMR outcome. Implementation takes place over time and expectations for change are dependent on that duration.

The evaluation process will also serve as a mechanism to ensure fidelity to and accountability for the implementation of the four improvement strategies (i.e., research-based literacy instruction; use of research and evidence-based practices in the provision of specially-designed instruction; RtI; and PBIS) that were selected to increase the percent of students with disabilities who score at levels 2 and above on the grades 3-8 ELA assessments.

SSIP Evaluation Logic Model

State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR)

Increase the percent of students with disabilities who score at proficiency levels 2 and above on the grades 3-8 ELA assessments (regular assessment with accommodations, regular assessment without accommodations and the New York State Alternate Assessment).



3(b) Stakeholder involvement and how information from the evaluation will be disseminated to stakeholders:

NYSED consulted with the various stakeholder groups to inform the evaluation questions, methodology and how information from the evaluation would be disseminated to stakeholders.

The Commissioner's Advisory Panel (CAP) for Special Education serves as the primary stakeholder group for the Annual Performance Report, including the SSIP. Information regarding the organizations that CAP members represent can be found at http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/cap/.

In addition, NYSED consulted with its technical assistance providers, including parent centers, RSE-TASC Coordinators, SESIS, regional special education trainers, bilingual special education specialists, nondistrict technical assistance providers, and behavior specialists as well as with external evaluators of the RtI, PBIS and RSE-TASC projects.

In consulting with these groups, draft evaluation questions were posed and stakeholders were provided the opportunity to respond to question such as (1) are these the right evaluation questions; (2) how will we ensure we have data to measure these results; and (3) are there other measures we can assess to determine improvements in provision of evidence-based practices.

Individual responses were reviewed and considered in the development of Phase II SSIP evaluation plan.

Stakeholders will continue to be informed and will be provided opportunities to discuss short-term, intermediate and long-term evaluation results. Specifically, the State will annually share evaluation results with the CAP and provide them with the opportunity to discuss the implications of the evaluation results to (1) inform whether the State is likely to reach its targets for the SiMR and (2) whether any revisions to the activities are needed in consideration of evaluation results.

Evaluation results will also be shared with the State's technical assistance providers (i.e., RSE-TASC SESIS and behavior specialists; the State RtI TAC and Regional Professional Development Teams and Special Education Parent Centers). As with CAP, they will be provided with the opportunity to discuss the implications of the evaluation results and whether any revisions to the activities are needed.

3(c) The methods that the State will use to collect and analyze data to evaluate implementation and outcomes of the SSIP and the progress toward achieving intended improvements in the SiMR are described below:

A set of specific evaluation questions associated with each of the improvement strategies are discussed below. For each strategy, a wide range of qualitative and quantitative data will be collected beginning in June of each year. Staff in the Office of Special Education with project responsibility (i.e., RSE-TASC, PBIS, RtI) will have the lead responsibility to ensure the collection of data from the external evaluators and State-collected data to respond to each evaluation question.

Improvement Activity - Assignment of SESIS to participate in DTSDE reviews and support to low-performing school districts

In collaboration with the ESEA Office of Accountability, the Office of Special Education of NYSED, through a regional planning process, assigns Special Education School Improvement Specialists (SESIS) and other specialists (e.g., behavior specialists, bilingual specialists, etc.), as appropriate, from the State's technical assistance centers to participate in the DTSDE Accountability Reviews when districts and schools are identified for low performance for the subgroup of students with disabilities. To supplement the data collected through the DTSDE reviews, SESIS conduct instructional walk-through data regarding the use of evidence-based practices for students with disabilities.

NYSED, through a regional planning process, assigns SESIS to approximately 330 schools to provide up to three years of professional development and technical assistance to low performing districts in the areas of literacy, behavior and specially-designed instruction.

The table below summarizes the evaluation plan for this improvement activity.

Evaluation Question	Data Source	Evaluator
<u>Did the activity occur?</u>		
1a. How many schools received SESIS support in elementary/middle school beginning with the 2015-16 school year?	Quality Improvement Process Plans	Office of Special Education
1b. Of those schools, how many did the SESIS also participate in the DTSDE review, either at the district or school level or both?	District/School Comprehensive Improvement Plans	Office of Accountability and Office of Special Education

Evaluation Question	Data Source	Evaluator
<u>Did the activity accomplish its intended outcome?</u> 1c. Of all the elementary/middle schools receiving SESIS support, how many and what percent demonstrated a measureable change in implementation of identified instructional practices (i.e., met their goals for changes to systems as documented in the Quality Improvement Process plan)?	Survey of Effort and Effectiveness QIPs	External Evaluator RSE-TASC Professional Learning Center (PLC)
<u>Did outcome/results improve?</u> 1d. Of those schools receiving SESIS support, how many and what percent demonstrated a measureable change in implementation of identified student outcomes as documented in the Quality Improvement Process plan?	Survey of Effort and Effectiveness QIPs	External Evaluator RSE-TASC Professional Learning Center (PLC)
1e. Of those schools receiving SESIS support in the area of literacy, how many and what percent of those schools: • Attained the student literacy outcome goal identified in each school's QIP plan by the end of the year? • Demonstrated a measurable change in implementation of identified instructional practices? 1f. Of the schools identified in 1a, what percent of these schools demonstrated improved ELA results from the prior year?	QIPs State-collected data	External evaluator – RSE-TASC Professional Learning Center (PLC) NYSED Office of Information Reporting Services

Improvement Activity - Professional Development to Provide High Quality Tiered Systems of Support - Response to Intervention

The table below summarizes the evaluation plan for this improvement activity:

Evaluation Question	Data Source	Evaluator
<u>Did the activity occur?</u> 2a. How many State webinars and regional trainings on RtI were provided and how many individuals participated?	RtI TAC and RtI PD Teams Quarterly Reports	NYSED Office of Special Education
<u>Did the activity accomplish its intended outcome?</u> 2b. Of the 183 schools with RtI design teams and receiving professional development and technical assistance support for RtI implementation during the 2015-16 school year, how many/ what percent of schools that were selected for professional development support completed the training program (i.e., attended the majority of the training sessions and participated in at least three onsite technical assistance visits)? 2c. Of the schools that completed the training program as identified in 3b, how many and what percent had evidence of implementation with fidelity: ▪ In Tier I? ▪ In Tier II? ▪ In Tier III?	RtI PD Teams Quarterly Reports NYS RtI Self-Assessment Readiness Tool	NYSED Office of Special Education University of Minnesota (external evaluator)
<u>Did outcome/results improve?</u> 2d. In the schools that implemented RtI with fidelity, what percent of these schools demonstrated improved ELA results at levels 2 and above from the prior year?	State-collected data	NYSED Office of Information and Reporting Services

Improvement Activity - Professional Development to Provide High Quality Tiered Systems of Support - PBIS

The table below summarizes the evaluation plan for this improvement activity.

Evaluation Question	Data Source	Evaluator
<u>Did the activity occur?</u> 3a. How many elementary/middle schools received PBIS technical assistance and support (as described above) beginning in the 2015-16 school year?	Spreadsheet submission to NYS PBIS TAC from each behavior specialist	PBIS Technical Assistance Center (external evaluator)
<u>Did the activity accomplish its intended outcome?</u> 3b. Of these schools, how many and what percent continued to be engaged in the technical assistance work in subsequent years?	Spreadsheet submission to TAC from each behavior specialist	PBIS Technical Assistance Center (external evaluator)
3c. Of these schools, how many/what percentage had evidence of implementation with fidelity?	Tiered Fidelity Inventory; Benchmarks of Quality; Benchmarks for Advanced Tiers (as applicable)	PBIS Technical Assistance Center (external evaluator)
<u>Did outcome/results improve?</u> 3d. Of the schools that implemented with fidelity, how many and what percent reported a decline in office disciplinary referrals and in school and out-of-school suspensions of students?	NYS PBIS Data Audit Tool	PBIS Technical Assistance Center (external evaluator)
3e. In the schools that implemented PBIS with fidelity, what percent demonstrated improved ELA results at levels 2 and above from the prior year?	State-collected data	NYSED Office of Information and Reporting Services

3(d) The following describes how the State will use the evaluation data to examine the effectiveness of the implementation, assess the progress toward achieving intended improvements, and make modifications to the SSIP as necessary.

Data for each evaluation question described above will be collected beginning in June of each year and reviewed through August to verify accurate data. Staff in the Office of Special Education with project responsibility (i.e., RSE-TASC, PBIS, RtI) will have primary responsibility to collect and organize the data report and verify its accuracy with the technical assistance provider, assigned evaluators and Office of Special Education management staff.

Data will be reviewed and discussed annually at the fall meeting of the Commissioner's Advisory Panel for Special Education (State Advisory Panel). Guiding questions for the discussion will include, but are not limited to:

- Does the data show improvement in the identified evidence-based practices?
- Is the data improvement such that it is likely to improve the statewide 3-8 ELA results for students with disabilities?
- If not, what changes to the State's improvement activities should be considered?
- Are any modifications to the SSIP needed?

These same questions will also be discussed with the State Parent Centers and federal Parent Training and Information Centers (PTICs).

The Office of Special Education project leads will meet directly with the State's technical assistance providers to determine what, if any modifications/adjustments to professional development/technical assistance may be needed to reach intended outcomes.

PHASE II TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT

The State anticipates needing the following support to develop and implement an effective SSIP:

Support for LEA implementation of evidence-based practices:

- Sources for ready access to evidence and research-based instructional practices for students with disabilities.
- Information that assists NYS to benchmark with other states on effective strategies and improvement activities.
- Additional technical assistance on how to meaningfully engage stakeholders in consideration of evaluation data to inform any needed changes to the SSIP.
- Continued support from the federal technical assistance centers to apply implementation research in large urban schools and persistently struggling schools.