

**Arkansas Special Education State Advisory Council Report
State Systemic Improvement Plan and State Personnel Development Grant
April 20, 2017**

Summary of Phase III Submission

In Phase III of the State Systemic Improvement Plan, the Arkansas Department of Education has implemented a plan for two coherent strategies to improve ADE's infrastructure and increase the State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR). Arkansas' SIMR is focused on improving the literacy achievement of students with disabilities in third through fifth grade.

The two improvement strategies that are being implemented are

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

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

Strategy One focuses on creating a coordinated system of support to provide the necessary organizational structures for the way in which LEA services and supports will be identified, managed, and differentiated at the state-level. This Strategy focuses on building the infrastructure needed for the ADE to be more effective in leveraging resources that will improve services for all students (including students with disabilities) and increasing the reach and impact of its work with LEAs. Since the submission of Phase II, a Cross Unit ADE Team has met regularly to support the building of this system. Many of the goals outlined by the team are directly tied to supporting the development and implementation of the ADE Strategic Plan, which provides a foundation for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan in development. The team's goal is to directly align the system of support with the supports written into the State's ESSA plan.

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

The SPDG Goals

- Develop statewide RTI resources and tools in the areas of behavior and literacy.
- Increase the capacity of regional and district teams in their ability to deliver high quality RTI professional development as well as technical assistance to support the implementation of evidence-based instructional practices within schools with fidelity.
- Improve educators' ability to implement evidence-based literacy and behavior support practices.

- Improve literacy and behavior outcomes for all students, especially students with disabilities.

Summary of Phase III State Level RTI Work

A RTI State Advisory Team has been developed to elicit stakeholder input on how to more effectively address statewide RTI Implementation including identifying strengths and barriers, guiding implementation, and supporting effective communication. The Advisory Team has provided feedback on implementation challenges, professional development, and guidance documents.

Summary of Phase III Regional Level RTI Work

The State Implementation Team has supported RTI work at the regional level through the creation and dissemination of online RTI modules. A total of seven modules have been built. All modules are divided into short segments and include a facilitation guide accessible to regional Education Services Cooperatives (ESCs) for RTI work. The ESC content specialists have received training in how to facilitate the modules.

Summary of Phase III District and School Level RTI Work

The SPDG has partnered with a total of four targeted SSIP districts. Within these four districts, 21 schools have been selected for RTI Implementation. The SPDG has contracted with the American Institutes of Research (AIR), Arkansas State University Center for Community Engagement, and the Center for Exceptional Families to support the SSIP targeted districts. The SPDG's partnership with the ADE School Improvement Unit has led to RTI becoming the school improvement model for these schools. A three-year professional development and coaching scope and sequence has been developed and is differentiated based on district and school readiness. The SPDG began the implementation process by forming a teaming infrastructure to support RTI work. The infrastructure includes District Implementation Teams and School Leadership Teams that have been formed and meet monthly. Additionally, district and school coaches have been identified and are currently being trained to support the RTI work in the areas of literacy and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). The SPDG provides professional development and coaching in RTI infrastructure, a comprehensive literacy tiered system of support, and PBIS.

Evaluation Overview

The SPDG utilizes a comprehensive evaluation system. District Implementation Teams complete the SISEP District Capacity Assessment (DCA) to measure their capacity for RTI support. Based on assessment results, the Teams have developed an action plan to support RTI capacity in their districts. Schools utilize "The Center for Response to Intervention Implementation Fidelity Rubric" to assess their overall RTI schoolwide systems. Each school has developed an RTI implementation action plan based on the assessment results. To assess the fidelity of their PBIS implementation, schools are using the Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI). All the schools that implemented the Tier One PBIS practices in the 2015-2016 school year have reported growth. A literacy tool from the

University of Oregon (The Planning and Evaluation Tool for Effective School-wide Reading Programs-Revised for grades K-2 and the School-Wide Evaluation & Planning Tool for grades 3-8) is being used to assess the school's literacy systems. Based on baseline data, all schools that implemented the program in the 2015-2016 school year focused on core literacy instruction. Data collection systems are being put in place for the districts to collect and analyze literacy screener scores and office discipline referrals.