

**Arkansas Special Education State Advisory Council Report**  
**State Systemic Improvement Plan and State Personnel Development Grant**  
**August 24, 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 Update**

Strategy One focuses on creating a coordinated system of support to provide the necessary organizational structures for state-level staff to be able to identify, manage, and differentiate LEA services and supports.

Early successes of this collaboration between school improvement and special education and the introduction of the ADE's Strategic Plan in December 2016 have been evident and five more ADE Units have joined the collaboration. A Cross Unit ADE Team has now been formed which includes Special Education, School Improvement, Title I, Assessment, Curriculum Supports, Educator Effectiveness, and Technology and Instruction. The team meets every two weeks to continue developing the system of support for LEAs. These Units within the ADE house many of the Department's initiatives, resources, and direct district supports. The Team has utilized organizational documents to outline the vision, goals, communication protocols, and roles.

**Strategy Two**

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 State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) functions as the "boots on the ground" for the RTI implementation in targeted SSIP districts.

## **Update of State Level RTI Work**

The State Implementation Team completed the SISEP State Capacity Assessment (SCA) on July 21, 2017, with a focus on RTI. The SCA is designed to support scaling up of evidence-based practices by providing a regular measure of state capacity, a structured process for completing a state action plan, information on progress towards goals, and a common infrastructure for implementation.

An RTI State Advisory Team meets quarterly to identify strengths and barriers around statewide implementation, implementation challenges, professional development, and guidance documents. The State Advisory Team helps revise the RTI High School Handbook that is on AR IDEAS.

## **Summary of Phase III Regional Level RTI Work**

Two new RTI Arkansas Modules have been released

- RTI Arkansas: PBIS Overview – The PBIS Overview module outlines the essential components of PBIS, how behavior data can be utilized, and how leadership can support PBIS implementation.
- RTI Arkansas: PBIS Guidebook – The PBIS Guidebook provides an overview of a PBIS team's role and responsibilities and a step-by-step handbook to develop PBIS in a school.

## **Summary of Phase III District and School Level RTI Work**

The SPDG has partnered with a total of six targeted SSIP districts. Within these four districts, 30 schools have been selected for RTI Implementation. 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 the formation of District Implementation Teams and School Leadership Teams which 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.