

**Division of Elementary and Secondary Education - Special Education Unit
Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities
State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) and
State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG), July 2020**

Goals for the State Personnel Development Grant

- Develop statewide RTI resources and tools in the areas of behavior and literacy.
- Increase the capacity of regional and district teams to deliver high quality RTI professional development.
- Improve educators' ability to implement RTI with a focus on evidence-based literacy and behavior support practices.
- Improve literacy and behavior outcomes for all students, especially students with disabilities.

UPDATE

- PBIS Tier II modules have been through the review process and are in the final revision stage. Finalized Modules will be available in July.
- RTI Academic Modules are finalized and in DESE review.
- The SPDG Annual Performance Report was submitted to OSEP on May 1, 2020, and is awaiting feedback.

Arkansas SPDG 2019–2020 Annual Performance Report Executive Summary

The Arkansas State Personnel Development Grant (AR SPDG) was designed to directly align with and intensely support the State Systemic Improvement Plan. The 2019–2020 school year represents the fifth year of this effort. The AR SPDG works to develop capacity for the implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI) in targeted districts with the long-term objective of improving literacy and behavior outcomes for all students. The AR SPDG facilitates the design and implementation of a professional development (PD) and technical assistance (TA) system to support RTI at the state, regional, district and school levels. Professional development is conducted through systematic and sequential training and ongoing coaching at the regional and district levels.

As part of the Special Education Unit along with the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), the SPDG supports alignment and leverage resources within the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), formerly known as the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE). Throughout the SPDG grant period, RTI has been integral to school improvement efforts employed throughout the state. Implementation of those efforts is accelerated for the districts that the AR SPDG is working with intensely.

The State Implementation Team (SIT) consists of the DESE Assistant Commissioner, Division of Learning Services, the project's Principal Investigator, the AR SPDG Core Management Team, DESE staff from multiple units, and the data manager. The role of the SIT is to improve systems alignment with state initiatives by advising the core management team regarding implementation, barriers, and project improvements. The SPDG Core Management Team (CMT) includes staff from the DESE, American Institutes for Research (AIR), Arkansas State University, The Center for Exceptional Families (TECEF), and external evaluators from Public Sector Consultants (PSC). The CMT meets weekly to review feedback from the SIT, support training leads, review roles and responsibilities, reflect on grant activities implemented, analyze survey effectiveness data, coordinate across external partners, create and manage deliverables, and hold each other accountable for training goals.

During the 2019-2020 school year, the AR SPDG scaled-up to nine districts and fifty-one schools. The AR SPDG has increased focus on building district training and coaching capacity to drive literacy and behavior improvements in the schools as a mechanism to ensure sustainable RTI implementation. This year, the team AR SPDG team finalized seventeen [PBIS Tier I modules](#) that are available on the DESE website. Additional modules for PBIS Tier II and Tier III and academics are being reviewed to ensure alignment with the DESE's selected frameworks of Professional Learning Communities, High Reliability Schools, and High-Leverage Practices for the Inclusive Classroom, and DESE's Reading Initiative for Student Excellence. These modules

will be available on the DESE website by the fall of 2020. A system to collect feedback from training participants to assess the quality of training and impact on knowledge and skills needed for successful implementation of RTI was utilized throughout the year. Input from over 500 trainees was gathered during 2019-2020 and used to support continuous improvement of training content and delivery.

For each of the AR SPDG performance metrics, targets were met, or significant progress was made toward meeting targets. Results of the 2019-2020 implementation included:

- Score of “good” or “exemplar” achieved for 14 of 16, or 88 percent, of the professional development components of the SPDG rubric—increase from 12 of 16, or 75 percent, in 2018-2018.
- Overall score on the SISEP State Capacity Assessment (SCA) of 42/50 (84 percent)—exceeds the target of 80 percent.
- Expanded number of districts taking the SISEP District Capacity Assessment (DCA) from three to eight with six of the eight meeting the performance threshold of a score of 80 percent or a ten percent increase over the score from the previous year—the percentage of districts meeting the implementation components fell just short of the 80 percent target (75%) but the increased number of districts represents expanded implementation of RTI.
- Eighty-one percent (29/36) of participating schools met the implementation components of the School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Tiered Fidelity Inventory (SWPBIS-TFI) with a total score of 80 percent or by increasing their score by 10 percent from the previous year’s assessment—exceeding the target of 80 percent.
- Among the 29 schools meeting the SWPBIS-TFI implementation components, 27 showed reductions in office discipline referrals (ODRs)—the percentage of schools reducing ODRs (93 percent) exceeds the target of 80 percent.
 - Additionally, 21 schools that had not yet met the implementation components showed reductions in ODRs. Across all 51 participating schools, ODRs were reduced by over 15 percent.
- Nine of 13 schools (64 percent) met the implementation components in the Reading-Tiered Fidelity Inventory (R-TFI) with a total score of 80 percent or with a 10 percent increase over the previous year’s score.
- To assess student outcomes resulting from improved implementation components in the R-TFI for literacy, ACT Aspire Reading scores were used to determine the percentage of students at or above grade level standards. Of the nine schools meeting R-TFI implementation components, one school was a K-2 school where literacy scores were not assessed. One of the remaining eight schools increased the percentage of students meeting or exceeding grade level by 6 percent or more. No schools met this aggressive target in 2018-2019—this year’s 13 percent represents a meaningful increase in percentage of schools meeting this performance target.
 - While only one school met the target of a 6 percent increase, 30 of the targeted SPDG schools showed an increase in the number of students meeting or exceeding grade level standards—the average increase was 3.6 percent.
- The Center for Exceptional Families delivered a training on the essentials of RTI to parents/guardians, families and communities. Using a pre- and post-assessment, all training participants (100%) demonstrated increased knowledge and understanding of the essential elements of RTI.

In an effort to increase RTI implementation throughout the state and ensure sustainability, the SPDG CMT is focusing on the following actions in the remaining months of the grant period:

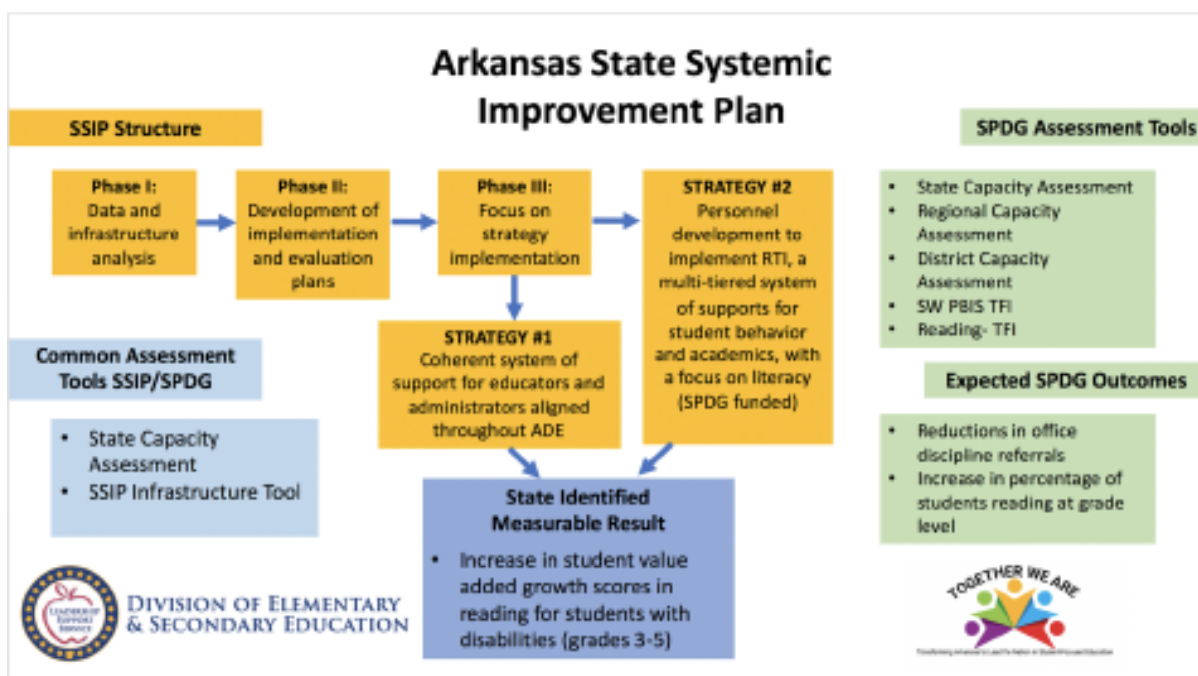
- Adapting training delivery and coaching service models to increase RTI implementation fidelity at the state, regional, and district levels — this will address current global health concerns while also expanding training and coaching capacity.

- Collaborating with regional and district level teams to develop a process for the recognition of positive achievements, including the procedures for setting and sharing benchmarks.
- Continue to work with the DESE to integrate its work with Professional Learning Communities and align training content with the following DESE initiatives: (1) Learning by Doing (DuFour et al., 2016), (2) Leading a High Reliability School (Marzano et al., 2018), (3) High-Leverage Practices for Inclusive Classrooms (McLeskey et. al., 2019) and (4) the DESE's Reading Initiative for Student Excellence.

The AR SPDG is well positioned to continue its efforts to strengthen the capabilities of educators and administrators to support improved behavior and literacy outcomes for students. Building on the established foundation, the SIT and CMT will focus on embedding RTI in school improvement efforts and other key initiatives of the DESE and making RTI available to all districts throughout the state.

Arkansas SSIP/SPDG Alignment Infographic

The below infographic displays the relationship among SSIP Coherent Improvement Strategies. Strategy One continues to focus on creating a coordinated system of support that outlines the necessary organizational structures for the way in which LEA services and supports are identified, managed, and differentiated at the state-level. This strategy focuses on building the infrastructure needed for the DESE 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. Strategy Two is aligned with the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) and continues to address the development of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) for academics and behavior.



Progress in the SSIP Strategy to Create a Coherent System of Support

The SPM Team's vision is to support the implementation of an aligned system within the DESE that is responsive to LEAs in personalizing student learning. The team goals are explicitly outlined in the DESE Strategic Plan, which provides a foundation for Arkansas's ESSA plan. Arkansas is one of three states to use the WestEd NCSI SSIP Infrastructure Development Planning Tool. The SSIP Infrastructure Development Rubric was used by DESE to crosswalk the implementation drivers and implementation stages necessary for effective sustainable implementation of the Arkansas SSIP.

In addition, the change to the SPM Team has continued to increase the awareness of the SSIP and promoted information exchange between units. During this phase of SSIP reporting, the DESE has continued aligning the

work of Professional Learning Communities, High Reliability Schools, R.I.S.E. Arkansas, RTI Arkansas, AIPL, and High-Leverage Practices. This alignment is being used to develop an Arkansas Systems Coaching Model.

As outlined in Arkansas's ESSA Plan, The DESE Special Education Unit's professional development and technical assistance outreach, referred to as the Arkansas Collaborative Consultants, is grounded in the SSIP and designed to build the capacity of local special education personnel and, to the extent appropriate, that of general education professionals. Increased efforts to align the work of the Arkansas Collaborative Consultants with broader DESE initiatives, including RTI Arkansas continues to occur.