



# NAVIGATING THE TARGETED IMPROVEMENT PLAN

August 1, 2019

Office of Special Education  
Nebraska Department of Education





# Introduction

In building capacity for the scale-up of the MTSS framework and to support districts in an environment of strong local control, Nebraska has required each district to review their student data and establish a Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP). Each TIP is required to have (a) a focus for improvement, (b) a measurable goal with annual targets, (c) a student-centered, evidence-based strategy to affect the outcomes for students with disabilities, (d) an implementation plan, and (e) criteria to measure fidelity of the student-centered, evidence-based strategy selected. The TIP must be aligned to the overall general education improvement activities being implemented at the district.

Regulations and Procedures for Accreditation of all public schools can be found in Rule 10, Section 009 – Continuous School Improvement. Districts and schools may choose state accreditation using the Nebraska Framework model or they may choose to be accredited regionally by the Cognia/North Central Association accrediting body. Cognia, previously known as AdvancED, is the largest community of education professionals in the world. They are a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that conducts rigorous, on-site external reviews of PreK-12 schools and school systems to ensure that all learners realize their full potential.

Either model of accreditation and school improvement is intended to assist Nebraska schools in aligning and coordinating the various school improvement initiatives that may be in progress in each district. These may include for example, TIPs, Title I Improvement Plans, technology plans, curriculum development activities, and plans for other local, state, or federal programs. Schools are encouraged to merge or align their various plans and goals so that local improvement activities will be mutually supportive and consistently aimed toward achieving school improvement goals.

Districts may choose the focus for improvement based on the data analysis conducted. Student performance data, and district implementation data is reported annually through the ILCD 3.0 site. Although districts may make changes to the (a) focus for improvement, (b) student-centered, evidence-based strategy/practice, or (c) implementation plan at any time, minimally all changes should be reflected in the TIP upon submission every December.





# Getting Started

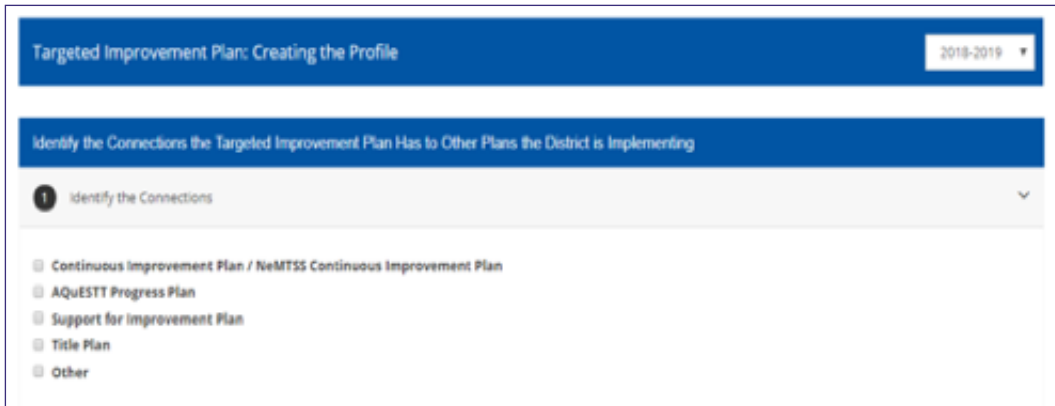
ILCD 3.0 can be accessed through the Portal. The activation code for the site should be provided by the district administrator for ILCD for the district (usually the superintendent). Once logged in, the Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP) can be found on the Program Improvement Tab.

The TIP contains four main components shown by colored arrows (see below). Each area can be accessed by clicking on the arrow needed.

The screenshot shows the ILCD 3.0 Portal interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the following tabs: DASHBOARD, PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY, DOCUMENTS, and RESOURCES. Below the navigation bar, the page title is 'EXAMPLEVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS' and the subtitle is 'Improving Learning for Children with Disabilities'. The main content area is titled 'SUBMIT YOUR TARGET IMPROVEMENT PLAN'. Below this title, there is a message: 'All sections of the Target Improvement Plan must be saved in order to enable the Submit button. Please see below for a list of the sections that haven't yet been saved.' Below the message is a 'CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT' button. Below the button, there is a list of sections that haven't been saved: 'Creating the Profile Hasn't Been Saved', 'Setting the Goals Hasn't Been Saved', 'Planning to Improve Hasn't Been Saved', and 'Implementing the Plan Hasn't Been Saved'. Below the list, there is a circular diagram illustrating the four phases of the TIP process: 'Creating the profile' (Phase I), 'Setting the Goals' (Phase I), 'Planning to Improve' (Phase II), and 'Implementing the Plan' (Phase III). Each phase has a 'click here!' link. Below the diagram, there is a section for uploading documents for the TIP, with a 'File Name' input field.

**REMEMBER:** The TIP should be included in the work of continuous school improvement. As a result, if the district has completed a data analysis for one of the plans below, it can be uploaded into ILCD.

- Continuous Improvement Plan/NeMTSS Continuous Improvement Plan
- AQuESTT Progress Plan
- Support for Improvement Plan
- Title Plan
- Other

The screenshot shows a web interface for 'Targeted Improvement Plan: Creating the Profile' for the 2018-2019 school year. The main heading is 'Identify the Connections the Targeted Improvement Plan Has to Other Plans the District is Implementing'. Below this, there is a section titled '1 Identify the Connections' with a dropdown arrow. A list of options is provided, each with an unchecked checkbox: 'Continuous Improvement Plan / NeMTSS Continuous Improvement Plan', 'AQuESTT Progress Plan', 'Support for Improvement Plan', 'Title Plan', and 'Other'.

When uploading one of the above plans for the TIP, include in the narrative on ILCD the name of the document uploaded and the page reviewers should focus on to find the information.

## Creating the Profile

Creating the Profile begins with identifying the connections the TIP has to other plans the district is implementing. Check the box next to the plan to which TIP is connected. You may choose as many, or as few plans with connections. Other is also an option in situations in which the plan is not already named. An example of “Other” would be the district’s strategic plan.

Creating the Profile contains three Impact Areas:

1. Impact Area I: Improving Developmental Outcomes and Academic Achievement (School Readiness) for Children with Disabilities – **REQUIRED**
2. Impact Area II: Improving Communication and Relationships Among Families, Schools, Communities and Agencies – **OPTIONAL**
3. Impact Area III: Improving Transitions for Children with Disabilities From Early Intervention to Adult Living – **OPTIONAL**

Although districts should review data related to each of the Impact Areas, for the purposes of improving outcomes for students with disabilities, the Office of Special Education requires districts to focus on and report information for Impact Area I only. Impact Areas II and III are OPTIONAL.

In Creating the Profile for Impact Area I, districts will do the following:

1. Summarize and Upload outcome and implementation data
2. Discuss strengths
3. Discuss challenges
4. Detail the district's infrastructure including their resources, supports, and initiatives.

## Data Summary and Upload

### Summary and Upload Expectations

Districts should begin by uploading (without including student's or teacher's personal identification information) both outcome and implementation data. The data that is uploaded and summarized should tell the story about how students are achieving the outcomes the district has defined and how teachers are implementing the strategies and initiatives detailed within the plan.



After uploading both outcome and implementation data, the district should summarize what the data shows. (See example summary on the following page)

The following questions should be considered:

- To what extent did (an activity) produce a change in student outcomes?
- To what extent were milestones in implementation (number of sites, coaches employed, and implementers trained to criterion, proficiency of fidelity measures) reached on schedule?

If the district has a Continuous Improvement Plan, Support for Improvement Plan, Priority Plan, or another improvement plan that has been developed, it may be uploaded and referred to in the TIP. Examples are provided on the following page.

## Summary and Upload Examples

### Student Outcome Uploads

- MAP Assessment Data
- NSCAS Data
- AIMSweb Data
- SWISS Data

### Teacher Implementation Uploads

- Aggregated Walk-through observation data
- Coaching Logs
- Fidelity Checks

### Data Upload from another Plan

Remember, if the TIP has connections to other plans, the district may choose to upload the plan. In a case where the information requested is detailed in another improvement plan, the district may simply type in the text box "Please refer to [NAME ATTACHMENT] on page [#]."

### Summary

There is a [##] gap in [READING/MATH/WRITING] proficiency between students with disabilities and general education students at DISTRICT. Although the DISTRICT has seen a [#] point increase/decrease in [READING/MATH/WRITING] scores from [20##-20##] to the [20##-##] school year on the [NAME ASSESSMENT] for general education students, students with disabilities have shown a [#] point increase/decrease during that same span. When looking at [ASSESSMENT 2] scores, [#] students with disabilities are above/below benchmark in [READING/MATH/WRITING] where [#] general education students are above/below.

The DISTRICT has been implementing [NAME STUDENT-CENTERED, EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGY(s)]. As of DATE, [##] percent of teachers trained are implementing with [##] percent fidelity. The area in which teachers need additional support in order to implement the strategy with fidelity are [DESCRIBE COMPONENT(s) TEACHERS STRUGGLE WITH].

## Strengths Narrative

The strengths narrative should highlight the strengths of the district's system and should cover the following points:

- Strengths of the system
- How components of the system are coordinated, e.g., school improvement and ILCD
- Evidence-based practices utilized by the district that result in improved outcomes

## Strengths Narrative Example

The TIP is embedded into the district Strategic Plan, Title Plan, CIP, and most recently the NeMTSS Continuous Improvement Plan. Over the past several years, the district along with the ESU have provided [NAME TRAINING]. As a result of the [NAME TRAINING] staff is already well versed in [PRACTICE/STRATEGY] with [#] percent of the staff implementing [PRACTICE/STRATEGY] with [#] percent fidelity. Since the district started to implement [PRACTICE/STRATEGY], general education students' [CONTENT] scores have increased from [#] to [#] and special education students' [CONTENT] scores have increased from [#] to [#].



## Challenges Narrative

The challenges narrative should highlight the challenges the district has faced and the impact those challenges have had on ensuring students are reaching the high level of outcomes expected. The challenges narrative should:

- Pinpoint additional evidence-based practices needed by the district
- Address the specific steps the district has taken to further align current initiatives and improvement plans that impact children with disabilities
- Identify areas for improvement within and across system components

### Challenges Narrative Example

The district completed the NeMTSS Self-Assessment which revealed [INSERT RESULTS HERE]. This was further supported by the initiative inventory the district completed (see Infrastructure below). In the area of [CONTENT], staff were implementing [#] curricula with some only being implemented by [#] staff. With the high number of administrative changes, additional practices were implemented with none being discontinued. As the district looked at [CONTENT], and the percent of staff implementing each of the numerous curricula and practices, administration and the [TEAM] eliminated the practices and curricula not in use and communicated it to staff by [DESCRIBE METHOD]. The [TEAM] also looked at the selected curriculum and noticed that it was lacking [COMPONENT]. Professional development will be implemented to assist staff in supplementing [CONTENT] by [DESCRIBE WHAT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED].

## Description of the District's infrastructure (resources, supports, and initiatives)

Review district system components including: administration/supervision, fiscal resources, quality standards (Cognia, curriculum, teacher quality), professional development provided, data, technical assistance and accountability (attaining goals, results). The description should include the following:

- Analysis of initiatives in the district, including general education and other areas beyond special education that can have an impact on improving results for children with disabilities
- Details about how decisions are made within the district and with other representatives that are involved in planning for systematic improvements in the district (e.g. agencies – NDE, DHHS, School Boards, other groups or individuals)
- Description of how the district is integrating and gaining from current improvement plans across the district (in general and special education), and how will this work specifically improve outcomes for children with disabilities?

## Description of the District's Infrastructure Example

The district has completed an initiative inventory and learned that teachers had an overabundance of curricular, intervention, and support materials, but none of them were used consistently. The most widely used materials were [NAME OF MATERIALS]. After multiple meetings with staff to discuss the pros/cons of the materials, the staff agreed to implement [NAME OF MATERIAL/PROGRAM] and are in the process of developing fidelity measures. Because only [#] percent of the staff were already using [NAME OF MATERIAL/PROGRAM], additional trainings will be provided. Staff were also asked to stop using [NAME OF MATERIAL/PROGRAM]. Administration will begin [TIMEFRAME] walk-throughs to ensure staff are implementing [NAME MATERIAL/PROGRAM] and that staff are no longer implementing [NAME MATERIAL/PROGRAM]. With the support of the school board, and the ESU, the district anticipates that streamlining initiatives and weeding out practices that are no longer in use, will provide additional time for staff to focus on [PRACTICE/STRATEGY].

## Setting the Goals

Based on the data analysis conducted by the district, a focus for improvement should be selected. Districts may change the focus for improvement as data show a change is needed. However, remember that data is slow to change. A district that changes the focus for improvement on an annual basis may not see improved outcomes for students with disabilities.

### Current General Focus for Improvement

**Current general focus for improvement:** Districts should select the one focus for improvement it has chosen to work on through the TIP. Choose ONE of the following focus options:

- Improve Reading
- Improve Math
- Improve Writing
- Improve LRE
- Improve Transition Outcomes
- Improve Behavior/Reduce Suspensions and Expulsions
- Improve Graduation Rate

After selecting the general focus for improvement, the district will indicate if that focus has changed from the previous year. For districts that continue to work on the same focus for improvement, no additional information is required. For districts that have changed the focus for improvement, a rationale is required. Rational options include the following:

- Training and/or hiring of new leadership staff
- Purchase of new curricular materials
- Change to coincide with other continuous improvement framework
- Other

If “Other” is selected, districts are asked to explain the circumstances for the change in focus.

### Specific Measurable goal with annual targets

After the general focus for improvement is identified, the district is required to write a specific goal. For example, a district that has selected “Improve Reading,” may write a goal specific to vocabulary, comprehension, or fluency. The measurable goal should include the details of what student outcome measures will be used to set targets and measure performance. The table that follows the written description of the goal is limited. As a result, a description of the numbers that are used (MAP RIT scores, number or percentage of students meeting benchmark, number or percentage of students meeting/exceeding standards on NSCAS, etc.) should be included with the goal statement.

#### Measurable Goal Example

Currently [#] of students are meeting benchmarks in reading on the [NAME ASSESSMENT]. [DISTRICT'S] goal is to increase the number of students meeting benchmark on [NAME ASSESSMENT] by [#] students annually so by 2021 [#] of students are meeting benchmarks.

Year	Target	Performance
2018-2019	#	#
2019-2020	#	
2020-2021	#	
2021-2022	#	
2022-2023	#	
2023-2024	#	

#### Target Met

Districts are required to indicate if they met the target for the previous school year. Districts who met the target may select “yes” and no other information is required. Districts who did not meet the target will be asked to explain why the target was not met. There are no consequences for districts who do not meet the target rather, the expectation is that districts analyze why the target was not met and adjust the TIP to assist them in making the target in the future.

## Student-Centered, Evidence-Based Strategy/Practice Selected

In order to get improved outcomes for students with disabilities, it is critical that practices and strategies implemented by districts are proven to be effective. Selecting student-centered strategies or practices that are diverse (can be used with any content area) and have a strong evidence-base are more likely to improve outcomes than strategies or practices that are considered to have mixed or insufficient evidence. Although “off the shelf” products can be considered evidence-based, purchasing new curriculum to support students is not required. It is preferred that the districts choose high-leverage practices (regardless of the curriculum) during core instruction and interventions to ensure students have access to effective instruction throughout the day. Examples of high leverage, evidence-based practices include but are not limited to the following:

- Using explicit instruction
- Providing scaffolded supports
- Teaching cognitive and metacognitive strategies to support learning and independence
- Using flexible grouping
- Using strategies to promote active student engagement
- Providing positive and constructive feedback to guide students’ learning and behavior
- Using assistive and instructional technology

## *Planning to Improve*

**List and describe the professional development/technical assistance that will be made available to implement the specific evidence-based practice selected.**

It is understood that districts provide a multitude of professional development activities for staff on a regular basis. The list of professional development/technical assistance should be specific to the implementation of the specific student-centered, evidence-based practice (EBP) selected. In addition to including a list of relevant professional development, the district should also consider the following:

- How does the district evaluate the effectiveness of the professional development?
- If the professional development is determined to be ineffective, what is the process for making adjustments?
- How is the data collected used to make decisions about what staff need to be instructional leaders in using EBPs?



## Identify how the district will support the staff in implementing the EBP selected.

When assisting staff in the implementation of a new strategy (professional development), there are six quality indicators which research has shown to be effective in the development of teacher skills/practices.

- **Coaching:** Practice-based opportunities integrate explicit coaching and feedback for staff regarding their practice and provide them with the means for improvement.
- **Modeling:** Demonstration of how to design, enact, and evaluate instruction if provided to staff through multiple means (e.g., faculty or peer demonstration, videos).
- **Spaced Learning:** Staff are provided sustained and repeated opportunities to practice knowledge and skills acquired in coursework. Opportunities are scaffolded to deepen knowledge and skills over time.
- **Varied Learning Opportunities:** Staff are provided practice-based opportunities in which they are expected to employ strategies in varying contexts, with a diverse range of students, and under different leadership support.
- **Analyzing and Reflecting:** Practice-based opportunities establish expectations and processes for staff to analyze and reflect upon their practice, their impact on student learning, and any necessary modifications.
- **Scaffolding:** Staff are provided with guidance and support for improving practice, both of which are incrementally removed to promote independence and foster the development of expertise over time.

Use of the above indicators can lead to better outcomes and implementation quality of the evidence-based strategy/practice. The use and measurement of the implementation of these six quality indicators becomes supporting evidence of implementation to fidelity and the effectiveness of the professional development offered.

Districts may select as few or as many supports that are provided. Districts may also select “Other.” If “Other” is chosen, a description of what supports are provided is required.

## Describe the criteria for measuring the successful implementation of the EBP.

- What are the criteria for successful implementation for the specific EBP selected that will be measured?
- What is the plan for evaluation of the EBP?
- What is the district’s system for collecting valid and reliable implementation data and data related to the focus of improvement?

### Describing the Criteria Examples

The administrative team will perform walk-through observations on a [TIME PERIOD (ex. monthly, quarterly, etc.)] basis to ensure teachers are implementing [STRATEGY] with fidelity. A copy of the walk-through form is attached and shows that the district is looking to ensure all staff are [LIST THE CRITERIA HERE]. The district will know that the strategy is implemented with fidelity when the staff reach [DESCRIBE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE].

## Implementing the Plan

### **Describe how the district is implementing the strategy within the selected framework.**

Provide details about the activities the district engaged in to implement the student-centered, evidence-based strategy selected and to achieve the goal documented in “Setting the Goals.” Activities should be tied to the Essential Elements (<http://nemtss.unl.edu/essential-elements/>) of MTSS.

The narrative to describe the implementation of the strategy or practice should include the following:

- A.** Protocol for implementing the strategy detailed.
- B.** People trained in strategy identified and trainer is identified.
- C.** Training schedule provided. Opportunities for spaced and varied learning opportunities provided.
- D.** Frequency of fidelity checks and tool to measure fidelity provided. Additional trainings provided to scaffold skills.
- E.** Criteria for successful implementation described.

### **Description of How the District is Implementing Example**

- A.** Leadership Team will meet with staff to review expectations with strategy implementation [defining what implementation looks like/doesn't look like]. Training schedule established with follow-up training. Coaching/modeling schedule established. Meetings or regularly scheduled targeted reflection and analysis time provided.
- B.** All six elementary teachers trained by ESU trainer
- C.** Initial training provided August 1, 2018, follow-up training provided September 1, 2018, individual coach training implemented September 15, etc.
- D.** Fidelity checks made bi-monthly with all staff trained. Each teacher must demonstrate 50 percent accuracy to protocol by November 24, 2018. Follow-up coaching (group or individual, as determined by data) is provided for any teachers in need of additional support, as identified through fidelity checks, etc.
- E.** Eighty percent of teachers trained must demonstrate 80 percent accuracy to protocol by May 2019, ongoing support for teachers provided until criteria are met, etc.

Districts may also choose to use a chart similar to the one below.

Action Step:		
Activity	Staff Responsible	Timeline

**Based upon a review of the implementation data (fidelity data, coaching, data, etc.), what adjustments have been implemented and what future adjustments are planned?**

A critical point in continuous improvement is using outcome and implementation data to determine next steps. An examination of the outcome and implementation data should guide districts to make changes to how the plan is implemented to ensure staff are getting the training and support needed to ensure students achieve improved outcomes. Questions districts should consider when responding include the following:

- What is the process that the district will use to make modifications to the TIP as necessary?
- What changes have been made to the TIP based on the data collected?

**Adjustments Planned Example**

Only 30 percent of teachers trained are implementing with 80 percent fidelity. The team identified that all trainings were provided as described. Leadership team reviewed fidelity data to determine patterns/weaknesses and identified additional training, coaching, modeling, and scaffolding as areas needing improvement. The leadership team determined that trainings were spaced too far apart and one of the coaches needed additional modeling to work more effectively with changing teacher practices. The leadership team noted that the original professional development around the strategy/practice did not effectively address all of the components of implementation that the team agreed to and have developed a more effective professional development to address previous deficit.

