NEBRASKA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

State Systemic Improvement Plan

Phase II

3/30/2016

Indicator B17: State Systemic Improvement Plan – Nebraska – Phase II

State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR) Identified in Phase I

The stakeholder committees engaged in a thorough analysis of the data and discussion of the infrastructure in place in Nebraska, subsequently the following State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR) was selected for school age students with disabilities receiving services under Part B of the IDEA:

Narrow the gap between the reading proficiency rates of students with disabilities and the general education students at 3rd grade.

Baseline and Targets

Baseline Data – Reading Proficient Gap 2013

	Proficiency Rate	
General Education Grade 3	83.42%	Gap between General and Special Education (3rd Grade) 22.79%
Special Education Grade 3	60.63%	

FFY 2013 – FFY 2018 Targets

FFY	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Target	22.79%	22.79%	22.29%	22.20%	21.79%

As identified in Phase I, the SIMR was selected based on its alignment with Part B Indicator 3C of the SPP as well as its close tie to the Nebraska State Board of Education statewide initiative for continuous improvement. In selecting the SIMR, the stakeholder committees reviewed and analyzed the data and infrastructure in place in Nebraska. The stakeholders reviewed the Office of Special Education's activities, cross-team activities and current state initiatives to identify and support improvement. Internal and external data was reviewed and analyzed to isolate key factors through a drill down process, which would influence the selection of the SIMR. State improvement initiatives were studied and opportunities for aligning with these initiatives explored, from both a state and a local level. Benefits for students with disabilities, as well as students without disabilities, were debated from the perspective of the impact of an increased capacity by school districts and programs to narrow the gap between the reading performance of children in special education and the children in general education, while also demonstrating improved results for the individual child.

As discussions and review of data progressed, the stakeholder committee became more sophisticated with data analysis leading to additional questions. Upon further investigation of the state's infrastructure and continuing conversations with the stakeholders concerns were raised. Stakeholders felt, and data showed, that when a Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) is implemented to fidelity with all students, all students increase their proficiency in reading. For districts that have been identified as "needs improvement" through our newly established and developing accountability system known as *Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow* (AQuESTT) the state found that either no gap or a negative gap exists between students with disabilities and their

nondisabled peers. As MTSS is implemented and core instruction for reading is strengthened, data shows that the reading gap at the third grade level emerges. As a result of conversations with our stakeholders and with guidance from OSEP and our contact from the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI), the state has decided to modify its SIMR.

Modified SIMR

Increase reading proficiency for students with disabilities within the selected cohort at the third grade level as measured by the statewide reading assessment (NeSA).

New Baseline and Targets

Baseline Data – Reading Proficiency of 3rd Graders within the Identified Cohort

	2011-12 School Year	2012-13 School Year	2013-14 School Year	2014-15 School Year
Identified Cohort	53.34%	57.76%	57.86%	65.07%

FFY 2013 – FFY 2018 Targets

FFY	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Target	59.86%	61.86%	63.86%	65.86%	67.86%

In order to identify districts to include in the cohort; the state used the following criteria:

1. Districts that are working with the MTSS statewide project;
2. Districts that are working with the PBiS statewide project;
3. Districts that have selected to improve reading as their focus for improvement through their state required Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP);
4. Districts that identified MTSS as their framework for implementing with increasing intensity evidence-based reading strategies through their state required TIP.

Districts within this cohort are representative of the demographics found within the state and are positioned geographically throughout the state providing representation of districts from western, central, and eastern Nebraska, as well as providing representation from both urban and rural environments.

Coherent Improvement Strategy Identified in Phase I

The NDE, Office of Special Education, with stakeholder input, identified MTSS/RtI as a sound, logical, coherent strategy that is aligned with the SIMR. MTSS/RtI is a multi-tiered, evidence-based model of providing instruction and intervention supports to ALL students based on needs identified through data analysis. Student data and data on instructional delivery are used to make decisions about the effectiveness of supports being provided for students. As students' needs increase, the intensity of the instruction and intervention increases.

Through conversations with stakeholders, our MTSS statewide trainers, OSEP, and our NCSI state contact, as well as continued investigation of our state infrastructure a need to clarify our coherent improvement strategy became apparent.

Clarified Coherent Improvement Strategy

To improve the reading proficiency of 3rd grade students within the identified cohort, Nebraska will work to ensure school districts are implementing increasingly intensive evidence-based reading methodologies (e.g., incorporating Explicit Instruction strategies to strengthen core instruction and interventions such as Early Intervention in Reading (Allor & Mathes, 2012[1]; Mathes & Torgesen, 2005[2]) and Corrective Reading (Engelmann et al., 2008[3])). This will be accomplished through the use of effective implementation of the newly integrated MTSS framework and continuing to align infrastructure within the state.

Component #1: Infrastructure Development

1(a) Specify the improvements that will be made to the State infrastructure to better support LEAs to implement and scale up EBPs to improve results for children with disabilities.

Nebraska identifies the following core elements to support the implementation and scale-up of evidence-based practices to improve results for children with disabilities and infrastructure development:

1. Create a newly integrated MTSS framework that integrates PBiS into the current RtI model;
2. Establish increasingly intensive implementation of evidence-based practices for reading; and
3. Continue alignment of the state's internal infrastructure.

Core Element 1 to Support the Coherent Improvement Strategy: Create a newly integrated MTSS framework combining PBiS into the current RtI model

The Nebraska Office of Special Education, with stakeholder input, identified MTSS/RtI as the evidence-based framework for providing instruction and intervention supports to ALL students based on their needs identified through data.[4] MTSS is a multi-tiered approach for addressing individual student needs and is sound, coherent, and logical in its application. As addressed in Phase I, the focus of MTSS is on improved student outcomes for all students through the provision of high-quality scientifically/research-based reading instruction and interventions matched to student need. The MTSS process enables districts to provide early literacy support and assistance to students who are struggling to attain or maintain grade level reading performance.[5]

The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) Office of Special Education contracts with the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families, and Schools (CYFS) at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln to provide training and technical assistance to Nebraska school districts to help them achieve deep implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS). Currently the Multi-Tiered System of Support- Implementation and Support Team (MTSS – IST) works with approximately 70 districts statewide that have volunteered to participate in the MTSS implementation process. The trainings, by

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[1] Allor, J.H. & Mathes, P. (2012). *Early interventions in reading: Level K.* Columbus: SRA/McGraw-Hill
[2] Mathes, P. & Torgeson, J. (2005). *Early interventions in reading: Levels 1 & 2*. Columbus: SRA/McGraw-Hill
[3] Englemann, S., Carnine, L., & Johnson, G. (2008). *Corrective Reading: Decoding A, B1, B2*. Columbus: SRA/McGraw-Hill
[4] Nebraska Part B State Systemic Improvement Plan (2015). Page 18
[5] Nebraska Part B State Systemic Improvement Plan (2015). Page 17

design, are leveled to support districts at every level of knowledge and implementation of the framework of MTSS. The MTSS-IST is highly skilled in working with districts at all levels of development.

In efforts to provide consistency, and ensure districts involved with MTSS-IST were committed to the process to more effectively use resources, districts who volunteered to become involved with the statewide MTSS training beginning in August 2015 were required to sign off on a list of agreements. The list of requirements detailed the supports the MTSS-IST would provide as well as commitments the district was required to make. To receive statewide MTSS training and technical assistance, districts had to agree to establish a district and building implementation team. Each team then also had to agree to the following:

1. Meet on a regular basis (at least once per month) to build and monitor implementation of the MTSS process.
2. Participate in all recommended training sessions.
3. Establish a rationale and vision for implementation of MTSS.
4. Identify, evaluate, and eliminate or reduce focus on all initiatives, programs, or practices being implemented that may be competing for resources and/or be unlikely to produce results for students and therefore could serve as barriers to getting deep implementation of MTSS.
5. Develop a written implementation plan outlining the procedures for MTSS within the district/building.
6. Allocate resources (e.g., financial, human, material) where they are needed (based on data).
7. Use technically adequate Universal Screening (e.g., MAP, DIBELS, AIMSweb) and Progress Monitoring measures (e.g., DIBELS, AIMSweb).
8. Use a comprehensive core reading program and evidence-based intervention programs and practices that have a high likelihood of being effective if deeply implemented.
9. Provide personnel with the training and follow-up support needed to achieve deep implementation of all programs and practices in the MTSS framework.
10. Allow IST members to conduct walk-through observations and participate in walk-through observations with IST members when gathering instructional data.
11. Establish indicators of deep implementation of MTSS and collect data on the indicators on a regular basis to ensure the MTSS plan is being implemented and determine where support is needed.
12. Provide MTSS-IST with implementation information (e.g., fidelity data, implementation indicator data, videos of instruction or meetings, etc.) as requested when needed for training, support, and capacity building activities.
13. Participate in UNL and NDE evaluation activities required for the Nebraska Results Driven Accountability efforts (e.g., provide the IST access to the Universal Screening data through project accounts or authorization to log into school accounts).

Districts that began working with the MTSS statewide trainers and coaches were not expected to have all of the items listed above fully in place prior to working with the MTSS-IST as some of the items listed are outcomes of participating fully in the training and technical assistance provided through involvement with the statewide trainers. However, districts are expected to be committed to installing and implementing all items listed in a timely manner.

In order to build capacity for a more comprehensive multi-tiered system of support for students in schools, the Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Special Education has begun to work collaboratively with both the MTSS-IST and the state level team responsible for training and support in Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBiS) to form an MTSS Management Team. One of the

goals of the MTSS Management Team will be to develop an organizational schema that will merge the current status of MTSS and PBiS in the state of Nebraska. This merger will lead to the development of an integrated MTSS system that is supported by the state and will support schools in providing both academic and behavioral tiered levels of support to students and increase the number of trainers available to implement universal training and technical support. Research demonstrates that when students are in a safe, welcoming environment and are not missing instruction due to behavioral referrals, there is an increase in academic achievement.

The State of Nebraska is committed and aware of the importance to build capacity and sustainability for enduring implementation and fidelity of evidence-based practices in schools and districts. Research is compelling that in order to support deep implementation and sustainability, a systemic coaching model must be a necessary piece of the framework (Gersten, et.al, 2000)[6]. The NDE Office of Special Education has determined that the development of a systemic coaching model for the new integrated MTSS framework is a high priority and is investigating options to implement an effective coaching model within the framework of MTSS is consistent with research on sustainability.

Districts interested in participating in MTSS training with the MTSS-IST attend the initial "Building and Refining" (B & R) trainings with district teams. The B & R training consists of in-person training sessions and onsite or distance technical assistance provided across multiple years. The initial focus of training and TA is on exploration and installation activities (e.g., comparing current practices to key MTSS components; examining current infrastructure; identifying areas for planning; identifying focus and plan for roll out) with the goal of building/refining their MTSS procedures and establishing a written plan for implementation that addresses key implementation drivers (e.g., addressing organizational, leadership, and competency drivers; Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005)[7]. In addition to the training sessions, the MTSS-IST provided technical assistance (TA or systems-level coaching) to provided support to teams between sessions as they are building and implementing their MTSS processes. TA activities include facilitating systems-level data review meetings, intervention response to data meetings, capacity-building for collection of fidelity data, etc. All TA activities are designed to build team capacity and gradually release responsibility from the TA providers to the teams.

As part of the Building and Refining training, district teams are asked to identify an individual(s) within their districts who can serve in an instructional coach role. The statewide MTSS trainers have developed their own model for instructional (practice-level) coaching and provide training for district administrators and district-identified coaches in the model. The model is driven by instructional data (fidelity data). The MTSS trainers follow a systematic process to build capacity of administrators to collect instructional data at the core and intervention levels, summarize the data, and identify teacher and interventionist professional development and coaching needs. The MTSS trainers also provide training and support for the instructional coaches. Coaches receive training in effective coaching meetings, dealing with resistance, and use of a variety of coaching strategies to employ based on the needs of those whom they are coaching. The coaching strategies used include the following:

- Observation with Feedback and Reflection;
- Side-by side;

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[6] Gersten, R., Chard, D., & Baker, S. (2000). Factors enhancing the sustained use of research-based instructional practices. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 33, 445-457.

[7] Fixsen, D.L., Naoom, S.F., Blasé, K.A., Friedman, R. M., & Wallace, F. (2005). *Implementation research: A synthesis of the literature* (FTMHI Pub. No. 231). Tampa: University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute.

- Use of Videotape;
- Lesson Demonstration;
- Group coaching/practice sessions;
- Shadow/Mirror Coaching; and
- Co-Observation.

The specifics for building capacity to scale-up the new integrated MTSS process including job-embedded coaching, and district coaching are currently in discussion with stakeholders and NDE team members. This discussion will be a focal point of future NDE and stakeholder meetings.

The scale-up process of the new MTSS framework is projected to take a minimum of three years. The following components will be added to further complete the training framework:

- Coach training;
- Support and follow-up for coaches; and
- Coach participation in the MTSS Training with district teams at all levels as part of the integrated scale-up of training and coaching.

The MTSS Management Team is examining a capacity building/scale-up process in which selected teams from Educational Service Units (ESUs), districts, and/or regions will engage in the "Building and Refining" trainings with the districts within their region. They will be provided opportunities to observe and take part in the technical assistance provided by the MTSS-IST for the districts involved in the initial "Building & Refining" trainings. Continuous and ongoing professional development (PD) and technical support will be provided to the ESUs, districts and/or regions participating in the coaching model. PD will focus on incorporating the principals of Implementation Science with the integrated MTSS framework, essential elements, and coaching procedures/techniques. In the coaching training, specific attention will be given to practices that include how to observe and provide meaningful feedback to teachers implementing MTSS.

Core Element 2 to Support the Coherent Improvement Strategy: Establish increasingly intensive implementation of evidence-based practices

In building capacity for the scale-up of statewide newly integrated 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 focus for improvement and a student-centered, evidence-based strategy to impact the outcomes for students with disabilities. 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 AdvancED/North Central Association accrediting body. AdvancED is the largest community of education professionals in the world. They are a non-profit, non-partisan 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, Targeted Improvement Plans (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.

While reading is not a required area of focus for improvement, districts will be required to analyze student reading data to determine its level of significance in their decisions for improved student outcomes. Districts will be required to annually report reading data to be part of the state aggregate and align with the SIMR of improving the reading performance of students with disabilities at the 3rd grade level for the identified cohort. Districts that have been included in the identified cohort have selected reading as their focus for improvement.

Core Element 3 to Support the Coherent Improvement Strategy: Continue alignment of state's internal infrastructure

During the development of this Phase, the Nebraska Department of Education Office of Special Education established a committee (Learning Collaborative) including individuals from various offices within the department to collaborate and align initiatives. The original committee included representation from the Office of Special Education, Accreditation and School Improvement, and the University of Nebraska in Lincoln (UNL). As work progressed, the team was expanded to include additional representatives from other areas including Teaching & Learning, Federal Programs and Nutrition, and evaluators from The Nebraska Academy for Methodology, Analytics and Psychometrics (MAP).

The work of the Learning Collaborative lead to additional collaborations and has allowed Nebraska to take multiple steps to further align and leverage the Part B SSIP with other initiatives within our state. Those initiatives include collaborations with the following:

- Literacy Cadre – Using Evidence-Based Practices to Improve Reading;
- Data Cadre – Using Data for Continuous School Improvement;
- AQuESTT - *Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow;*
- 10 Year Strategic Planning Committee;
- MTSS;
- PBiS; and
- Pyramid Model.

1(b) The State of Nebraska will take the following steps to further align and leverage current improvement plans and initiatives, including general and special education, which impact children with disabilities:

The recent improvement and accountability initiative in general education, including special education students, in the state of Nebraska is called *Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow* (AQuESTT). AQuESTT began through state legislation requiring the Nebraska Department of Education to classify schools as well as identify the three lowest performing buildings (priority schools) based on a number of factors. The factors used to determine a school's classification include:

1. performance on the state math, reading, science, and writing assessments;
2. graduation rate;
3. dropout rate;
4. attendance; and

5. information collected through an Evidence-Based Analysis (EBA) completed by each school and district that targeted information related to continuous improvement cycles and the infrastructure supports available within the school and district to support the diverse needs of students.

Previously, Nebraska stakeholder committees helped develop a system to organize the Part B Indicators that tied with general school improvement efforts and clustered the Part B indicators into 3 Impact Areas:

- Impact Area I - Improving Developmental Outcomes and Academic Achievement (School Readiness) for Children with Disabilities
- Impact Area II - Improving Communication and Relationships Among Families, Schools, Communities and Agencies
- Impact Area III - Improving Transitions for Children with Disabilities from Early Intervention to Adult Living

The end result demonstrated how the Part B Indicators clearly tied to district's overall school improvement planning and implementation. Thus, the Impact Areas align strongly with the latest vision for Nebraska's school improvement process, AQuESTT (see table below).

AQuESTT is aligned to school improvement and the Impact Areas specific to State Performance Plan (SPP) indicators as required by OSEP specific to special education. The AQuESTT tenets include Positive Partnership, Relationship, and Student Success, Transitions, Educational Opportunities & Access, College & Career Ready, Assessment, and Educator Effectiveness. Each of the standards for school improvement has been aligned to these tenets as well as each of the Impact Areas specific to SPP indicators. Below shows the alignment of the Impact Areas to the AQuESTT tenets:

AQuESTT Tenets	Special Education Impact Areas
Positive Partnerships/Relationships & Student Success	**Impact Area II**: Improving Communication and Relationships Among Families, Schools, Communities and Agencies - Parental Involvement; and Positive Behavioral Interventions/Supports
Transitions	**Impact Area III**: Improving Transitions for Children with Disabilities from Early Intervention to Adult Living - Post-Secondary Transition; Seamless Transitions **Impact Area I**: Improving Developmental Outcomes and Academic Achievement (School Readiness) for Children with Disabilities - Program Completion
Educational Opportunities & Access	**Impact Area I**: Improving Developmental Outcomes and Academic Achievement (School Readiness) for Children with Disabilities - Settings for Part B (LRE); **Impact Area II**: Improving Communication and Relationships Among Families, Schools, Communities and Agencies - Child Find
College & Career Ready	**Impact Area III**: Improving Transitions for Children with Disabilities from Early Intervention to Adult Living - Post-Secondary Transitions; **Impact Area I**: Improving Developmental Outcomes and Academic Achievement (School Readiness) for Children with Disabilities - Program Completion-graduation
Assessment	**Impact Area I**: Improving Developmental Outcomes and Academic Achievement (School Readiness) for Children with Disabilities - Assessment; Child Find; **Impact Area II**: Improving Communication and Relationships Among Families, Schools, Communities and Agencies - Child Find
Educator Effectiveness	**Impact Area II**: Improving Communication and Relationships Among Families, Schools, Communities and Agencies - Positive Behavioral Interventions/Supports

In addition, the essential process of cross-team collaboration is occurring across these tenets. For example, the NDE Assessment team is working on the College and Career Ready ELA and Math

Standards with Extended Indicators for Students with Significant Disabilities that would be taking the Alternate Assessment and updating accommodations and accessibility for all students. In Transitions and College & Career Ready there is collaboration among Special Education, Career Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, and the Department of Health and Human Services to offer joint workshops and webinars.

As part of the analysis in identification of the three required priority schools, the Office of Special Education, along with other offices within NDE, reviewed the data for a number of schools in the "needs assistance" category. The Office of Special Education provided input regarding each school's special education determination and the quality of the TIP.

The Office of Special Education has had multiple conversations with the NDE team responsible for the AQuESTT classifications. This cross collaboration resulted in clarification and solidified the importance of closely aligning the special education determination process and the AQuESTT classification process.

As the AQuESTT initiative and the SSIP begin to be implemented, cross-team efforts will continue to support districts in the implementation of evidence-based reading practices to improve the outcomes for all students.

1(c) Identify who will be in charge of implementing the changes to infrastructure, resources needed, expected outcomes, and timelines for completing improvement efforts.

The offices that will be in charge of implementing the changes to infrastructure include the following:

- Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Special Education;
- Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Accreditation and School Improvement;
- Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Teaching & Learning;
- Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Federal Programs and Nutrition;
- University of Nebraska in Lincoln (UNL);
- The Nebraska Academy for Methodology, Analytics and Psychometrics (MAP); and
- University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC).

Resources needed for completing improvement efforts:

- Discretionary grants available through IDEA funding;
- Access to district level progress monitoring data;
- MTSS and PBiS Statewide trainers and coaches;
- Time for continued collaboration between entities listed above; and
- Commitment on the part of local districts and ESUs.

Expected outcomes for completing improvement efforts:

Additional details regarding expected outcomes can be found in the Evaluation Section.

1. Integrating PBiS with RtI to create a newly integrated MTSS framework will create a greater number of individuals with the skills necessary to provide universal training and coaching throughout the state with the anticipated outcome of increasing the reading performance of students with disabilities at the 3rd grade level.

2. Collaboration between MTSS and PBiS will enable more schools across Nebraska to have access to evidence-based reading practices that will enhance their multi-tiered leveled supports to all students, especially students identified to have specific needs that require tier II and III interventions (see connection between PBiS and its effect on reading in Section 2(a)).
3. Requiring each district to develop and implement a TIP based on the local data available is also anticipated to increase the reading performance of students at the 3rd grade level as well as improve the outcomes for students with disabilities in general and increase the number of student-centered evidence-based reading strategies being used in classrooms across the state.

Timelines for completing improvement efforts:

1. By the year 2018, it is anticipated that NDE will have increased the number of individuals/organizations capable of providing training and technical assistance with the newly integrated MTSS model in place and begun integrated training.
2. Targets for in increasing the reading proficiency of students with disabilities at the third grade level as measured on the NeSA are set as follows:

FFY 2013 – FFY 2018 Targets for the Identified Cohort					
FFY	**2014**	**20115**	**2016**	**2017**	**2018**
Target	59.86%	61.86%	63.86%	65.86%	67.86%

3. The timelines for completing the improvement efforts in relation to the TIPs are as follows:
    a. By August 2016, it is anticipated that at least 75% of all Nebraska districts will have a TIP that identifies a focus for improvement based on a results indicator and identifies a student-centered evidence-based strategy.
    b. By August 2018, it is anticipated that at least half of all Nebraska districts who have submitted a TIP that included a focus for improvement based on a results indicator and a student-centered, evidence-based strategy will show improvement in the indicator area selected as measured by a review of the TIPs submitted.

1(d) Specify how the State will involve multiple offices within the State educational agency (SEA), as well as other State agencies and stakeholders in the improvement of the infrastructure.

- Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Special Education;
- Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Accreditation and School Improvement;
- Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Teaching & Learning;
- Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Federal Programs and Nutrition;
- University of Nebraska in Lincoln (UNL);
- The Nebraska Academy for Methodology, Analytics and Psychometrics (MAP);
- University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC);
- Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC); and
- Results Driven Accountability (RDA) Stakeholders.

As the Office of Special Education has been drafting the SSIP, there has been on-going collaboration and technical assistance between the members of the Learning Collaborative team that was formed for involvement with National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI). The Learning Collaborative team consisted of members from the Office of Special Education which included a data manager, the MTSS project manager and state team lead; the Office of Accreditation and School Improvement team member, PBiS project manager, and a member from the AQuESTT initiative; the Office of Federal

Programs and Nutrition included a member from Title I; Office of Teaching and Learning included a member from Language Arts; and the University of Nebraska, Lincoln which included a member from the MTSS-IST and a member from the MAP Academy. The Learning Collaboration team worked with NCSI to develop plans to build capacity in order to scale up the implementation of the newly integrated MTSS framework statewide.

The Office of Special Education met with the RDA Stakeholders and with SEAC to engage in discussions about how to build capacity for the scale-up of MTSS statewide and to gain additional information about what supports districts needed to develop Targeted Improvement Plans (TIPs) that identified a focus for improvement with a results rather than a compliance focus and to implement with fidelity student-centered, evidence-based strategies. Due to development of the SSIP and the AQuESTT initiative, conversations between multiple state offices have been on-going and will continue. Progress toward achieving the results detailed in the SSIP and the improvement of schools as a result of the AQuESTT initiative will be monitored and the processes re-evaluated by the multiple offices involved.

Infrastructure Development Conclusionary Statements

1. A Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) will continue to be the framework used to ensure evidence-based reading practices are incorporated throughout schools with training and technical supports designed to meet the unique needs of individual school districts.
2. The development of a newly integrated MTSS framework is anticipated to provide districts with a more comprehensive tiered system of support. Data shared in Section 2(a) demonstrate that when PBiS is implemented with fidelity, students spend more time in class and increase their reading proficiency.
3. A systemic coaching model will be developed to help sustain positive effects of deep implementation of MTSS to build capacity for a more comprehensive multi-tiered system of support across the state to further emphasize the components of literacy instruction.
4. Every school district in the state will annually review its data and update their Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP). Each TIP will have a focus for improvement that details a student-centered, evidence-based strategy that impacts outcomes for students with disabilities and ties to the improvement activities specified for students in general education. TIPs that have identified reading as a focus for improvement will have increased support from NDE to ensure the reading strategy selected has a high likelihood of positive outcomes.
5. The state of Nebraska is implementing a new improvement initiative that includes students in both general and special education. AQuESTT, *Accountability for a Quality Education System, Today and Tomorrow*, began through a legislative process that required the state to identify the three lowest performing buildings (priority schools) within the state. Multiple factors related to student outcomes contribute to this accountability system.
6. AQuESTT has and will continue to spawn and encourage important integration and interaction between the offices of special and general education through school-wide implementation of evidence-based practices that improve the outcomes for all students.
7. The Office of Special Education, RDA Stakeholders, and SEAC will continue to work together to strengthen conversations and practices around the scale-up of MTSS statewide. Schools will be supported in their development of the TIP to identify foci for improvement in the areas of student achievement through selection of evidence-based practices.

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

2(a) Specify how the State will support LEAs in implementing the evidence-based practices that will be result in changes in LEA, school, and provider practices to achieve the SIMR for children with disabilities.

As discussed in Phase I of the SSIP, NDE in collaboration with stakeholders determined that a lack of coherent, evidence-based reading interventions at early ages has led to the widening of the achievement gap for reading over the grade levels. The same root cause applies when looking at the need to increase reading proficiency of students with disabilities at the 3rd grade level within the identified cohort. There are a number of initiatives, at the state and local level, which address the issue of increasing reading proficiency for students with disabilities.

Local Initiative 1 – Literacy Model

In order to increase the reading proficiency of students throughout the state, Nebraska developed a Literacy Model[8]. Embedded in the model are the core components of literacy instruction[9] which include:

- Phonemic Awareness – awareness of and the ability to manipulate the individual sounds in words;
- Phonics – the study and use of sound/spelling correspondences and syllable patterns;
- Fluency – reading text with sufficient speed, accuracy and expression to support comprehension;
- Vocabulary – the body of words and their meanings that students must understand to comprehend text; and
- Text Comprehension – ability to make meaning requiring specific skills and strategies, vocabulary, background knowledge and verbal reasoning skills.

Local Initiative – MTSS

Along with the Nebraska Literacy Model that focuses on the core elements of literacy instruction, the state also has statewide trainers for supporting districts with the implementation of the MTSS framework. The MTSS IST provides several levels of training and technical assistance (TA) during the 2015-2016 school year: Building and Refining (B & R) training and TA series, Priority TA, Partner TA, and Topical Trainings (see descriptions below). Currently about 70 districts out of 245 in the state are involved in the MTSS training provided by the MTSS-IST including 12 districts that began the "Building & Refining" work this year.

- *B & R Training*. Districts participating in the B & R training applied to participate and made a commitment to implement MTSS (see district MTSS commitment) and provide data for evaluation. The B & R training consists of in-person training sessions and onsite or distance technical assistance provided across multiple years. Each session consists of didactic training in key components of the MTSS framework (e.g., teaming, systems-level data analysis, effective core instruction, decision rules) and time for district teams to develop/refine their MTSS procedures with support from a TA provider (member of the MTSS IST). In addition to training

[8] Nebraska Literacy Plan: A World of Literacy for All Nebraska Students

[9] National Reading Panel (US), National Institute of Child Health, & Human Development (US). (2000). *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction*. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health.

sessions, each school/district participating in the B & R training receives intensive, ongoing technical assistance. TA is provided onsite or via distance with the type and amount of support varying based on district needs. The initial focus of training and TA is on exploration and installation activities (e.g., comparing current practices to key MTSS components; examining current infrastructure; identifying areas for planning; identifying focus and plan for roll out) with the goal of building/refining their MTSS procedures and establishing a written planning for implementation that addresses key implementation drivers (e.g., addressing organizational, leadership, and competency drivers; Fixsen, Naoom, Blase, Friedman, & Wallace, 2005)[10]. As districts create more developed/refined MTSS procedures and are ready to begin implementing, the training and TA support will shift to a focus on activities for initial implementation of areas identified and planned for in the MTSS Implementation Plan (e.g., use of indicators of deep implementation to identify areas of success and need; systematic problem solving around implementation issues; gradual release of responsibility for leading decision making meetings from TA assisted to district-lead). The MTSS IST will continue to support these districts across multiple years to ensure systematization of procedures and scale up (to other content areas, grade levels, etc.) to achieve full implementation through continued planning around MTSS and continued use of problem solving/improvement cycles.

- *Priority TA*: Districts were prioritized based on data analysis (e.g., overall percent of students proficient on NeSA, overall percent of SPED students proficient on NeSA, size of current gap between SPED and non-SPED, % in SPED, size) and support focuses on assistance with initial implementation activities to help districts achieve deeper implementation of their MTSS process. Teams from priority districts participate in 4 in-person, regional TA sessions with monthly TA check ins to help them apply content from trainings and problem solve around issues that arise during initial implementation of MTSS in their identified focus area(s).
- *Topical trainings*: These trainings provide additional information on the key components of a MTSS and implementation science. There are session options that include exploration/installation activities and support for initial implementation around topics such as: leading the MTSS implementation process; instructional data – developing the system for collection of instructional data and analysis of the data to provide support; response rules – developing the system for analyzing progress and applying response rules; individual student problem-solving; evaluating your MTSS.
- *Partner sites*: Partner districts sites were identified to vary in size, demographics, focus areas for implementation (core and intervention), current level of implementation, programs/practices being implemented and school configurations. There is a strong commitment from the district teams at each partner site to the change process and focus of efforts on achieving deep implementation of MTSS. The MTSS IST provides training and TA to build knowledge and skills to achieve deep implementation of MTSS components and provides TA support for development and implementation of effective MTSS procedures. The focus of training and TA varies based on each district's current focus area and level of implementation.

Local Initiative - PBiS

Currently 67 schools in Nebraska are working with the Department of Education to implement school wide PBiS (SW- PBiS). The Nebraska PBiS Network was created to address schools' need for SW-PBiS training statewide. To date, the Nebraska PBiS Network has provided training and technical assistance

[10] Fixsen, D.L., Naoom, S.F., Blasé, K.A., Friedman, R. M., & Wallace, F. (2005). *Implementation research: A synthesis of the literature* (FTMHI Pub. No. 231). Tampa: University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute.

to over 215 schools and districts across the state of Nebraska. In addition to providing regional trainings open to all Nebraska schools, the Nebraska PBiS Network provides intensive, onsite technical assistance for partner schools/districts. During the 2014-2015 school year, 66 schools/districts received this intensive level of technical support with 1 school receiving technical support through an online module pilot program. The number of schools expressing interest in partnering with the Nebraska PBiS Network increases each year.

Nebraska began efforts to implement and sustain PBiS with the Nebraska State Improvement Grant (NSIG: 1999-2005) and continued those efforts with two additional grant awards (NSPDG: 2005-2011 and NSPDG: 2011-2016). PBiS is defined as "an approach that begins with school-wide and classroom prevention efforts, and then adds targeted and individualized support for those students with more extreme needs." PBiS has five core strategies: 1) focus on preventing the development and occurrence of problem behavior; 2) teach appropriate social behavior and skills; 3) acknowledge appropriate behavior; 4) gather and use data about student behavior to guide behavior and support decisions; and 5) invest in the systems that support adults in implementation of effective practices" (Horner, Sugai, & Vincent, 2005)[11].

From the analysis of the implementation of the prior grants, several needs/gaps were identified. Five specific needs described below focus on the needs identified in the State Performance Plan and related data.

- Need 1. Align the Nebraska MTSS Initiative and PBiS Initiative with the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP).
- Need 2. Increase regional capacity on secondary and tertiary behavioral interventions, including increasing school capacity to provide mental health supports.
- Need 3. Continue to increase statewide coaching and training capacity.
- Need 4. Support NePBiS schools from previous years and train and coach district and school teams on universal SW-PBiS systems.
- Need 5. Create a Nebraska PBiS Network.

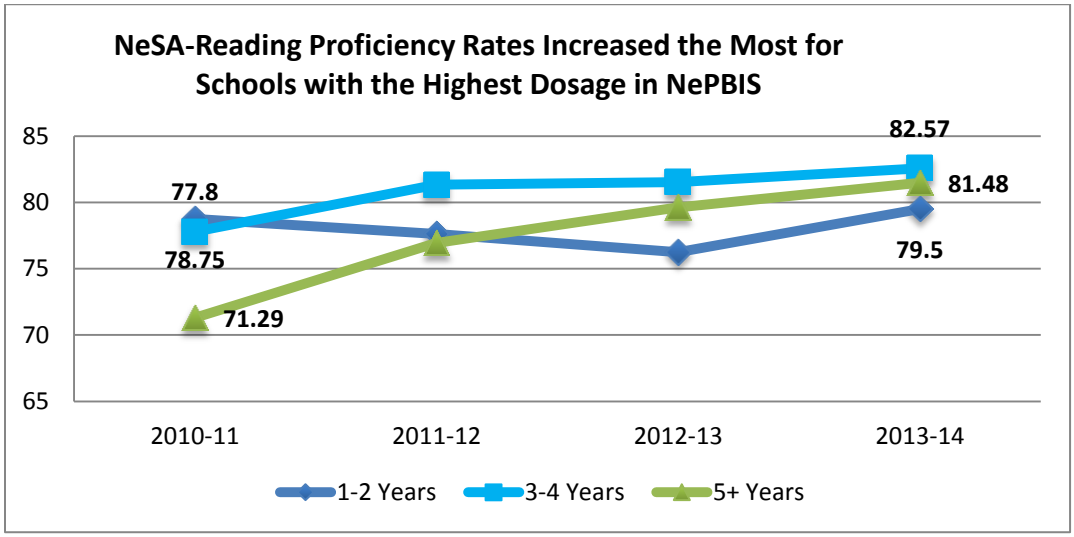
Fullan (2010)[12] noted that authentic reform requires addressing education as a system. NSPDG explicitly improves and reforms systems as it expands current state efforts to coordinate professional development related to improved student achievement and behavior across multiple agencies and offices, rather than address reform in a piecemeal fashion. In Nebraska the major systems for change are NDE, ESUs, LEAs, and Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs). An additional area of focus is parents and communities as they support these systems. Systemic change within the NDE is demonstrated by the collaboration and leveraging of programs between general and special education. Originally, two NDE program offices were involved in NSIG. Office of Special Education and Office of Equity and Instructional Strategies were responsible for providing programs and professional development which improve equity of outcomes for students. The original NSIG also partnered with an IHE and PTI. Through expansion and collaboration with other NDE programs, IHEs, other state agencies, and community agencies and organizations; several PBiS initiatives were developed. With the new NSPDG proposal

[11] Horner, R., Sugai, G., & Vincent, C. (2005). School-wide Positive Behavior Support: Investing in student success. *Impact: Feature Issue on Fostering Success in School and Beyond for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders 18*(2), 4-5.

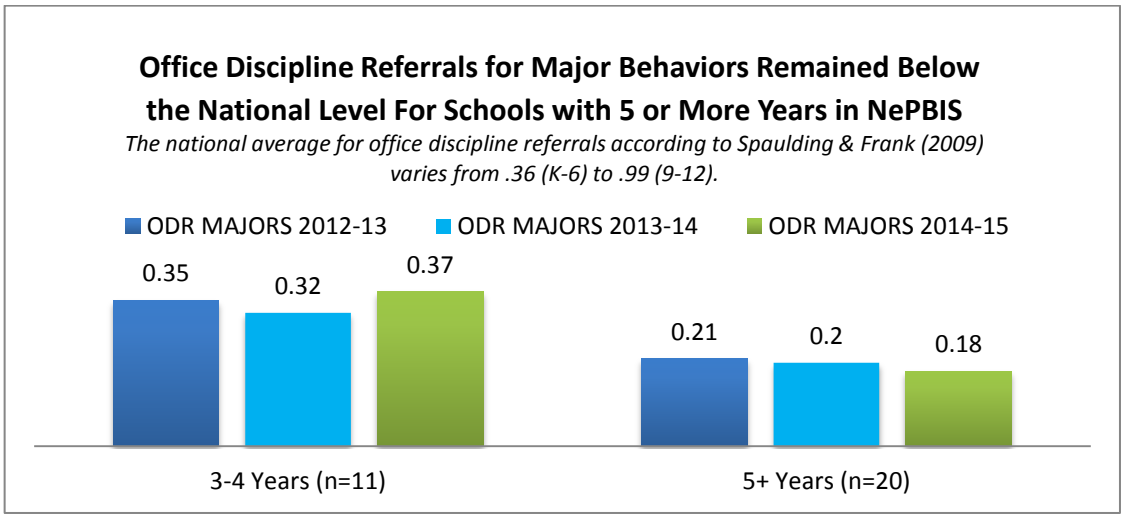
[12] Fullan, Michael. (2010) *All Systems Go – the Change Imperative for Whole System Reform.* Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

several of these established partnerships will be maintained and collaboration with additional offices and initiatives to better meet our needs.

Outcome Data



The reading proficiency gains made by teams participating in the NePBiS process were significantly more than teams with 3-4 years of participation and teams with 1-2 years as determined by a One-way ANOVA ($F(43) = 3.745$, $p = .032$). Post-hoc analyses found no significant differences between schools with 3-4 years of participation and schools with 1-2 years of participation.



The chart shows that schools with 5 or more years in the NePBiS system continue to have Office Discipline Referral rates for major behaviors below the national average. Schools with 3-4 years are at the low end of the national rates. Looking at the two outcome measures dosage appears to make a difference in student outcomes both behaviorally and academically.

State SPDG staff spent many years improving the state systems of professional development and technical assistance. These systems can provide a strong foundation for the work that must be accomplished through the SSIP.

The NePBiS SPDG initiative made gains this year in providing quality professional development and coaching opportunities to an increasing number of schools in the area of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support.

NePBiS schools are implementing School-wide PBiS practices with fidelity according to the annual Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) completed by the PBiS leadership teams. Data indicate that 83% of schools are implementing the practices with fidelity with mean implementation score across all teams being 84%. Areas of strength included Expectations Defined, Expectations Taught and Monitoring. Areas above 75% but still needing improvement included Violation System and Management. Results on the SAS were consistent with the level of fidelity found using the Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) as evidenced by 84% of the teams meeting the goal. However, it was noticed that some of the PBiS Level 2 and 3 teams, as described below, were drifting from essential basic practices and the Leadership Development Institute and coaching sessions were directed back to the fundamentals of PBiS.

- *PBiS Level I (school -wide)* is defined as involving all students, all staff and in all settings within a school. Specific strategies include school-wide guidelines for success, teaching expectations, clearly defined discipline procedures, and continual self-assessment SER (Nelson & Ohlund, 1999)[13]. These universal interventions are effective for students without serious behavior problems who account for an estimated 80% to 90% of a school's population (OSEP, 2005[14]; Sugai, Sprague, et. al., 2000[15]). Specific content for Nebraska's LTs at the PBiS I level focus on defining and teaching school-wide behavior expectations and, setting up a school-wide recognition and reward system to develop a positive school culture. It also focuses on active supervision of common areas, correcting inappropriate behavior, and using discipline referrals to diagnose school-wide and individual student needs. During the PBiS I, training schools are requested to revise their ODR forms to include consistent information to align with the *SWIS* components used to collect behavior data. Teams are also introduced to the fidelity instruments such as the *BOQ* and *Team Implementation Checklist (TIC)*. Heather Robbins, CEO of Heather's Behavior Support Services, and also part-time employee of the University of Oregon's Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior, facilitates the PBiS I training component with assistance from Nebraska PBiS Director, Amy Rhone.
- *PBiS Level II (classroom)* training content also focuses on prevention, but within the classroom setting, and is defined as instructional settings in which teacher(s) supervise and teach groups of students. Specifically, this category involves a school's focus on instruction, classroom behavioral expectations and routines, clearly defined discipline procedures, access to assistance and continual self-assessment (Nelson & Ohlund, 1999[16]). Content taught during PBiS II is centered on classroom organization which is the foundation of classroom management. Designing, defining, teaching, recognizing and reinforcing classroom expectations and using preventive interactions are key components of PBiS II training. *SWIS* is used again to collect behavior data. In addition, using consequences to change group and individual behavior is

[13] Nelson, J. R., & Ohland, B. (Eds.). (1999). The School Evaluation Rubric. Tucson: University of Arizona.
[14] OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (2009).*SWPBS Research* Retrieved March 15, 2016 from http://www.pbis.org/ research/default.aspx
[15] Sugai, G., Sprague, J. R., Horner, R. H., & Walker, H. M. (2000). Preventing school violence: The use of office discipline referrals to assess and monitor schoolwide discipline interventions. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 8*(2), 94-101.
[16] Nelson, J. R., & Ohland, B. (Eds.). (1999). The School Evaluation Rubric. Tucson: University of Arizona.

included. School/home collaboration is the last section of the PBiS II training conducted by Heather Robbins in its entirety.

- *PBiS Level III (targeted group/secondary & individual/tertiary)* training content focuses on interventions that *target* students who are considered at risk for problem behavior and/or academic skill deficits who are not responding to the primary level prevention strategies. According to Sugai, Sprague, et al (2000)[17], 5% to 15% of students is typically found in the targeted and individual groups. The goal of the targeted approach is to reduce current cases of problem behavior and academic failure by using special group interventions that provide more support. These strategies may include behavioral contracts, conflict resolution training, and self-management strategies among others (Nelson, Martella, & Marchand-Martella, 2002[18]). PBiS III training also focuses on *individual intervention* procedures for students at risk of, or experiencing, school failure. Level III provides training to help staffs conduct FBA and develop positive behavioral intervention plans (Nelson, Martella, & Marchand-Martella, 2002). Although students needing these individually based interventions include only 3% to 5% of a school's population, they account for 40% to 50% of behavioral disruptions (Sprague & Golly, 2005[19]). In addition to addressing how to conduct FBAs, training content for PBiS III includes responding to escalating behavior and verbal harassment, building positive behavior support plans for challenging students, adapting curricula to prevent problem behavior, and teaching students who are at risk to self-manage their behavior. As an experienced behavior specialist, Heather Robbins facilitates the PBiS III training.

As schools progress through the levels of training, additional tracks will be assessed and training provided to best meet school's needs. Tracks are organized by strands that support initial through advanced implementation in elementary, middle, and high schools as well as juvenile justice and mental health facilities. Examples of track topics are: PBIS Foundations, Enhanced Implementation, Tier 2/Tier 3 Integrated Systems / Multi-tiered Systems of Support, School Mental Health, Culturally Responsive Systems.

Parent engagement training and implementation of engagement strategies was a focus for several teams this reporting period. Of the teams sending representatives to parent engagement seminars nearly all (85%) report either using two or more parent engagement strategies or making the strategies part of their overall action plan. Commonly used strategies included ongoing communication with parents, having parent volunteers, including parents in decision making processes and collaborating with the community. Evidence of parent communication included products such as newsletters, information sent out about PBiS, including parents on school committees and informing parents about student celebrations using multiple approaches.

The coaching provided to school leadership teams by the external coaches was seen as valuable and helpful by the majority of the teams. Coaches serve regions within the states and each coach has an area

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[17] Sugai, G., Sprague, J. R., Horner, R. H., & Walker, H. M. (2000). Preventing school violence: The use of office discipline referrals to assess and monitor schoolwide discipline interventions. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 8*(2), 94-101.

[18] Nelson, J. R., Martella, R. M., & Marchand-Martella, N. (2002). Maximizing student learning: the effects of a comprehensive school-based program for preventing problem behaviors. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 10*(3), 136-148.

[19] Sprague, J.R., & Golly, A. (2013). *Best Behavior: Building positive behavior supports in schools (2nd Ed.)*. Longmont, CO: Cambium Learning Group.

of expertise that help support teams with specific needs and/or action plan goals. Fidelity to the coaching model was measured by feedback forms completed by teams. Those feedback forms indicated the five coaches were seen positively by the teams across multiple domains. The overall satisfaction rating was 94% and teams saw their external coaches as a resource particularly when problem-solving and for assistance with technology and data collection practices. Areas to improve on included meeting more consistently with leadership teams and regular communication with the pilot/co-pilot of the school leadership teams. In addition, the one school who accessed and used the tertiary services rated those very highly indicating that at all levels the coaching services received by the teams were seen as useful and of high quality.

Finally, strides have been made in influencing practice and policy within the state of Nebraska. A leadership team was formed in 2012 to provide assistance in expanding the work of NE PBiS in Nebraska. Members included: PBiS team members-- principals, superintendents, teachers, sped directors, parents, association representatives, higher education representatives, PTI representative and staff from NDE including Special and General Education. Agendas have focused on learning more about evidence based practice and PBiS, visiting PBiS school sites to experience PBiS in action, expanding the message about PBiS and evidence based practice into the constituencies represented and understanding systems approaches to sustaining the use of PBiS. Some of the outcomes of this work have included: articles in association publications on PBiS, use of the term research based programming in Nebraska Statute on suicide prevention, passing of Nebraska statute providing for school safety director and program, PBiS presentations at State meetings/ conventions, more conversation statewide on the need for systemic work to support better student outcomes.

Multiple activities and opportunities were provided over the last year for schools to attend training, receive technical assistance, and connect with other PBiS schools and to become engaged with NePBiS model. In addition to the external coaching provided to teams (at least four times per year), teams attended the PBiS advisory meeting, the PBiS Leadership Development Institute, specific, leveled PBiS team training, FAST Track training for principals, PBiS regional meetings and PBiS Administrators' Academies. Some of the activities are required for teams annually while others are introductions to NePBiS and specific trainings. Meetings open to all teams were the PBiS Advisory meeting, PBiS Leadership Development Institute (LDI) and the PBiS regional meetings.

The PBiS Administrators' Academies were held multiple times during the year. The academies are the preliminary step for teams to determine if they wish to continue on with PBiS. The academies provide an overview of the process as well as what is required of the teams should they choose to participate. Of the teams attending the academies, several were from one district interested in pursuing a district-wide implementation of PBiS.

Regional meetings are held in January and are for the pilot and co-pilot of the school leadership teams. The focus of the regional meetings are on use of technology for team training purposes and as a supplemental resource as well as utilizing school behavioral data to drive discussion and decision making. During the regional meeting, the participants were introduced to the revamped website, the new iBooks, quick links and the use of the PBiS videos on the website.

An annual two-day Leadership Development Institute (LDI) is conducted the beginning of June. For the LDI, teams are required to send a full team or are not allowed to participate. Full teams are required to promote implementation fidelity. The Leadership Development Institute is designed to address "hot

topics" and reconnect PBiS teams with information to ensure quality and successful implementation in their school buildings.

FAST Track training for principals is held for those principals new to a building already implementing PBiS. The training introduces principals to the PBiS concepts and connects them to the NePBiS process.

All of the leveled PBiS trainings are held in June for teams either new to the process or for those who are moving up to a new level. While teams can attend the leveled training more than once, they are not required to do so. Different components and content are covered during each level of training. Schools must meet specific criteria before moving up to Levels II and III in the training model.

Teams within the NePBiS system receive quarterly coaching visits from their external coaches. Coaches are responsible for the school teams within a region and all coaches have areas of specialty to assist in providing teams with additional support and guidance. Areas of specialty included data support, connecting with parents, special education and tertiary supports and working with secondary schools. In addition to the five on-site visits, coaches provide support to teams during monthly and as needed phone calls. External coaches meet with the NePBiS coordinator at least monthly to review data and to reflect on effective coaching strategies.

The tertiary cadre provides support to schools needing support and assistance in addressing significant behavior issues. While PBiS III training provides some support and training in this area, at times a school may need more expertise or assistance. While very few schools have accessed the tertiary cadre there have been more requests for the assistance. Coaches of the teams work through the requests and work with the teams to determine if the tertiary cadre is necessary or decide if other Tier I and Tier II strategies need to be implemented first. When asked to review Tier I and Tier II strategies some teams realized that they needed to implement a Tier II strategy first before going any further with a tertiary request. Data from SWIS on office referrals support the hypothesis that most students are responding to Tier I and II strategies.

All school leadership teams are expected to have two parents as part of the team composition, one parent of a student without an IEP and one parent of a student with an IEP. In addition, schools are invited to participate in family training such as the PBiS at Home training offered in September; and school teams distributed the PBiS at Home manual. External coaches continued working with teams on their use of the PBiS at Home manual as well as other family and community engagement strategies. The PBiS at Home manual is intended to be a resource book for parents from parents.

Through the OSEP-funded State Personnel Development Grant (SPDGs), Nebraska intends to improve their state systems of professional development and technical assistance. The SPDG will support the dissemination and implementation of evidence-based practices designed to improve results for children and youth with disabilities. The goal is to develop a statewide structure to create capacity for an integrated Behavior and Reading Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) that can be implemented with fidelity, is sustainable over time and utilizes data-based decision making at all levels of implementation support.

The integration of the current MTSS process with PBiS emphasizes the use of evidence-based strategies or interventions plus high levels of fidelity of the chosen intervention or system. The implementation

drivers cited in the Nebraska MTSS system (Fixsen, NIRN)[20] are the same drivers required for the SPDG grants. Implementation remains a focus of the SPDG grants. Additionally, MTSS best practices include having a team-based approach for implementation which is similar to that required in the Nebraska PBiS process. It is through an integration team that the development of a newly integrated MTSS system will begin. The team will focus on developing an integrated training and coaching model to best support schools. The integration team will work to develop a MTSS framework using the current implementation fidelity standards all while moving to a comprehensive, integrated, three-tiered model of prevention and intervention which addresses academic, behavioral, and social domains with an emphasis on prevention moving to a more targeted approach. This work will also include the expansion of coaches training and coaching supports.

To complete these efforts we will be exploring options to work with ESUs, districts, or regions to increase the capacity of the state to provide intervention specific training, coaching and technical assistance to districts in the future.

As the data demonstrates, Nebraska anticipates that by integrating PBiS with MTSS, students will increase engagement in literacy instruction which will allow for an increase in reading proficiency. With any collaboration, there will be barriers to implementation. It is the integration team's plan to outline these barriers and present them to the MTSS management team where strategies and plan development will be designed to assist the local school districts to reach deep implementation of then newly integrated MTSS framework.

Local Initiative - TIP development

The Department of Education, Office of Special Education is ensuring districts are providing increasingly intensive evidence-based strategies statewide through the requirement for districts to develop a Targeted Improvement Plan. An evaluation of the initial TIP data revealed that 93% of Nebraska's districts have identified at least one focus for improvement; however 43% of the districts have not yet identified a student-centered evidenced based strategy to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities. To successfully achieve the SIMR, the development of coherent strategies included scaling-up the multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) currently in use and the requirement for districts to develop a TIP which included the implementation of evidence-based practices were determined necessary.

Through the course of the 2015-16 school year, the NDE Office of Special Education has had multiple stakeholder meetings to further investigate and explore what districts need to deeply implement student-centered evidence-based interventions and to build capacity for the current MTSS system. Regional consultants within the Office of Special Education have provided feedback and guidance to districts as they have further developed their TIPs and identified student-centered evidence-based strategies to implement. NDE has also partnered with the ESU facilitators to provide technical assistance and guidance to ensure districts have the knowledge and tools needed to analyze their data to develop TIPs likely to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities. Professional development opportunities with national speakers have also been provided to districts to increase the readiness and capacity for implementation of student-centered evidence-based strategies. NDE Office of Teaching and Learning has posted evidence-based reading strategies on their website and on their Facebook and Twitter feeds. The Office of Special Education and the Office of Teaching and Learning are in the process

[20] Fixsen, D.L.; Blase, K. A.; Naoom, S. F.; and, Duda, M. A. (2013). National Implementation Research Network (NIRN)

of sharing information between the two sites. The regional consultants housed within the Office of Special Education will continue to monitor and address the identification of evidence-based practices with local districts every August and provide assistance to districts accordingly.

2(b) Identify steps and specific activities needed to implement the coherent improvement strategies. Include communication strategies, stakeholder involvement; how identified barriers will be addressed; and who will be in charge of implementing. Include how the activities will be implemented with fidelity; the resources that will be used to implement them; and timelines for completion.

Nebraska identifies the following core elements to support the implementation and scale-up of evidence-based practices to improve results for children with disabilities and infrastructure development:

- Create a newly integrated MTSS framework that integrates PBiS into the current RtI model;
- Establish increasingly intensive implementation of evidence-based practices for reading; and
- Continue alignment of the state's internal infrastructure.

Activities specifically articulated to achieve coherent improvement strategies include:

SHORT TERM:

During the 2016-17 school year:

- At least half of the school districts that have experienced the "Building & Refining" training in the previous year (e.g. 2015-16) will transition from the "exploration and installation phase" to the "implementation phase" and will receive additional "Building & Refining" training to obtain deeper implementation of MTSS.
- During 2016-17, the state will continue to explore options for increasing capacity for the implementation of the new integrated MTSS framework by conducting additional stakeholder meetings to create buy-in at the local level and obtain commitment from an ESU, district, or region to pilot the newly developed coaching model.
- By August 2016, it is anticipated that at least 75% of all Nebraska districts will have a TIP that identifies a focus for improvement based on a results indicator and identifies a student-centered evidence-based strategy. NDE anticipates that a majority of the TIPs will focus on improving reading.
- To facilitate the integration of MTSS and PBiS, the Learning Collaborative will meet on a monthly basis to accomplish activities detailed in the timelines embedded in the Phase II SSIP document.

LONG TERM:

- By 2018, the MTSS Management Team will address capacity building and sustainability of the newly integrated MTSS framework using the established coaching model.
- By 2018, the state plans to increase the reading proficiency of students with disabilities at third grade for the identified cohort to 67.86% as measured by the state's reading assessment (NeSA).
- By August 2018, it is anticipated that at least half of all Nebraska districts who have submitted a TIP that included a focus for improvement based on a results indicator and a student-centered, evidence-based strategy will show improvement in the indicator area selected as measured by a review of the TIPs submitted. NDE anticipates that a majority of the TIPs will focus on improving reading.

- By 2018, to accomplish the integration of MTSS and PBiS, the Learning Collaborative will meet on a monthly basis to refine and complete activities detailed in the timelines embedded in the Phase II SSIP document.

Communication strategies employed to achieve coherent improvement strategies include:

- The MTSS-IST plans to update the current MTSS website to highlight current MTSS research, evidence-based reading practices in use in the state, the framework for the current MTSS system and how districts can become involved, and components of Implementation Science.
- The Office of Special Education in conjunction with the Offices of Teaching & Learning, Accreditation and School Improvement, Federal Programs and the MTSS Management Team will create and provide a list of evidence-based reading interventions for districts to refer to as they engage in continuous improvement activities. The list of evidence-based reading interventions will be posted on the NDE Office of Special Education's and Teaching & Learning's website, the Department's Facebook and Twitter accounts, and will be shared at stakeholder meetings and professional development events held throughout the duration of the SSIP.
- The Nebraska Department of Education plans to develop a marketing plan for the new integrated MTSS framework and coach trainings.

Stakeholders involved in achieving coherent improvement strategies include:

- Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Special Education;
- Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Accreditation and School Improvement;
- Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Teaching & Learning;
- Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Federal Programs and Nutrition;
- University of Nebraska in Lincoln (UNL);
- The Nebraska Academy for Methodology, Analytics and Psychometrics (MAP);
- University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC);
- Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC); and
- Results Driven Accountability (RDA) Stakeholders.

Identified barriers to implementation fidelity will be addressed through:

<u>Addressing barriers to implementation – district and building level</u>

Understanding how to use improvement cycles fed by fidelity data and student data is crucial to building and continuously strengthening the MTSS process. To prepare district and building implementation teams, use of data for analyzing systems-level issues is a key theme throughout all trainings provided by the MTSS-IST. Districts participating in the B & R, Priority TA, and Partner Training establish written procedures for their MTSS process and collect data on fidelity at multiple levels (e.g., fidelity to the MTSS process to examine their overall level of implementation; fidelity to use of data-based decision making procedures; fidelity of delivery of evidence-based intervention programs, etc.). The MTSS-IST provides guidance (e.g., meeting templates) for district and building implementation teams to examine these data at team meetings on a regular basis. When districts find they are not meeting their pre-established indicators for implementation, their MTSS-IST TA provider works with the team to identify barriers to implementation, gather information to determine why the barriers are occurring and problem solve to plan for addressing the barriers. The goal of the TA provider is to help districts establish improvement cycles so that they continue to refine and improve their MTSS over time.

<u>Addressing barriers to implementation – MTSS-IST level</u>

The MTSS IST also collects and evaluates data on a regular basis to identify areas in need of improvement in provision of training and TA supports. Data are collected on fidelity to delivery of

training session content and TA as well as satisfaction feedback from district teams on training and TA. When issues arise, the team problem solves to identify why the issue is occurring and plan for improvement. For example, practice sessions prior to training may be used to address issues of fidelity to delivery of training content or coaching may be provided to a TA provider during TA sessions. Additionally, when a district is not meeting their targets for implementation, the MTSS-IST examines the type and amount of training and TA support being providing to determine if adjustments need to be made to better support the district.

The positions charged with leading the implementation of coherent improvement strategies include:

- The NDE MTSS Project Manager and the team lead for the Program Improvement Team from the Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Special Education;
- The NDE PBiS Project Manager;
- The MTSS-IST Project Lead from the University of Nebraska in Lincoln (UNL);
- The evaluation team from The Nebraska Academy for Methodology, Analytics and Psychometrics (MAP); and
- The evaluation team from the University of Nebraska Medical Center – Munroe Meyer Institute (UNMC – MMI).

Resources that will be required to implement with fidelity include:

- Budget alignment of MTSS and PBiS discretionary grants;
- Discretionary Special Education grants; and
- Local Resources.

The timeline for completion is as follows:

<u>Activity Year 1 – 2016-17 School Year</u>

- NDE commences the alignment of MTSS and PBiS frameworks with an integrated logic model and works to develop both a management team and advisory committee.
- NDE plans to hire and train additional integrated MTSS personnel.
- The integrated MTSS management team will plan for the implementation of the new MTSS system including the development of the coach training materials, modules, and progress monitoring.
- The Offices of Special Education, Accreditation and School Improvement, and Data, Research and Evaluation will collaboratively work to develop a data management plan.
- NDE plans to develop a communication plan to market the new integrated MTSS framework that will include a website highlighting both PBiS and MTSS/RtI concepts and interventions.
- The MTSS Management team will work collaboratively with stakeholder input to develop a systemic coaching model for the new integrated MTSS framework.
- The MTSS Management team plans to create a systems and provider level coaching needs assessment tool for districts.
- The PBiS team and MTSS-IST will continue existing coaching/ implementation on universal systems.
- The NDE MTSS and PBiS project managers plan to develop implementation plans with the existing PBiS and MTSS schools and districts to merge existing procedures into the newly integrated framework.
- The MTSS Management team will work collaboratively with stakeholder input to assess the capacity of districts, ESUs, and/or regions to provide integrated MTSS supports for districts.

Activity Year 2 – 2017-18 School Year

- The MTSS and PBiS implementation support teams will establish fidelity measures utilizing current PBiS and academic fidelity measures.
- The MTSS – IST and pilot teams will implement the new system and practice-level coaching model with pilot site(s).
- The MTSS - IST will provide continuous technical assistance and integrated MTSS implementation support to teams ready to transition to the integrated model.
- The MTSS – IST will continue with coaching and implementation on universal systems.
- The MTSS – IST will train ESU/Regional personnel on providing Tier II and Tier III supports targeted for districts identified as needs assistance through the AQuESTT designation expressing an interest in implementing MTSS.

Activity Year 3 – 2018-19 School Year

- Full implementation of integrated MTSS model at pilot site(s) including evaluation.
- Implementation planning with new MTSS district teams.
- Continue to implement and evaluate coaching model.
- Provide continuous technical assistance and integrated MTSS implementation support to remaining teams needing to transition to integrated model.
- Evaluate and adjust current practices

2(c) Specify how the State will involve multiple offices within the SEA (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.

- Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Special Education;
- Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Accreditation and School Improvement;
- Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Teaching and Learning;
- Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Federal Programs and Nutrition;
- University of Nebraska in Lincoln (UNL);
- The Nebraska Academy for Methodology, Analytics and Psychometrics (MAP);
- University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC);
- Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC); and
- Results Driven Accountability (RDA) Stakeholders

Support for LEA Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices Conclusionary Statements

1. In 2015-16, NDE regional consultants supported through the Office of Special Education along with ESU facilitators will continue to provide guidance to school districts in the development of their TIPs. Consultants have challenged schools to use student data to determine their TIP and select appropriate student-centered evidence-based practices to address the need for improved student achievement.
2. At least half of the schools that have experienced the “Building & Refining” training during the 2015-16 school year will transition from the “exploration and installation phase” to the “implementation phase” and will receive additional “Building & Refining” training to obtain deeper implementation of MTSS.

3. In 2016-17, with the support and involvement of the Stakeholder groups, options will be explored for building capacity for the new integrated MTSS framework that includes the coaching model.
4. In 2017-18, up to five schools will be eligible to volunteer for to participate in a second cohort and engage in the "Building & Refining" training for MTSS to explore and install MTSS processes.
5. By 2018, the MTSS Management Team will have addressed capacity building and sustainability of the newly integrated MTSS framework using the established coaching model.
6. By 2018, the increase in the reading proficiency rates of students with disabilities at the third grade will be 67.86% for students within the identified cohort as measured by the statewide reading assessment (NeSA).
7. The MTSS website for the newly integrated model will continue to be updated to highlight current research, evidence-based practices, the MTSS framework, and components of implementation fidelity.
8. A list of evidence-based reading practices and interventions will be created and posted on the NDE Office of Special Education's and Teaching & Learning's website, and on the Facebook and Twitter account to provide guidance to schools engaging in continuous improvement activities.
9. A marketing plan will be developed to support recognition of the new integrated MTSS framework and coaching training.
10. An activities timeline from 2016 through 2018 is planned to guide the process of statewide scale up of MTSS and coaching to build capacity for sustainability into the future.
11. Infrastructure changes within the state's system for improvement efforts are outlined and include collaborating partners, resources needed, anticipated outcomes, and timeline for completion.
12. The process to determine the scaling up and sustainability of the implementation of evidence-based reading practices within the state of Nebraska is under development.

Theory of Action from Phase I

As required by OSEP, the Department of Education, Office of Special Education developed in conjunction with stakeholders the following Theory of Action.

Theory of Action: Part B Preschool and School Age

	Strands of Action for NDE	If…	Then…		
			District	Teacher	Student
Leadership	Goals are established by the Nebraska State Board of Education which provide guidance for all NDE initiatives; and include a continuous improvement process which provides a framework for state and local improvement activities.	State activities continue to be aligned with the state goals and the continuous improvement process…	Expectations for improvement will be consistent across all programs and should ultimately provide a common message to all school districts.	Will use evidenced-based strategies with deep implementation.	Will demonstrate improved results on the state reading assessment (NeSA).
Collaboration	Partners with school districts, regional Educational Service Units (ESUs), higher education, national technical assistance centers, agencies, advocacy groups, and families to ensure supports are in place to assist schools in improving results for children with disabilities 3 to 21 years old.	NDE Office of Special Education continues to collaborate with these partners…	Resources and supports can be leveraged to support districts in implementing improvement plans with fidelity.		

	Strands of Action for NDE	If…	Then…		
			District	Teacher	Student
Resources and Supports	Cultivates collaborative partnerships to provide differentiated resources and evidence-based information.	The State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) coherent improvement strategies are implemented by the districts with fidelity…	Over time the state level 3rd grade reading proficiency gap will narrow for special education and general education students.	Will use evidenced-based strategies with deep implementation.	Will demonstrate improved results on the state reading assessment (NeSA).
	Has identified coherent improvement strategies to improve 3rd grade reading proficiency in order to narrow the gap between special education and general education students.	Districts review data by Impact Area on an annual basis…	Districts will continuously be revisiting results of special education students and will have an opportunity to review and revise overall school improvement plans and the supports provided to children with disabilities.		
	Utilizes three Impact Areas which guide districts in evaluating all SPP/APR indicators on an annual basis.	NDE Office of Special Education continues to support improved outcomes through multiple initiatives (tied to multiple SPP/APR indicators) including but not limited to the SSIP coherent improvement strategies…	NDE can better identify districts doing well and what specific improvement activities may be contributing to this improvement.		
Accountability	Does not currently have an ESEA waiver and is developing and implementing a new state accountability system for all children in all districts. Teams throughout the NDE are engaged in aligning regulations and requirements specific to quality, accountability and school improvement.	NDE provides leadership through an individualized monitoring process and the implementation of coherent improvement strategies…	Schools identified under the accountability system and the focused monitoring system as needing support will have access to the identified coherent improvement strategies including Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS).	Will use evidenced-based strategies with deep implementation.	Will demonstrate improved results on the state reading assessment (NeSA).
	Is developing and implementing a focused monitoring system which enables the state to (1) ensure compliance with federal and state regulations; (2) focus on the uniqueness of the individual district; and (3) support the linkage between compliance and improvement.	NDE provides leadership through an individualized monitoring process and the implementation of coherent improvement strategies…	Districts identifying improved reading performance will have access to supports provided through the state's coherent improvement strategies.		

	Strands of Action for NDE	If…	Then…		
			District	Teacher	Student
Stakeholder Involvement	Engaging external stakeholders in the development of the SSIP beginning in April 2014 creates a Nebraska Results Driven Accountability Stakeholder Group to provide input and guidance specific to improve results for children with disabilities (Birth-21). The NDE presents and gathers input from the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) and the Early Childhood Results Matter Task Force regarding the new SPP/APR and SSIP requirements.	NDE continues to engage stakeholders representing diverse disciplines and experiences throughout the development and implementation of the SSIP…	Nebraska's plans outlined in the SSIP and in the District's Targeted Improvement Plans will continuously evolve to ensure ambitious and meaningful change.	Will use evidenced-based strategies with deep implementation.	Will demonstrate improved results on the state reading assessment (NeSA).

After making changes to the SIMR and further clarifying our coherent improvement strategy as described earlier, NDE Office of Special Education found it necessary to review the Theory of Action and make changes accordingly. As a result, our revised Theory of Action is presented below.

Nebraska's Revised Theory of Action

	Strands for Action for NDE……	If……	Then…..		
			District	Teacher	Student
Increasing use of EBP	#1 - Require each Nebraska district to develop a Targeted Improvement Plan aligned with data-identified needs, and deeply implement student-centered, evidence-based practices	NDE continues collaboration with districts, regional consultants review and monitor the TIPs to support work with all districts, and MAP audits a % of TIPs to ensure that evidence based strategies are identified and implemented with fidelity….	Resources and supports can be leveraged to support districts in deeply implementing evidence-based strategies as identified in their improvement plans with fidelity	Will use evidence-based strategies with deep implementation	Will demonstrate increased reading proficiency as measured by the state assessment (NeSA)
Newly Integrated MTSS Framework (Current MTSS System merges with PBiS)	#2 - Develop a newly integrated MTSS framework that merges the current Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) and the Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBiS) to support districts that have selected improving reading proficiency of students with disabilities at the 3rd grade level and have volunteered to participate with the statewide trainers.	NDE provides leadership and continues to support improved outcomes through multiple initiatives…	Districts identifying improved reading performance will have access to supports provided through Nebraska's coherent improvement strategies	Will use evidence-based strategies with deep implementation	Will demonstrate increased reading proficiency as measured by the state assessment (NeSA)

	Strands for Action for NDE……	If……	Then…..		
			District	Teacher	Student
Alignment of State Infrastructure	#3 – Align the state infrastructure to ensure districts receive necessary supports to deeply implement evidence-based reading strategies to support all learners	Special Education activities are aligned with Nebraska's state goals and the continuous improvement process (AQuESTT)…	Expectations for improvement will be consistent across all state programs and will ultimately provide a common message to all school districts in support of deep implementation of EBPs	Will use evidence-based strategies with deep implementation	Will demonstrate increased reading proficiency as measured by the state assessment (NeSA)

Component #3: Evaluation:

The evaluation of the Nebraska SSIP will be conducted jointly by the Nebraska Academy of Methodology, Analytics and Psychometrics (MAP Academy) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the Munroe-Meyer Institute (MMI) at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) in consultation with the MTSS/PBIS Management Team and project stakeholders. The MAP Academy, a university-recognized service center, is housed within the Nebraska Center for Research on Children, Youth, Families and Schools (CYFS). The advanced doctoral level research statisticians and methodologists in the MAP Academy have extensive experience in statistical methods (e.g., general linear modeling, latent variable modeling, multilevel modeling and longitudinal growth modeling), quantitative research design methodology (e.g., experimental, quasi-experimental, correlational, program evaluation, and survey designs), psychometrics, measurement, evaluation, meta-analysis, and mixed methods research designs. They are experienced with, and have access to, sophisticated statistics software packages including BILOG, Parscale, MULTILOG, SPSS, SAS, R, LISREL/EQS, M*plus*, and HLM. The Interdisciplinary Center for Program Evaluation located at MMI focuses on consultation on research/evaluation design, development and implementation of evaluation projects, implementation of community needs assessment, identification or development of tools and the development of data management systems.

Both the MAP Academy and MMI will closely collaborate with the Department of Education and the project management team providing an "outsiders" perspective and objectivity.

3(a) Specify how the evaluation is aligned to the theory of action and other component of the SSIP and the extent to which it includes short-term and long-term objectives to measure implementation of the SSIP. Specify its impact on achieving measurable improvement in SIMR(s) for children with disabilities.

The Nebraska State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) is a multi-tiered, multi-phase comprehensive approach targeted at improving the reading proficiency of students with disabilities at the third grade level as measured by the statewide reading NeSA assessment. As such, Nebraska is proposing a multi-phase mixed methods evaluation to assess the implementation and efficacy of the SSIP. A multi-phase mixed methods evaluation is appropriate when there are multiple research questions, diverse

stakeholders, and complex systems (Plano, Clark, & Ivankova, 2015)[21]. This evaluation aligns with the Theory of Action detailed earlier in this document by assessing progress on both short-term and long-term goals as detailed in Section 3(c). This evaluation will impact the lives of children with disabilities in the state of Nebraska by providing developmental feedback (i.e. formative evaluation) to guide the effective management of the SSIP and to thoughtfully address challenges in a timely manner. Assessing outcome data will provide a summative evaluation of the progress on the State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR).

The evaluation plan is based on the Logic Model presented in the table below. Each element of the logic model and its respective evaluation question, data collection, and data analysis plan will be described in turn.

Nebraska's Logic Model

Inputs	Activities	Short-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
NDE has policies, procedures, and resources available to support districts' development of Targeted Improvement Plans.	1. Supporting TIP development with district data 2. Selection of evidence-based strategies with high likelihood increasing outcomes	Fidelity of implementation of evidence-based strategies	Increased reading proficiency of students with disabilities at the 3rd grade level as measured by the statewide assessment (NeSA)
NDE has statewide MTSS and PBiS trainers who provide training, coaching, and technical assistance to districts.	3. Integration of current MTSS and PBiS frameworks 4. Training, coaching, and technical assistance	Deep implementation of the newly integrated MTSS/PBiS framework	Increased capacity for MTSS/PBiS training, coaching, and technical assistance statewide
The Office of Special Education has formed a Learning Collaborative that includes members from multiple offices and projects.	5. Alignment of state infrastructure 6. Continued and closer collaboration with stakeholders and the Learning Collaborative	Cohesive connections with AQuESTT initiative and the SSIP	1. Increased support to deeply implement evidence-based reading strategies 2. Determinations calculation and monitoring process with a stronger emphasis on results

Inputs

The three primary inputs for the Nebraska SSIP Logic Model are:

1. NDE policies, procedures, and resources support districts' development of Targeted Improvement Plans (TIPs);
2. Statewide MTSS and PBiS trainers provide training, coaching, and technical assistance to districts; and
3. A Learning Collaborative that includes members from multiple offices and projects to disseminate information about evidence-based reading strategies.

Input 1: Support for TIPs.

The Nebraska Department of Education, Office of Special Education requires all districts to develop a Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP) based on a detailed district data analysis. The Office of Special Education provides an Impact Area document that guides districts through the data analysis process as

[21] Plano Clark, V. L., & Ivankova, N. V. (2015). *Mixed methods research: A guide to the field.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

described in Section 1(b) as well as provides guiding questions to support a well-developed, comprehensive TIP. Local facilitators, housed at the Educational Service Agencies, funded through discretionary grants provided by the Office of Special Education, provide training, coaching, and guidance to member districts in the development of their TIPs.

Input 2: MTSS and PBiS Statewide Trainers.

The Department of Education contracts with the University of Nebraska, Lincoln (UNL) to provide universal training of the MTSS framework and principles of deep implementation. Through the contract, UNL has hired four staff members to work directly with districts providing training, on-site coaching, and technical assistance. The MTSS – IST supports the districts as they examine their current MTSS process and use data to identify strengths and weaknesses within their framework. The project works closely with districts to ensure the core curriculum is implemented with fidelity and that the interventions selected are evidence-based and have a high likelihood of providing the results they would like to see based on the goals identified. The MTSS statewide trainers have developed a list of requirements (see Section 1(a)) designed to establish behaviors within the district that will assure the success of the MTSS framework. A coaching protocol has also been established to ensure districts are implementing with fidelity (see description of coaching in Section 1(a) Core Element 1).

Within the Department of Education, the Staff Professional Development Grant has funded the establishment of PBiS statewide training and coaching. To date, the Nebraska PBiS Network has provided training and technical assistance to over 215 schools and districts across the state of Nebraska. In addition to providing regional trainings open to all Nebraska schools, the Nebraska PBiS Network provides intensive, onsite technical assistance for partner schools/districts (see description of NePBiS activities in Section 2(a) Local Initiative - PBiS).

Input 3: Learning Collaborative.

When the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) announced that technical support would be provided to states to develop Phase II plans, the Nebraska's Office of Special Education reached out to other offices within NDE and to the MTSS statewide trainers to ascertain their participation in the Learning Collaborative. The initial group consisted of members from the Department of Education including the Office of Special Education, and the Office of Accreditation and School Improvement as well as our statewide MTSS trainer from UNL. As the group met and began collaborations, missing roles were identified and the Learning Collaborative grew. The Learning Collaborative now includes members from the Office of Special Education, Office of Accreditation and School Improvement, Office of Teaching and Learning, Office of Federal Programs and Nutrition, Office of Data, Evaluation and Research and includes representatives from the statewide PBiS and MTSS projects.

Activities

The Nebraska SSIP Logic Model includes six primary activities:

1. Supporting TIP development with district data;
2. Selection of evidence-based strategies with a high likelihood of increasing outcomes;
3. Integration of the current MTSS and PBiS frameworks;
4. Training, coaching, and technical assistance to support the newly integrated framework;
5. Aligning state infrastructure to ensure districts receive necessary supports to deeply implement evidence-based strategies to support all learners; and
6. Continued and closer collaboration between stakeholders and the Learning Collaborative.

Activity 1: Aligning TIPs.

Each district within Nebraska is required to develop a Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP) based on a detailed analysis of the district's data. Nebraska designed the TIP to have a similar process required by states to develop the SSIP by including phases of development, monitoring, and evaluation. Districts review data related to all of the SPP indicators. From the detailed analysis, each district identifies a focus area in which improvement is needed and set measurable goals. After a focus for improvement is identified, the district then choses an evidence-based strategy to implement in order to achieve the goals specified. The TIP is intended to be a living document in which districts are constantly monitoring data and adjusting goals to ensure improved outcomes for students with disabilities. On an annual basis, NDE regional consultants will review districts' TIPs and provide feedback regarding potential improvements to ensure the success of the plan.

Activity 2: Evidence-based reading strategies.

As part of the TIP, districts are required to select evidence based strategies that have a high likelihood of being effective when deeply implemented in order to achieve the target identified. All district TIPs are reviewed by the NDE regional consultants from the Office of Special Education upon submission to ensure that they meet the required guidelines. The NDE Program Improvement Team will conduct an additional audit of 20 % of the TIPs to ensure that the evidence-based strategies meet the criteria set forth by the What Works Clearinghouse. If more than 10% of the reviewed practices do not meet the criteria, an additional 10% of the TIPs will be randomly selected and the audit will repeat until less than 10% of the practices reviewed meet the criteria or all of the TIPs have been audited, whichever occurs first. This audit procedure will allow the Department to answer the following question: To what extent do the TIPs identify appropriate student-centered, evidence-based strategies?

The results of this audit will be provided to the Learning Collaborative team. In addition to support provided by the Educational Service Agencies, the NDE regional consultants will work with districts who do not meet the evidence-based criteria to revise their TIP.

Activity 3 and 4: Integration of MTSS/PBiS with supports.

Developing the integrated MTSS/PBiS framework will involve coordination and collaboration among two distinct teams that to date have functioned independently. It will require the identification of elements that overlap and establish a protocol to resolve any contradictory practices. They will educate each other about the novel components of their respective programs and negotiate what elements will be retained in the newly integrated model. Once these issues have been addressed, policies and procedures will need to be revised, and training and coaching materials updated. The pilot implementation will provide additional opportunities to refine the framework, as well as provide insight regarding scale-up strategies.

Activity 5 and 6: Aligning State Infrastructure and closer collaboration.

The Office of Special Education has already begun collaborative relationships with the formation of the Learning Collaborative. The Learning Collaborative involves coordination and collaboration with state teams that have in the past worked in silos. Through these collaborations, the various offices have learned from each other and identified integral parts of the programs that use similar processes.
The plan is to continue to find areas in which the Learning Collaborative can support the work in process and bring unique perspectives to develop an integrated cohesive model.

Short-Term Outcomes

Nebraska has identified two broad short-term outcomes as part of the SSIP Logic Model:

1. Fidelity of implementation of individual program components;
2. Developing cohesive connections between the AQuESTT initiative and the goals of the SSIP.

Short-Term Outcome 1: Fidelity of implementation of evidence-based strategies

For Nebraska's model, fidelity of implementation refers to the degree to which a specific intervention or program component is implemented as intended. Century, Rudnick & Freeman (2010) operationalized five categories of fidelity: exposure and dosage, quality, participant responsiveness, differentiation, and structure/process[22].

Since the SSIP is not an experimental design, measuring differentiation, or the extent to which the intervention may have unintentionally spread to non-treatment participants, is not a particular concern. Therefore, our approach to fidelity will focus on the remaining four factors.

1. ***Exposure and dosage.*** Training attendance logs will measure exposure and dosage of teachers who attended trainings. Coach calendar diaries will be coded to measure teacher-level coaching exposure. Student attendance logs in reading intervention will provide a measure of exposure and estimate of dosage at the student level. Teachers will complete an online survey about the frequency of the coaching activities they received over the past year.
2. ***Quality.*** Training evaluation forms will be used to assess teacher satisfaction with the training and gather feedback to improve future training. Evaluation forms are collected as part of the SPDG and from the fidelity observations outlined in the MTSS-IST process. For districts choosing other evidence-based practices, fidelity measures for the strategy selected are reported in their TIP. Districts will complete reports on their fidelity and submit to NDE through the ILCD website.
3. ***Structure/process.*** Fidelity in terms of the procedural and instructional elements of an evidence-based strategy will be measured as detailed within the SPDG (see Table 2, Section 3 (c)).
4. ***Levels of Implementation***. Providing teachers with real-time feedback regarding the quality of instruction, student engagement, and the implementation of the instructional elements in real time is a key component of the newly integrated MTSS/PBiS framework. Regional consultants will be trained on fidelity rubrics and resources developed by the MTSS/PBiS team. They will complete those tools with districts and provide support to districts as indicated by the collected data.

Short-Term Outcome 2: Aligning State Infrastructure.

It is expected by aligning state infrastructure activities; districts will receive consistent, unified and cohesive information about what evidence-based practices are and receive the trainings and supports needed to achieve deeper implementation of those strategies. It is also anticipated that a duplication of work activities can be eliminated and collaborative efforts will result in more meaningful dialogue among state offices and demonstrate to districts the need and importance of special education initiatives being tied firmly with general education continuous improvement.

[22] Century, J., Rudnick, M., & Freeman, C. (2010). A framework for measuring fidelity of implementation: A foundation for shared language and accumulation of knowledge. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *31*(2), 199-218.

Long-Term Outcomes

At the heart of the SSIP Logic Model are four intended outcomes:

1. Increase reading proficiency for students with disabilities at 3rd grade as measured by the NeSA;
2. Increased capacity for the State of Nebraska to support implementation of the newly integrated MTSS/PBiS framework;
3. Provide support to districts to implement evidence-base strategies selected through the Targeted Improvement Plan; and
4. Refine Nebraska's determinations calculation and monitoring process to provide a stronger emphasis on results.

Long-Term Outcome 1: Increase reading proficiency.

The State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR) is to increase the reading proficiency of students at the 3rd grade level in the identified cohort from 57.86% in 2014 to 67.86% by 2018. Therefore, Nebraska proposes the following evaluation question related to the NeSA third grade reading data: What was the change in the percentage of special education students meeting grade level benchmarks on the NeSA reading assessment?

In addition to analyzing the descriptive trends in the percentage of students at benchmark on the NeSA reading assessment, we propose additional analysis of NeSA reading data using a multi-level model to understand trends at both the school and district level among those participating in the newly integrated MTSS/PBiS program. Additional analyses would then compare trends in participating districts with non-participating districts as well as with the state-wide trends.

While the primary data will determine if the State of Nebraska has met its stated SIMR, it provides only limited utility in fully understanding the impact of the newly integrated MTSS/PBiS framework in improving student reading achievement for special education students. As with many educational initiatives, early intervention is key in order to obtain the maximum positive results over the course of a student's educational experience. Because the newly integrated MTSS/PBiS framework targets students in kindergarten through third grade, it will also be important to measure reading outcomes among all of those grades. Given the strong tradition of local control among Nebraska schools, student reading screening data will come from a variety of assessments (e.g. DIBELS Next, AIMSweb, MAP, etc.) which will provide particular challenges in drawing meaningful inferences in the data. However, even looking at trends in percentage of students at benchmark on these different reading screeners may provide some insight into potential trends in the third grade NeSA reading achievement scores. Collectively, all of these measures and approaches will help Nebraska answer the following question: To what extent did student reading achievement scores (or reading screening scores) change?

Long-Term Outcome 2: Increased capacity for MTSS/PBiS.

While improving reading skills of special education students is the focus of the SSIP, developing a system that can sustain improvements is also an important outcome. Nebraska proposes a mixed methods case study approach to explore and document capacity of staff that supports the newly integrated MTSS/PBiS implementation, as well as to highlight effective strategies, lessons learned, and recommendations for scaling-up implementation efforts. A mixed methods case study features quantitative methods (in this case student outcome and survey data) within a case study (observations and interview data) to

enhance the overall application of the findings from the case study (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2015)[23]. The case study will include a comprehensive review of all evaluation data, with additional interviews and focus groups to provide both context and richness for the case. A minimum of one district will be selected based on staff opinion of their potential to serve as a pilot district for the 2017-2018 school year according to the timeline detailed within the SPDG. The findings from the case study will then inform the selection process of additional districts and guide the development of the Train the Trainer training model.

Long-Term Outcome 3: Increased support to implement evidence-based reading strategies

As closer collaborations and the alignment of state infrastructure continues, the Department of Education as a whole will provide literacy resources in multiple locations to facilitate streamlined dissemination of recommended evidence-based practices to all educators in a unified format.

The Nebraska Department of Education plans to provide webinars for districts regarding the use of the core instructional model, the use of formative assessments, and how to monitor and adjust instruction based upon student needs.

The Office of Special Education and the Office of Teaching and Learning is planning to engage in a 30 in 30 challenge in which each office will post on Facebook and Twitter 30 evidence-based reading strategies in 30 days. Information posted will also be shared on the NDE website to ensure it can be accessed in multiple ways.

NDE also plans on providing information and tools to assist districts in defining what fidelity of their selected evidence-based strategy should look like and measure the level of fidelity reached as they begin to implementation.

Long-Term Outcome 4: Revised Determinations Calculations and Monitoring Process.

The Nebraska Office of Special Education has also begun work internally in the areas of monitoring and revising the determination calculation to align with the SSIP outcomes and AQuESTT classification.

Work has begun by the Office of Special Education to review and analyze the current district determinations and monitoring processes to examine what is working and what is not supporting the efforts to achieve positive outcomes for all students with disabilities. With the assistance of an outside statistician, in depth district data analysis with drill down components has commenced, leading to very rich discussions among varying stakeholders. It is anticipated changes to the above-mentioned processes will be developed with an evaluation component to help determine future success and additional modifications. Input from multiple and various stakeholders will be used to create new systems that are responsive to the goals of the SSIP.

The Office of Special Education has begun refining the monitoring and determination process by:

- Connecting supports to determine the effect of the emphasis being placed on the use of evidence-based practices through the work of our SSIP.
- Working with a nationally recognized statistician to support strengthening Nebraska's district determination process and alignment with the state AQuESTT classification process.

[23] Plano Clark, V. L., & Ivankova, N. V. (2015). *Mixed methods research: A guide to the field.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

3(b) Specify how the evaluation includes stakeholders and how information from the evaluation will be disseminated to stakeholders.

In January 2014, the NDE Office of Special Education began organizing a state-wide Results Driven Accountability (RDA) stakeholder umbrella committee. This committee was organized in order to ensure appropriate representation and build capacity with a consistent group of partners. The members of the committee were formally invited to serve as representatives and as part of the agreement to participate, the individual agreed to serve for up to three years. The intent is that Nebraska's RDA stakeholder committee will continue to meet while the State's Systemic Improvement Plans are developed and implemented. This will help the state's planning to continuously evolve and help ensure ambitious and meaningful change.

Nebraska's RDA committee represents diverse disciplines and experiences. Committee members represent multiple internal and external partners. Additionally, Nebraska was intentional about organizing a group of stakeholders involved in supporting children with disabilities ages birth through age 21. Therefore, the committee representation has supported the state in planning seamless improvement strategies that focus on improved results for infants and toddlers and their families (Early Intervention ages birth- 3); preschool children in early childhood (Part B, ages 3-5); and school age children and youth (Part B, ages 6-21). The stakeholder group included representatives of parents, special education directors, special education staff, general education administration (principals, superintendents), institutions of higher education, NDE teams (Approval/Accreditation, School Improvement, Equity and Instructional Strategies, Curriculum and Instruction), community agencies, nonpublic schools, and the Nebraska State Education Association and the Nebraska Association of Special Education Supervisors. A list of our RDA Stakeholders is listed below.

RDA Stakeholders			
Name	**Representation**	**Name**	**Representation**
Laura Barrett	NASES Region V	Tricia Parker	NDE Teaching and Learning
Jeff Sutter	SPED Director	Aprille Phillips	NDE Accreditation & School Improvement
John Cerny	Superintendent/Elementary Principal	Sheri Rickert	Non-Public System
Jason Harris	SPED Director, NASES Region III	Jenny Piening	SPED Director NASES Region I
Kyle McGown	Superintendent	Brenda Tracy	SPED Director NASES President
John Street	SPED Director/Fiscal	Christine Young	SPED Director
Cristen Witte	Special Education Consultant	Jane Byers	SPED Director NASES Region II
Brenda McNiff	Parent/SEAC/SPED Director	Wendy Kemling	SPED Director NASES
Melisa Dobish	SPED Director NASES Region IV	Josie Floyd	Elementary Principal
Jenny Fundus	SPED Director	Kami Jessop	SPED Director
Terry Houlton	SPED Director/Former Principal	Ellen Stokerbrand	SPED Director
Don Loseke	NDE School Improvement		

This group has met periodically throughout the past year and will continue meeting to establish/review targets and performance as indicated in the SPP/APR and the development and implementation of the SSIP. Meetings over the course of the year have provided NDE input and guidance on revising our SIMR, setting targets for the revised SIMR, clarifying our coherent improvement strategy, as well as other activities specific to the development of our SSIP. NDE intends to continue to hold stakeholder meetings to review evaluation data and assist in revision activities as data analysis requires.

In addition to the stakeholder group established specifically for the purpose of gathering input on the RDA and the development of the SSIP, Nebraska also obtained input from two longstanding stakeholder groups with some members serving as liaisons to the RDA stakeholder committees: Special Education

Advisory Council (SEAC) and the State Results Matter Task Force. The council is established pursuant to 34 CFR 300.167 and as such provides for input from a diverse group of stakeholders. SEAC and the Task Force, which regularly discusses the SPP/APR and provides input on the targets and strategies contained therein, has reviewed and supported the work of the stakeholder group. SEAC and the Task Force will continue to be utilized for input on the implementation and evaluation of the SSIP. The list of SEAC members is listed below.

SEAC Stakeholder List

Name	Representation (see key below)	Name	Representation (see key below)
Frank Adams	*(iii)*	Samantha Jacobson	*(i)*
Kasey Alexander	*(i), (ii)*	Kami Jessop	*(v)*
John Bright	*(iv)*	Cate Jones-Hazledine	*(i), (vi)*
Diane Bruha	*(v)*	Mary Jorgensen	*(i)*
Millie Demuth	*(i)*	Seamus Kelly	*(i)*
Cindy Ellis	*(i), (iii), (vi)*	Renee Kiernan	*(i)*
Barb Gentrup	*(i), (ii)*	Emily Kluver	*(ix)*
Queen Greene	*(i)*	Kristen Larsen	*(vi), (i)*
Judy Hall	*(iii)*	Steve Larsen	*(x)*
Debbie Healey	*(i)*	Graciela Sharif	*(i), (vi)*
Jody Hitesman	*(viii)*	Fr. Lawrence Stoley	*(vii)*
Terry Houlton	*(v)*	Carey Winkler	*(i)*
Marie Wohlers	*(i)*		

Representation Key

(i) *Parents of children with disabilities (ages birth through 26); or individuals with disabilities;*
(ii) *Teachers;*
(iii) *Representatives of institutions of higher education that prepare special education and related services personnel;*
(iv) *State and local educational officials, including officials who carry out activities under Homeless Assistance Act;*
(v) *Administrators of programs for children with disabilities;*
(vi) *Representatives of other State agencies involved in the financing or delivery of related services to children with disabilities;*
(vii) *Representatives of private schools and public charter schools;*
(viii) *Not less than one representative of a vocational, community, or business organization concerned with the provision of transition services to children with disabilities;*
(ix) *A representative from the State child welfare agency responsible for foster care; and*
(x) *Representatives from the State juvenile and adult corrections agencies.*

3(c) The State of Nebraska will employ the following methods to collect and analyze data to evaluate implementation and outcomes of the SSIP and the progress toward achieving intended improvement in the SIMR(s):

The methods used to collect and analyze data to evaluate implementation and outcomes of the SSIP and the progress toward achieving intended improvements in the SIMR are introduced in Section 3(a) within Nebraska's description of each element of the logic model and are further specified below.

Table 1
Evaluating Long-Term Outcome 1 from Section 3(a)
(Increase reading proficiency for students with disabilities at 3rd grade as measured by the NeSA)

Activities	Methods, Evaluation Instruments, Data Sources and Processes
Provide training and technical assistance around key components of building and refining the MTSS framework (e.g., teaming, systems-level data analysis, effective core instruction, selecting and planning for implementation of evidence-based interventions, decision rules, individual student problem solving, evaluating and continuously improving your MTSS)	a. Document fidelity of delivery of training sessions b. Participants rate quality, relevance, and usefulness of training sessions c. District/building teams rate the effectiveness of TA/coaching d. Document existence of district/school written MTSS procedures that includes a process for using data for

Activities	Methods, Evaluation Instruments, Data Sources and Processes
	making decisions about reading supports (including process for intensification)
Provide training for district-identified, practice-level coaches to support teachers' and interventionists' implementation of evidence-based reading strategies as requested by the districts participating.	a. Document fidelity of coach training b. Participants rate the quality, relevance, and usefulness of training sessions
Implementation of coaching process to support teachers with implementation of evidence-based reading strategies	a. Document coaching supports provided for teachers and interventionists b. Document fidelity of coaching supports using coach performance assessment
Collection of student data to guide decision making across multiple levels (e.g., universal screening data at least 2 times per year, ongoing progress monitoring data (general outcome measures and in-program measures) for students receiving intervention supports, diagnostic data, and outcome data) using technically adequate assessments for their intended purposes	a. Document district process for and collection of universal screening data b. Document district process for and collection of progress monitoring data for students receiving intervention c. Collect and report universal screening data at least 2 times per year d. Collect and report general outcome measures and in-program measures for students receiving intervention supports
Implementation of data-based decision making process at the student and systems level to guide core instruction and intervention decisions (e.g., fade, discontinue, continue, intensify intervention)	a. Document meetings to review student progress and intervention delivery data b. Document fidelity of use of pre-established decision rules to determine next steps with student intervention based on progress monitoring data and intervention delivery data c. Review of fidelity of progress monitoring procedures using progress monitoring guidelines
Systematic intensification of interventions for students who continue to struggle after receiving initial intervention with evidence-based practices	a. Document plans for intensifying intervention when data indicate a need; review of strategies for intensification to ensure evidence base b. Document fidelity to use of intensified intervention plans

Table 2

Evaluating Long-Term Outcome 2 from Section 3(a)

(Increased capacity for Nebraska to support implementation of the newly integrated MTSS/PBiS framework)

Activities	Methods, Evaluation Instruments, Data Sources and Processes
Plan alignment of MTSS and PBIS including developing an integration team and advisory committee.	Logic model developed and approved by NDE
Hire and train necessary MTSS personnel.	a. Candidates are interviewed & outcomes documented. b. Hired personnel rate the MTSS training on quality and usefulness c. Hired personnel complete pre-post ratings of knowledge/skills acquired in MTSS training.
Implementation Planning including training, materials, modules, progress monitoring, fidelity measures	a. Document training modules for MTSS including materials. b. Document development and/or selection of progress monitoring and fidelity measures.
Select pilot sites for implementation of newly integrated MTSS/PBIS framework	Sites selected based on priority list and needs assessment

Activities	Methods, Evaluation Instruments, Data Sources and Processes
Develop a publicity plan including: Market the new model, new video, vendor partner and integrated website.	Document activities completed from the publicity plan.
Planning year with pilot site(s) toward implementation of integrated model.	Document meetings and activities with pilot site, record outcomes of meetings & plans for implementing the model.
Implementation of newly integrated MTSS model at pilot site(s) including training, coaching, and evaluation	a. Participants rate the quality, relevance and usefulness of the training. b. Pilot site(s) rates the effectiveness of the coaching on MTSS. c. Pilot site(s) implements MTSS model with fidelity using the fidelity instrument(s) selected. d. Document meetings and activities with pilot site(s), record outcomes of meetings & plans for implementing the model.

Table 3
Evaluating Long-Term Outcome 3 from Section 3(a)
(Provide support to districts to implement evidence-based strategies selected through the Targeted Improvement Plan)

Activities	Methods, Evaluation Instruments, Data Sources and Processes
Provide a list of evidence-based strategies, including reading strategies in multiple locations.	List of evidence-based strategies, including reading strategies will be developed and located on NDE website, Facebook, and Twitter
Develop and present webinars regarding the use of the core instructional model, formative assessments, and monitoring and adjusting instruction based on student need.	Webinars regarding the use of the core instructional model, formative assessments, and monitoring and adjusting instruction based on student need will be advertised during monthly calls with directors and links to the webinars will be posted on the NDE website, Facebook and Twitter
Provide information and tools to assist districts in defining fidelity of selected evidence-based strategy and measure the level of fidelity reached as beginning implementation.	Information and tools to assist districts in defining fidelity of selected evidence-based strategy and measure the level of fidelity reached as beginning implementation will be provided on the NDE website, Facebook and Twitter.
Provide feedback to districts regarding quality of TIP and continue providing assistance to districts when needed.	a. Regional consultants will review districts TIPs for the region in which the consultant is assigned. b. Regional consultants will discuss with districts actions that can be taken to improve the TIP to ensure positive outcomes. c. Program Improvement Team will conduct an additional review of 20% of the TIPS to ensure evidence-based strategies meet the criteria set forth by the What Works Clearinghouse.

Table 4
Evaluating Long-Term Outcome 4 from Section 3(a)
(Refine our determinations calculation and monitoring process to provide a stronger emphasis on results)

Activities	Methods, Evaluation Instruments, Data Sources and Processes
Create a new calculation for determinations that displays a greater spread in district determination scores and accurately reflects the district's performance on the SPP indicators, continues to use all SPP indicators, reward improvement in scores, and is a transparent process.	a. The new determination calculation will permit a greater spread of scores and align with the AQuESTT classification. b. The revised District Determination Documentation provides a concise description of the process easily understood by all stakeholders. c. Improvements made by districts will be shown in the calculation by the increase in score for each indicator.

Activities	Methods, Evaluation Instruments, Data Sources and Processes
	d. The new determination calculation places greater emphasis on performance indicators rather than compliance indicators.
NDE improves its monitoring system to permit a greater focus on student outcomes.	a. The monitoring system emphasizes 1) compliance with IDEA and 92 NAC 51; 2) uniqueness of the individual district; 3) linkages between compliance and improvement; and 4) improved outcomes for students with disabilities. b. As districts complete their monitoring cycle, survey data will be collected and utilized to refine the monitoring system to improve focus on student outcomes.

Nebraska's strategy to develop and scale-up a sustainable newly integrated MTSS/PBiS model will be based on a small scale pilot study of an ESU, district or region selected to participate in training to be developed and implemented. Results of this pilot study will be compared to that of those in the identified cohort described with the Modified SIMR at the beginning of this document. Although the identified cohort is representative of the demographics found within the state and are positioned geographically throughout the state, there is no expectation that the students participating in the pilot, are representative of students throughout Nebraska. It would be outside of the scope of this evaluation to make any claims about the generalizability of the findings. The intent of the evaluation is gather evidence about the efficacy of the newly integrated framework being used and to inform plans to scale-up that model.

MAP Academy and UNMC will be analyzing student outcome data for change over time as well as relative to other groups of students. For example, student outcome scores from 2016-2017 will be compared to scores from 2015-2016. Except in cases where there is an insufficient sample size, MAP Academy and UNMC will also run group comparisons based on special education status as well as treatment condition.

As external evaluators, the findings will be presented in an unbiased manor to assist the MTSSS/PBiS management team in identifying key strategies.

3(d) The State of Nebraska will use the evaluation data to examine the following:

Evaluation data will be collected on an on-going basis, depending on the nature of the data and any naturally occurring data collection windows. Given the developmental nature of this project, all data will be processed and analyzed as it is received so that it may help inform program development. As external evaluators, the findings will be presented in an unbiased manner to assist the MTSS/PBiS Management Team in identifying key strategies that contribute to the project's success as well as opportunities for improvement. Ultimately any changes to the newly integrated MTSS/PBiS framework will be at the discretion of the MTSS/PBiS Management Team (see Evaluation Table in 3(c)).

Evaluation Conclusionary Statements

1. On an annual basis, NDE regional consultants will review each TIP and provide feedback to the district regarding potential improvements that could be made for the success of the plan.

2. The NDE Program Improvement Team will conduct an additional audit of 20 % of the TIPs to ensure that the evidence-based strategies meet the criteria set forth by the What Works Clearinghouse. If necessary, the NDE regional consultants will work with districts who do not meet the evidence-based criteria to revise their TIP.
3. For districts choosing other evidence-based practices, fidelity measures for the strategy selected are reported in their TIP. Districts will complete report on their fidelity and submit to NDE through the ILCD website.
4. Regional consultants will be trained on fidelity rubrics and resources developed by the MTSS/PBiS team. They will complete those tools with districts and provide support to districts as indicated by the collected data.
5. It is expected by aligning state infrastructure activities; districts will receive consistent, unified and cohesive information about what evidence-based practices are and receive the trainings and supports needed to achieve deeper implementation of those strategies.
6. In addition to analyzing the descriptive trends in the percentage of students at benchmark on the NeSA reading assessment, we propose additional analysis of NeSA reading data using a multi-level model to understand trends at both the school and district level among those participating in the newly integrated MTSS/PBiS program.
7. After a year of integration of MTSS/PBiS, Nebraska will pull from existing evaluation plans to establish a cohesive evaluation to measure the success to which the state has implemented the newly integrated model and the collaborative efforts that have been initiated.
8. After a year of the newly integrated MTSS/PBiS model, Nebraska will establish an evaluation to measure the fidelity of the coaching process and the increase in the use of evidence-based practices.
9. NDE intends to continue to hold stakeholder meetings to review evaluation data and assist in revision activities as data analysis requires.

Phase II: Technical Assistance and Support

Describe the support the State needs to develop and implement an effective SSIP. Areas to consider include: Infrastructure development; Support for the LEA implementation of EBPs; Evaluation; and Stakeholder involvement in Phase II.

- Continued support and technical assistance from the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) with systems alignment and infrastructure development.
- Continued support and technical assistance form the IDEA Data Center (IDC) with monitoring and implementation support of the evaluation plan.
- Continued recognition from OSEP of the importance of breaking down silos and the need for continued cross-departmental collaboration.
- Continued technical assistance/guidance calls to communicate emerging national issues effecting SSIP implementation.
- OSEP funding and support to have staff to collaborate and problem solve regarding SSIP implementation issues.
- Sustained continuity of support and leadership from OSEP.