



State Systemic Improvement Plan

Phase III

March 29, 2017

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Introduction of Nebraska and the Phase III Submission

Nebraska is a unique state. From its fierce sense of individual and community ownership to its Unicameral Legislature, from its bedrock family and community and local values to its statewide pride in who Nebraskans are, Nebraska is unique.

Nebraska's ESUs are intermediate education agencies mandated by state statute in 1965 to provide professional development for educators as part of state defined core services. ESUs are service-oriented, non-regulatory agencies designed to achieve a better balance of educational opportunities for students regardless of the population, financial differences, or geographic limitations of school districts. The ESUs are uniquely situated to assist the Office of Special Education in implementing the SSIP.

Nebraskans place the highest values on its families and its communities. "Family and community first" ensures protection for those values Nebraskans treasure. It ensures that the institutions Nebraska creates and the government services Nebraskans provide, protect, support and strengthen families and communities. With this strong sense of community in mind, Nebraskans are very involved with and protective of local control for their schools. Within the state, there are 245 districts.

As the Office of Special Education has embarked on the development, implementation, and evaluation of the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), it has always been a challenge to honor everyone's diverse interests and values into one overriding state vision. At the outset of the SSIP Process, Nebraska worked to develop an integrated RtI and PBIS MTSS System. As we continued those endeavors and examined the core components of the MTSS Framework and looked at the district needs assessment that was recently completed, it became apparent that attempting to integrate the two different types of tiered systems of support was not going to result in the largest possible impact on Nebraska's students with disabilities. Therefore, Nebraska is moving forward with a revised MTSS plan for increasing the use of Evidence Based Practices that Nebraska believes will result in better outcomes for Nebraska students. By creating a comprehensive MTSS system based on the provision of differentiated supports, Nebraska believes all parties will receive the levels of assistance needed to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities.

Nebraska has been actively involving stakeholders in the development and revision of the SSIP throughout all three Phases of development. During Phase I, our stakeholders helped to identify the State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR) as well as the coherent improvement strategy. While developing Phase II, Nebraska met multiple times with varying groups of stakeholders in order to identify a cohort that would be geographically and demographically representative of our state. None of the proposed cohort configurations met the criteria desired by some of the most vocal stakeholders, and it was overwhelmingly recommended that all third grade children in the state be included in the SIMR. Furthermore, stakeholder feedback indicated a strong desire to then disaggregate statewide third grade data by the type of MTSS evidence-based practice being implemented in each district. This type of data analysis will allow Nebraska to see overall progress toward the SIMR as well as incorporate the evidence-based practices that were identified as being part of the proposed cohort in Phase II.

Using the outline provided by OSEP, the following narrative describes Nebraska's SSIP Phase III work and progress.

Summary of Phase III

Theory of action or logic model for the SSIP, including the SIMR

Upon review of Nebraska’s Theory of Action, Logic Model, and State-identified Measurable Result (SIMR) it was determined that changes needed to occur. Through input that included multiple stakeholders and numerous meetings, it was determined that Nebraska’s Theory of Action and Logic Model surrounding the MTSS integration would not adequately address or impact child outcomes without some revision of the MTSS framework and implementation. Data collected from a needs assessment earlier this spring, indicated clearly that many districts across the state are already implementing MTSS with varying results. To honor the work that districts have already begun, it became evident that the State needed to establish a common, comprehensive MTSS framework to further guide districts with implementation. As a result, the Theory of Action was revised. The change from the previous Theory of Action is highlighted.

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
Develop a framework for MTSS implementation	#2 - Develop an 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 3 rd 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
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

Due to the changes with the Theory of Action and the need to move from a newly integrated MTSS model to the development of a comprehensive MTSS framework, stakeholders felt a revision also needed to occur with Nebraska’s Logic model to accurately represent the evaluation activities and stakeholder input to ensure implementation of activities produced the desired outcomes. Nebraska’s Revised Logic Model can be found on page 6.

Nebraska's Revised Logic Model

<u>Inputs</u>	<u>Improvement Strategies</u>	<u>Short-Term Outcomes</u>	<u>Medium-Term Outcomes</u>	<u>Long-Term Outcomes</u>
NDE Special Education (Leadership, Regional Consultants and SSIP team) State Educational Agency Learning Collaborative UNL RtI Consortium SPDG PBiS (Management team, coaches) Evaluation team for SPDG, RtI, and SSIP Stakeholders: LEAs, Special Education Advisory Council, Nebraska Association of Special Education Supervisors	Strategy 1: Increase the use of evidence-based practices (EBPs) by providing support for district Targeted Improvement Plans (TIPs) including data analysis, selection of EBPs, and implementation of EBPs to fidelity	1a. NDE staff will demonstrate the knowledge and skill necessary to provide support to LEAs 1b. District teams will align TIPs with district data.	1c. Districts will select EBPs with high likelihood of improving outcomes for students with disabilities.	1d. Districts will implement EBPs with high levels of fidelity.
	Strategy 2: Develop and implement a comprehensive MTSS framework to provide behavioral and academic supports for all students.	2a. In order to build upon existing infrastructure, districts will continue to receive training and support through the RtI Consortium and NEPBiS. 2b. In collaboration with stakeholder input, a comprehensive MTSS framework will be developed.	2c. A training, coaching and TA resource center will be developed to support the MTSS framework.	2d. LEAs will implement the MTSS framework with fidelity.
	Strategy 3: Align resources and programs within the state infrastructure to support implementation of SSIP activities.	3a. NDE special education staff will collaborate with other NDE team to align the SSIP with ESSA and AQuESTT.	3b. Gaps in infrastructure will be identified and addressed using stakeholder workgroups, strategic planning work and coordination with the ESUs. 3c. Establish a Grant/Financial support process designed to provide assistance to Districts.	3d. Training and information will be provided and dissemination in a consistent and cohesive manner.
Student Outcomes <u>SIMR:</u> Increase reading proficiency for students with disabilities at the 3rd grade level as measured by the statewide reading assessment. <u>Growth Goal (K-3):</u> Decrease the number of students determined at-risk for reading failure beginning in Kindergarten. Maintain/ Increase the rate of growth for students on IEPs in order for them to be grade level readers.				

SIMR

For Nebraska's Phase II SSIP submission, the Office of Special Education continued to engage multiple stakeholders in discussion and data analysis to review the State-Identified Measurable Result (SIMR). Stakeholders articulated what the data also verified, that when a Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS) was implemented to fidelity with all students, all students increase their proficiency in reading. As a result of stakeholder input and guidance from the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) and the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), Nebraska's SIMR for Phase II was changed from decreasing the reading gap between general education and special education students to measuring the increase in reading proficiency for 3rd grade students with disabilities for a selected cohort of students.

As identified in Phase II, the SIMR was selected based on its alignment with Part B Indicator 3C of the SPP as well as its close ties to the Nebraska State Board of Education statewide initiative for continuous improvement.

As a result of data analysis and feedback from our multiple stakeholder groups, our SIMR has changed to reflect reading proficiency for all students with disabilities at the third grade level rather than with a specific cohort. Stakeholders voiced strong concern that the cohort was not representative of the state. Though demographics were considered in the original cohort selection, stakeholders across the state expressed concerns regarding the size of the districts included in the cohort and race/ethnicity of the district makeup for the selected cohort. The cohort selected

included 30 districts from all geographic regions of the state and had a total of 560 third graders with disabilities or approximately 14% of the population, however, the largest districts in the state were excluded from the cohort which also raised concerns with stakeholders. The change in the SIMR allows Nebraska to monitor the reading proficiency of all 3,801 third grade students with disabilities and allows for the Office of Special Education to further disaggregate the data according to the various strategies being implemented.

Although Nebraska is looking at data from the entire state, due to the sparse population, the large geographic area of the state, and the close relationship the Office of Special Education shares with the local education agencies and strong stakeholder involvement, the SEA felt it was critical to continue to examine reading proficiency statewide. The office will continue to conduct an analysis of 3rd grade reading proficiency as well as look at trend data for districts who have implemented one of the initiatives targeted. Those initiatives include districts that:

- Identified reading as a focus area for their Targeted Improvement Plan;
- Work with the UNL RtI Consortium;
- Work with the Nebraska Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (NEPBiS); and/or
- Work with both the UNL RtI Consortium and NEPBiS.

SIMR Phase III

Increase reading proficiency for students with disabilities at the 3rd grade level as measured by the statewide reading assessment.

3rd Grade Reading Proficiency for Students with Disabilities - Statewide					
School Year	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Percentage	56.60%	57.20%	60.63%	64.85%	64.69%

SSIP 2013 – 2018 Targets					
FFY	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Target	59.86%	61.86%	63.86%	65.86%	67.86%
Progress	Met Target 64.85%	Met Target 64.69%			

Baseline and Targets

Targets are set based on a trajectory of growth within a five year period. Proficiency scores were looked at from a five year previous trajectory to give a predictive measure over the next five years. Although the SIMR includes all students with disabilities, the targets have not changed since they were established in Phase II. With the projected implementation of the new statewide English - Language Arts assessment in 2016-17 that replaces the current Nebraska Education State Assessment for reading, targets may need to be adjusted in the future.

Coherent improvement strategies or principal activities employed during the year (April 2016 - March 2017), including infrastructure improvement strategies

As shown in Nebraska’s Logic Model which can be found on page 6, the Office of Special Education has three improvement strategies that are being evaluated. The three strategies include:

1. Increase the use of evidence-based practices (EBPs) by providing support for district Targeted Improvement Plans (TIPs) including data analysis, selection of EBPs, and implementation of EBPs to fidelity.
2. Develop and implement a comprehensive MTSS framework to provide behavioral and academic supports for all students.
3. Align resources and programs within the state to support implementation of SSIP activities.

Strategy 1 (Increase use of EBPs): The principal activities employed during the year were as follows.

- NDE Regional Consultant review of the TIPs.
- Results Driven Accountability (RDA) conference targeting requirement of measures for fidelity of implementation for TIP Phase II submission.

- Feedback regarding TIP submission provided to districts by the NDE Regional Consultants.
- Development of TIP Phase II materials including guiding questions and a review tool.

Strategy 2 (MTSS Framework): The principal activities employed during the 2016-17 school year were as follows.

- Provided multiple trainings that included building and refining, topical, and coaching training.
- Provided technical assistance to districts regarding data analysis at the systems and intervention level.
- Development of an MTSS workgroup among our stakeholders to guide development of a comprehensive MTSS framework.
- Development of a logic model for a comprehensive MTSS framework.

Strategy 3 (Systems Alignment): The principal activities employed during the 2016-17 school year were as follows.

- Office of Special Education along with other offices within NDE had shared presentations at the AQuESTT and Administrator Days conferences as well as at the Continuous Improvement Process fall workshops.
- Monthly meetings with multiple NDE offices for the Data Collaborative (Learning Collaborative) occurred.
- Attendance at the Cross State Learning Collaborative Fall Convening.
- Review of Office of Special Education internal procedures.
- Development of a strategic plan for the Office of Special Education in conjunction with the overall NDE Strategic Plan.

Specific evidence-based practices that have been implemented to date

Phase II of the SSIP submission contained four short-term activities to be completed during the 2016-2017 school year. The following information describes the extent to which these activities were completed in Phase III of the SSIP.

Short-Term Activities Described Phase II Implemented in Phase III		
Strategy	Activity	Progress
Increase use of EBPs	1. 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.	Met
MTSS Framework	2. Half of the districts participating with the UNL RtI Reading Consortium will continue with trainings	Met
MTSS Framework	3. Explore options for increasing capacity	Met
Systems Alignment	4. The Learning Collaborative will meet on a monthly basis to accomplish activities detailed in the timelines embedded in the Phase II SSIP document.	Amended

Short-Term Activity 1: As identified in Phase II of the SSIP, one of the short-term goals was to have at least half of the school districts that experienced the “Building & Refining” training in 2015-16 transition from the “exploration and installation phase” to the implementation phase. For the 2016-2017 school year, 11 of the 15 Building and Refining districts from the 2015-2016 are continuing. Of the 4 districts not continuing to participate in training and TA, 1 district decided to focus on continued consensus building and implementation of a new screening tool and indicated that they may seek support in future, 2 districts indicated interest in attending trainings, but not receiving follow-up TA support and 1 district dropped out before the last training session in 2015-2016.

Short-Term Activity 2: 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.

Short-Term Activity 3: By August 2016, it was anticipated that at least 75% of all Nebraska districts will have a TIP that identified a focus for improvement based on a results indicator and identified a student-centered evidence-based strategy. NDE anticipated that a majority of the TIPs will focus on improving reading. Disaggregated data regarding TIP can be found in the “Description of Key Measures” on page 17.

Short-Term Activity 4: Rather than placing the focus on integration of MTSS and PBiS, stakeholders’ feedback indicated developing a common framework would be more beneficial and honor the work districts had already accomplished with using a true MTSS process. Thus, this activity has been altered to develop a common framework rather than integrating processes already functioning collaboratively.

Brief overview of the year’s evaluation activities, measures, and outcomes

Nebraska’s evaluation activities, measures and outcomes in 2015-16 were aligned with the three strategies identified within the Logic Model as described in Nebraska’s Logic Model on page 6. The three strategies are:

1. Increase the use of evidence-based practices (EBPs) by providing support for district Targeted Improvement Plans (TIPs) including data analysis, selection of EBPs, and implementation of EBPs to fidelity.
2. Develop and implement a comprehensive MTSS framework to provide behavioral and academic supports for all students.
3. Align resources and programs within the state to support implementation of SSIP activities.

Strategy 1: Increase Use of Evidence Based Practices		
<u>Evaluation Activity</u>	<u>Measure</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
Regional consultant TIP review	TIP Review Tool	Met
Regional consultant feedback to districts	Completion of the review tool	Met
Review of 20% of the TIPs submitted	TIP Review Tool for SSIP Evaluation	Met

Strategy 2: MTSS Framework		
<u>Evaluation Activity</u>	<u>Measure</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
MTSS Training and technical assistance	Attendance Survey evaluations	Met
Alignment of MTSS and PBIS	Logic Model	Activity changed to development of comprehensive MTSS framework

Strategy 3: Systems Alignment		
<u>Evaluation Activity</u>	<u>Measure</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
Establishment of Learning Collaborative	Meeting minutes and agendas	Met
Interviews with NDE Regional Consultants	Review of responses collected from interviews	Met
Alignment of SSIP with State Strategic Plan	Crosswalk between the SSIP and the Strategic Plan	Met

Highlights of changes to implementation and improvement strategies

Revisions to the implementation and improvement strategies as described in the Phase III Logic Model (page 6) and the revision of the Theory of Action (page 5), includes the change from an integration of MTSS and PBiS to building a comprehensive MTSS framework. Stakeholder input guided by data analysis prompted the need to alter the original strategy of integrating MTSS and PBiS to developing a comprehensive MTSS framework that took into account the quality MTSS programs in existence and honored the integrated processes already functioning collaboratively within Nebraska districts.

Changes made to Nebraska's SIMR need to be noted even though those changes are not specific to implementation or improvement strategies. As described earlier in the Summary of Phase III regarding the SIMR, Nebraska's measurable result includes all 3rd grade students with disabilities rather than those involved with a specific cohort. Justification for this change can be found on pages 6 and 7.

Summary

- Alteration of SIMR from selected cohort to entire state
- Change from integrating MTSS and PBiS to developing a comprehensive MTSS framework
- Short-term activities from Phase II contained within strategies 1, 2, and 3 have been met.

Progress in Implementing the SSIP

Description of the State's implementation progress

The Office of Special Education has made significant progress in implementing the activities that were detailed within Phase I and II of the SSIP. Nebraska's progress with implementation as well as modifications are described within this section.

Description of extent to which the State has carried out its planned activities with fidelity - what has been accomplished, what milestones have been met, and whether intended timeline has been followed

Progress on Strategy 1: Increase Use of EBPs

When Nebraska began the initial work in developing the Phase I State Systemic Improvement Plan, it was recognized that strong local control exists in the state, thus Nebraska's plan needed ensure that local districts had the ability to determine how to best improve the outcomes for students with disabilities. In an effort to give school districts support and framework for continuous improvement to build upon their programs, the Office of Special Education requested that districts develop a Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP) using the same structure and pieces the Office of Special Education used to develop the SSIP.

The Nebraska TIP process requires districts to submit similar justification as OSEP has outlined in Phase I and II of the SSIP. Within Phase I of the TIP process, districts were asked to conduct a detailed data analysis which then led to a focus of improvement (the SIMR for the local education agencies). After a focus was selected, districts then investigated initiatives that would best support achieving improved outcomes for students with disabilities based on the focus selected.

Progress on Strategy 2: MTSS Framework

Current Progress on Implementation of UNL RtI Implementation Support Team (IST) Supports:

During the 2015-2016 school year, the UNL RtI IST, a State Grant Funded project, provided 52 professional development training sessions with teams from 59 districts. Trainings included the following:

- Initial building and refining of MTSS-reading supports;
- Selection of evidence programs/practices and assessments;
- Leadership for MTSS-reading;
- Collection and use of observation fidelity data for instruction and interventions;

- Development and application of decision rules for guiding intervention decisions;
- Coaching supports for instruction and intervention; and
- Problem solving for individual students.

The IST provided several levels of support for teams based on need and level of engagement. This support included:

- 15 districts were new to working with the IST (Building & Refining districts);
- 13 districts who had previously worked with the IST received ongoing support through regional trainings and technical assistance (Priority districts);
- 4 districts participated in onsite training and more extensive technical assistance (Partner districts); and
- 27 districts participated in regional trainings on a variety of RtI-related topics (Topical districts).

The average fidelity on the *RtI Training Fidelity Observation Checks* was 100% on coverage of training content and an average of 4.8 (on a scale of 1-5) on content delivery items across all trainings. The median rating on all items of the *Training Perceptions Survey* across all trainings was 4.4) on a scale of 1 [strongly disagree] to 5 [strongly agree]). Participants agreed or strongly agreed on items related to the trainings being useful and informative, learning something new, and planning to use the information from the sessions. The IST continuously reviews the survey data to inform updates to training materials, content, and delivery based on participant feedback

The IST provided approximately 245 Technical Assistance sessions for participating districts/schools. The average adherence to *Technical Assistance protocols* as self-reported by IST Technical Assistance (TA) providers was 86% (range of 82-97%) across all TA visits. The most frequently reported reason provided when there was not adherence to the TA protocols involved a need to shift focus during a TA visit as school teams reprioritized needs or recognized a prerequisite step they needed to back up to address. The TA protocols were new for the 2015-2016 school year and modifications and updates were made for the 2016-2017 school year on IST TA providers' feedback on protocol content and ease of use and to account for content shifts based on needs that arise during TA sessions.

To ensure the professional development provided for districts has a higher likelihood of leading to deep implementation of evidence-based practices, the option for districts to attend topical training without receiving follow-up TA was discontinued.

At this point in the 2016-2017 school year (March, 2017), the UNL RtI Implementation Support Team (IST) has provided 28 professional training sessions with teams from 50 districts. Trainings included the following:

- Building and refining of MTSS-reading core and intervention supports;
- Explicit instructional practices, selection of evidence-based practices;
- Collection and use of observation fidelity data for instruction and interventions;
- Development and application of decision rules for guiding intervention decisions;
- Coaching supports for instruction and intervention;
- Intensifying intervention supports; and
- Problem solving for individual students.

The IST provides ongoing technical assistance between training sessions based on the needs of the district/school. TA included activities such as: conducting shadow observations, assisting with selection of evidence-based practices, development of fidelity tools, collection and use of fidelity data, analyzing student and instructional data for decision making, applying intervention decision rules, planning for intensification of interventions, and evaluating the RtI-reading process.

TA activities are designed using a gradual release of responsibility with the TA provider providing more intensive initial support and fading support over time. To date (through March 1, 2017), the IST has provided 110 Technical Assistance sessions for participating districts/schools.

For the 2016-2017 school year, with the financial assistance provided by a State Grant, the IST also provided support through partnerships with 2 Educational Service Units (ESUs). During 2016-17 the UNL RtI Reading Consortium began supporting ESUs with the implementation and training of MTSS. One partnership focuses on working with ESU personnel to provide training and technical assistance for school administrators and school-identified coaches to support teachers implementing Explicit Instruction practices. The other partnership focuses on working with ESU personnel to provide training and technical assistance for school teams working to refine their intervention instruction and data-based decision making practices. Finally, 12 individuals across 7 districts were identified to provide in-district coaching. The UNL RtI IST is providing a series of trainings and follow-up support for coaches that includes:

- Content related to 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.

Follow up support includes providing models of coaching support and observing coaches and providing coaching and feedback.

Summary of Involvement with UNL RtI Consortium		
<u>Trainings/Participants</u>	<u>2015-2016 School Year</u>	<u>*2016-2017 School Year</u>
# of Training Sessions Held	52	28
# of Districts Involved	59	50
# of Coach Trainings with ESU Staff	0	2
# of TA Sessions	135	110

*Data through March 2017. Additional trainings and TA Sessions are planned for the remainder of the 2016-17 School Year.

The evaluator for the UNL RtI IST plans to summarize fidelity data for the 2016-2017 school year during the spring/summer of 2017.

Progress on Strategy 2: MTSS Framework

Current Progress on Schools Participating in the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG):

Multiple activities and opportunities were provided over the reporting period for schools to attend PBiS trainings, receive technical assistance, connect with other PBiS schools, and to become engaged with NEPBiS model through funding provided by the SPDG. In addition the following supports were provided:

- External coaching provided to teams (occurred four times during the year),
- PBiS advisory meeting attended including teams;
- PBiS Leadership Development Institute (LDI);
- Specific, leveled PBiS team trainings;
- FAST Track training for principals;
- PBiS at HOME training for schools and parent representatives;
- PBiS regional meetings; and
- PBiS Administrators' Academies.

Across all the activities, sixteen new schools enrolled in the NEPBiS model during the 2015-16 school year. Additionally, 11 schools and one entire district were added to the NEPBiS network for the 2016-17 school year.

Progress on Strategy 3: Systems Alignment

Multiple steps were made in the alignment of the SSIP with other initiatives. As has been noted, the Office of Special Education has continued to collaborate with other departments at NDE. Additionally, the Office of Special Education has been increasingly intentional in collaborating both with local directors and the Nebraska Association of Special Education Supervisors (NASSES) in order to address issues and to efficiently use resources to improve programming and implementation of evidence-based practices.

During the development of Phase II of the SSIP, NDE Office of Special Education established a committee (Learning Collaborative) including individuals from various offices within the department to collaborate and align initiatives. Although this Learning Collaborative has undergone some changes, it still has members from multiple offices including:

- Office of Special Education;
- Office of Accreditation and School Improvement;
- Data, Research, and Evaluation Office;
- Office of Federal Programs and Nutrition;
- University of Nebraska in Lincoln (UNL);
- University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC);
- Educational Service Unit; and
- Results Driven Accountability (RDA) Stakeholders.

One of the critical offices, the Office of Teaching and Learning, is not currently represented due to staff members leaving the department and those positions remain unfilled. The hope is that as soon as those positions are filled, the Collaborative will again have representation from that office. Nevertheless, joint presentations have occurred in conjunction with other offices at the AQuESTT Conference, Administrator Days, and the Continuous Improvement Process fall workshops and will continue to be offered.

Members of the Learning Collaborative have participated in monthly meetings as well as invited to trainings, virtual meetings, and webinars provided by the National Center of Systemic Improvement (NCSI). At this point, the development of a list of evidence-based practices has been discussed by stakeholders and is currently under development. The focus of this Collaborative has been on activities implemented to align state infrastructure as well as to create a single improvement plan that accommodates key components of the multiple plans required by the Department to allow districts to focus on implementation of improvement activities rather than the creation of multiple plans.

Additional focus of the Collaborative has been around the development of a crosswalk between the NDE Strategic Plan developed by the Board of Education, the Strategic Plan for the Office of Special Education and the SSIP. As these are all dynamic processes, this continues to be ongoing work.

With the new leadership within the Office of Special Education, multiple initiatives are being instituted including:

- The development of a strategic plan for the Office that incorporates the initiatives identified within the NDE State Board of Education's Strategic Plan;
- The examination of the role of the Regional Consultants and the supports provided to districts to ensure the improvement of outcomes for students with disabilities;
- The changes to obtaining meaningful stakeholder engagement within multiple areas to provide support with all processes; and
- The alignment of grant funding to priority areas identified in the Office's strategic plan and the SSIP.

Intended outputs that have been accomplished as a result of the implementation activities.

Strategy 1: Increase Use of EBPs

All of Nebraska’s 245 districts submitted a TIP plan for review. The TIP included a data analysis, focus for improvement, and selection of an evidence-based strategy. All NDE Regional Consultants completed a review of the TIPs submitted within their region using the Phase I TIP Review Tool. Information gathered from the review tool was used to provide feedback to the district regarding the strengths and areas of improvement for the plan. Feedback provided was intended to guide districts through the continuous improvement process and to build a strong foundation from which a unique individualized school improvement plan may be implemented to improve the outcomes for students with disabilities. A summary of what was discovered during the preliminary TIP review can be found on page 17. The NDE Regional consultants found that the TIPs submitted August 1, 2016, included information to set the foundation for continuous school improvement. TIPs identified a singular focus for improvement, specific measurable targets across multiple years, and stronger ties to general school improvement.

In addition to the preliminary review completed by the NDE Regional Consultants of Nebraska’s 245 districts, a random stratified sampling of 20% of the TIPs submitted was also conducted. The 20% random sampling of district TIPs was initiated to identify areas of training needed within the Office of Special Education as well as to districts.

Strategy 1 Accomplishments		
<u>Activity</u>	<u>% Completion</u>	<u>Timeline Met</u>
TIP submission	100%	96.76% 3.24% late submissions
NDE review with district feedback	100%	84.89% 15.11% late submissions
Additional Review of 20% of TIPs	100%	100%

The review of 20% of the TIPs revealed that districts needed additional support in analyzing data and that the State technical assistance needed to focus on identification of evidence-based practices.

Strategy 2: MTSS Framework - UNL RtI Consortium

Outputs that have been accomplished as a result of the implementation activities in relation to the activities with the UNL RtI Consortium can be found in the “Description of the State’s SSIP Implementation progress” beginning on page 11.

Strategy 2: MTSS Framework - NEPBIS

NEPBIS provided training and technical assistance around key components of PBI and the NEPBIS Model through three training modules; Universal and Classroom - Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III. Training and technical assistance on School-wide Information System (SWIS), the data collection mechanism used for PBI was also provided to 17 of the 91 new schools that were determined to be at the second level stage of readiness. Within this training, schools were to complete school-wide flow charts and definitions to aide in cohesive data collection around behavior. NEPBIS also provides two different types of coaching model trainings. The first, external coaching, is provided to the contracted “systems” level coaches for the NEPBIS project. Within the 2015-16 school year, all six of the external coaches participated in the four part series training. The second, internal coaching, is provided to all schools participating in the project. All 52 schools participated in the internal coach model training.

Strategy 3: Systems Alignment

Intended outputs that have been accomplished as a result of the implementation of the systems alignment work include multiple areas. One area is the increased meaningful stakeholder feedback to assist in the overall implementation of the SSIP. During 2015, NDE staff participated in trainings/meetings provided by OSEP and the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) that focused on creating meaningful engagement of stakeholders as well as levels of stakeholder participation. Using the book, Leading by Convening, Nebraska began engaging stakeholders in a different manner than had previously been done including the development of a virtual record keeping system to keep track of discussions during stakeholder meetings as well as allow for continuous stakeholder feedback.

Through the work of strategic planning within the Office of Special Education and the NDE Board of Education's Strategic Plan multiple activities have taken place to shape vision and priorities for the work needed to align with current systems. The Office of Special Education's strategic planning led to 4 priority foci with systems alignment being at the core. Within the strategic plan and the SSIP, systems alignment, data, communication, and MTSS are all main focuses.

Several outputs in the manner in which work is conducted within the Office of Special Education have also been identified with the strategic planning process. The first output was the need for improved communication. From feedback from our stakeholders, internal and external communication needed to be improved. To assist with improved internal communication, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) replaced the teams that were originally in place. All staff members within the Office as part of the PLCs have the ability to influence and impact the work being implemented within each PLC. Through the work of the members of the Learning Collaborative ongoing discussions regarding the creation of a single NDE improvement plan for district completion have continued.

In order to align all systems, the Office of Special Education has engaged the support of multiple OSEP funded Technical Assistance Centers including the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI), Center for IDEA Fiscal Reporting (CIFR), Center for IDEA Integration of Data (CIID), Signetwork, and IDEA Data Center (IDC). With the support of the TA centers, the Office of Special Education has begun to refine and develop new policies and procedures surrounding the existing programmatic, compliance, and fiscal responsibilities of the office. With the assistance of NCSI, Nebraska initiated and continues peer to peer discussions with the state of Georgia to gain insight with the development of a single improvement plan for districts. Nebraska has also attended the Cross State Learning Collaborative Fall Convening and participated in both affinity groups established by NCSI to assist in the systems alignment work.

Stakeholder involvement in SSIP implementation

The Office of Special Education has made significant changes to meaningfully engage stakeholders. The details regarding how stakeholders have been involved in the implementation of the SSIP is described in this section.

How stakeholders have been informed of the ongoing implementation of the SSIP

Stakeholder groups were developed within the implementation of Phase I of the SSIP. Upon review of the stakeholder group participants, it became evident that this group would need to expand to get a better identification of needs across the state. Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs), and regional individuals from the Educational Service Units (ESUs) were brought onto the existing RDA stakeholder group. During the course of the 2015-16 school year quarterly meetings were held. Each meeting took a different turn in focus. Initial data on the SSIP development was outlined in the first stakeholder meeting with input gathered on how the integration of initiatives would increase the likelihood of success in schools. Within the next two meetings, the needs of the LEAs and ESUs were discussed to determine how the state could best support the efforts to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. Areas of high need were developed and work groups within the large group

were formed to provide a deeper dive to examine the needs and challenges to current implementation. The workgroups within the stakeholder groups continuously meet to provide support in the identified areas. The most recent meeting focused on analyzing data collected and reviewing the proposed evaluation methodology with stakeholders helping to identify challenges and gaps within the implementation and evaluation process.

How stakeholders have had a voice and been involved in decision-making regarding the ongoing implementation of the SSIP

Stakeholder involvement and voice have been integral in the development of the SSIP in Nebraska. Throughout the Phase III document, several instances of modification and improvement to the SSIP plan have been captured through the input of stakeholders. Early on in the development of the SSIP, it was identified that key information would have to come specifically from stakeholders in order to build on already existing frameworks within LEAs and to build non-existing frameworks for others.

Summary of Progress in Implementing the SSIP

- **Strategy 1 (Increase Use of EBPs)**: All 245 of Nebraska’s school districts submitted a TIP that included a data analysis, focus for improvement, and evidence-based practice for the purposes of incorporating special education into continuous school improvement.
- **Strategy 2 (MTSS Framework)**: Ongoing progress with the UNL RtI Consortium, NEPBIS, and the development of a comprehensive MTSS framework.
- **Strategy 3 (Systems Alignment)**: Multiple changes to support the alignment of internal infrastructure with the Office of Special Education and the Department of Education as a whole continue to be ongoing.

Data on Implementation and Outcomes

How the State monitored and measured outputs to assess the effectiveness of the implementation plan

Nebraska used multiple measures to monitor and determine progress on outputs to determine the effectiveness of the implementation plan.

How evaluation measures align with the theory of action

The evaluation measures will provide both quantitative and qualitative data to examine the progress and effectiveness of the theory of action. Each of the measures for the short-term and medium-term outcomes are benchmarks to indicate progress towards the long-term and impact outcomes. If the goals of the short-term and medium term outcomes are met, the theory would be that long-term goals of increased capacity and fidelity of implementation of evidence-based practices will be met. When those goals are met, the impact on the SIMR should be evident.

Data sources for each key measure

Strategy 1 (Increase use of EBPs): There were two key measures. The first key measure was submission of the TIP. The second key measure was the review of 20% of the TIPs submitted. The data source for the first key measure for strategy 1 was the Phase I Review Tool. The data source for the second key measure was the TIP Review for SSIP Submission.

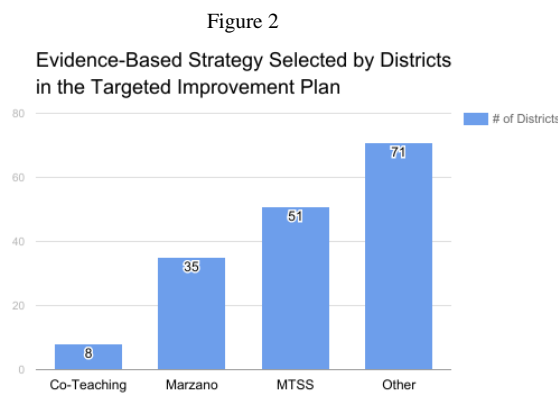
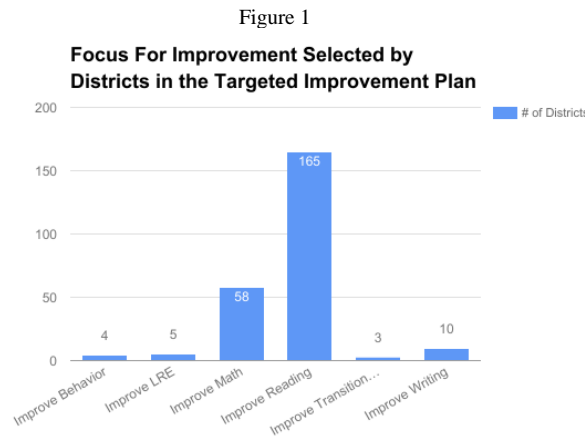
Strategy 2 (MTSS Framework): Data were collected as part of the two current initiatives: UNL RtI Consortium and NEPBIS (SPDG). Data sources include the fidelity measures, surveys and observations that were all part of the evaluation process for both programs.

Strategy 3 (Systems Alignment): Key measures included (a) the establishment of a Learning Collaborative involving multiple offices within the Department of Education; (b) interviews with the NDE Regional Consultants; (c) and the alignment of the SSIP with the NDE Strategic Plan. The data sources for the measures are (a) the meeting minutes and agendas from the Learning Collaborative meetings; (b) interviews that were conducted with the NDE Regional Consultants; and (c) the crosswalk of the SSIP and the Strategic Plan.

Description of baseline data for key measures

Strategy 1: Increase Use of EBPs

Key Measure 1: The preliminary review of the Targeted Improvement Plans show that 96.76% of the districts submitted the TIP by August 1, 2016. The remaining districts that constituted 3.24%, completed their submission prior to the secondary review that was completed in December 2016. When NDE Regional Consultants completed the TIP Review Tool to provide feedback to districts, based on data analysis, 165 districts chose reading as a focus for improvement (see Figure 1) and for the districts who selected reading as a focus for improvement, 51 districts selected MTSS as the evidence-based strategy (see Figure 2). Seventy one districts selected “other” as their strategy. Districts who selected “other”, listed multiple strategies to be implemented. These strategies included specific reading interventions such as Reading Mastery, and Corrective Reading, but also included instructional models such as Anita Archer and Danielson.



Key Measure 2: Based on a 20% stratified random selection of TIPs reviewed, 91.48% of the districts supported their focus for improvement with data and based the focus for improvement on a results indicator. 85.10% of the districts reviewed had identified at least one evidence-based strategy.

Strategy 2: MTSS Framework

RTI Reading Consortium

Due to the multiple measures used to track the progress made with Strategy 2, a chart was created to detail the specific activities that were implemented during the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school year, the key measures for those activities, and the baseline data that was collected.

Strategy 2: MTSS Framework - RtI Reading Consortium

<u>Activities</u>	<u>Key Measures</u>	<u>Baseline</u>
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, evaluation and continuously improving the district's MTSS process)	<p>Document fidelity of delivery of training sessions</p> <p>Participants rate quality, relevance, and usefulness of training sessions</p> <p>District/building teams rate the effectiveness of TA/coaching</p> <p>Document existence of district/school written MTSS procedures that includes a process for using data for making decisions regarding reading supports (including process for intensification)</p>	<p>Provided a 4-part training series (Building & Refining your MTSS for Reading) and onsite and distance TA for 15 new teams in 3 regions (2015-16)</p> <p>Provided topical, priority, or partner trainings and TA for 44 districts (2015-16)</p> <p>Providing MTSS-reading training and TA for 50 districts (2016-17)</p>
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.	<p>Document fidelity of coach training</p> <p>Participants rate the quality, relevance, and usefulness of training sessions</p>	<p>Providing multi-session training series for 12 practice-level coaches from 7 districts (2016-17)</p>
Implementation of coaching process to support teachers with implementation of evidence-based reading strategies	<p>Document coaching supports provided for teachers and interventionists</p> <p>Document fidelity of coaching supports using coach performance assessment</p>	<p>Coaches from 7 districts used data-based coaching model to provide support for teachers and interventionists (2016-17)</p>
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	<p>Document district process for and collection of universal screening data</p> <p>Document district process for and collection of progress monitoring data for students receiving intervention</p> <p>Collect and report universal screening data at least 2 times per year</p> <p>Collect and report general outcome measures and in-program measures for students receiving intervention supports</p>	<p>57/59 districts collected screening data and 51/59 districts collected progress monitoring data (2015-16)</p> <p>50/50 districts are collecting screening data and 47/50 districts are collecting progress monitoring data (2016-17)</p>
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)	<p>Document meetings to review student progress and intervention delivery data</p> <p>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</p> <p>Review of fidelity of progress monitoring procedures using progress monitoring guidelines</p>	<p>50/50 districts are analyzing data at a systems level to examine core supports and 37/50 districts are implementing data-based decision making processes at the intervention level (2016-17)</p>
Systematic intensification of interventions for students who continue to struggle after receiving initial intervention with evidence-based practices	<p>Document plans for intensifying intervention when data indicate a need; review of strategies for intensification to ensure evidence base</p> <p>Document fidelity to use of intensified intervention plans</p>	<p>20/50 districts are working on refining their processes for intensification of intervention and Individual Student Problem Solving (2016-17)</p>

Strategy 2: MTSS Framework - RtI Reading Consortium		
<u>Activities</u>	<u>Key Measures</u>	<u>Baseline</u>
Plan alignment of MTSS and PBIS including developing an integration team and advisory committee.	Logic model developed and approved by NDE	Logic Model was completed by integration team and approved by advisory committee.

Strategy 2: MTSS Framework
NEPBiS

Due to the multiple measures used to track the progress made with Strategy 2, a chart was created to detail the specific activities that were implemented during the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school year, the key measures for those activities, and the baseline data that was collected.

Strategy 2: MTSS Framework - NEPBiS		
<u>Activities</u>	<u>Key Measures</u>	<u>Baseline</u>
Provide training and technical assistance around key components of PBIS and the NEPBiS Model (e.g., universal training - Tier I, classroom level training - Tier I, Tier II training, Tier III training).	Document fidelity of delivery of training sessions Participants rate quality, relevance, and usefulness of training sessions District/building teams rate the effectiveness of TA Document existence of district/school PBiS Process	Provided a 3 day training series for universal - Tier I and Tier II and a 2 day training series for Tier III (52 of 91 trained with 75% trained schools implemented Universal PBiS with fidelity (2015-16) 2015-16 Self-Assessment Survey - 80% of the NEPBiS trained schools met the target of implementing Universal PBiS with 80% fidelity. 2015-26 Benchmarks of Quality showed that 84% of the teams met the goal of having 8/10 elements securely in place. Provided technical assistance for 91 schools (2015-16).
Provide training and technical assistance on Schoolwide Information System (SWIS) - data collection mechanism used for PBiS.	Document training and implementation of SWIS. Documentation of schoolwide flow charts and definitions.	17/17 schools trained and implementing SWIS. 17/17 had documentation of schoolwide flowcharts and definitions.
Provide training and technical assistance for external coaching through NEPBiS Model as well as internal coaching for district-identified, practice level coaches to support PBiS implementation.	Document fidelity of coach training(s) Document fidelity of external coaching supports using coach performance assessment Document existence of internal coach role within schools/districts	Provided a 4 part training to external coaches with 6 of 6 attending all four trainings. Provided external coaching performance assessment with 94% exceeding the goal for coaching evaluations 52 of 52 schools providing internal coach within schools using self-assessment survey (SAS)

Strategy 2: MTSS Framework - NEPBIS		
<u>Activities</u>	<u>Key Measures</u>	<u>Baseline</u>
Provide training and technical assistance to schools to have teams attend the NEPBIS advisory meeting, the PBiS Leadership Development Institute (LDI), FAST Track Training for principals, PBiS at HOME training for schools and parent representatives, PBiS regional meetings and PBiS Administrators' Academies.	Document attendance and evaluation of meetings and trainings.	NEPBIS advisory meeting for 2015-16 attended by 52 of the 52 schools. PBiS LDI attended by 52 of 52 schools. FAST Track Training for Principals attended by 12 of 14 Principals. PBiS regional meetings attended by 91 of 91 schools.
Level II to Level III Readiness Assessment	Level III Readiness Checklist Schoolwide Evaluation Tool completed by external evaluator	Level III Readiness Checklist completed by 15 out of 15 schools. Schoolwide Evaluation Tool completed on 15 of 15 schools. 13/15 schools scored above 90% on total implementation.
Plan alignment of MTSS and PBiS including developing and integration team and advisory committee.	Logic model developed and approved by NDE	Logic Model was completed by integration team and approved by advisory committee.

Strategy 3 (Systems Alignment)

As multiple measures were used to track the progress made with Strategy 3, a chart was created to detail the specific activities that were implemented during the 2016-17 school year, the key measures for those activities, and the baseline data that was collected.

Strategy 3: Systems Alignment		
<u>Activities</u>	<u>Key Measures</u>	<u>Baseline</u>
Establish a committee (Learning Collaborative) including individuals from various offices within the department to collaborate and align initiatives.	Meeting Minutes Goals established Products created	Monthly meetings Continued work on products
Interviews with NDE Regional Consultants	Results from interviews	See summary of Regional Consultant Interviews on beginning of page 25
Further align and leverage the Part B SSIP with other initiatives within our state.	Presentations Collaborative meetings and trainings Involvement with the cross state learning collaborative with NCSI Alignment with State Department Strategic Plan	AQuESTT Conference, April 18-19, 2016 (4 joint presentations) Administrator Days, July 27-29, 2016 (4 joint presentations) Continuous Improvement Process Fall Workshops, October 10-11, 2016 (1 joint presentation)

Regional Consultant Interviews (Summary of Interviews from Dec 2016-Jan 2017)

In order to gain information regarding infrastructure changes needed within the Office of Special Education, interviews were conducted with each of the NDE Regional Consultants. Each NDE Regional Consultant was asked a series of questions regarding the following topics:

- Targeted Improvement Plans (TIPs)
- Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)
- Internal and external training needed

In response to questions regarding Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP) successes and needs, Regional Consultants shared the following:

- The previous structure that had been provided in the past of having ESU facilitators who work with the “Improving Learning for Children with Disabilities (ILCD)” system within the regions was beneficial and needed to be re-implemented.
- The TIP provided a common language and structure to support continuous school improvement that previously was not available.
- Consultants found the review template provided consistency in which to provide feedback to districts.

When asked about MTSS, it was found that regional consultants had various levels of understanding regarding the process and required components. Regional consultants also shared that districts were implementing MTSS to varying degrees, which is supported by the data obtained from the needs assessment.

Regional consultants identified multiple areas of training that was needed both internally (within the Office of Special Education) and externally (to districts and ESUs). The areas of training that were identified were as follows:

- Main components of MTSS
- Measuring fidelity of implementation with evidence-based strategy selected
- Data analysis and utilization
- Understanding what comprises an evidence-based practice

SIMR Summary Data

As stated in the Summary section of the Phase III submission, Nebraska’s SIMR is to:

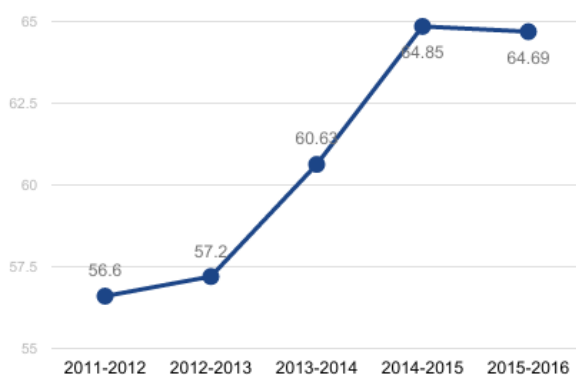
Increase reading proficiency for students with disabilities at the 3rd grade level as measured by the statewide reading assessment.

Although Nebraska is monitoring reading improvement for all third grade students with disabilities rather than a cohort, the targets have remained the same. Nebraska set the following targets during Phase II for third grade reading for students with disabilities as measured by the statewide reading assessment as shown in the table below.

SIMR Targets					
FFY	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2018</u>
Target	59.86%	61.86%	63.86%	65.86%	64.69%
Progress	Met Target 64.85%	Met Target 64.69%			

Reviewing data from 2011- 12 School year through the 2015-16 school year, Nebraska third grade students with disabilities are increasing reading proficiency as measured by the statewide reading assessment and shown in the table below. Data confirms that the efforts put into implementing the strategies identified are having the desired outcomes.

3rd Grade Reading Proficiency for Students with Disabilities - Statewide



As Nebraska has chosen to implement various strategies, the following table shows the impact each of those strategies has on the reading proficiency of third grade students with disabilities. It is important to note that comparisons cannot be made between initiatives due to the overlap of student and district participation within the initiatives listed.

Baseline Group Comparisons for the 2015-16 School Year			
<u>Group</u>	<u>% Proficient</u>	<u># of Districts</u>	<u># of Students</u>
Statewide	64.69%	245	3,801
Reading TIP	66.57%	165	2,097
UNL RtI Consortium	65.91%	58	657
PBiS	69.44%	22	373
UNL RtI & PBiS	67.49%	80	935

Data collection procedures and associated timelines

Nebraska has utilized multiple data collection procedures in order to address each strategy used. Descriptions of these procedures and the associated timelines are presented in the following tables.

Strategy 1: Increase Use of EBPs Data Collection Procedures and Timelines			
<u>Key Measure</u>	<u>Data Source</u>	<u>Procedure</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
Qualitative data obtained from Regional Consultants	TIP Review Tool	The TIP Review Tool is completed by each NDE Regional Consultant for the districts the consultant supports.	NDE Regional Consultants complete the TIP Review Tool during the fall on an annual basis.
Qualitative data obtained from Regional consultant feedback to districts	TIP Review Tool	The outcome of the completed TIP Review Tool is shared with each district by the NDE Regional Consultant.	NDE Regional Consultants review the outcome of the completed TIP Review Tool with each district during the fall/winter on an annual basis.

Strategy 1: Increase Use of EBPs Data Collection Procedures and Timelines			
<u>Key Measure</u>	<u>Data Source</u>	<u>Procedure</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
Review of 20% of the TIPs submitted	TIP Review Tool for SSIP Evaluation	<p>Selected NDE Regional Consultants will review a randomized stratified sample of 20% of the TIPs.</p> <p>The selected NDE staff will review a limited number of TIPs together to establish fidelity with the instrument prior to reviewing the remaining TIPs independently.</p> <p>Data results from the review are analyzed to provide guidance for future professional development needed both internally and externally.</p>	Selected NDE Regional Consultants conduct on an annual basis a review of 20% of the TIPs during the winter.

Strategy 2: MTSS Framework Data Collection Procedures and Timelines			
<u>Key Measure</u>	<u>Data Source</u>	<u>Procedure</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
MTSS Training and technical assistance	<p>Notes from observations of trainings conducted</p> <p>Survey evaluations from coaching and trainings conducted</p>	<p>Observations conducted by project staff</p> <p>Training surveys are administered after each training</p>	<p>Ongoing - completed during each training provided</p> <p>Coaching surveys conducted annually</p>
(Phase III) Development of comprehensive MTSS Framework	Documented Components of the new comprehensive MTSS Framework	Developed with stakeholder input	One time event, with needed revisions occurring on an “as needed” basis based on feedback from stakeholders

Strategy 3: Systems Alignment Data Collection Procedures and Timelines			
<u>Key Measure</u>	<u>Data Source</u>	<u>Procedure</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
Establishment of Learning Collaborative	<p>Documentation of meetings jointly attended and/or presented</p> <p>Attendance of meeting participation from varying internal and external offices (NDE, ESUs, and Vocational Rehab.)</p>	<p>Keeping minutes of joint meetings</p> <p>Keeping agendas of conferences attended by multiple offices</p>	Ongoing (began Fall 2015)

Strategy 3: Systems Alignment Data Collection Procedures and Timelines			
<u>Key Measure</u>	<u>Data Source</u>	<u>Procedure</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
Interview questions designed for NDE Regional Consultants	Responses collected from interviews	Individual interviews conducted with NDE Regional consultant by an external evaluator. External evaluator takes detailed notes regarding responses and maintains the confidentiality of the responses.	One time event (occurred in the winter). Future interviews may be conducted to investigate result of changes made to infrastructure. Need for future interviews is yet to be determined.
Alignment of SSIP with Nebraska's State Board of Education Strategic Plan	SSIP Nebraska's State Board of Education Strategic Plan	Crosswalk between the SSIP and the Strategic Plan	Ongoing (began Spring 2016)

SIMR Data Collection Procedures and Timelines			
<u>Key Measure</u>	<u>Data Source</u>	<u>Procedure</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
Nebraska 3rd grade statewide reading proficiency for students with disabilities	Statewide Reading Assessment (NeSA)	All students with disabilities in 3rd grade take the statewide assessment. NDE Data, Research and Evaluation Office provides reading proficiency data for the initiatives targeted (MTSS, PBiS, and Districts with Reading as focus for Improvement) for analysis.	Assessments completed at the district level annually in the spring with results available to the State in the winter.

Sampling procedures

In one area, a random stratified sampling procedure is being utilized. This instance occurs with a sampling procedure utilized for the TIP Review for the SSIP Evaluation. This review is conducted by the select group of NDE Regional Consultants with the district sampling pulled by the Data, Research, and Evaluation Office. The 20% sample of districts, stratified by geography (i.e., ESU) and membership size, were randomly selected using Microsoft Excel's random number generator and sorting features. Stratified random sampling, whereby random samples are drawn from each stratum or group, ensured that at least one observation from every stratum is drawn into the sample.

Planned data comparisons

As a result of data analysis and feedback from our multiple stakeholder groups, our SIMR has changed to reflect reading proficiency for all students with disabilities at the third grade level rather than with a specific cohort. Although Nebraska is looking at data from the entire state, the office will continue to conduct an analysis of 3rd grade reading proficiency and review trend data for districts who have implemented one of the initiatives targeted. Those initiatives include districts that:

- Identified reading as a focus area for their Targeted Improvement Plan;
- Work with the UNL RtI Consortium;

- Work with the Nebraska Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (NEPBiS); and/or
- Work with both the UNL RtI Consortium and NEPBiS.

As discussed in the section on *Coherent improvement strategies or principal activities employed during the year, including infrastructure improvement strategies* on page 7, Nebraska has chosen to implement various strategies. The Office of Special Education will analyze reading proficiency data for districts utilizing one or more of those strategies. The data from these initiatives will continue to be reported out separately as comparisons cannot be made between initiatives due to the overlap of student and district participation within the initiatives listed.

How data management and data analysis procedures allow for assessment of progress toward achieving intended improvements

With the support and guidance of various stakeholders, Nebraska intentionally created a data management and analysis process that incorporated procedures allowing for ongoing, time sensitive, and incremental reviews of the data at all levels including student, building, district and state. Data management and analysis has been structured in a manner that permits the Office of Special Education to implement a timely feedback loop between collection and implementation. This allows for responsive changes to be implemented as successes and challenges are identified.

Details regarding when data is collected, how it is collected and when data is analyzed can be found in the tables below. To clarify the data procedures and progress, the following tables have been separated into the measurement for the SIMR as well as the three major strategies that Nebraska is implementing.

Strategy 1: Increased Use of Evidence-Based Practices			
Data Collection Processes			
<u>Data Collection</u>	<u>When Collected</u>	<u>How Collected</u>	<u>When Analyzed</u>
TIP Review	Annually in the fall	TIP Review Tool completed by each Regional Consultant	Annually in the fall
TIP Review of 20% of TIPs	Annually in the winter	TIP Review Tool for SSIP Evaluation completed by SSIP PLC	Annually in the winter

Strategy 2: MTSS Framework - RtI Reading Consortium			
Data Collection Processes			
<u>Data Collection</u>	<u>When Collected</u>	<u>How Collected</u>	<u>When Analyzed</u>
RtI Training Fidelity Observation Checks	During each training provided	Observation check completed by IST staff observer	Quarterly
RtI Training Perceptions Survey	After each training provided	Survey completed by participants and collected by IST staff prior to dismissal from training	Quarterly
RtI Technical Assistance protocols	After each TA session in a district/building	Self-report by IST staff	Quarterly
Student Performance (DIBELS, AIMsWeb)	On-going	Students assessed in the fall and spring. At-risk students assessed more frequently as each district's data decision making rules dictate	Quarterly

Strategy 2: MTSS Framework - NEPBiS Data Collection Processes			
<u>Data Collection</u>	<u>When Collected</u>	<u>How Collected</u>	<u>When Analyzed</u>
NEPBiS Self-Assessment Survey	Annually in spring	PBiSApps.org	Quarterly
NEPBiS Benchmarks of Quality	Annually in spring	Leadership teams within schools during PBiS meetings	Quarterly
NEPBiS School Evaluation Tool	Annually in spring for schools requesting	SPDG funded External PBiS evaluator	Quarterly
NEPBiS Team Implementation Checklists	Completed annually in fall and winter	Completed by all school staff and collected by school leadership team	Quarterly
Student performance (SWIS)	By incident	SWIS	Quarterly

Strategy 3: Systems Alignment Data Collection Processes			
<u>Data Collection</u>	<u>When Collected</u>	<u>How Collected</u>	<u>When Analyzed</u>
Google Doc	During each stakeholder meeting	Electronically	Quarterly
Needs assessment	Varies	Electronically through Google Forms	As needed

SIMR Data Collection Processes			
<u>Data Collection</u>	<u>When Collected</u>	<u>How Collected</u>	<u>When Analyzed</u>
Statewide Reading Assessment	Annually in the spring	State assessment given to every student in the state beginning at 3rd grade	Annually in the winter
NWEA MAP Reading	Varies by district	NWEA provides data file to NDE every two weeks per MOU agreement	Quarterly

Data analysis indicates that at this phase of implementation of the work, Nebraska is collecting the necessary data and appears to be on target for meeting the outcomes detailed within Phase II of the SSIP.

How the State has demonstrated progress and made modifications to the SSIP as necessary

The Office of Special Education has demonstrated progress and made modifications to the SSIP in multiple ways. Those methods and modifications are described in this section.

How has the State reviewed key data that provide evidence regarding progress toward achieving intended improvements to infrastructure and the SIMR

Nebraska is implementing three strategies designed to impact reading proficiency at multiple levels (student, district, region, state). Each strategy has key data being collected and analyzed to ensure progress is made toward achieving outcomes. The chart below displays the three strategies implemented along with the key measures.

Strategy 1: Increase Use of EBPs		
<u>Key Measure</u>	<u>How Progress is Demonstrated</u>	<u>Changes Made As Necessary</u>
Review Tool	Review data from TIPs submission to identify supports and training districts need with the continuous improvement process.	Creation of TIP Phase II Package to further guide districts with the continuous improvement process based on data collected with the TIP submission.
TIP Review Tool	Review data from TIP Reviews completed by the NDE Regional Consultant in conjunction with stakeholder feedback	Development of policies and procedures for NDE Regional Consultants to provide feedback to districts regarding TIPs
TIP Review Tool for the SSIP Evaluation	Share results of 20% TIP Review with stakeholders and districts to determine strengths/weaknesses with the process. The review also assisted with determining training needs to further align fiscal and programmatic resources.	Trainings to be developed around evidence-based practices and process for conducting on-going data analysis at the local and regional level

Strategy 2: MTSS Framework		
<u>Key Measure</u>	<u>How Progress is Demonstrated</u>	<u>Changes Made As Necessary</u>
Training observations Survey evaluations	Data collected from observations made during training are reviewed by the project staff to target additional support needed by project staff. Survey data from training attendees is reviewed by project staff to inform and direct future trainings.	Data shows that project staff are implementing trainings as required. No changes needed at this time, but data will continue to be analyzed. Phases of training with the RtI Consortium are determined based on feedback from surveys.
Integration - discontinued	Feedback from stakeholders was reviewed in conjunction with reading proficiency data.	Review of data indicated a need to change emphasis from integration, which was already occurring to the development of a comprehensive framework.
Development of comprehensive framework	A framework was developed in conjunction with stakeholders. Measurement of progress for the implementation of the comprehensive framework is to be determined as the process continues.	Any changes needed to the framework are yet to be determined. NDE will continue to involve stakeholders.

Using the Self-Assessment Survey and based on the overall Implementation Average, 75% of the NEPBIS trained schools implemented Universal PBiS with fidelity during the 2015-16 school year. Schools included in this analysis are the 52 schools who participated for the entire reporting period. New schools added in June 2016 would not have completed the Self-Assessment Survey (SAS) within the time period. Criteria were set at 80% of items needing to be in place, which was based on the University of Oregon recommendations for indications of fidelity. Even with the higher criteria, teams continued to meet the set goal. Only one area was below the 80% criteria, “Violations System” and that was implemented at 79% fidelity.

Implementation is measured using several tools including the Self-Assessment Survey, Benchmarks of Quality (BoQ) tool and the Team Implementation Checklists. In addition, teams wanting to move to PBiS Levels II and III must have the School Evaluation Tool (SET) completed by an external coach or the external evaluation team. Teams

continue to make progress across survey and implementation tools. Both the SAS and the BoQ results show improvement for teams from year to year. Last year, 75% of teams met the 80% fidelity criteria benchmark and this year that percentage has increased to 80%. Only one area was less than 80% for both years, Violation System. In addition, scores on the BoQ showed that 84% of the teams met the goal of having 8/10 elements securely in place.

Fifteen schools wanting to move from Level II to Level III had the SET completed by the external evaluation team. All 15 schools (100%) met the fidelity of implementation criteria and 13/15 schools scored above 90% on total implementation. All schools moved to Level III in the PBiS framework.

Strategy 3: Systems Alignment		
<u>Key Measure</u>	<u>How Progress is Demonstrated</u>	<u>Changes Made As Necessary</u>
Meeting minutes and agendas	Review of participation of various office staff (NDE and ESU) participating in attending joint meetings and sharing data.	Infrastructure change is slow and complex process. Office of Special Education staff will continue to request to participate in meetings held in other offices and attend outside meetings as requested.
Review of responses collected from interviews	External evaluator compiled the results from the responses obtained through the interview process (results found on page 21).	Data from the interview process is being used to develop future internal and external trainings.
Crosswalk between the SSIP and the Strategic Plan	NDE's Strategic plan is still under development - measures to be determined.	Data and feedback from the crosswalk activity is currently under evaluation.

Evidence of change to baseline data for key measures

As a result of data analysis and feedback from our multiple stakeholder groups, our SIMR has changed to reflect reading proficiency for all students with disabilities at the third grade level rather than with a specific cohort. Stakeholders voiced strong concern that the cohort was not representative of the state. Though demographics were considered in the original cohort selection, stakeholders across the state expressed concerns regarding the size of the districts included in the cohort and race/ethnicity of the district makeup for the selected cohort.

Although Nebraska is looking at data from the entire state, due to the sparse population, the large geographic area of the state, and the close relationship the Office of Special Education shares with the local education agencies and strong stakeholder involvement, the Office felt it was critical to continue to examine reading proficiency statewide. The office will continue to conduct an analysis of 3rd grade reading proficiency as well as look at trend data for districts who have implemented one of the initiatives targeted. Those initiatives include districts that:

- Identified reading as a focus area for their Targeted Improvement Plan;
- Work with the UNL RtI Consortium;
- Work with the Nebraska Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (NEPBiS); and/or
- Work with both the UNL RtI Consortium and NEPBiS.

How data support changes that have been made to implementation and improvement strategies

The activity of integrating MTSS and PBiS has been changed to developing a comprehensive MTSS framework. This change was a result of stakeholder and district input and evaluation of current status of MTSS processes being implemented in districts.

How data are informing next steps in the SSIP implementation

Multiple data sources have converged to inform the next steps of the SSIP implementation. Data from stakeholder groups, needs assessments, surveys and the TIPs review support the need to continue with some planned steps and also to make some modifications to other next steps. From the data, the SSIP management team has determined that more training and resources need to be developed and disseminated in the areas of Evidence-Based Practices, Data Analysis and core components of MTSS. In addition, the SSIP implementation will continue to move forward in supporting districts with writing TIPs plans and helping to support the implementation of the those plans and with increasing the alignment of the SSIP with other initiatives and programs within both NDE and regions.

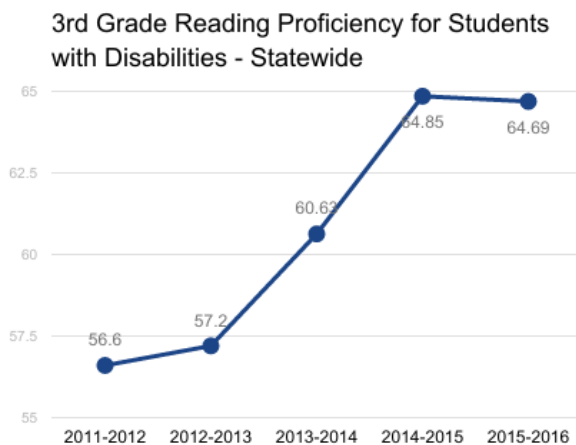
How data support planned modifications to intended outcomes (including the SIMR) - rationale or justification for the changes or how data support that the SSIP is on the right path

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- Work with both the UNL RtI Consortium and NEPBIS.

Reviewing data from 2011- 12 School year through the 2015-16 school year, Nebraska third grade students with disabilities are increasing reading proficiency as measured by the statewide reading assessment and shown in the table below. Data confirms that the efforts put into implementing the strategies identified are having the desired outcomes.



Stakeholder involvement in the SSIP evaluation

The Office of Special Education has made significant changes to meaningfully engage stakeholders. The details regarding how stakeholders have been involved in the evaluation of the SSIP is described in this section.

How stakeholders have been informed of the ongoing evaluation of the SSIP

During 2015, NDE staff participated in trainings/meetings provided by OSEP and the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) that focused on creating meaningful engagement of stakeholders as well as levels of stakeholder participation. Using the book, *Leading by Convening*, Nebraska began engaging stakeholders in a different manner than had previously been done. Nebraska is continuing to examine roles and working to provide opportunities for various stakeholders. Being open to the process has allowed for very engaging conversations.

Results Driven Accountability (RDA) work and evaluation has been and continues to be a topic on agendas with stakeholders. With RDA and evaluation of the SSIP being a priority for engagement with stakeholders, all meetings have included a review of the data collected to date and a discussion of future action that should be taken in response to what the data has shown.

The evaluation components have been discussed with multiple stakeholders including regional consultants, district and ESU staff, community members and leadership groups such as Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and Nebraska Association of Special Education Supervisors (NASES).

How stakeholders have had a voice and been involved in decision-making regarding the ongoing evaluation of the SSIP

Regarding the Nebraska SSIP, stakeholder input has influenced two significant changes which include:

- Moving from the use of a selected cohort for measuring the increase of reading proficiency for 3rd grade students with disabilities to using data from the entire state
- Altering the activity of integrating MTSS and PBIS to developing a comprehensive MTSS framework

The SIMR was developed and revised based on feedback from stakeholders. In addition, it was determined to use the needs assessment developed and administered by NASES for the SSIP evaluation rather than develop and administer a separate tool. Stakeholder input has been key in helping the evaluation be efficient in collecting data from districts and ESUs. Much emphasis has been placed on using data schools are already required to collect or have been collecting as part of other initiatives.

Summary of Evaluation

- Nebraska met the SIMR target set during Phase II of the SSIP.
- District Targeted Improvement Plans were submitted timely and contained a focus for improvement with an evidence-based strategy.
- 165 Nebraska districts have chosen reading as a focus for improvement and of those districts, 51 have chosen MTSS as the evidence-based strategy to be used.
- MTSS comprehensive framework has been developed.
- The State Grant Funded RtI Reading Consortium and the SPDG funded NEPBIS have implemented trainings with fidelity.
- RtI and NEPBIS are being implemented with fidelity.
- The internal infrastructure within the department continues to be aligned.

Data Quality Issues

Data limitations that affected reports of progress in implementing the SSIP and achieving the SIMR due to quality of the evaluation data

Nebraska has identified few data limitations affecting reports of progress in the implementation of the SSIP and achievement of the SIMR. During the 2016-17 school year, the state developed interim data measures for the SIMR. The State began obtaining MOUs between the districts and NWEA to obtain MAP data that is planned to be used to monitor reading proficiency prior to the 3rd grade statewide reading assessment to better analyze the extent to which the strategies implemented have had an effect. MAP data will also be used to measure progress toward the Growth Goals that were established when the SIMR was updated for Phase III.

Data quality currently does not have an impact on progress toward the SIMR, but has a limited impact on the implementation of the strategies implemented. Those issues are described in this section.

Concern or limitations related to the quality or quantity of the data used to report progress or results

Strategy 1: Increase Use of EBPs

Providing support to districts with the development, implementation, and evaluation of the TIP has presented resource issues at the state level. The role of the NDE Regional Consultant has taken on additional responsibilities with providing technical assistance to districts. The NDE Regional Consultants are at varying levels of comfort and expertise with guiding districts through completing a detailed data analysis, identification of evidence-based practices, and implementing strategies identified to fidelity. As a result, the Office of Special Education leadership is working to provide additional training to the NDE Regional Consultants in these specific areas.

With the SSIP being a comprehensive endeavor and with the TIPs being a new process for the districts, the NDE Office of Special Education is still developing timelines and resources that are meaningful, supportive and sensitive to the varying district needs.

Currently, there are no concerns with the data collection, validity, or reliability for the purposes of reporting progress or results.

Strategy 2: MTSS Framework

As the SSIP is in the early years of implementation, NDE is continuing to build communication between our contracted providers (UNL RtI Consortium and NEPBis). Establishing timelines that (a) allow for the flow of data between the projects and the reporting requirements for the SSIP; and (b) the implementation of the individual project's direct services and the SSIP implementation have been a challenge. As Nebraska continues to implement the strategies within the SSIP, the following changes are proposed when data is collected and analyzed for MTSS. Specifically, interim measures to assess reading proficiency (DIBELS and AIMsWeb) collected and analyzed by the UNL RtI Reading Consortium on an annual basis will be shared with and reported to the Office of Special Education on a quarterly basis.

Currently, there are no concerns with the data collection, validity, or reliability for the purposes of reporting progress or results in regards to the implementation of the MTSS Framework strategy, continued discussions are planned with the intent to improve the flow of data between the phases of the project implementation and the SSIP.

Strategy 3: Systems Alignment

Currently, Nebraska has multiple checks and balances to ensure the validity and reliability of the data collected. The current statewide data collection does not permit real-time viewing of data and has limits based on collection fields.

Measures for changes in the infrastructure have recently begun. Issues regarding data quality and concerns for changes to infrastructure may be revealed as this area of measurement continues to evolve. The Office of Special Education will consider using *Leading by Convening* rubrics to document office work across programs within the department to measure changes in infrastructure.

SIMR:

Currently, there are no concerns with the data collection, validity, or reliability for the purposes of reporting progress or results. However, beginning with the 2016-17 school year, Nebraska has changed the statewide reading assessment to an overall English Language assessment. In addition, Nebraska is also looking to change the vendor providing the statewide assessments which will impact the ability of the Office of Special Education to compare reading proficiency results for students with disabilities in an equitable manner. Another consideration with the measurement of the SIMR is that the statewide measure of reading proficiency begins at the 3rd grade level. To assist with assessing the state's progress at meeting the SIMR targets, Nebraska instituted two growth goals which will be measured using MAP data on a quarterly basis.

1. Decrease the number of students determined at-risk for reading failure beginning in Kindergarten; and
2. Maintain/Increase the rate of growth for students with disabilities who have IEPs to be grade level readers.

NDE is in the process of entering into Memorandums of Understandings (MOUs) between individual school district agreements and NWEA to receive MAP reading scores. The Office of Special Education hopes to use NWEA MAP data as the measure for the above stated growth goals. To date, it is unknown the extent to which the 245 Nebraska districts use NWEA MAP at the primary grade levels and, if used, how and when the assessment is given.

Implications for assessing progress or results

Nebraska's continuous improvement loop, requires consistent data reviews to ensure progress is made in both the implementation of the SSIP activities and the SIMR.

Nebraska's review process has focused on the following areas:

- Stakeholder input that provides guidance with data collection, strategy implementation and overall SSIP evaluation.
- Nebraska must pay attention to significant changes with the statewide reading assessment that impact the state's ability to compare longitudinally reading proficiency data.
 - MOUs allow for NDE to directly receive NWEA MAP data.
 - Identify the types of tests administered at the district level paying particular attention to the grade levels in which reading assessments are administered and frequency of the test administrations.
- Measures for changes in the infrastructure are under development. Issues regarding data quality and concerns for changes to infrastructure may be revealed as this area of measurement continues to evolve.
- With the two statewide projects currently being used (UNL RtI Consortium and NEPBIS) continued discussions are planned with the intent to improve the flow of data between the phases of the project implementation and the SSIP to ensure data is collected and analyzed in a timely manner.

Plans for improving data quality

Nebraska's plan for continuous improvement regarding data quality is focused on the areas of: (a) data mapping with the assistance of NCSI, IDC, and CIID; (b) monitoring of timelines with the projects (UNL RtI and NEPBIS); and (c) development of PLC website to increase communication between the Office of Special Education staff.

Nebraska has chosen to participate in technical assistance provided by NCSI, IDC, and CIID, in the area of data for monitoring, programmatic, and fiscal mapping. To begin the process of data mapping for Part B, Nebraska chose

the areas of Child Count, Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), and Exiting data (students 14 and older). Although it is recognized that the data mapping process requires a great deal of time and staff, Nebraska is finding the process assists with staff familiarization of data, allows for the early identification of collection issues, and creates a structure to support sustainability. Due to the benefits identified, Nebraska will continue the data mapping for all collection areas.

To improve communication access and flow between NDE and the 2 statewide projects currently being used to implement MTSS (UNL RtI Consortium and NEPBIS), NDE will be implementing a format that includes quarterly reporting with meetings and structured timelines for inputs from both projects. NDE is continuing to build communication between our contracted providers. Establishing timelines that (a) allow for the flow of data between the projects and the reporting requirements for the SSIP; and (b) the implementation of the individual project's direct services and the SSIP implementation have been a challenge.

In an effort to meaningfully engage all staff at the Office of Special Education and to share timely data across priority areas, an internal website has been created. It is the intention that the website will increase staff's access to the SSIP data allowing for the identification of data quality issues if and when they emerge. This process will be monitored and adapted for further adjustments as needed.

Summary for Data Quality Issues

- Strategy 1: Increase Use of EBPs
 - Currently, there are no concerns with the data collection, validity, or reliability for the purposes of reporting progress or results.
- Strategy 2: MTSS Framework
 - Improve the flow of data between the phases of the project implementation and the SSIP between the two statewide projects in use
- Strategy 3: Systems Alignment
 - Measures for changes in the infrastructure are under development.
- SIMR
 - Change in the statewide reading assessment
 - Potential issue with use of longitudinal statewide data
 - Potential of using NWEA MAP reading scores for growth goals

Progress Toward Achieving Intended Improvements

Assessment of progress toward achieving intended improvements

The assessment of progress toward achieving intended improvements is described in the following section.

Infrastructure changes that support SSIP initiatives, including how system changes support achievement of the SIMR, sustainability, and scale-up

For strategy 1 (Increase Use of EBPs), the Office of Special Education collaborated with NASES on a survey regarding the use of evidence-based practices currently in use in Nebraska. As a result of stakeholder feedback and survey results, the Office of Special Education created a TIP Phase II package to clearly communicate the expectations for the next submission in the continuous improvement process including the provision of the review tool that will be used. The Office of Special Education is also in the process of developing new grant structures to support the implementation of evidence-based practices at the local level. Once the grant structure has been developed, the process will be evaluated as to the efficiency and ease districts and ESUs have accessing assistance and the outcomes associated with the new process.

In an effort to provide scale-up and sustainability, the Office of Special Education has committed to financially support districts in the implementation and evaluation of Targeted Improvement Plans through a grant process. Funds must be used to assist with the deep implementation of evidence-based practices designed to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities. Projects must demonstrate a high degree of collaboration among special and regular education and support/supplement the framework of ongoing district continuous improvement practice(s). Grant activities are intended to assist districts in meeting TIP Phase II requirements in preparation for TIP Phase III tasks the following year. Grant resources are being made available beginning with the 2016-17 school year. Projects should encourage agencies to leverage resources and align efforts to serve students with disabilities through continuous school improvement. Projects are intended to increase the capacity of districts to deeply implement evidence-based practices designed to improve outcomes of students with disabilities. Grant activities must address unique district strengths and needs. Applicants will identify the structures and supports necessary to implement and measure progress toward achieving the District TIP.

For strategy 2 (MTSS Framework), with the input from multiple levels of stakeholders, NDE is shifting from integrating the current supports (NEPBiS and UNL RtI Reading Consortium) for an MTSS process to developing a comprehensive MTSS framework. Shifting to a more comprehensive and differentiated framework for MTSS implementation that is inclusive of multiple levels will support the statewide implementation of MTSS. Identifying the varying district/regional needs and strengths will encourage sustainability and scale-up. The Office of Special Education is also exploring the establishment of monthly meetings with the two State Grant Funded Projects providing support for the MTSS Framework to ensure data is collected, shared, and analyzed on a quarterly basis to be more proactive when changes are needed.

For strategy 3 (Systems Alignment), based on feedback from stakeholder meetings and a review of the TIPs submitted, the department structure has changed to allow for better alignments of internal teams and promote more cohesive supports and structures. The Office of Special Education began a strategic planning process in the fall of 2016. During this process, one of the priorities identified by members of the strategic planning team was MTSS. Members of this team included members from the Department of Education including the Office of Special Education, the Office of Data Research, and Evaluation, the Federal Programs Office, Office of Early Childhood Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, as well as LEA representatives and NASES representatives.

Through the strategic planning process, the Office of Special Education also began the exploration of Regional Consultant Support Teams within regions of Nebraska. The exploration of moving to Regional Consultant Support teams allowed for the Office to define job responsibilities and roles to align with the priorities developed. Additionally, the Office of Special Education moved from having a team structure (including teams for Monitoring, Program Improvement and Data) to a Professional Learning Community structure in which information is housed within a newly developed website so all staff members have timely access and continuous input into all initiatives being implemented.

In the areas of monitoring, programmatic and fiscal mapping, Nebraska has chosen to participate in technical assistance provided by NCSI, IDC, and CIID. Nebraska is finding the process beneficial and assists with staff familiarization of data, allowing for early identification of collection issues which will lead to increased data quality, and creates a structure to support sustainability.

Evidence that SSIP's evidence-based practices are being carried out with fidelity and having the desired effects

Strategy 1 (Increase Use of EBPs): All 245 districts submitted a Targeted Improvement Plan that included each of the required areas. As the TIP is designed to contain multiple phases, the review of outcomes for progress will change as each phase is submitted by districts. For example when TIPs plans are submitted in the fall of 2017, each district must specify how fidelity of the evidence-intervention selected to implement will be measured. Data from the selected fidelity tools will be submitted to the Office of Special Education as part of the overall TIP process.

Information from the TIP reviews will assist in the development of internal and external trainings needed to ensure there is an increase in the use of evidence-based practices and those practices lead to the improvement of outcomes for students with disabilities.

Strategy 2 (MTSS Framework):

RtI Reading Consortium

The UNL RtI-reading Implementation Support Team (IST) utilizes a variety of tools to collect implementation data within the context of continuous improvement. To monitor fidelity of RtI training supports the team provides, they collect observational data on delivery and coverage of content for professional learning opportunities, participant sign-in sheets, and perception surveys. Data from the observations and perception surveys are used to inform professional learning foci for the IST members and to update and improve training content and materials.

- ***RtI Training sign-in sheets*** – a registrant list was used for each training to track the number of training sessions provided and participants and school teams who attended each training session.
- ***RtI Training Fidelity Observation Checks*** – During each training session, a member of the UNL IST observes the other IST presenter(s) and records fidelity to use of effective professional learning delivery methods and coverage of training content.
- ***RtI Training Perception Surveys*** – After each training session, participants received a link to an electronic survey to provide feedback on the usefulness and applicability of training content and activities to their district/school settings, beliefs about RtI and suggestions for improvement and additional training needs.

The IST monitors fidelity to provision of technical assistance supports through the use of TA calendars and TA protocols.

- ***Technical Assistance Calendars*** – IST members keep detailed calendars of training and Technical Assistance activities provided for schools/districts
- ***Technical Assistance protocol adherence*** – IST members use common protocols for provision of TA with schools/districts; TA providers complete self-checks of adherence to TA protocols

District- and school-level teams use a variety of tools to monitor implementation of MTSS-reading within a continuous improvement context. All district- and school-teams complete the MTSS-Academic Implementation Rubric each spring to evaluate their implementation and plan for continued implementation the following school year.

- ***MTSS-Academics Implementation Rubric*** – Completed by teams from all schools. Teams rate their implementation of items related to teaming and leadership for MTSS-academic supports, use of evidence-based core and intervention programs/practices, professional development and coaching, assessment and data-based decision making practices, and individual student problem solving. Observation data, surveys, student data, written action plans and implementation plans, and other permanent products are sources of information used to complete the Implementation Rubric.
- ***Instruction and Intervention Observational Fidelity Checks*** – School/district representatives collect fidelity data on instruction and intervention supports provided for students using fidelity observation tools that align with their instructional models and identified evidence-based programs/practices. Fidelity data from observations are collected throughout the year and used to guide professional learning and coaching experiences.
- ***Systems- and Practice-Level Coach logs*** (at school/district level) – Districts and schools that have identified onsite coaches at the schools/districts record coaching activities implemented with educators to evaluate and improve their coaching supports.

The Nebraska PBiS (NEPBiS) system uses several fidelity tools with teams to collect implementation and outcome data across the participating schools. Schools are asked to complete the tools at least annually.

The ***School-wide Information System (SWIS)*** which is required of all PBiS schools, is a web-based information system designed to help school personnel use office discipline referral (ODR) data to design school-wide and individual student interventions. *SWIS* gives school personnel the capability to evaluate classroom management, individual student behavior, the behavior of groups of students, settings of behavior and times of day eliciting the most frequent student behaviors. *SWIS* data allow PBiS teams to shape school-wide environments to maximize students' academic and social learning opportunities.

The Schoolwide Evaluation Tool (SET): *The School-wide Evaluation Tool (SET)* is an external fidelity of implementation assessment (Horner, Todd, Lewis-Palmer, Irvin, Sugai & Boland, 2004) and will be completed for a sample of PBIS schools annually. The *SET* is designed to assess and evaluate the critical features of school-wide PBIS across each school year. The external evaluation team will complete the *SETs* on the schools selected. Schools required to have *SET* completed are those schools looking to move up to a level 3 and all level 3 schools within the NEPBIS framework.

The School-wide PBIS Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) (Algozzine, Barrett, Eber, George, Horner, Lewis, Putnam, Swain-Bradway, McIntosh, & Sugai, 2014) is a valid and reliable tool allowing teams to assess core features in Tiers I, II and III. The *TFI* as four purposes: 1) initial assessment; 2) implementation guide for each of the three tiers; 3) as an index of sustained SWPBIS implementation and 4) as a metric to identify school meeting criteria and needing recognition with a state system. NEPBIS schools will complete the entire assessment as baseline the first year of the new SPDG grant. After baseline teams will complete the *TFI* on as many tiers as they are implementing and will do so at least annually.

Strategy 3 (Systems Alignment): Shifts in priorities within the department have led to many of the initiatives not having sustained work produced. There have also been shifts in personnel that have led to initiatives not being continued or delays in the work. The Office of Special Education continues to be involved in each initiative and is committed to membership in each. The Office of Special Education has also identified individuals from outside the agency to also serve within membership to promote collaboration and continued successes when these barriers arise. The Learning Collaborative continues to meet on a monthly basis and is committed to supporting the SSIP efforts.

Outcomes regarding progress toward short-term and long-term objectives that are necessary steps toward achieving the SIMR

Strategy 1 (Increase Use of EBP): From the TIP Review, the goal of 75% of the districts identifying an evidence-based practice was easily met with 97% meeting the criteria. Additionally, based on feedback from stakeholder meetings and a review of the TIPs submitted, the department structure changed to allow for better alignments of internal teams and promote more cohesive supports and structures.

Strategy 2 (MTSS Framework):

UNL RtI Consortium:

The average fidelity on the *RtI Training Fidelity Observation Checks* was 100% on coverage of training content and an average of 4.8 (on a scale of 1-5) on content delivery items across all trainings. The median rating on all items of the *Training Perceptions Survey* across all trainings was 4.4 (on a scale of 1 [strongly disagree] to 5 [strongly agree]). Participants agreed or strongly agreed on items related to the trainings being useful and informative, learning something new, and planning to use the information from the sessions. The IST continuously reviews the survey data to inform updates to training materials, content, and delivery based on participant feedback

The IST provided approximately 245 Technical Assistance sessions for participating districts/schools. The average adherence to *Technical Assistance protocols* as self-reported by IST Technical Assistance (TA) providers was 86% (range of 82-97%) across all TA visits. The most frequently reported reason provided when there was not adherence to the TA protocols involved a need to shift focus during a TA visit as school teams reprioritized needs or recognized a prerequisite step they needed to back up to address. The TA protocols were new for the 2015-2016 school year and modifications and updates were made for the 2016-2017 school year on IST TA providers' feedback on protocol content and ease of use and to account for content shifts based on needs that arise during TA sessions.

A summary and analysis regarding the fidelity data for the 2016-17 school year as well as outcome data is currently in process and will be reported in the next submission of the SSIP.

NEPBIS:

From the NEPBIS/SPDG evaluation, 75% of schools are implementing PBIS practices with fidelity. External evaluation team members completed *SETs* for a sampling of schools identified by the SPDG grant. For these

schools, 100% met the identified target for fidelity. Schools who have been participating in NEPBIS have an average proficiency rate of 70.79% on the statewide reading assessment for 3rd grade students with disabilities.

Strategy 3 (Systems Alignment): The Office of Special Education recently developed professional learning communities within the team to collaborate and develop task specific products to provide technical assistance to local districts and Educational Service Units. The SSIP Professional Learning Community specifically works within three areas to develop collaboration amongst the ESSA, AQuESTT (Nebraska’s student accountability system), and grant funded projects designed to support special education student outcomes.

Measurable improvement in the SIMR in relation to the targets

Each of the targets set for the SIMR established in Phase II for the past two school years were surpassed. For the current school year (2016-17), a new statewide reading assessment will be used that will assess English Language Arts (ELA) as a whole. The new (ELA) assessment will be assessing new components including a text-dependent analysis which may require the targets to be adjusted. In addition to new assessment item types, the Department of Education is also in the process of investigating the use of a new testing company to administer the statewide assessments. As a result of these changes, and the potential impact these changes will have on reading proficiency scores, the Office of Special Education will wait to make adjustments in the SIMR targets.

Summary

- Strategy 1: Increase Use of EBPs
 - Completed needs assessment of current evidence-based practices in use.
 - TIP Review completed on all TIPs as well as 20% sample for evidence-based practice checks, data analysis and alignment with school improvement
 - Development of TIP Phase II package including review tool
 - Creation of the grant package guidance to clarify alignment with school improvement plans
 - Development of multi-year grant that will align with the phases of the TIP

- Strategy 2: MTSS Framework
 - Development of differentiated support systems for districts
 - Integration of evidence-based practices identified through the needs assessment in the overall MTSS framework
 - Evidence that UNL RtI and NEPBIS are being implemented with fidelity
 - Establishment of a quarterly schedule to collect, share, and analyze implementation data

- Strategy 3: Systems Alignment
 - Restructuring of the Office of Special Education personnel roles and responsibilities including the development of priority based PLCs
 - Strategic planning across the Department has been initiated
 - Mapping of data to document policies and procedures of all data collections has begun

- SIMR
 - Development of MOUs to access NWEA MAP reading scores for use of interim measures to show progress toward SIMR targets.
 -

Plans for Next Year

Additional activities to be implemented next year, with timeline

As the Office of Special Education has implemented the activities that were detailed within the Phase II SSIP and engaged in strategic conversations with stakeholders regarding implementation data, timelines for the activities

originally planned changed and additional activities planned. A description of what the Office of Special Education will be implementing over the next year can be found below.

<u>Strategy</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
Increase Use of EBP	At least half of all Nebraska districts will submit a Phase II TIP that includes an implementation and evaluation plan for the strategy selected	August 2017
MTSS Framework	Hire and train necessary MTSS personnel.	Currently on hold due to Department hiring "freeze"
MTSS Framework	Develop SEA supported MTSS Framework	Fall of 2017
MTSS Framework	Implementation Planning including training, materials, modules, progress monitoring, fidelity measures	Fall of 2017
MTSS Framework	Develop a statewide needs assessment to determine areas of need for statewide or regional professional development around the MTSS Framework	Fall of 2017
MTSS Framework	Develop readiness checklists for districts to evaluate level of implementation readiness	Fall of 2017
MTSS Framework	Select pilot sites for implementation of MTSS framework	Spring 2018
MTSS Framework	Develop Coaching Model for System Level Coaching of MTSS State Support	Spring 2018 Ongoing
MTSS Framework	Develop resources to be used within technical assistance	Ongoing
MTSS Framework	Develop a publicity plan including: Market the new model, new video, vendor partner and integrated website.	Fall 2017
MTSS Framework	Build upon Tier II and Tier III training in both academic and behavior.	Spring 2018
Systems Alignment	Create RDA focused conference or training to include all areas of Targeted Improvement Plans and MTSS	Annually
Systems Alignment	Continue fiscal support to Targeted Improvement Plans with activities linked to outcomes	Annually

Planned evaluation activities including data collection, measures, and expected outcomes

Currently, the Nebraska Department of Education Office of Special Education has multiple evaluation activities planned including data collection, measures and expected outcomes. Those pending evaluation activities are described in the table below.

Planned Evaluation Activities			
<u>Evaluation Activities</u>	<u>Data Collection</u>	<u>Measures</u>	<u>Expected Outcomes</u>
Monitor progress with SIMR	Annual Statewide reading assessment	Percent of students with disabilities scoring at a proficient level	Meet targets set within the SIMR
Monitor growth goals	NWEA MAP reading assessment - analyzed on a quarterly basis	Rate of growth	Students with disabilities will maintain or increase the necessary rate of growth to achieve grade level reading skills

Planned Evaluation Activities			
<u>Evaluation Activities</u>	<u>Data Collection</u>	<u>Measures</u>	<u>Expected Outcomes</u>
Monitor improvement of outcomes in districts	TIP Review	Report of progress toward targets	Half of districts who submitted TIP will show improvement in focus area selected Reading proficiency data for students with disabilities in districts that chose reading as a focus for improvement will increase
Monitor increased use of EBPs	TIP Review for SSIP Evaluation	Pull of 20% of TIPs submitted	Half of districts who submitted TIP will show improvement in focus area selected Establish a baseline for fidelity of implementation to be used in setting future targets
Monitor implementation of MTSS Framework	Ongoing RtI and NEPBIS fidelity and outcome measure results Additional data collection processes to be developed to measure the fidelity of the comprehensive MTSS framework	Training fidelity observation checks Training perception surveys Implementation Rubric Instructional and Intervention Observational Fidelity Checks Systems- and Practice-Level Coach logs	Current UNL RtI Consortium and NEPBIS will continue to be implemented with fidelity Reading proficiency data for students with disabilities in districts that using the MTSS framework through the UNL RtI Consortium and/or NEPBIS will increase
Monitor Systems Alignment	Interviews Surveys Needs Assessments	Perceptual data gathered from interviews, surveys, and needs assessments	NDE Regional Consultants will receive the professional development needed to improve the differentiated supports provided to districts Districts will report that information shared by the department is consistent

Anticipated barriers and steps to address those barriers

With the assistance of stakeholders, areas of focus that closely align with the activities within the SSIP were identified. The strategic planning process and the implementation of the activities within the SSIP identified anticipated barriers and some steps that can be taken to address those barriers. The information can be found in the table below.

Anticipated Barriers for Systems Alignment	
<u>Anticipated Barriers</u>	<u>Steps to Address Barriers</u>
Providing regional/reactionary technical assistance (TA) on compliance/regulatory special education issues Primarily oriented around subject area or silos	Restructure the Office of Special Education staff roles/infrastructure to provide differentiated supports to districts Connecting, convening and partnering within NDE teams as well as other state/private agencies, school, and families

Anticipated Barriers for Systems Alignment	
<u>Anticipated Barriers</u>	<u>Steps to Address Barriers</u>
Regulatory compliance-based professional development is offered minimally	Provide ongoing professional development based on assessed needs to both internal staff and external partners Broader staff expertise, including both content knowledge and breadth of experiences

Anticipated Barriers for Data Systems	
<u>Anticipated Barriers</u>	<u>Steps to Address Barriers</u>
Limited internal/publicly accessible data Focus on accountability and compliance Unclear/undocumented policies for data collection and usage	Move to an understanding of the data that is currently collected Documented policies and procedures for data collection and usage Use valid and reliable data to make informed decisions and programmatic improvements

Anticipated Barriers for MTSS	
<u>Anticipated Barriers</u>	<u>Steps to Address Barriers</u>
Separate programs supports align to grant specific initiatives 'Siloed' staff responsibilities based on individual regional response Limited staff knowledge/guidance and implementation planning	Collaborative supports, focused on regional and individual educational needs Comprehensive professional development targeted on both academic and behavioral systems Develop resources to implement a framework of Multi-tiered Systems of Support Establish a statewide technical assistance resource center

Anticipated Barriers for Communication	
<u>Anticipated Barriers</u>	<u>Steps to Address Barriers</u>
Sporadic and limited communication with specific populations on an "as-needed" basis (external) Sporadic and inconsistent communication with Office of Special Education Team on an "as-needed" basis (internal) Cumbersome, non-user friendly website	Clear and consistent communication across all stakeholders to engage in continuous improvement Transparent and consistent communication on a regular basis within the Office of Special Education Team A user-friendly, intuitive web environment

Additional Barriers:

Nebraska is a unique state in that the majority of the students in special education are located in one geographical location of the state. The majority of Nebraska students are attending schools in the eastern portion of the state, leaving a vast geographical area that is sparsely populated with many very small school districts. This can create a barrier in development of a one size fits all approach to technical assistance in all of the identified strategies. The Office of Special Education plans on developing frameworks to guide LEAs regardless of their size in their

implementation planning and then will provide technical assistance and professional development on a more specific basis.

During the development of Phase II, 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.

The barriers around the Learning Collaborative and continued work within each initiative that will lead to the outcomes desired within the SSIP are those that all state agencies experience. Shifts in priorities within the department have led to many of the initiatives not having sustained work produced. There have also been shifts in personnel that have led to initiatives not being continued or delays in the work. The Office of Special Education continues to be involved in each initiative and is committed to membership in each. The Office of Special Education has also identified individuals from outside the agency to also serve within membership to promote collaboration and continued successes when these barriers arise. Through continued interoffice collaboration, NDE hopes to (a) reduce the duplication of work; (b) prudent and efficient use of fiscal and human resources; and (c) ensure districts receive the support needed to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities.

The State describes any needs for additional support and/or technical assistance

- Continued support and technical assistance from the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) with systems alignment and infrastructure development.
- Continued support and technical assistance from 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 affecting 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.