



State Systemic Improvement Plan

Phase III - Year 3

March 25, 2019

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Introduction of Nebraska and the Phase III-Year 3 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 Educational Service Units (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 State Systemic Improvement Plan (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 244 districts.

As Nebraska has worked at building a comprehensive Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) system that provides for increasingly intensive services in academics and behavior, stakeholder involvement has been key. Nebraska continues with an ever evolving 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.

Using the outline provided by OSEP, the following narrative describes Nebraska's SSIP Phase III Year 3 work and progress.

Summary of Phase III Year 3

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

During Year 1 of Phase III, Nebraska's Theory of Action, Logic Model, and State-identified Measurable Result (SIMR) were changed based on stakeholder input and data analysis (see SSIP Phase III-Year 1 on pages 5 - 7). As Nebraska worked on implementing the activities indicated in the Phase III Year 1 submission and continued to involve stakeholders, it was determined that the Theory of Action, Logic Model, and State-identified Measurable Result (SIMR) accurately described the work implemented.

Nebraska's 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, Office of Special Education staff review and monitor the TIPs to support work with all districts, and MAP audits a % of TIPs to ensure that evidence based strategies are identified and implemented with fidelity....	Resources and supports can be leveraged to support districts in deeply implementing evidence-based strategies as identified in their improvement plans with fidelity	Will use evidence-based strategies with deep implementation	Will demonstrate increased reading proficiency as measured by the state assessment (NeSA)
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 (NeSA)
Alignment of State Infrastructure	#3 – Align the state infrastructure to ensure districts receive necessary supports to deeply implement evidence-based reading strategies to support all learners	Special Education activities are aligned with Nebraska's state goals and the continuous improvement process (AQuESTT)...	Expectations for improvement will be consistent across all state programs and will ultimately provide a common message to all school districts in support of deep implementation of EBPs	Will use evidence-based strategies with deep implementation	Will demonstrate increased reading proficiency as measured by the state assessment (NeSA)

Based on the implementation of the activities detailed within Phase III Year 1 of the SSIP, the Department of Education Office of Special Education along with stakeholder feedback determined that no changes were needed to Nebraska's Logic Model found on page 6.

Nebraska's 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, Office of Special Education staff and SSIP team)	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 skills 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.
State Educational Agency				
Learning Collaborative	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 NeMTSS Implementation Support Team 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.
NeMTSS Implementation Support Team • UNL • Westat				
SPDG PBiS (Management team, coaches)	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.
Evaluation team for SPDG, NeMTSS, and SSIP				
Stakeholders: LEAs, Special Education Advisory Council, Nebraska Association of Special Education Supervisors				
Student Outcomes SIMR: Increase reading proficiency for students with disabilities at the 3rd grade level as measured by the statewide reading assessment. Growth Goal (K-3): 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

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

Because of data analysis and feedback from our multiple stakeholder groups, Nebraska's SIMR is to increase the reading proficiency for students with disabilities at the 3rd grade level as measured by the statewide reading assessment. The SIMR allows Nebraska to monitor the reading proficiency of all third grade students with disabilities and allows the Office of Special Education to disaggregate the data according to the various components of the strategy implemented.

Although Nebraska is looking at data from the entire state, due to the sparse population, the large geographic area of the state, the close relationship the Office of Special Education (OSE) shares with the local education agencies, and strong stakeholder involvement, the State Education Agency (SEA) felt it was critical to continue to examine reading proficiency statewide. Through the analysis of 3rd grade reading proficiency and looking at trend data for districts who have implemented the initiatives targeted, the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) OSE has

decided to move toward analysis of districts who have utilized the tiered systemic supports provided to develop a framework for improvement.

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 - Statewide					
School Year	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Sp Ed. Percentage	60.63%	64.85%	64.69%	30.32%	26.39%
General Ed. Percentage	83.28%	85.71%	88.13%	51.90%	58.74%

*Yellow highlight indicates baseline year.

SSIP 2013 – 2018 Targets

FFY	2014-15	2015-16	New Assessment	2016-17	New Vendor	2017-18	2018-19
Target	59.86%	61.86%		63.86%		65.86%	67.86%
Progress	Met Target 64.85%	Met Target 64.69%		Not Met 30.32%		Not Met 26.39%	

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 implementation of the new statewide English - Language Arts assessment in 2016-17 that replaced the current Nebraska Education State Assessment for reading, there was a significant drop in proficiency scores for all students, at all grade levels including students with disabilities at the third grade level. This year, Nebraska had a new vendor that included a computer adaptive testing feature that again affected outcome levels for all students. The documentation from the new vendor said to expect a drop in scoring within the first years of implementation.

Due to the changes with the statewide assessment, NDE needed to find a more valid and reliable way to determine students' progress toward proficiency in reading. A majority of districts in the state were already using Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), so NDE-OSE decided to try using the MAP data as an interim measure. Although NDE-OSE has struggled to overlay demographics with the MAP data in the past, this task has finally been accomplished allowing the OSE to begin analyzing MAP data for trends (see pages 22-23).

Coherent improvement strategies or principal activities employed during the year (April 2018 - March 2019), including infrastructure improvement strategies

"The School Improvement Leadership Team, which now overlaps closely with the MTSS team, believed that the reading program was more successful because of its reliance on data-based decision making. Therefore, the leadership hypothesized that data-based decision making would improve learning for all students in all subjects. The district's adoption of the NeMTSS framework has further supported the importance of data-based decision making as an evidence-based strategy for improving student learning for special education students."

➤Quote from a NE District implementing MTSS

As shown in Nebraska's Logic Model found on page 6, the Office of Special Education has three improvement strategies 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 Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework to provide behavioral and academic support for all students.
3. Align resources and programs within the state to support implementation of SSIP activities.

Although Nebraska continues to focus on the activities detailed within the Logic Model, the Office of Special Education has identified MTSS as the main strategy containing two main components. Those two components are (1) increasing the use of evidence-based practices and; (2) aligning resources and programs within the systems alignment.

Strategy (NeMTSS Framework):

Develop a statewide-tiered system of support to enhance districts' ability to improve students' reading performance. The principal activities employed during the 2018-19 school year were as follows.

- Provided multiple trainings that begin with a core awareness, data analysis, building and refining, topical, and coaching training.
- Provided technical assistance to districts regarding data analysis at the systems and intervention level.
- Provided a statewide MTSS conference with national and local speakers.
- Continued work with the MTSS builder's group to respond to the feedback and recommendations among our stakeholders to guide refinement of the comprehensive MTSS framework.
- Use of a self-assessment for districts to use to determine areas of support needed in implementing an MTSS framework.

Component 1 (Increase use of EBPs): The principal activities employed during the 2018-19 school year were as follows:

- Westat staff reviewed of all district TIPs.
- Feedback regarding TIP submission provided to districts by the Office of Special Education.
- Review of the TIPs submitted to identify trends and needs for additional professional development and technical assistance.
- The website districts use to submit the TIP was re-designed to emphasize the continuous improvement process and reduce redundancy.

Component 2 (Systems Alignment): The principal activities employed during the 2018-19 school year were as follows.

- Monthly meetings with multiple NDE offices for the Data Collaborative (Learning Collaborative) occurred.
- Development of a comprehensive needs assessment and trainings to schools identified as Comprehensive Support and Intervention (CSI) provided by the Committee for Coordination of Systemic Improvement which included multiple NDE offices and members from ESUs
- Attendance at the Cross State Learning Collaborative Fall Convening and State Leads Meetings.
- Continued review and development of Office of Special Education internal procedures.

Specific evidence-based practices that have been implemented to date

<u>Strategy/ Component</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Progress</u>
NeMTSS Framework	1. Distribution of NeMTSS materials through the newly developed website including the self-assessment, training modules, progress monitoring tools, fidelity measures	Met
NeMTSS Framework	2. Development of crosswalk between AQuESTT and MTSS	Met

NeMTSS Framework	3. Implementation of the second annual MTSS Conference	Met
Increase Use of Evidence-Based Practices (EBPs)	4. At least half of all Nebraska districts will report improvement in the indicator are selected	Not Met
Systems Alignment	5. Development of comprehensive needs assessment to align with ESSA requirements	Met
Systems Alignment	6. Development of continuous improvement tool aligned with AQuESTT, ESSA, and Department Office needs	Met
Systems Alignment	7. Continue fiscal support to Targeted Improvement Plans with activities linked to outcomes	Met

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

Nebraska's evaluation activities, measures and outcomes in 2016-17 were documented in Phase III Year 1 under "Planned evaluation activities including data collection, measures, and expected outcomes" on pages 38-39 and is aligned with the three strategies identified within the Logic Model as described in Nebraska's Logic Model on page 6. As stated on page 8 the Office of Special Education has identified MTSS as the main strategy containing two main components. Those two components are (1) increasing the use of evidence-based practices and (2) aligning resources and programs within the systems alignment.

The tables below specify the evaluation activities completed in Phase III Year 3 of the SSIP. In the Outcomes column, "Ongoing" delineates activities that are continual and do not have a specific due date.

Strategy: MTSS Framework			
<u>Evaluation General Activity</u>	<u>Evaluation Specific Activities</u>	<u>Measure</u>	<u>Progress</u>
Monitor Implementation of MTSS Framework	MTSS Training and technical assistance	Attendance Survey evaluations	*Ongoing
August 2018 MTSS Conference	Conference surveys	Survey evaluations	*Met
District Consulting during the 2018-19 School Year	Feedback survey for participants	Effectiveness of the consultant process	*Ongoing
Outcome: Increased attendance at the MTSS conference with a larger population of general education teachers and administrators.			

* Specifics regarding the outcomes for the Strategy are on pages 15-16 and 20-21.

Component 1: Increase Use of Evidence Based Practices			
<u>Evaluation General Activity</u>	<u>Evaluation Specific Activities</u>	<u>Measure</u>	<u>Progress</u>
Monitor improvement of outcomes in districts	Westat staff conduct review of district TIPs	TIP Review Tool	*Met
	TIP feedback to districts	Completion of the review tool	*Met
Outcome: 117 districts, regardless of the focus for improvement, have reported progress toward their target. The number of districts who have selected a strategy considered evidence-based has increased by 46.8%. Students whose districts focused on reading performed better than those that did not.			

* Specifics regarding the outcomes for Component 1 are on pages 16-19.

Component 2: Systems Alignment			
<u>Evaluation General Activity</u>	<u>Evaluation Activity</u>	<u>Measure</u>	<u>Progress</u>
Monitor Systems Alignment	Continued collaboration with multiple offices within the Department	Meeting minutes and agendas	*Met
	Needs assessments and surveys from districts	Review of responses collected from needs assessment and surveys	*Met
Outcome: Development of comprehensive needs assessment and revision of monitoring system used by the Office of Special Education to align with the state accountability system (AQuESTT).			

*Specifics regarding outcomes for Component 2 are on pages 20-21.

State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR)		
<u>Evaluation Activity</u>	<u>Measure</u>	<u>Progress</u>
Monitor progress with SIMR	Percent of students with disabilities scoring at a proficient level statewide	*Not met- New assessment vendor, scores not comparable to previous data
	Percent of all third grade students at a proficient level statewide	
Monitor growth goals	Rate of growth	*In process

* Specifics regarding outcomes for the SIMR are on pages 21-23.

Highlights of changes to implementation and improvement strategies

The change with the most impact appears to be the state assessment used to measure progress toward our State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR). For the spring of 2018 testing, the Nebraska Department of Education has again changed the assessment and added a change in vendor. It is the intent that the change in assessment and vendors will allow Nebraska to move to a more balanced assessment system and allow more immediate results to inform instruction. The change in the assessment vendor and the addition of the computer adaptive component to the assessment prevents scores from 2018-2019 school year to be compared to the 2017-2018 scores. Despite the changes to the assessment and to a different vendor to provide critical data to inform instruction in a timelier manner, the Office of Special Education will continue to analyze the data available to monitor any trends.

Another change was the ability to use Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) data to measure the growth goal toward the SIMR. When the Nebraska Department of Education changed vendors for the summative assessment in English and Language Arts, it was able to provide formative assessments to districts (MAP). Districts who assess students using MAP provide reading proficiency scores in the fall, winter, and spring to NDE. MAP is then able to provide measures of growth (RIT scores). The Office of Special Education and the NDE Office of Data, Research and Evaluation recently completed the process of overlaying demographic information onto the formative assessment information to more accurately measure growth for students who are at risk or identified as having a disability. Initial MAP data is on pages 22-23.

Summary

- Change of the statewide assessment to include a computer adaptive component with a new vendor does not allow the state to compare reading scores across years.
- The Office of Special Education is in the process of using local formative assessment data for intermediate measures toward progress on the SIMR.
- Five (5) of the seven (7) short-term activities from Phase III-Year 2 contained within the strategy and two main components have been met with the remaining activities being on-going.

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 detailed within Phase I, II, and III Year 1 and 2 of the SSIP. Nebraska's progress with implementation as well as modifications are described within this section.

Description of the 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: NeMTSS Framework

During the 2018-2019 school year, the Implementation Support Team (IST), a State Grant Funded project, provided a variety of supports to school districts. The types of supports and the number of districts impacted is in the table on page 16.

As the Office of Special Education continues its efforts in establishing a Comprehensive MTSS Framework for districts to implement, it has developed a structure that allows for stakeholder input and guidance at multiple levels, including a core team, key advisors and participants, and a feedback and dissemination network as recommended through the Leading by Convening materials.

The role stakeholders have played in the implementation of the MTSS Framework can be found in *Stakeholder Involvement in SSIP Implementation* portion of the Phase III-Year 3 SSIP under the heading "*How Stakeholders have been informed of the ongoing implementation of the SSIP*" beginning on page 14.

Progress on Component 1: Increase Use of EBPs

Districts have been annually updating the Targeted Improvement Plan since initially implemented during the 2014-15 school year. During the 2017-18 school year, districts were required to provide a specific implementation and evaluation plan for the evidence-based strategy selected. By December 2018, districts were required to report their progress with implementing the evidence-based strategy selected and report the fidelity in which it was implemented. The state set a target of having half of the districts report progress toward the target. Although that target was not met, districts provided a rationale for why the target was not met (see page 17).

Progress on Component 2: Systems Alignment

Multiple steps were made in the alignment of the SSIP with other initiatives. As has been noted, the Office of Special Education continues to collaborate with other departments at NDE. Additionally, the Office of Special Education has been increasingly intentional in collaborating with both local directors and the Nebraska Association of Special Education Supervisors (NASES) in order to address issues and 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 continues to undergo changes, it continues to have representation from multiple offices including:

- Office of Special Education;
- Office of Accreditation and School Improvement;
- Office of Accountability/AQuESTT;
- Office of Teaching and Learning;
- Data, Research, and Evaluation Office;
- Office of Federal Programs and Nutrition;
- University of Nebraska in Lincoln (UNL);
- Educational Service Units; and
- Results Driven Accountability (RDA) Stakeholders.

When the SSIP began, the Office of Special Education requested assistance from other offices within the department. As a result, a committee formed to work specifically on systems alignment. During the course of the 2018-19 school year, the Committee for the Coordination of Systemic Improvement (CCSI) members have participated in monthly meetings as well as invited to trainings, virtual meetings, and webinars provided by the National Center of Systemic Improvement (NCSI). The focus of this Committee has been on:

- Alignment of state infrastructure;
- Creation of a single unified improvement plan that accommodates key components of the multiple plans required by the Department and is aligned with Nebraska's accountability system (AQuESTT) to allow districts to focus on implementation of improvement activities rather than the creation of multiple plans; and
- Development of a comprehensive needs assessment that will guide districts in the development of their unified plan as required by ESSA.

In order to continue providing districts support around MTSS implementation, Nebraska organized and presented the second MTSS Conference in the state. A group of national and local presenters conducted the conference. The 2018 MTSS Conference was attended by 750 compared to the 400 participants that attended the 2017 MTSS Conference. There was also an increase in the percentage of general education staff and administrators who attended by conference by 20%.

Along with the high level of collaboration among the various offices within the Department, the Office of Special Education is continuing the work of restructuring and strengthening the teaming process. Activities specific to the work within the Office of Special Education include:

- Revising the electronic system in which districts report their progress on their Targeted Improvement Plans (TIPs);
- Modifying the monitoring system to have a greater emphasis on data and continuous improvement;
- Defining the roles and responsibilities required within the office; and
- Aligning the work accomplished in the Office of the Special Education with the State Board's Strategic Plan

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

Strategy: MTSS Framework

Through the work of the MTSS Builder's Group described on page 8, Nebraska established a website to house information about the NeMTSS Framework providing districts with resources. Specific outputs/outcomes accomplished because of the implementation activities in relation to the activities with the Implementation of the MTSS Framework are found in the "Description of data for key measures" beginning on page 15.

Component 1: Increase Use of EBPs

All of Nebraska's 244 districts submitted a Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP). The focus of the TIP included reporting progress in implementing the evidence-based strategy selected and providing data regarding the fidelity of implementation. Westat along with a member from the Office of Special Education completed an analysis of the TIPs submitted using the 2018-19 TIP Review Tool. Information gathered from the review tool was used to provide comments to districts 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 outcomes for students with disabilities.

A summary of what was discovered during the TIP review can be found on pages 16-19. TIPs submitted December 1, 2018:

- Included the necessary information to set the foundation for continuous school improvement;
- Demonstrated alignment between general school improvement, improvement activities for specifically for special education as well as other initiatives within the district; and
- Documented detailed implementation plans.

As shown last year, the areas of concern found during the review analysis continued to be:

- Support with understanding the difference between outcome and implementation data;
- Instruction in the use of outcome and implementation data; and
- Tools and/or methods to evaluate the effectiveness of the professional development provided.

Although there was an improvement in districts understanding the difference between outcome and implementation data, there are still a large number of districts who need additional support in this area.

Fidelity checks in the area of explicit instruction during reading instruction will be completed by one of the reading coaches and a building administrator. By spring 2019, fidelity checks will be completed for each reading teacher at least monthly. Feedback will be provided to teachers in a timely manner to assist with their reflective practices and improve their explicit instruction implementation. With fidelity checks, student engagement will be documented and reported as well. On average, 90% of students in each reading class will be on task during a five minute check.

➤Quote from a NE District Focused on Improving Reading

Component 2: Systems Alignment

Intended outcomes that have been accomplished as a result of the implementation of the systems alignment work include multiple areas.

Area 1: Increased meaningful stakeholder feedback to assist in the overall implementation of the SSIP. During 2016, 2017, and 2018, 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 undertook a more interactive and intentional focus regarding stakeholder involvement. This included the development of a virtual record keeping system which tracks discussions during meetings as well as allows for continuous stakeholder feedback.

Area 2: Engagement with multiple OSEP funded Technical Assistance Centers including:

- 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. 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.

Area 3: Team building focused on detailing the changing roles/responsibilities continues to be conducted by the Office of Special Education including aligning this work to the State Board's Strategic Plan. The Office of Special Education has also changed its monitoring process to ensure the following:

- Alignment between compliance and results with the monitoring process
- Alignment between the Office of Special Education's monitoring process and the Department of Education's accountability system (AQuESTT)

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 involvement has evolved over the course of the implementation of the SSIP. The table below shows the evolution of involvement over time and the results that have been accomplished as a result.

Year	State of Engagement	Result
2015-16	Informing → Networking	Sit/get → Cursory discussions, information with limited use
2016-17	Networking → Collaborating	More in-depth discussions → Development of products
2017-18	Collaborating	Development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MTSS Self-Assessment• MTSS Framework• MTSS Guidance Document
2018-19	Collaborating	Development of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• MTSS Website• MTSS Guidance Document for Non-Public

During the course of the 2018-19 school year, multiple face-to-face and virtual meetings were held with the MTSS Builder's Group that was initiated during the 2017-18 school year. The MTSS Builder's Group disseminates information quarterly via the MTSS Newsletter to share what stakeholder groups are in existence, what groups are working on, and what work has been accomplished. A description of the various stakeholder groups is as follows:

- RDA Stakeholders (individuals who form the feedback and dissemination networks): assist the Office of Special Education with analyzing data and providing information about next steps based on the data reviewed;
- MTSS Stakeholders (individuals who form groups of key advisors and participants): utilize information from the RDA Stakeholder group to develop next steps for the MTSS Builder's Group
- MTSS Builder's Group (Individuals who form the core team): responsible for acting on the information from the RDA and MTSS Stakeholder groups in order to review and/or implement stakeholder input and support the build of the Nebraska MTSS framework.

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-Year 1 document, several instances of modification and improvement to the SSIP plan have been initiated due to the input of stakeholders. Early on in the development of the SSIP, stakeholders made it clear that the Nebraska MTSS framework needed to be sensitive to and inclusive of already established district frameworks while providing a foundation for districts who had not yet established a framework. Examples of how stakeholders had a voice include:

- Expanding and further developing the MTSS website including increasing the number of resources;
- Developing multiple technical assistance documents for MTSS including Guidance for Non-Public Schools;
- Providing input on the redevelopment of the website used to submit the Targeted Improvement Plan; and
- Providing input on the development of the revised monitoring system.

Summary of Progress in Implementing the SSIP

- Strategy (MTSS Framework): Dissemination of the NeMTSS Framework Document across the state; continued partnerships between NDE, Districts and ESUs around NeMTSS; ongoing implementation of supports including tiered training; and expansion of the NeMTSS Website.
- Component 1 (Increase Use of EBPs): All 244 of Nebraska's school districts submitted a Phase II Targeted Improvement Plan and received specific feedback to assist districts in the continuous improvement process.

- Component 2 (Systems Alignment): Multiple changes have occurred within the internal infrastructure of both the Office of Special Education and the Nebraska Department of Education. This process continues to be an ongoing endeavor and includes a revised monitoring process for the Office of Special Education with the support of various national TA Centers.

Data on Implementation and Outcomes

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

Nebraska used multiple measures to monitor and determine progress on outputs/outcomes to determine the effectiveness of the implementation plan that are described in this section.

How evaluation measures align with the theory of action

The evaluation measures 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 (MTSS Framework): Progress toward the implementation of the MTSS Framework are qualitative and quantitative and captured through agendas, and notes from the various stakeholder groups. Data from the Targeted Improvement Plan for districts receiving MTSS support is analyzed to determine if districts implementing the NeMTSS Framework are achieving outcomes.

Component 1 (Increase use of EBPs): The key measure was submission of the TIP. The data source for the key measure for component 1 was the 2018-19 TIP Review Tool that was created as a [Google Form](#).

Component 2 (Systems Alignment): Key measures included:

- The continuation of collaboration with the Committee for the Coordination of Systemic Improvement involving multiple offices within the Department of Education;
- Development of a comprehensive needs assessment;
- Revision of the monitoring process for the Office of Special Education; and
- Surveys from the MTSS conference.

The data sources for the measures are:

- The meeting minutes and agendas from the Committee for the Coordination of Systemic Improvement meetings;
- Copy of the comprehensive needs assessment;
- Copy of the new monitoring procedures for the Office of Special Education
- The survey results from the MTSS conference.

Description of data for key measures

Strategy: MTSS Framework - Implementation Support Team

The Office of Special Education started to implement a differentiated approach to providing support to districts. Districts interested in beginning to use MTSS or had started MTSS and needed additional support were provided general supports and trainings (Building and Refining). Districts that have an MTSS system in place, but needed assistance with interventions had a higher level of support (Intensive Intervention and Support). Districts who have been implementing MTSS or have previously had support from the state, were provided sustainability training. Finally, districts identified as “Needs Improvement” through the state’s accountability system (AQuESTT) had the most intensive support and received “Targeted/Technical Support”. Due to the multiple measures used to track the progress made with the strategy of implementing the NeMTSS framework, a chart was created to detail the specific activities that were implemented during the 2018-19 school year, the key measures for those activities, and the data that was collected.

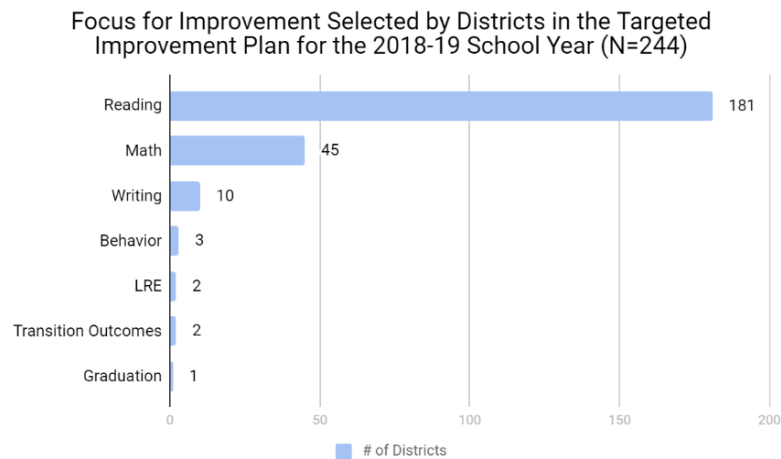
Strategy: MTSS Framework		
<u>Activities</u>	<u>Key Measures</u>	<u>Data</u>
Building and Refining Training	Attendance TIP Review	13 districts involved 8 districts with complete TIP 10 districts that selected 1 EBP 5 districts reporting progress toward goal
Intensive Intervention and Support	Attendance TIP Review	12 districts involved 7 districts with complete TIP 6 districts that selected 1 EBP 3 districts reporting progress toward goal
Sustainability Training	Attendance TIP Review	18 of districts involved 10 districts with complete TIP 15 districts that selected 1 EBP 10 of districts reporting progress toward goal
Targeted/Technical Support	Attendance TIP Review	11 districts involved 5 districts with complete TIP 7 districts that selected 1 EBP 8 districts reporting progress toward goal

Districts receiving Targeted/Technical Supports are districts identified as “Needs Improvement” through the state’s accountability system (AQuESTT) required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). These districts identified multiple areas of improvement in which a team of technical assistance providers have assisted with using the MTSS framework.

Component 1: Increase Use of EBPs

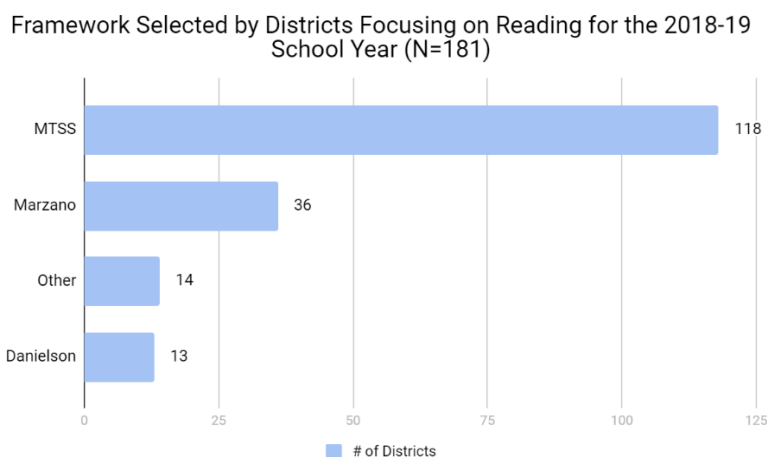
Key Measure 1: The preliminary review of the Targeted Improvement Plans (TIP) show that 99.18% of the districts submitted the TIP by December 1, 2018. The remaining districts completed their submission by early January. When Westat and the Office of Special Education completed the 2018-19 TIP Review Tool to provide feedback to districts, based on data analysis, 181 districts chose reading as a focus for improvement (see Figure 1) which is an additional 13 districts who selected reading as a focus from the previous year.

Figure 1



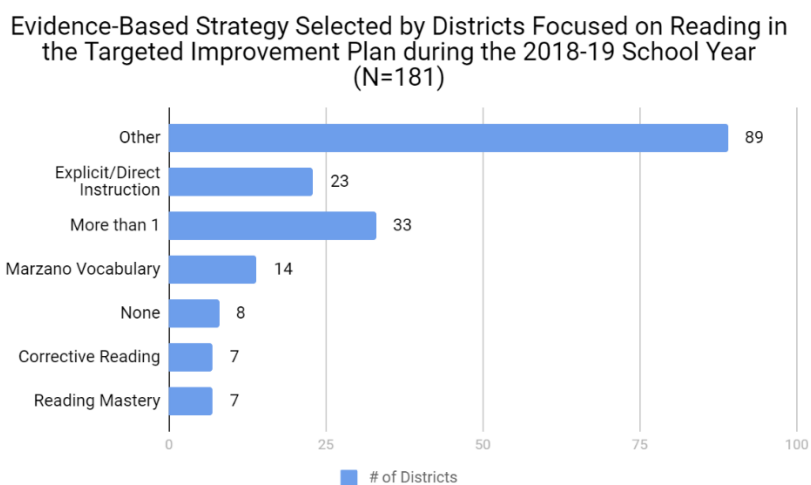
Due to changes with the submission of the TIP, districts were asked to identify the instructional or improvement framework in which the evidence-based strategy was embedded. For districts who selected reading as a focus for improvement (see Figure 2), 118 selected MTSS; 36 selected Marzano; 13 selected Danielson; and 14 chose “other”. Districts who selected “other” as their framework use a combination of strategies to best meet the district’s needs.

Figure 2



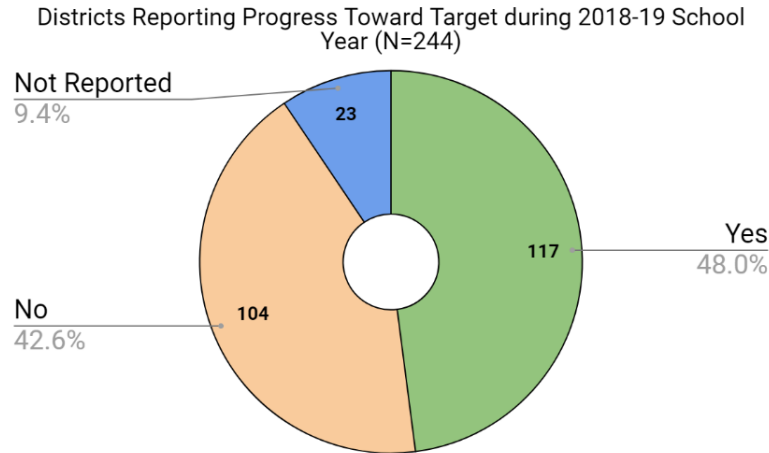
Along with identifying the instructional or improvement framework used, districts were also asked to specify the evidence-based strategy or strategies that would be implemented to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. For the districts who selected reading as a focus for improvement, 33 districts selected more than one evidence-based strategy to implement (see Figure 3). Districts that selected only one strategy, 14 districts selected vocabulary strategies from Marzano; 23 selected explicit or direct instruction; 7 selected Corrective Reading; and 7 selected Reading Mastery. Eighty-nine districts selected “other” as their strategy. Districts who selected “other” selected strategies including guided reading, bell ringers, and repeated readings among others.

Figure 3



With districts at various levels of TIP implementation, the Figure 4 shows the number of districts already demonstrating progress towards the targets set during the development of the TIP. Although many districts have moved to using local measures, some districts (23 districts) are using statewide assessment data. As a result of this, 9.4% of the districts did not have verified data available to demonstrate progress toward the targets set. Districts that did not have verified data did not report whether progress was made toward the target (Not Reported). Some of Nebraska’s districts (48%) were using measures other than the statewide assessment and have already demonstrated progress towards the targets set. For the 104 districts that reported they did not make progress toward the target, the rationale provided included a recent change in how the district was measuring progress, a change in focus from math to reading, or lack of fidelity of implementation with the strategy selected.

Figure 4



“Of the Special Education students who participated in NWEA MAPS testing in the elementary, 12 out of 20 met their goal which is 60%. Of the Special Education students who participated in NWEA MAPS testing in the Secondary level, 6 out of 10 met their goal which is 60%.”

➤Quote from a NE District Focused on Improving Reading

Figure 5 compares the difference in the number of districts reporting progress toward the target set from the 2017-18 school year to the 2018-19 school year as reported on the TIP. As shown, there was an increase of 55 districts (or 22.4% point increase) showing an improvement in outcomes for students with disabilities. In some cases (42.6%), districts did not show progress toward the target set. Again, this is a decrease in the number of districts stating they did not make progress from the previous year.

Figure 5

# of Districts Reporting Progress Toward Target from 2017-18 to 2018-19			
	2017-18	2018-19	Difference
Progress Toward Target	62	117	+55
No Progress Toward Target	54	104	+50
Did not report Progress Toward Target	126	23	-103

The TIP review provided an overview of the evidence-based practices (EBP) used by the districts. Since the SSIP focuses on meeting state targets for third grade reading, emphasis was placed on EBPs related to reading. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) criteria for EBP were used. Results of the review are found in Figure 6. The bar graph in Figure 6 shows that 107 districts reviewed are using EBP as defined by CEC; 6 districts are using Promising Practices or practices with mixed evidence. A small number of districts (33) had chosen multiple evidence-based strategies, so the level of evidence was not determined. A small number of districts (8) that have not yet identified a specific strategy. For 27 of the districts, there was a mismatch between the focus for improvement and the strategy selected which was identified as “insufficient evidence”.

Figure 6

Level of Evidence-Based Practices for Districts Focused on Reading during the 2018-19 School Year (N=181)

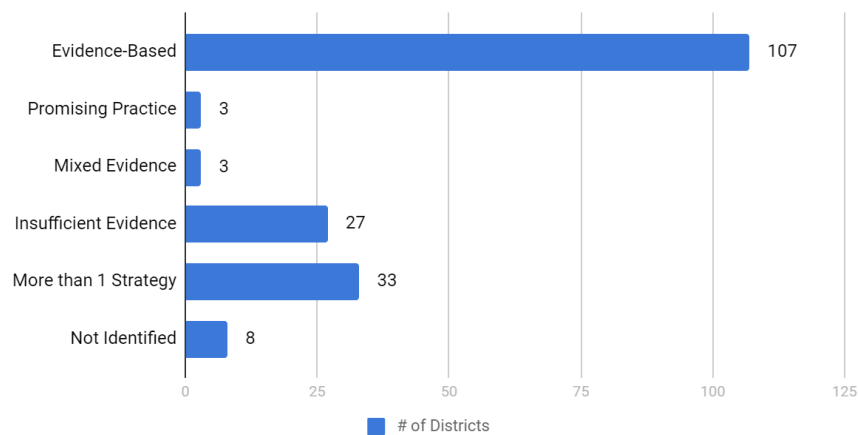


Figure 7 compares the difference in the number of districts whose identified strategy is considered evidence-based from the 2017-18 school year to the 2018-19 school year as reported on the TIP using the CEC definitions. Part of the increase in the use of evidence-based practices may be due to providing a specific definition used to determine criteria for the evidence-base. During the 2017-18 school year, no definition of evidence-based was provided. As shown there was an increase of 46.8 percentage points of districts who selected a strategy considered evidence-based. There was also a decrease in the percentage of districts who were using promising practices and strategies that considered as mixed evidence. Districts who did not identify a specific strategy, selected multiple strategies or had a mis-match between the strategy selected and the focus for improvement are not included.

Figure 7

Change in Percent of Districts' Level of Evidence-Based Practices Reported from 2017-18 to 2018-19 (N=244)			
	2017-18	2018-19	Difference
Evidence-Based	12.3%	59.1%	+ 46.8
Promising Practice	29.2%	1.7%	- 27.5
Mixed Evidence	15.4%	1.7%	- 13.7

The Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP) has grown and evolved since it began. With the submission that was due December 1, 2018, districts were expected to report progress with implementation of the strategy that was selected and data regarding fidelity of implementation. As shown in the logic model on page 6, it is the expectation that as districts select evidence-based practices that have a high likelihood of improving outcomes for students with disabilities, districts will implement those practices with high levels of fidelity which will increase the reading proficiency for students with disabilities. The quote below shows how districts are using fidelity data to support staff to achieve outcomes.

More specifically though, the criteria used for measuring successful implementation is the fidelity checks that are performed by the reading specialists. These fidelity checks are used to drive decisions based on modeling and coaching. The level and intensity of modeling and coaching is based on the data that is gathered. Those individuals with the most need of support, get the greatest degree of support.

➤Quote from a NE District Focused on Improving Reading

Component 2: (Systems Alignment)

Key Measure 1: The Committee for the Coordination of Systemic Improvement (CCSI) continues to meet. The goals of this committee include creating:

- A comprehensive continuous improvement process, aligned with AQuESTT, Nebraska's Frameworks, and AdvancED, that addresses requirements and needs of all programs;
- A multi-tiered system of support that builds capacity for a culture of continuous school improvement by monitoring for fidelity of implementation (including the use of a comprehensive needs assessment); and
- A system that builds a culture that ensures data-driven, evidence-based, student-centered decision-making and professional learning.

The committee, which has grown to include participants from multiple Educational Service Units (ESUs), was able to implement a comprehensive needs assessment aligned with the MTSS self-assessment. Districts identified as Comprehensive Supports and Intervention (CSI) piloted the needs assessment. Several workshops were conducted to assist CSI schools draft an improvement plan addressing the requirements of all the program as detailed in bullet one above.

The CIP team has made it a priority incorporating the AQuESTT tenets into the overall focus of school improvement, including the ILCD process. PLC meetings are held on a monthly basis for all staff, focusing in on the tenet of Educator Effectiveness and Marzano's instructional model. Staff are expected to take the area(s) of focus and implement the strategies into their daily lessons. Administrators complete walk-throughs that provide fidelity checks and feedback on the progress of the strategies. Additionally, committee chairs hold meetings to discuss and provide insight into the implementation of the strategies.

➤Quote from a NE District Implementing MTSS

Key Measure 2: To better align with the accountability system (AQuESTT), the Office of Special Education revised its monitoring process by moving away from pre-determining the districts monitored every year during a 5-year cycle, to using data to determine what districts need to be monitored. The monitoring cycle has also been altered so monitoring is done based on a calendar year rather than school year and coincides with the release of the AQuESTT classifications.

To determine what districts are in need of monitoring, the Office of Special Education developed a data analysis tool that enables the Office to determine risk. For the 2019 calendar year, the Office looked at nineteen programmatic and fiscal data elements. Based on a review of the data, districts with the highest level of risk on multiple areas were selected for monitoring. Districts selected for monitored during the 2019 calendar year were widely dispersed geographically across Nebraska and were representative of the statewide demographics.

Key Measure 3: Statewide MTSS Conference

NDE's August 2018 MTSS Statewide Conference allowed for more participants than the previous year with attendance increasing to 750 from the previous 400. The demographics of the conference shifted from a majority of attendees from special education in 2017 to a majority of attendees from general education in 2018. There was a 20% increase in the percentage of general education staff and administrators who attended the 2018 MTSS Conference.

Conference survey data indicated a high level of satisfaction. Participants were provided paper evaluations in survey form to complete after each session with over 3000 responses received. The surveys asked three questions in which participants were able to provide responses on a 5-point scale with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. Figure 8 provides the conference mean for each of the survey questions.

Figure 8

MTSS Conference Overall Evaluation Data (N=488)	
Question	Mean
Did the session meet expectations?	4.42
Did session answer primary questions about the topic?	4.38
Was the speaker engaging?	4.49

SIMR Summary Data

As stated in the Summary section on page 7, Nebraska's SIMR states:

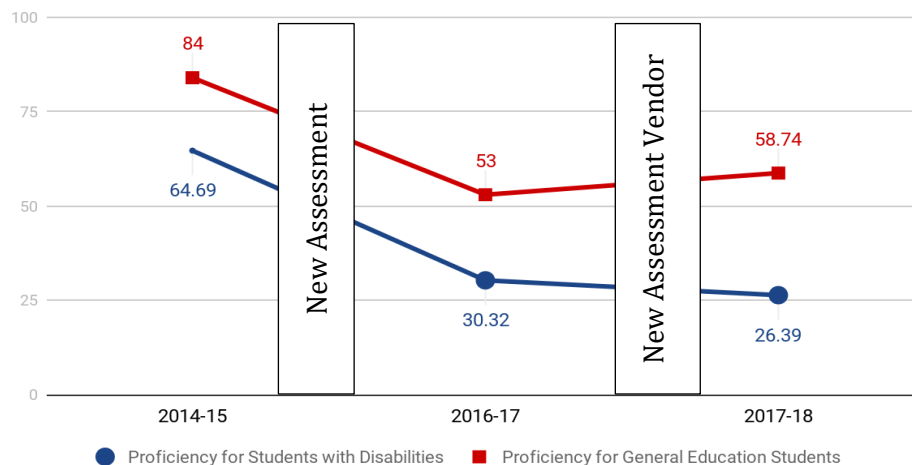
Increase reading proficiency for students with disabilities at the 3rd grade level as measured by the statewide reading assessment.

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 on page 7.

During the 2016-17 school year, the statewide reading assessment changed to a combined English Language Arts (ELA) test that aligned to the new College and Career Ready standards. With the new rigorous standards of the statewide assessment, all students, including students with disabilities, proficiency dropped (See Figure 9). When the state changed vendors, a computer adaptive component was added to the assessment. The gap in scores between general and special education students widened with the change in vendor and addition of the computer adaptive component. This may be due to students with disabilities not accessing the computer adaptive accommodations. It is also possible that students with disabilities were accustomed to the computer adaptive component with the MAP assessment that would present skills at a lower grade level where the state assessment could not.

Figure 9

3rd Grade Reading Proficiency on Statewide Reading Assessment



As Nebraska has chosen to implement one strategy with two main components, the Office of Special Education compared data for third grade students statewide to data for districts focused on reading as an area for improvement. Figure 10 shows the comparison between the state data and the data for districts focused on improving reading proficiency. As the data shows, districts who are focusing on reading are showing increased improvement in comparison to the statewide data.

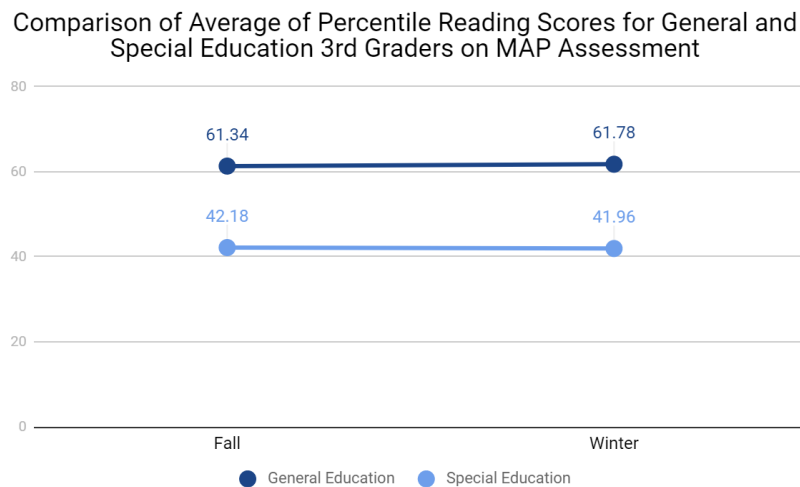
Figure 10

Comparison of Proficiency Data						
Group Comparisons for the 2016-17 School Year				Group Comparisons for the 2017-18 School Year		
Group	% Proficient	# of Districts	# of Students	% Proficient	# of Districts	# of Students
Statewide	30.32%	244	4,033	26.39%	244	4,259
Reading TIP	30.7%	109	1,451	27.77%	181	2,618

The Office of Special Education in cooperation with the Office of Data, Research and Evaluation was able to access the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) data to begin to look at interim measures toward achievement of the SIMR. The MAP data is not a complete data set due to the manner of the data submission. In addition, some districts did not use the NDE Student ID on the MAP records preventing the data to be loaded into the Operational Data Store (ODS). Despite the data limitations, the Office of Special Education still analyzed the data and will conduct additional analysis in the future. The data pool contained 1,836 third grade general education students and 375 special education students that were tested in the fall and winter of the 2017-18 school year.

The analysis of the preliminary MAP data can be found in Figures 11 and 12. The Office of Special Education looked at the minimum and maximum of percentile data for both general education and special education students. Figure 11 shows the change in percentile scores for both general and special education 3rd graders tested from Fall 2017 to Winter of 2018.

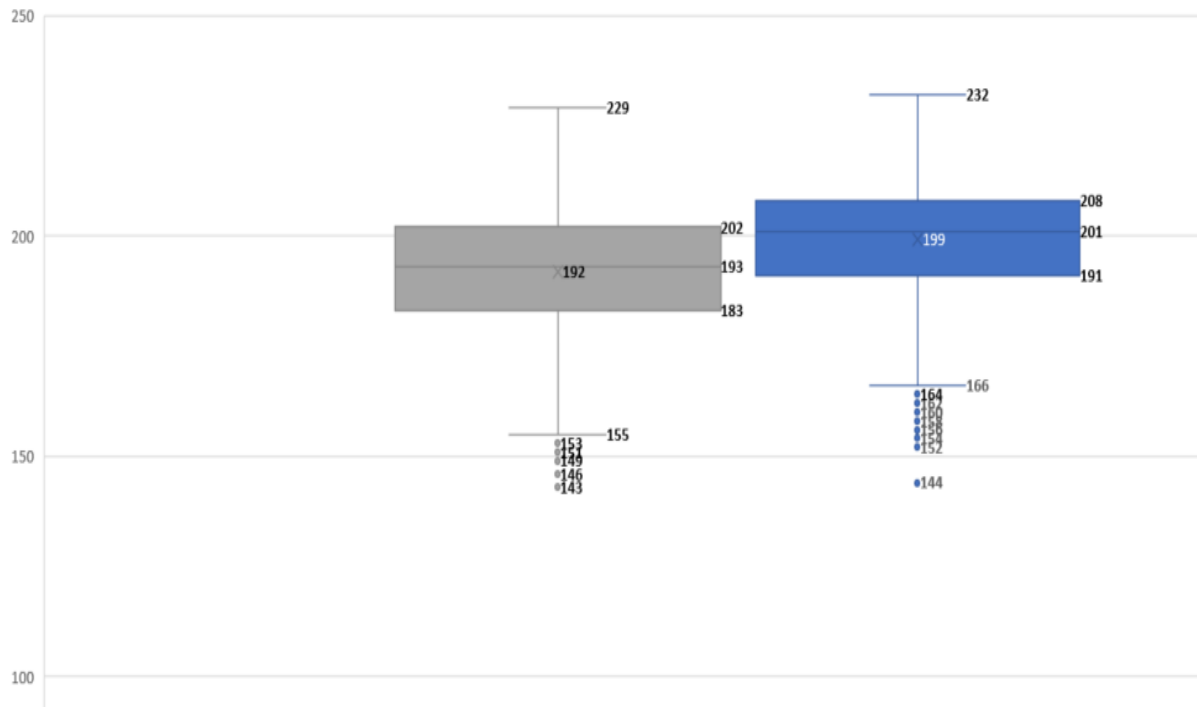
Figure 11



As described in the Logic Model found on page 6, Nebraska would like to decrease the number of students determined at-risk for reading failure beginning in kindergarten and to maintain/increase the rate of growth for students with disabilities in order for them to be grade level readers. Figure 12 shows the comparison of the growth scores on the MAP assessment for 3rd graders (both general and special education) that were tested in the fall of 2017 and the winter of 2018. The maximum and minimum score variations are shown as well as the median range of scores. NWEA, the vendors of the MAP assessment, have determined that students scoring below 177 in the fall and below 183 in the winter are considered to be at-risk for future reading difficulty.

Figure 12

Comparison of Fall and Winter RIT Scores on MAP Assessments for 3rd Graders



Data collection procedures and associated timelines

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

Strategy: MTSS Framework Data Collection Procedures and Timelines			
Key Measure	Data Source	Procedure	Timeline
MTSS Training and technical assistance	Notes from observations of trainings conducted	Observations conducted by project staff	Ongoing - completed during each training provided
	TIP Review Data	Correlate data between level of training and support provided with data reported in the TIP	Completed annually in the winter

Component 1: Increase Use of EBPs Data Collection Procedures and Timelines			
Key Measure	Data Source	Procedure	Timeline
Qualitative data obtained from Westat and NDE Office of Special Education staff	TIP Review Tool	The TIP Review Tool is utilized by Westat and the Office of Special Education to provide feedback to the districts.	Office of Special Education staff annually complete the TIP Review Tool during the winter.
Qualitative data obtained from Westat and NDE Office of Special Education staff	TIP Review Tool	The outcome of the completed TIP Review Tool is shared with each district by the Office of Special Education staff.	Office of Special Education staff provide the outcome of the annually completed TIP Review Tool with each district during the winter/spring.

When comparing the (reading) data (MAP) from 2016-2017 to 2017-2018 we saw a 5% increase in the students who have shown performance growth with an average increase of 20 points.

➤Quote from a NE District Focused on Improving Reading

Component 3: Systems Alignment Data Collection Procedures and Timelines			
Key Measure	Data Source	Procedure	Timeline
Continuation of Learning Collaborative	Documentation of meetings jointly attended and/or presented Attendance of meeting participation from varying internal and external offices (NDE, ESUs, and Vocational Rehab.)	Keeping minutes of joint meetings Keeping agendas of conferences attended by multiple offices	Ongoing (began Fall 2015)
Surveys from the MTSS Conference	Responses collected from surveys	Surveys sent to all registrants and participants who attend the MTSS Conference	Survey provided after each session
Development of revised Monitoring Process for the Office of Special Education	Data Rubric Monitoring Protocol	Analysis of data of districts selected for monitoring Revision of Monitoring Protocol	Ongoing (began Spring 2018)

There is unified messaging going on. It is reflected in the attendance at this conference. More unified message from the state makes districts more likely to adopt MTSS.

➤Quote from attendee at the MTSS Conference

SIMR Data Collection Procedures and Timelines			
Key Measure	Data Source	Procedure	Timeline
Nebraska 3rd grade statewide reading proficiency for students with disabilities	Statewide Reading Assessment (NeSA) - 2016-17 Nebraska Student Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) - beginning 2017-18	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 TIP focus) for analysis.	Assessments completed at the district level annually in the spring with results available to the State in the winter.
Growth goal	Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)	MAP testing made available to all districts. NWEA provides MAP scores to NDE.	Fall and Winter (after districts provide MAP tests to students)

Sampling procedures

No sampling procedures were used during the 2018-19 school year. Assessment data from 3rd graders is analyzed for the state. The state disaggregates data from districts who select reading as the focus for improvement for the Targeted Improvement Plan to see if districts who specifically target reading are seeing improved outcomes as aligned with the state's SIMR.

Planned data comparisons

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 one strategy with two main components. The Office of Special Education will analyze reading proficiency data for districts who have selected reading as the focus for improvement on the Targeted Improvement Plan submitted.

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. The goal of data management and analysis is for the Office of Special Education to implement a timely feedback loop between collection and implementation. This will allow 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 major strategy and the two main components that Nebraska is implementing.

Strategy: MTSS Framework - Implementation Support Team Data Collection Processes			
<u>Data Collection</u>	<u>When Collected</u>	<u>How Collected</u>	<u>When Analyzed</u>
MTSS Training Fidelity Observation Checks	During each training provided	Observation check completed by IST staff observer	Quarterly
MTSS Training Perceptions Survey	After each training provided	Survey completed by participants and collected by IST staff prior to dismissal from training	Quarterly
MTSS Technical Assistance protocols	After each TA session in a district/building	Self-report by IST staff	Quarterly
Implementation Rubric	Annually in spring	Completed by IST staff for each district Completed by leadership teams during spring evaluation sessions	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: MTSS Framework - NPBIS 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 the fall and winter	Completed by all school staff and collected by school leadership team	Quarterly
Student performance (SWIS)	By incident	SWIS	Quarterly

Strategy: MTSS Framework Data Collection Processes			
<u>Data Collection</u>	<u>When Collected</u>	<u>How Collected</u>	<u>When Analyzed</u>
Google Doc	During stakeholder meetings following release of website	Electronically	Fall 2018
Coaching perception survey	After each training provided	Survey completed by participants and collected by staff prior to dismissal from training	Following each training

Component 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 winter	TIP Review Tool completed by the Office of Special Education staff	Annually in the winter

Component 2: 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	Following each meeting
Comprehensive Needs Assessment	Winter - required by buildings identified as CSI	Electronically	Winter
Conference Surveys	During MTSS Conference	Electronically	Conference data analyzed fall/winter of 2018

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	Fall and Winter after assessment window

Data analysis indicates that at this phase of implementation, Nebraska is collecting the necessary data and appears to be on target for meeting a majority of the outcomes detailed within Phase III - Year 2 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 one strategy with two components 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: MTSS Framework		
<u>Key Measure</u>	<u>How Progress is Demonstrated</u>	<u>Changes Made As Necessary</u>
Type of training and support provided TIP Review Data	Data collected from observations made during training are reviewed by the project staff to target additional support needed by project staff. TIP data from districts receiving training and support from the Implementation Support Team is reviewed to determine whether district receiving support submit TIPs that are complete, identify 1 EBP, and report progress toward target.	Data shows that project staff are implementing trainings as required. No changes needed at this time, but data will continue to be analyzed. First year of this type of analysis to show impact. Data will continue to be collected and analyzed.

Component 1: Increase Use of EBPs		
<u>Key Measure</u>	<u>How Progress is Demonstrated</u>	<u>Changes Made As Necessary</u>
Review Tool	Data review from TIPs submission to identify supports and training districts need with the continuous improvement process.	Reformatting how the TIP is submitted

Component 2: 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 a slow and complex process. Office of Special Education staff will continue to invite and engage offices to participate and attend outside meetings as requested.
Conference Survey	High degree of satisfaction with the conference	Moving conference date to later in the year.
Documentation of monitoring protocol	Establishment of Monitoring Protocol with greater emphasis on data and outcomes	Data and feedback from the districts selected for monitoring.

Evidence of change to baseline data for key measures

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 on the state and MAP assessment for districts who have focused on improving reading for the Targeted Improvement Plan.

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

With the requirement for districts to engage in a continuous improvement process through the development of a Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP), stakeholders expressed concern with the report due on August 1. Stakeholders felt that the August due date required them to have the TIP ready for submission before summer break began and was developed after schools decided on professional development activities for the following school year. The Office of Special Education in conjunction with stakeholders moved the submission date for the TIP to December 1, rather than August 1. Districts were responsible for reporting their progress of implementation of the evidence-based strategy selected December 1, 2018. The Office of Special Education has included components to the secure district website that will permit a more streamlined submission process for Districts as well as NDE review. The district reporting date change did not affect the state's ability to complete TIP reviews to collect the necessary data for the Phase III - Year 3 SSIP submission. As a result, the Office of Special Education will maintain the December 1 due date for TIP submission.

Based on the data from the most recent review of the TIPs, the Office of Special Education has identified trainings needed to better support districts. A list of training that districts need is on page 13. The state has also identified areas of the TIP that can be further streamlined to assist districts in submitting the TIP. These changes will be implemented in time for the December 1, 2019 submission.

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 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 and helping to support the implementation of 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

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 with the state and MAP assessment for districts who have selected reading as a focus for improvement.

The Office of Special Education and stakeholders have determined the SIMR is appropriate and continues to be the focus of improvement for the state. However, it is clear with the changes in the vendor for the state assessment used to measure reading proficiency; scores from 2017 cannot be compared to scores from 2018. Consequently, NDE looked to the use of an alternative measure, NWEA's Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). MAP is used as a formative assessment within Nebraska schools and provides robust measures of progress toward proficiency. The Office of Special Education and the Office of Data, Research and Evaluation is now able to access and overlay demographic data onto the MAP data for analysis. As a result, The Office of Special Education hopes to continue to access MAP data to establish interim goals.

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

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 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. Specifics regarding how stakeholders have been involved can be found in the section *Stakeholder involvement in SSIP Implementation* beginning on page 14.

The evaluation components have been discussed with multiple stakeholders including staff from the Office of Special Education, 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

Stakeholders are key participants throughout the entire SSIP process particularly with the implementation of the MTSS Framework. For MTSS, Nebraska stakeholders have provided feedback on the MTSS self-assessment and analyzed feedback each time a pilot district took the self-assessment to determine what changes were needed to the self-assessment before releasing for all districts to use. Stakeholders at all levels of involvement have the opportunity to review data from the MTSS conference, self-assessment, and TIPs which provide input into next steps. Additional specifics of stakeholder involvement can be found on page 14.

Summary of Evaluation

- District Targeted Improvement Plans were submitted in a timely manner and contained an implementation and evaluation plan.
- 181 Nebraska districts have chosen reading as a focus for improvement and of those districts, 118 have chosen MTSS as the framework in which to embed the evidence-based strategy to be used.
- An MTSS website was developed to house resources.
- Work to align the internal infrastructure continues and is ongoing.
- The vendor used for the reading state assessment was changed during the spring of 2018 that incorporated a computer adaptive component.
- NDE has overlaid demographic data onto the MAP data for use to determine progress toward the SIMR.

Data Quality Issues

Data limitations that affected reports of progress in implementing the SSIP and achieving the SIMR due to the 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 limitations regarding MAP data is described on pages 22-23.

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

Strategy: MTSS Framework

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.

Component 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 staff within the Office of Special Education has taken on additional responsibilities with providing technical assistance to districts. The Office of Special Education staff 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 Office of Special Education staff in these specific areas.

An additional change to the TIP is the formatting of how the TIP will be submitted. The Office of Special Education has rebuilt a secure district website that emphasizes the key components of the continuous improvement process and built in features that will simplify the review process. Although the new format was simpler for districts to use, there were some component that districts missed as the TIP was submitted. The Office of Special Education is reviewing the components that districts did not complete and determine if those components are needed or can be removed.

Finally, in reviewing the TIPs, the Office of Special Education determined specific areas in which districts require additional support. Trainings that have been targeted for development are discussed on page 13.

In order to increase the consistency of reviewing the TIPs, the Office of Special Education limited the reviewers one member of the NDE staff and Westat. This staff member, along with Westat, ensured reviews were consistent and feedback was specific.

Component 2: Systems Alignment

Measures for changes in the infrastructure have 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 is using *Leading by Convening* rubrics to document work across programs within the department to measure changes in infrastructure. Progress toward systems alignment can be shown in the development of the comprehensive needs assessment, the collaborative efforts the department has undergone to support districts identified as “comprehensive supports and intervention” though ESSA, and the revision of the monitoring process used by the Office of Special Education. Districts also report they see the Department as partners in improvement rather than solely playing a regulator role.

SIMR:

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. Nebraska changed the vendor providing the statewide assessments in 2018 which impacted 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.

Limitations regarding MAP data were identified and are detailed on page 22-23.

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.
- Changes with the statewide reading assessment affect the state's ability to compare longitudinally reading proficiency data.
- MOUs allow 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 began. Issues regarding data quality and concerns for changes to infrastructure will be monitored as measurement continues.

Plans for improving data quality

Due to the incomplete data set for MAP data, NDE provided districts with guidance regarding assessment set up to ensure that districts are using the unique Student ID provided by NDE on all MAP assessments. This alteration will enable NDE to get both fall and winter scores on the MAP data while overlaying demographic data that is already collected.

The Office of Special Education is also working with the Office of Data, Research and Evaluation to ensure reports can be generated from the secure website districts upload their Targeted Improvement Plans enabling the office to pull data directly from the site rather than from the TIP reviews completed.

At this point in time, no other changes to the statewide reading assessment (NSCAS) are anticipated which should enable the Office of Special Education to compare the 2018 reading proficiency scores with those obtained in the future.

Summary for Data Quality Issues

- Strategy: MTSS Framework: No data quality issues reported.
- Component 1: Increase Use of EBPs: Although there are no concerns with the data collection, validity, or reliability for the purposes of reporting progress or results, additional changes to the TIP are needed to help streamline the process for districts.
- Component 2: Systems Alignment: No data quality issues reported.
- SIMR
 - Change in the vendor for the statewide reading assessment and inclusion of computer adaptive component
 - Potential issue with use of longitudinal statewide data
 - Incomplete data set of 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 the main strategy MTSS Framework), Nebraska shifted to a more comprehensive and differentiated framework for MTSS implementation that is inclusive of multiple levels supporting the statewide implementation of MTSS. The development of an MTSS website that includes resources and information was released in the summer of 2018 and allows for the scale-up and sustainability of MTSS.

For component 1 (Increase Use of EBPs), from stakeholder feedback and survey results, the Office of Special Education updated the secure website in which districts submit the Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP). The new secure website highlighted the components of the continuous improvement process and streamlined the requirements of the TIP submission.

For component 2 (Systems Alignment), the Committee for the Coordination of Systemic Improvement (CCSI) continues to work at developing a continuous improvement process and piloted a Comprehensive Needs Assessment for districts identified as needing Comprehensive Supports and Intervention.

In the areas of monitoring, programmatic and fiscal mapping, Nebraska continues 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 (MTSS Framework):

Data showing the impact of the implementation of the MTSS framework is just starting to be collected. Data of districts receiving support from the Implementation Support Team is being correlated with key aspects of the TIP review which can be seen on page 16.

Component 1 (Increase Use of EBPs): All 244 districts submitted a Targeted Improvement Plan that included each of the required areas. As the TIP is designed to contain multiple components, fidelity data was the focus of the submission due to the Office of Special Education December 2018. Information from TIP reviews assists in the development of internal and external training needed to ensure there is an increase in the use of evidence-based practices and EBPs lead to the improvement of outcomes for students with disabilities.

Component 3 (Systems Alignment): The Learning Collaborative which has transformed into CCSI continues to meet frequently and is committed to supporting the SSIP efforts. The Office of Special Education continues to be involved in each department 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 barriers arise.

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

Strategy (MTSS Framework):

The number of districts reporting the use of MTSS has grown as shown by the TIP review data. Due to reports from those receiving support by the Implementation Team, NDE has received more requests for support. As a result, NDE has hired regional MTSS support personnel to help fulfil requests. Outcome data is starting to be collected and analyzed.

Component 1 (Increase Use of EBP):

The TIPs reviewed identified supports needed for improvement and evidence-based strategies. The most critical component for support identified was the need for districts to understand the difference between outcome and implementation data as well as assistance with identifying tools to measure fidelity. For additional information refer page 13.

Component 2 (Systems Alignment): The Office of Special Education continues to use 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. Members from the SSIP PLC are part of the CCSI (see *Progress on Component 2: Systems Alignment* on beginning on page 11).

Measurable improvement in the SIMR in relation to the targets

During the 2016-17 school year, a new statewide reading assessment was used to assess English Language Arts (ELA). The new (ELA) assessment assessed new College and Career Ready standards. In addition to new assessment aligned to new standards, the Department of Education decided to hire a new vendor to administer the 2018 statewide assessments. As a result of these changes, and the impact these changes have on reading proficiency scores, the Office of Special Education will wait to make adjustments in the SIMR targets until new baselines can be established.

Summary

Strategy: MTSS Framework

- NDE hosted the second annual MTSS Framework Conference
- Continuation of multiple stakeholder groups to facilitate implementation of needs identified by stakeholders
- Development of a comprehensive needs assessment aligned with the district level MTSS self-assessment to facilitate continuous improvement with districts identified as "Comprehensive Support and Intervention"
- Consulting framework developed to assist districts with self-analysis for implementation of MTSS
- Continued development of the MTSS website
- Creation of a technical assistance document is under development for MTSS

Component 1: Increase Use of EBPs

- TIP Review completed on all TIPs to determine how districts are measuring fidelity and establish the number of districts who report progress toward the target set
- Development of an online secure district website submission for the TIP
- Continuation of a funding process to support trainings identified by the Office of Special Education based on the TIP reviews

Component 2: Systems Alignment

- Restructuring of the Office of Special Education personnel roles and responsibilities aligning with the State Board's Strategic plan
- Strategic planning across the Department continues
- Revision of the monitoring process used within the Office of Special Education to align with AQuESTT and provide a more balanced focus between compliance and outcomes

SIMR

- Initial analysis of MAP data to provide progress monitoring of SIMR
- Implementation of the statewide reading assessment developed by a new vendor including a computer adaptive component

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 III-Year 1 of the SSIP and engaged in strategic conversations with stakeholders regarding implementation data, timelines for the activities originally planned changed and additional activities planned. Those specific activities include providing a comprehensive framework for MTSS with a publicity plan, developing resources to be used within technical assistance with MTSS, increasing the use of evidence-based practices, etc. A description of what the Office of Special Education will be implementing over the next year for the SSIP-Year 3 can be found below.

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.

<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
(NEW) 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
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 implementation of MTSS Framework	Google Doc	Survey of Stakeholders regarding functionality of new website	Districts report using website materials NDE adds/deletes/changes content based on stakeholder feedback
Monitor implementation of MTSS Framework	Conference Surveys	Perceptual data gathered from surveys	Tier I MTSS implementation with increased fidelity
Monitor Systems Alignment	Google Doc	Survey of Stakeholders regarding continuous improvement tool	Continuous improvement tool aligned with AQuESTT, ESSA, and all Department Office needs
Monitor Systems Alignment	Final Report	Implementation of required activities	District staff receive training needed to implement TIPs and outcomes improve for students with disabilities

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.

Area of Focus	Anticipated Barriers	Steps to Address Barriers
Systems Alignment	<p>Providing regional/reactionary technical assistance (TA) on compliance/regulatory special education issues</p> <p>Primarily oriented around subject area or silos</p> <p>Regulatory compliance-based professional development is offered minimally</p>	<p>Restructure the Office of Special Education staff roles/infrastructure to provide differentiated supports to districts</p> <p>Connecting, convening and partnering within NDE teams as well as other state/private agencies, schools, and families</p> <p>Provide ongoing professional development based on assessed needs to both internal staff and external partners</p> <p>Broader staff expertise, including both content knowledge and breadth of experiences</p>

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

Area of Focus	Anticipated Barriers	Steps to Address Barriers
MTSS	<p>Lack of common language to describe components of MTSS due to lack of understanding of the Framework</p> <p>‘Siloed’ staff responsibilities based on individual regional response</p> <p>Limited staff knowledge/guidance and implementation planning</p>	<p>Development of MTSS website providing resources and examples of practice in use and how the fit into the MTSS framework</p> <p>Collaborative supports, focused on regional and individual educational needs</p> <p>Comprehensive professional development targeted on both academic and behavioral systems</p> <p>Establish a statewide technical assistance resource center</p>

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

Additional Barriers:

During the development of Phase III-Year 1, 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) increase 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.