



# NEBRASKA'S STATE SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Phase III Year 6

January 2022

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## Section A: Data Analysis

### State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR)

#### **What is the State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR)?**

Nebraska's State-Identified Measurable Result is to increase the reading proficiency for students with disabilities at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade level as measured by the statewide reading assessment.

### Change of SiMR

#### ***Has the SiMR changed since the last SSIP submission?***

Yes.

#### **Provide a description of the system analysis activities to support changing the SiMR.**

The State along with Stakeholders, reviewed reading assessment data for grades 3, 4, 8, and 11. The new requirements for reporting for Indicator 3 were also reviewed and considered. Stakeholders felt it was critical for the SiMR to align more directly to Indicator 3 than it had in the past to enable districts to understand how they were performing in comparison to the rest of the state towards improving reading proficiency for students with disabilities.

#### **Please list the data source(s) used to support the change of the SiMR.**

- Nebraska analyzed statewide assessment (NSCAS) for 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> graders.
- OSEP Measurement Table for Indicator 3

#### **Provide a description of how the State analyzed data to reach the decision to change the SiMR.**

The State along with Stakeholders analyzed the Spring 2021 NSCAS data for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders and 4<sup>th</sup> graders and recognized there wasn't a statistical change between the reading proficiency of 3<sup>rd</sup> grades to that of 4<sup>th</sup> graders. The requirements for Indicator 3 were also reviewed and discussed. Research studies were also reviewed indicating that the transition from learning to read and reading to learn occurred during the 4<sup>th</sup> year. Based on the analysis of this information, the decision to change the SiMR from the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade was made.

#### **Please describe the role of stakeholders in the decision to change the SiMR.**

Stakeholders were informed that OSEP had changed the way assessment was being analyzed and that now OSEP would be looking at specific grade levels rather than grade bands for Indicator 3. Stakeholders discussed the advantages and disadvantages of changing the SiMR in response to the changes to the reporting of assessment data. Stakeholders requested the SiMR be similar to what is reported for

Indicator 3. As a result, the SiMR changes from reporting proficiency of students at the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade level in reading to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

Is the State using a subset of the population from the indicator (e.g., a sample, cohort model)?

No. Nebraska is not using a subset of the population from the indicator, however, based on feedback from the Stakeholders, Nebraska will be breaking down the data submitted for the SiMR by disability category to assist districts in understanding the data and to target efforts for improvement to the students most in need based on the data.

Is the State's theory of action new or revised since the previous submission?

Yes.

Please provide a description of the changes and updates to the theory of action.

Due to the change of the measure for the SiMR from focusing on improving reading proficiency of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders to 4<sup>th</sup> graders, the theory of action was changed to reflect this overall change. Despite the change in measures, the core of the theory of action did not require additional changes.

Please provide a link to the current theory of action.

<https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Theory-of-Action-v2-ACCESS-CHECKED-sped.pdf>

Does the State intend to continue implementing the SSIP without modifications?

No.

If no, describe any changes to the activities, strategies, or timelines described in the previous submission and include a rationale or justification for the changes.

- Breakdown State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR) data by disability category to provide additional meaning to the data allowing them to assist groups most in need
- Upcoming change from using the Measures of academic Progress (MAP) which is currently used to Nebraska Student Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) for growth which will align more closely with the statewide assessment system so teachers have increased knowledge of how students are performing in order to achieve reading standards.
- Focus of Multitiered Systems of Support (MTSS) on Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Learning (SEBL) and impact on reading proficiency due to data showing an increase in mental health issues among students and staff as a result of the pandemic

- Timeline for establishing interim targets using NSCAS growth due to the upcoming change in interim measures from the MAP assessment to the NSCAS growth assessment
- Alignment activities to clarify for districts the interconnectedness between MTSS, High Quality Instructional Materials, SEBL, Continuous School Improvement, and the whole child based on data gathered indicating the confusion districts have about those initiatives.

## Progress toward the SiMR

### **Does the State use two targets for measurement?**

No

### **Historical data**

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2020	25.63%

### **Targets**

FFY	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target	25.63%	26.13%	27.13%	28.13%	29.13%	30.13%

### **FFY 2020 SPP/APR Data**

Number of Students with Disabilities at the 4 <sup>th</sup> grade level who are proficient in reading	Total number of students with disabilities tested on the statewide reading assessment (both general assessment and alternate assessment)	FFY 2019 Data	FFY 2020 Target	FFY 2020 Data	Status	Slippage
1073	4187	N/A	25.63%	25.63%	Met	No

### **Provide the data source for the FFY 2020 data.**

Data comes from the same source as Indicator 3 (NSCAS proficiency scores for 4<sup>th</sup> grade students who received a valid score and for whom a proficiency level was assigned for both students with IEPs against grade level academic achievement standards and proficiency rate for children with IEPs against alternate academic achievement standards.

### **Please describe how the data are collected and analyzed for the SiMR.**

Data is collected based on the requirements of Indicator 3. For the analysis for the SiMR, the state adds together the number of students with IEPs who received a valid score and a proficiency level was assigned against grade level academic achievement standards to the number of students with IEPs who received a valid score and proficiency level was assigned against alternate academic achievement standards divided by the total number of students at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade with IEPs.

### **Additional SiMR data.**

Based on feedback from stakeholder, the State breakdown the NCSAS data by disability category to help give meaning to the data and allow districts to see what

groups of students needed to be targeted in their improvement work. The data in the table shows the proficiency of students at the 4th grade level by disability category and includes both students who took the general education assessment as well as the alternate assessment. The scores are arranged from the lowest to highest levels of proficiency. As you can see, our students with specific learning disabilities are the lowest performing group of students with 11.68% proficient, while our students with speech and language impairments are the highest performing with 43.20% proficient. It is recognized there is a huge gap in performance from our students with SLD to our students with OHI (24.75% proficient), ED (27.39% proficient), and Autism (27.73% proficient), followed by another gap between our students with ID (42.21% proficient) and SLI (43.20% proficient).

**NSCAS by Disability Category**

<u>Disability Category</u>	<u>Percent Proficient</u>
Specific Learning Disability (SLD)	11.68
Other Health Impairment (OHI)	24.75
Emotional Disturbance (ED)	27.39
Autism	27.73
Intellectual Disability (ID)	42.21
Speech/Language Impairment (SLI)	43.20

## Slippage

### ***Did slippage occur?***

No.

## Slippage Rationale

### ***If applicable, describe the reasons for slippage.***

Not applicable as Nebraska met its target for FFY 2020.

## Additional Data Collected

### ***Optional: Has the State collected additional data (i.e., benchmark, CQI, survey) that demonstrates progress toward the SiMR?***

Yes.

## Describe Additional Data Collected

### ***If "Yes", describe any additional data collected by the State to assess progress toward the SiMR.***

Nebraska tested 19,077 fourth-grade students using the MAP assessment. 15,441 students without disabilities and 3,636 students with disabilities were tested. According

to an analysis of the MAP reading scores, districts had an average RIT score in the fall 2020 administration for students without disabilities was 202.37 and 187.24 for students with disabilities. During the spring 2021 administration, the average RIT (Rasch Unit) score for students without disabilities was 208.96 and for students with disabilities was 194.78. A comparison of fall to spring scores shows students with disabilities demonstrated slightly more growth of 7.54 points whereas students without disabilities showed 6.59 points of growth.

#### **Average RIT Scores on Reading MAP Assessment**

<b>4<sup>th</sup> Grade Students</b>	<b>Fall 2020</b>	<b>Spring 2021</b>
<b>Without Disabilities</b>	<b>202.37</b>	<b>208.96</b>
<b>With Disabilities</b>	<b>187.24</b>	<b>194.78</b>

When looking specifically at students with disabilities and performance on the MAP reading assessment, scores varied by disability with students with Emotional Disability and Speech/Language Impairments out-scoring students with other disabilities in all three administrations of the MAP assessment. Students with Intellectual Disabilities and Autism had the lowest RIT scores for all test administrations. Average RIT scores for the fall of 2020, winter of 2020 and spring of 2021 are as follows for each category.

- Emotional Disability was 178.37; 185.98; 185.95 respectively
- Speech/Language Impairment was 172.44; 182.60; 182.56 respectively
- Other Health Impaired was 172.07; 181.04; 180.85 respectively
- Specific Learning Disability was 169.05; 175.48; 178.73 respectively
- Autism was 167.74; 172.60; 175.24 respectively
- Intellectual Disability was 155.83; 159.62; and 162.19 respectively

#### **Average RIT on MAP by Disability Category**

<b>Disability</b>	<b>Fall 2020</b>	<b>Winter 2020</b>	<b>Spring 2021</b>
<b>Intellectual Disability</b>	155.83	159.62	162.19
<b>Specific Learning Disability</b>	169.05	175.48	178.73
<b>Other Health Impaired</b>	172.07	181.04	180.85
<b>Autism</b>	167.74	172.60	175.24
<b>Emotional Disability</b>	178.37	185.98	185.95
<b>Speech/Language Impairment</b>	172.44	182.60	182.56
<b>No Disability</b>	176.28	185.53	189.13

Nebraska also uses the MAP RIT scores to determine the percentage of students considered at-risk for not becoming proficient readers. Based on the 2021 spring administration of the MAP assessment, 11,668 kindergarten students took the assessment with 9,955 students without disabilities and 1,713 students with disabilities; 13,051 first grade students took the assessment with 10,895 students without disabilities and 2,156 students with disabilities; 16,419 second grade students took the assessment with 13,513 students without disabilities and 2,906 students with disabilities; 16,252 third grade students took the assessment with 13,197 students without disabilities and 3,055 students with disabilities. In looking at percent of students considered at risk, kindergarten had 17.64% students without disabilities and 32.28% of students with disabilities; 1<sup>st</sup> grade had, 20.12% students without disabilities and 43.00% students with



disabilities; 2<sup>nd</sup> grade had 12.28% students without disabilities and 38.16% students with disabilities; and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade had 12.18% students without disabilities and 43.86% students with disabilities.

**Percent of Students found “At-Risk” of Not Achieving Reading Proficiency Based on 2021 Spring MAP Assessment Data**

	Kindergarten	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade
<b>Students without Disabilities</b>	17.64%	20.12%	12.28%	12.18%
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	32.28%	43.00%	38.16%	43.86%

Nebraska also analyzes the pre-literacy and language data from the Teaching Strategies (TS) Gold assessment for 3- and 4-year-old students. Based on the 2021 fall benchmark, 34.74% of 3-year-olds without disabilities and 37.71% of 4-year-olds without disabilities were considered below expectations. 63.37% of 3-year-olds with disabilities and 63.46% of 4-year-olds with disabilities were considered below expectations. 65.26% of 3-year-olds without disabilities and 62.29% of 4-year-olds without disabilities were considered to meet or exceed expectations whereas 36.63% of 3-year-olds with disabilities and 36.54% of 4-year-olds with disabilities met or exceeded expectations.

**Percent of 3 and 4-Year-Old’s Performance on Pre-Literacy and Language Skills on TS Gold Fall Benchmark**

	Performance	3-Year-Olds	4-Year-Olds
<b>Students Without Disabilities</b>	Below Expectations	34.74%	37.71%
	Meets or Exceeds Expectations	65.26%	62.29%
<b>Students With Disabilities</b>	Below Expectations	63.37%	63.46%
	Meet or Exceeds Expectations	36.63%	36.54%

## Quality Concerns

**Describe any data quality issues, unrelated to COVID-19, specific to the SiMR and include actions taken to address data quality concerns.**

Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), the institution responsible for the reporting of the MAP data to the state, had a system issue that resulted in the lack of reporting of all Fall and some Winter scores obtained by students during the Fall 2019 and Winter 2019 administration of the MAP assessment. Nebraska uses MAP data to show progress toward the SiMR and to determine the number of students with disabilities who are considered “at-risk” for not becoming proficient readers. As a result, Nebraska did not have a full data set to analyze. In the future, MAP data will no longer be used. It is being replaced with the NSACAS Growth Assessment and will have similar assessment windows and provide similar data as the MAP Assessment. The Office of Special Education is working with the Assessment Office as well as the Data Division to ensure data is received on a quarterly basis to ensure data is analyzed on a regular basis and errors or missing data caught earlier.

## COVID-19 Data Quality Concerns

**Did the State identify any data quality concerns directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic during the reporting period?**

Yes

## COVID-19 Narrative

***If data for this reporting period were impacted specifically by COVID-19, the State must include in the narrative for the indicator: (1) the impact on data completeness, validity and reliability for the indicator; (2) an explanation of how COVID-19 specifically impacted the State's ability to collect data for the indicator; and (3) any steps the State took to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the data collection.***

Due to the ongoing pandemic, parents were allowed to opt-out of the NSCAS for the Spring 2021 testing. As a result, there were 206 fourth-grade students with disabilities who did not participate in the statewide reading assessment which affects the completeness of the data. The State had allowed parents of all students to opt-out of the statewide reading assessment during the Spring 2021 administration of the assessment due to the ongoing pandemic and safety concerns of students with disabilities attending school in person to take the assessment. To mitigate the requirement of students having to take the assessment in person, districts allowed those who took the assessment but were attending school virtually to take the assessment at alternate times in smaller group settings in person to lessen the opportunity of transmission of the virus. For the Spring 2022 administration of the assessment, parents will no longer be able to "opt out" students for the assessment.

## Section B: Implementation, Analysis and Evaluation

### Evaluation Plan

***Please provide a link to the State's current evaluation plan.***

<https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Revised-Logic-Model-.pdf>

### Evaluation Plan Changes

Yes, the evaluation plan has changed.

### Description of Changes

***If "Yes", please provide a description of the changes and updates to the evaluation plan.***

The evaluation plan was updated to reflect the following changes

- Measurement of the SiMR from targeting reading proficiency of students with disabilities at the 3rd-grade level to those at the 4th-grade level.
- Measurement showing progress toward the SiMR from Measures of Academic Progress to NSCAS Growth
- Removed activities previously accomplished
- Added new measures for systems alignment activities

***If "Yes," provide a rationale or justification for the changes to the SSIP evaluation plan.***

The change of the SiMR measurement from reading proficiency of students at the 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade level to the 4<sup>th</sup>-grade level required minimal change but was needed to accurately reflect the changes in measure required by OSEP for Indicator 3 (Proficiency of Students with Disabilities on Reading Assessments for 4<sup>th</sup> Grade) and how data was being analyzed to ensure clarity for Stakeholders.

The Nebraska Department of Education has worked with stakeholders for a few years to discuss reducing the number of assessments required to understand how students were achieving proficiency in standards. As a result of these discussions, the Department is moving toward using an NSCAS Growth measure which takes the best of MAP Growth and the NSCAS General Summative Assessment (see <https://www.education.ne.gov/assessment/nscas-growth/>).

Although the Office of Special Education has indicated changes to the evaluation plan with each SSIP submission, changes had not been formally made to the evaluation plan submitted with Phase II until recently. To communicate more clearly with stakeholders and OSEP, the evaluation plan was copied from Phase II, consolidated, and published in a separate link on the Special Education website. Updates included and will continue to include removal of activities accomplished through the work implemented and continue to focus on the quality, relevance, and usefulness of the infrastructure strategies and evidence-based practices that are core to the SSIP.

The evaluation plan was expanded to include specific infrastructure activities being targeted by the Department of Education as a whole. Recently, the Department in conjunction with Instructional Partners (a non-public organization working with the state of Nebraska to support great teaching and accelerate learning), identified a need to improve alignment, communication, and messaging with key infrastructure strategies including work with High Quality Instruction Materials, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, Continuous School Improvement, Social Emotional Learning/Social Emotional Behavioral Learning and whole child well-being. Through conversations among state staff, Educational Service Units (ESUs), districts, schools, and families, the Department recognized how each group interpreted the work and the need to clarify how these specific strategies align and support each other, rather than independent from each other. These activities have been included in the updated evaluation plan and will be growing and emerging as to work is done and data analysis requires updates to the work.

## Continued Evidence-Based Practices

***Provide a summary of each infrastructure improvement strategy implemented in the reporting period.***

Nebraska's main infrastructure strategy is MTSS focusing on aligning resources and programs within the State educational system.

For the main strategy of implementing MTSS statewide, the State Implemented Language Essentials for Teacher of Reading and Spelling (LETRS), held an MTSS conference, a reading symposium and provide MTSS systems level training and training specific to English Language Arts.

To further align resources and programs within the system, Nebraska engaged in the assistance of Instructional Partners to identify specific areas that require further alignment of programs and initiatives at the State level.

**Describe the short-term or intermediate outcomes achieved for each infrastructure improvement strategy during the reporting period including the measures or rationale used by the State and stakeholders to assess and communicate achievement. Please relate short-term outcomes to one or more areas of a systems framework (e.g., governance, data, finance, accountability/monitoring, quality standards, professional development and/or technical assistance) and explain how these strategies support system change and are necessary for: (a) achievement of the SiMR; (b) sustainability of systems improvement efforts; and/or (c) scale-up.**

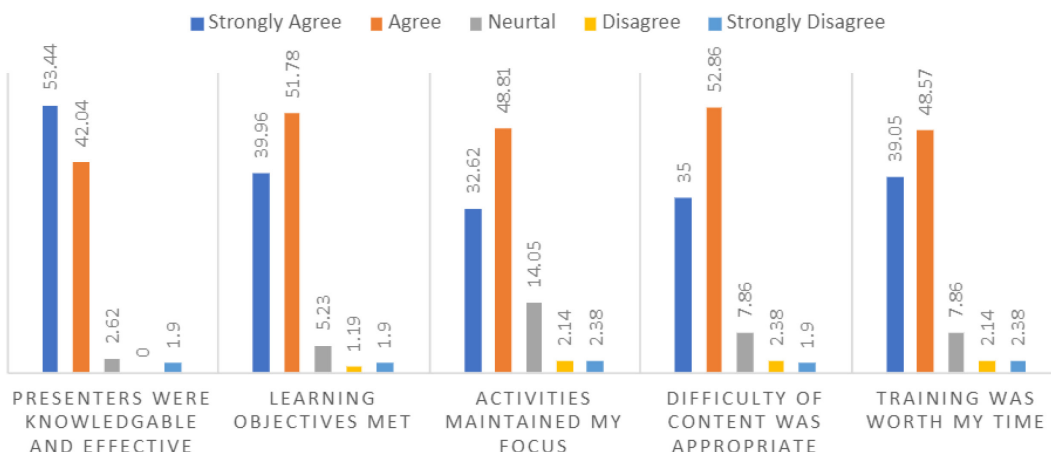
MTSS:

#### Systems Training:

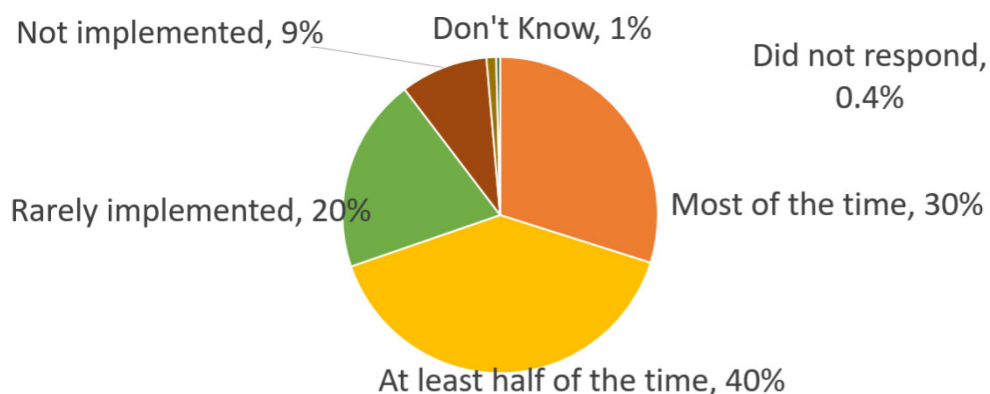
The MTSS State Facilitators provided training and support to districts dependent on their needs. Of the 244 districts, 34.4% (84 districts) have received 4 days of MTSS systems training; 11.5% (28 districts) have received 3 days of systems training; 10.2% (25 districts) have received 2 days of training; and 2.05% (5 districts) have received 1 day of training. So far, Nebraska has only 41.8% (102 districts) that have not received system training for MTSS. Systems training relates to governance, data, finance, quality standards and professional development and/or technical assistance to support sustainability of systems improvement efforts and scale-up across the state.

After each training, participants filled out a survey to gather information related to the quality, relevance, and usefulness of the training. Over the course of the four days of training, surveys were conducted after each and the aggregated results are shown in the table below. A total of 420 responses were captured showing that a majority of the participants strongly agreed or agreed with the following: presenters' knowledge and effectiveness (53.44% and 42.04% respectively); learning objectives were met (39.96% and 51.78% respectively); training maintained the participants' focus (32.62% and 48.81% respectively); the difficulty of the content was appropriate (35% and 52.86% respectively); and the training was worth participants' time (39.05% and 48.57% respectively).

### NE MTSS SYSTEMS TRAINING DAYS SURVEY DATA



As part of the Targeted Improvement Plan, Districts were asked to report the level of implementation of MTSS based on a Likert scale. Based on that information, 30% of Districts reported they implement the MTSS “most of the time”; 40% of Districts reported they implement evidence-based practice “at least half of the time”; 20% reported they “rarely implemented”; 1% indicated they “don’t know”; 9% reported the MTSS was “not implemented” and 0.4% did not respond.



#### ELA Training:

In order to support districts who have selected reading as a focus for improvement on their Targeted Improvement Plans (TIPs), the MTSS State Facilitators also implemented training specific to reading. The training provided Building and Refining the Core for reading (B&R Core) to 24.6% (60 districts); Intervention to 19.7% (48 districts); Sustainability to 11.9% (29 districts); and Sustainability Partnership to 10.7% (26 districts). ELA training relates to professional development and/or technical assistance and quality standards to support achievement toward the SiMR, sustainability of systems improvement efforts, and scale-up.

#### LETRS Training:

To better support reading, MTSS provided training in the Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS). In the area of professional development and technical assistance, the state trained 118 individuals in the essentials of reading and spelling. Participants included teachers, administrators, instructional coaches. LETRS training is essential for achievement toward the SiMR.

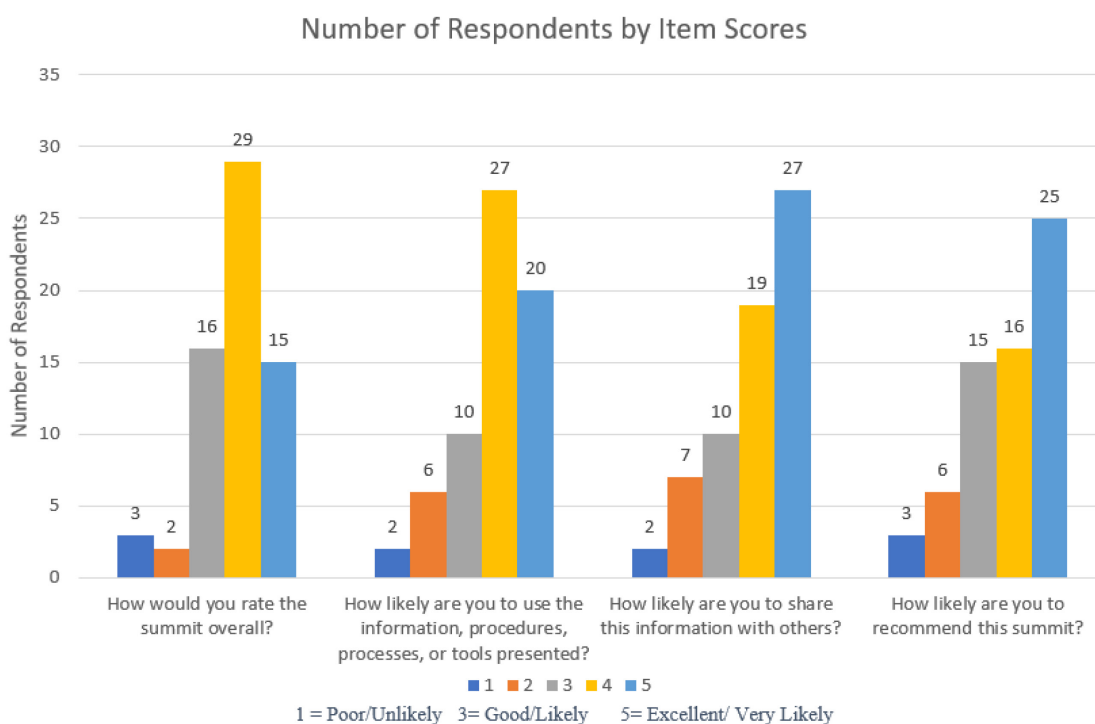
#### MTSS Reading Symposium Data:

The annual reading symposium was attended by 73 individuals who ranged in role from teachers to administrators. The reading symposium relates to professional development and/or technical assistance to support achievement toward the SiMR, sustainability of systems improvement efforts, and scale-up.

#### MTSS Summit Data:

The annual MTSS Summit was attended by 801 individuals who ranged in role from teachers to administrators. The annual MTSS Summit relates to professional development and/or technical assistance to support achievement toward the SiMR, sustainability of systems improvement efforts, and scale-up. Overall, the evaluation of

the Summit data shows that it was rated very well (67% rated excellent or very good), people who attended were likely to use the information presented (72% rated likely or very likely) and would share the information learned with others (70% rated likely or very likely).



#### MTSS Universal Support:

From Jan. 1, 2021, to Nov. 30, 2021, the NeMTSS website had nearly 26,000 unique visitors, more than 3.5 million hits and approximately 4,450 downloads.

#### 2021 NeMTSS Website Traffic

	Unique Visitors	Number of Visits	Pages	Hits
January 2021	1,770	2,974	129,784	244,129
February 2021	2,066	3,208	191,500	327,215
March 2021	2,195	3,663	91,634	254,639
April 2021	2,340	3,865	135,639	287,042
May 2021	2,258	3,781	163,687	316,640
June 2021	2,644	4,005	256,602	415,197
July 2021	2,395	4,729	147,924	272,777
August 2021	3,534	6,821	146,437	352,647
September 2021	3,179	5,344	82,113	305,978
October 2021	2,328	4,486	160,165	488,633
November 2021	1,237	2,054	4,433	272,134
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,946</b>	<b>44,930</b>	<b>1,509,918</b>	<b>3,537,031</b>
<b>Monthly Average</b>	<b>2,359</b>	<b>4,085</b>	<b>137,265</b>	<b>321,548</b>

In 2021, there were a total of 4,450 downloads from the NeMTSS Website with 999 downloads of the Program Comparison chart. The Program Comparison chart allows users to evaluate and compare information on more than 80 academic and social-emotional learning programs and interventions. The most downloaded files from the NeMTSS website are listed below.

#### 2021 Top 10 NeMTSS Website Downloads

File	Downloads	Partial Downloads
NeMTSS Program Comparison Chart	999	17
NeMTSS Framework Document Part 2	601	32
PBIS CICO Getting Started Workbook	424	38
Teachers Guide to Problem Solving Within MTSS (Florida Dept. of Ed)	395	38
Program Comparison Chart Research Information	379	13
Welcome to NeMTSS PowerPoint	354	14
New MTSS Self-Assessment	328	0
PBIS/Pyramid Model/CASEL SEL Crosswalk	327	19
New MTSS Self-Assessment	329	0
2021 NeMTSS Summit Schedule	314	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,450</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>Monthly Average</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>18</b>

The top 10 most visited NeMTSS Webpages for 2020 are listed below:

1. Home
2. Pyramid Model
3. 2021 NeMTSS Summit – Virtual Participant Page
4. 2021 NeMTSS Summit
5. Resources Program Comparison Tool (Landing page)
6. Why NeMTSS
7. About NeMTSS
8. Essential Elements – Essential Element #3 (Evidence-Based Practices)
9. Resources Library
10. Getting Started

#### Systems Alignment

Since the inception of the SSIP, the Nebraska Department of Education has been working to align the work of the Office of Special Education and other offices within the Department including the following: MTSS; High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM); Continuous Improvement; Social-Emotional and Social-Emotional/Behavioral Learning; Whole Child Wellbeing. Through the focus of these initiatives, districts have expressed a need for further clarification of each of the initiatives including how each support and ties to the others. As a result of the investigation into the alignment of these initiatives, the NDE has established the following activities:

- Strengthen coherence of MTSS and Continuous Improvement



- Strengthen intersection of MTSS and academics with attention to non-summative assessment guidance in the context of high-quality instructional materials
- Development of a common visual about how MTSS, Continuous Improvement, Whole Child Supports and High-Quality Instructional Materials work together
- Streamline and strengthen school supports and monitoring processes

### New Infrastructure Improvement Strategies

**Did the State implement any new (previously or newly identified) infrastructure improvement strategies during the reporting period?**

No

### Description of New Strategies

**If “Yes”, describe each new (previously or newly identified) infrastructure improvement strategy and the short-term or intermediate outcomes achieved.**

Not Applicable

### Next Steps

**Provide a summary of the next steps for each infrastructure improvement strategy and the anticipated outcomes to be attained during the next reporting period.**

With Nebraska's main infrastructure strategy being MTSS, the priorities moving forward will be to continue focusing on aligning resources and programs within the State educational system.

For the main strategy of implementing MTSS statewide, the State will continue to implement Language Essentials for Teacher of Reading and Spelling (LETRS), hold an MTSS conference, a reading symposium and provide MTSS systems level training and training specific to English Language Arts. These all will continue, building sustainability and implementation supports.

To continue to support districts who have selected reading as a focus for improvement on their Targeted Improvement Plans (TIPs), the MTSS State Facilitators also will continue to implement training specific to reading. Our ELA specific training will have a high focus on the selection of high-quality instructional materials with detail in aligning the Interventions at Tiers II and III to the materials. Both the MTSS Reading Symposium and the MTSS Summit will ensure connectivity to ELA system support in schools. The Office of Special Education has also partnered with the University of Nebraska - Lincoln to develop Workshops on Reading Development Strategies known as the WORDS project. A student's ability to read is a critical predictor of academic and lifelong success. Early identification of children who may need extra reading support is essential to keep them on a positive trajectory. In partnership with schools across Nebraska, the WORDS Project provides sustained support and professional development to kindergarten through third grade (K-3) teachers — empowering them to deliver effective reading instruction and assessment.

With the shift in 2020 and 2021 focusing on renewal and acceleration for all students, specifically students with disabilities as a continued historically marginalized subgroup, it



became more apparent that the focus within schools and thus within the SEA needed to be on system alignment. Across American Rescue Plan consultation meetings, there was a consistent push to create more coherence, efficiency, and mutual reinforcement across the major processes and to create a clearer sense of connection of how these processes interact and to plan into these processes tiers of support based on need. This work would seek to align, define, and streamline NeMTSS, high-quality instructional materials (HQIM), and continuous improvement processes and tools with attention to social emotional learning and whole-child wellbeing.

At the end of this process:

- We want to have a shared vision of success - shared within the entire State Educational Agency and statewide, including our Educational Service Units
- We want our stakeholders to hear us speaking with one voice
- We want to have functional and trusting spaces to identify and productively work through tension and conflict and ensure the work is cohesive
- We want to make it clearer what actions school and system leaders need to take to support students and to make it easier for them to take those actions

Creating this alignment will ensure that schools have the resources they need to support student well-being, ultimately supporting academic growth.

## Summary of Continued Evidence-Based Practices

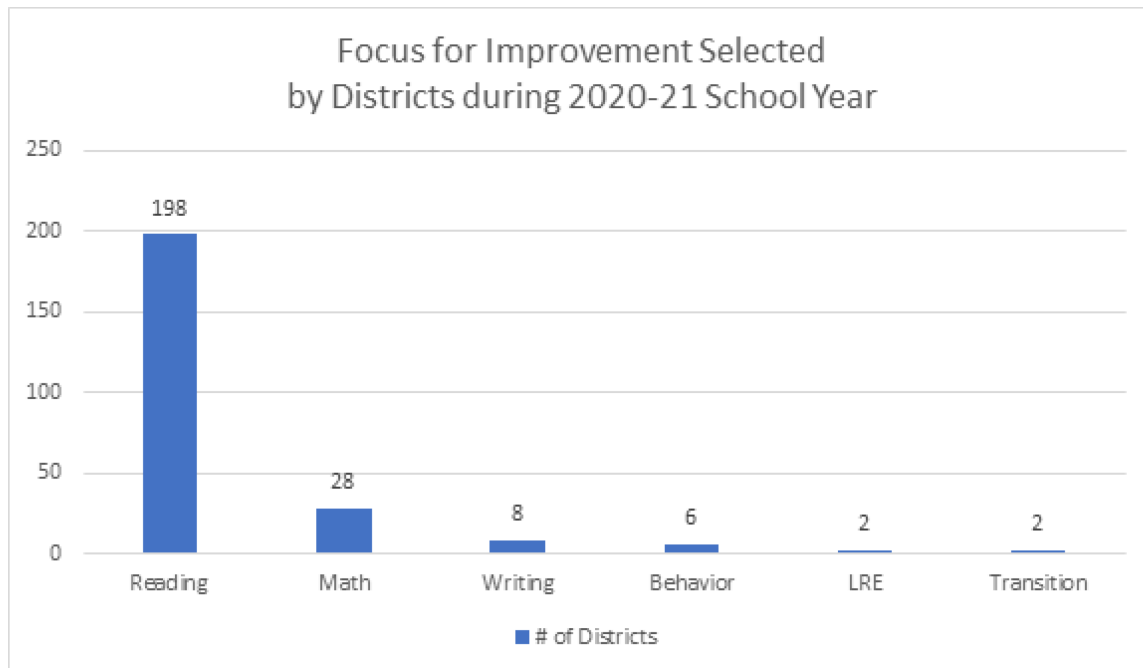
**List the selected evidence-based practices implemented in the reporting period.**

Nebraska continued to require districts to submit and report on the evidence-based practices used to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities through the development of a Targeted Improvement Plan.

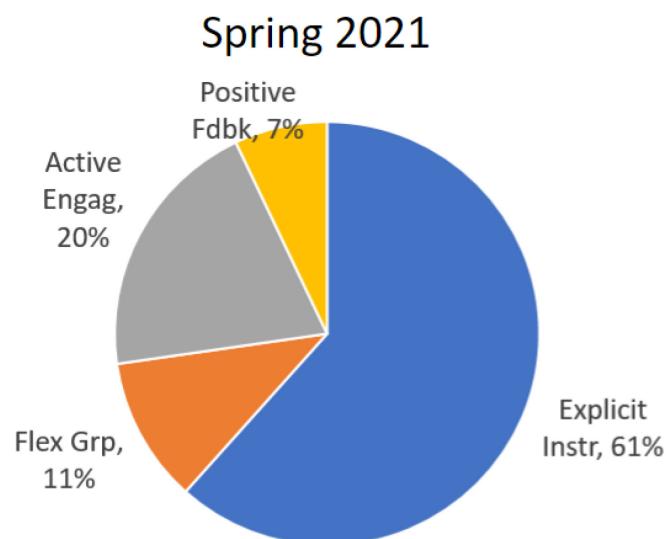
## Summary of Each Evidence-Based Practice

**Provide a summary of how each evidence-based practice and activities or strategies that support its use, is intended to impact the SiMR by change program/district policies, procedures, and/or practices, teacher/provider practices (e.g., behaviors), parent/caregiver outcomes, and/or child outcomes.**

Nebraska continued to require districts to create a Targeted Improvement Plan (TIP) to report the evidence-based strategy implemented to improve student outcomes. Based on a review of the TIP, 81% of the 244 districts focused on reading as their area of improvement which is an increase from the year before.



The evidence-based practices selected by districts include explicit instruction (61%), strategies to promote active student engagement (20%), implementing flexible grouping (11%), and providing positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior (7%) among other strategies.



243 districts provided a numerical target to demonstrate improvement toward their goal. 73% of those districts provided performance data and 55% of the districts indicated they met or exceeded their target.

**Provide a summary of how each evidence-based practice and activities or strategies that support its uses intended to impact the SiMR by changing program/district policies,**

**procedures, and/or practices, teacher/provider practices (e.g., behaviors), parent/caregiver outcomes, and/or child outcomes.**

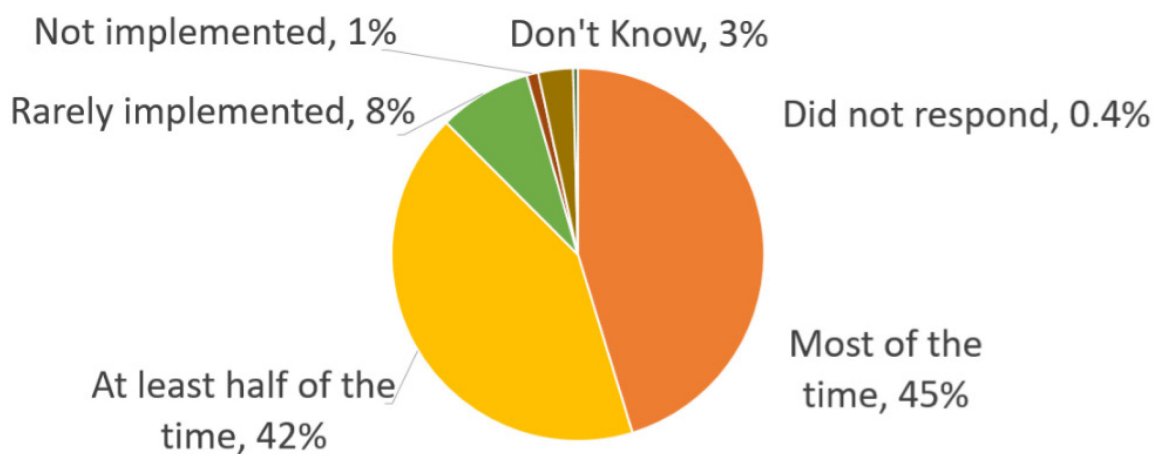
The targeted improvement plan focuses on the core components of continuous improvement and is designed to help districts focus on analyzing data to make decisions to improve the outcomes of students with disabilities. It also requires districts to select a specific evidence-based practice to implement to achieve those results and develop fidelity measures to ensure practices are implemented with fidelity. Districts are provided feedback on the targeted improvement plans submitted to further guide the continuous improvement process. When Nebraska developed Phase I of the SSIP, it was identified that students with disabilities were not achieving at the level anticipated due to the lack of evidence-based practices in use. The targeted improvement plan has required districts to focus on evidence-based practices and has moved to measuring the fidelity of the practices to improve results.

## Fidelity of Implementation

**Describe the data collected to monitor the fidelity of implementation and to assess practice change.**

Districts self-reported the level of fidelity of implementation of the evidence-based practice (EBP) in use as well as fidelity of implementation of MTSS. Information specific to the fidelity of implementation of MTSS can be found in the *Continued Evidence-Based Practices* section on page 12.

As part of the Targeted Improvement Plan, Districts were asked to report the level of implementation of the evidence-based practice selected based on a Likert scale. Based on that information, 45% of Districts reported they implement the evidence-based practice “most of the time”; 42% of Districts reported they implement evidence-based practice “at least half of the time”; 8% reported they “rarely implemented”; 3% indicated they “don’t know”; 1% reported the evidence-based practice was “not implemented” and 0.4% did not respond.



**Describe any additional data (e.g., progress monitoring) that was collected that supports the decision to continue the ongoing use of each evidence-based practice.**

No additional data was collected to support the decision to continue the ongoing use of each evidence-based practice.

**Provide a summary of the next steps for each evidence-based practices and the anticipated outcomes to be attained during the next reporting period.**

Based on a review of the TIPs submitted in 2021, the State will provide additional professional development to assist districts in measuring fidelity, building an effective action plan to track progress, evaluating improvement efforts and applying data-based decision making within a continuous improvement model. With an increase in additional professional development the state anticipates seeing a higher percentage of districts indicating they are implementing with fidelity and obtaining the targets set to ultimately impact student achievement.

## Section C: Stakeholder Engagement

### Strategies Engaging Stakeholders

#### **Description of Stakeholder Input**

The Office of Special Education and stakeholders continue to have an ongoing collaborative relationship while implementing and evaluating the SSIP. Stakeholder have included the following:

- Results Based Accountability (RDA) Stakeholders
- Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)
- MTSS Builder's Group

Each of the groups consisted of the following:

- Parents
- Special Education Directors
- Special Education staff
- General Education Administrators (including principals and superintendents)
- Staff from Institutions of Higher Education
- Community agencies
- Nonpublic school staff
- Nebraska State Education Association members
- Nebraska Association of Special Education Supervisors members
- Members from various Offices within the Nebraska Department of Education including:
  - Office of Accountability, Accreditation, and Program Approval
  - School Improvement
  - Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Although due to COVID, the State has been unable to meet with stakeholders in person, the State has held virtual meetings.

**Describe the specific strategies implemented to engage stakeholders in key improvement efforts.**

Each of the groups met at least 4 times during the year. Members of the RDA Stakeholders formed a workgroup specifically to discuss targets and changes for the SiMR and met virtually an additional 4 times. Stakeholders collaborated with the State in making decisions about the data for the SiMR including establishing baseline and establishing new targets by making suggestions, responding to questions, and analyzing and reviewing data. Stakeholders also worked collaboratively with the State to consolidate and update the evaluation plan for the SSIP.

## Concerns of Stakeholders

***Were any concerns expressed by stakeholders during the engagement activities?***

Yes

## Concerns Addressed

***Describe how the State addressed the concerns expressed by stakeholders.***

The State provided stakeholders with the changes made at the Federal level with the SSIP, particularly the change in the measurement of Indicator 3 which impacted the SiMR. Due to the change with OSEP requiring proficiency data for reading at grades 4, 8, and 11, Stakeholders felt it was important to alter the SiMR to reflect what the State was already reporting rather than continuing to focus on the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Although the SiMR focus has remained (improving the reading proficiency of students with disabilities) the grade level to which the State is focused has changed from 3<sup>rd</sup> grade to 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

Stakeholders continued to advocate for analyzing data for all 4<sup>th</sup> grade students, but felt it was important to disaggregate data based on disability category to allow districts to see what could be done locally to improve the data. As a result, the State will now report how 4<sup>th</sup> grade students perform on the statewide assessment as a whole and by disability category.

## Additional Implementation Activities

***List any activities not already described that the State intends to implement in the next fiscal year that are related to the SiMR.***

All activities have already been described.

***Provide a timeline, anticipated data collection measures, and expected outcomes for these activities that are related to the SiMR.***

See Evaluation Plan at <https://cdn.education.ne.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Theory-of-Action-v2-ACCESS-CHECKED-sped.pdf>

***Describe any newly identified barriers and include steps to address these barriers.***

The state is moving from the MAP assessment to the NSCAS Growth Assessment which will cause a lapse in interim data to measure progress toward the SiMR. The Office of Special Education is working with Data Management and Application Development (DMAD) to ensure we get both MAP assessment and NSCAS Growth Assessment results until the full transition from MAP to NSCAS Growth is completed.

The state has seen multiple staff changes within the Department of Education particularly with DMAD and includes a change in the data manager for the Office of

Special Education. DMAD and the new data manager will be provided supports and on-the-job training to ensure data is available when needed.

As stated in the *Continued Evidence-Based Practice* section under Systems Alignment, it was stated that data shows districts are struggling with the understanding how the initiatives at the state interconnect and support each other. To help districts understand how the initiatives support and interconnect, multiple offices within the Department have been working with Instructional Partners to align processes.

## Prior FFY Required Actions

### Response to Actions Required

#### ***Response to actions required in FFY 2019 SPP/APR***