



# **State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)**

**Phase III, Year 4**

**April 1, 2020**

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## Introduction

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) seeks to create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in college and in the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens. To make this vision a reality, the Department has established rigorous strategic goals that are focused on achievement at every level of Mississippi's public education system, including districts, schools, classrooms and individual students. These goals include:

1. All Students are Proficient and Showing Growth in All Assessed Areas
2. Every Student Graduates from High School and is Ready for College and Career
3. Every Child Has Access to a High-Quality Early Childhood Program
4. Every School Has Effective Teachers and Leaders
5. Every Community Effectively Uses a World-Class Data System to Improve Student Outcomes
6. Every School and District is Rated "C" or Higher

Mississippi has developed a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) that is clearly aligned to the strategic goals referenced above. This comprehensive, multi-year plan is based on high expectations for students with disabilities and is focused on building the capacity of local districts to implement and scale-up evidence-based practices in reading with a focus on improving third grade reading proficiency. Aligned with other State and Federal initiatives, the SSIP was developed so that resources could be leveraged for maximum impact to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

The State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR) is aligned with Mississippi's Literacy-Based Promotion Act, which places an emphasis on grade-level reading skills for students, particularly as they progress through grades K-3. Beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, a student scoring at the lowest achievement level in reading on the established state assessment for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade could not be promoted to the 4<sup>th</sup> grade unless the student meets criteria for a Good Cause Exemption for promotion.

Beginning in the 2018-2019 school year, if a student's reading deficiency is not remedied by the end of the student's Third-Grade year, as demonstrated by the student scoring above the lowest two (2) achievement levels in reading on the state annual accountability assessment or on an approved alternative standardized assessment for Third Grade, the student shall not be promoted to 4<sup>th</sup> Grade.

Students with a disability who participate in the state annual accountability assessment and who have an IEP or a Section 504 plan that reflects that the individual student has received intensive remediation in reading for more than two years but still demonstrates a deficiency in reading or previously was retained in Kindergarten or First, Second or Third Grade may receive a Good Cause Exemption for promotion.

To support schools in their literacy efforts, the MDE has deployed educators with expertise in literacy to several targeted schools across Mississippi. Additionally, the SiMR supports the statewide literacy campaign, *Strong Readers = Strong Leaders*, which promotes literacy and provides resources to parents, students, educators, and community members to strengthen literacy skills in Mississippi.

The SSIP also supports the work of the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) Office of Special Education (OSE), a service-oriented organization that seeks to improve the education experience for

children with disabilities, ages 3-20, who need special education and related services. Through professional development, technical assistance, and regulatory actions, the MDE OSE assists Mississippi's districts and schools in implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and State law, and the SSIP activities meld seamlessly with and support the MDE OSE efforts.

In the 2017-2018 school year, the MDE OSE added the final cohort of SSIP districts. The MDE OSE continues to implement an exciting key component of the SSIP: professional learning opportunities for teachers in participating SSIP districts to teach them multisensory, evidence-based, literacy instructional strategies employing an Orton-Gillingham approach that are designed to meet the needs of ALL students.

In the 2019-2020 school year, the MDE OSE had 11 districts participating in the SSIP. Of those districts, six were being partially funded by the MDE OSE. The remaining five were supported by the MDE OSE through professional development and MDE Literacy Coach meetings. Even with the support, one district elected not to continue with the initiative, one district decided not to rehire the coach that retired, and one district has not fully participated in the sustainability model.

Beginning with the 2020-2021 school year, the MDE OSE will fully adopt the MDE Literacy Coach model to implement Mississippi's Literacy-Based Promotion Act. SSIP Literacy Coaches will be employed by the MDE OSE and will work collaboratively with the Office of Elementary Education and Reading in the shared goal of improving literacy instruction to ALL students, thus improving outcomes for students with disabilities.

## Component A: Summary of Phase III, Year 4

### Theory of Action and Logic Model, Including the SiMR

In Phase I, the MDE identified four key strands of action (i.e., leadership, collaboration, technical assistance, and accountability) that need to take place at the State level to promote highly effective practices at the district level and, ultimately, positively impact student outcomes. Each of these strands represents critical areas in which improvement strategies are being implemented to achieve the SiMR.

- Leadership: The MDE will utilize the agency’s strategic plan as the roadmap for improving results for all students including students with disabilities. MDE staff across all offices will promote high expectations for students with disabilities.
- Collaboration: The Office of Special Education will work closely with staff from other offices at the MDE and internal and external stakeholders to ensure that priorities, initiatives and improvement strategies are aligned to improve reading proficiency for students with disabilities.
- Technical Assistance (Including Professional Development): The MDE will develop and provide high quality professional development that focuses on implementation of evidence-based practices and is designed to improve reading proficiency for students with disabilities. Follow-up technical assistance and coaching will be provided to support the implementation of the evidence-based practices with fidelity.
- Accountability: The MDE will align accountability systems and use data from the accountability systems to guide professional learning and technical assistance.



In Phase I of the SSIP, the Theory of Action was developed from these key components and actions, and coherent improvement strategies were designed.

In Phase II of the SSIP, the Theory of Action was used to develop the SSIP Logic Model, which further identified inputs, activities, and results indicators for implementation of the SSIP. From the SSIP Logic Model, tools to measure the short-term, intermediate, and long-term outcomes (i.e., results indicators) were developed and/or identified. The contents of the Theory of Action and the Logic Model were operationalized as the SSIP implementation began.

In Phase III of the SSIP, the first SSIP evaluation was completed, aligned to the Theory of Action and the SSIP Logic Model, and a new input was added to the Logic Model. In year 2 of Phase III (the

2017-2018 school year), the evaluation was continued, and a key component of the SSIP was implemented.

### Theory of Action

**Vision:** To create a world-class educational system that gives students the knowledge and skills to be successful in college and the workforce, and to flourish as parents and citizens

**Mission:** To provide leadership through the development of policy and accountability systems so that all students are prepared to compete in the global Community

Improving reading proficiency on the statewide reading assessment for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade SWD in targeted districts with SLD and L/S eligibility to 24% by FFY 2018.

<p><b>Leadership</b></p>	<p>... Utilizes the MDE mission, vision, and strategic plan to guide the development and implementation of programs, initiatives, and services</p> <p>... Provides information, guidance, programs, and fiscal resources to support LEAs in aligning their policies and programs with the focus on improving reading proficiency for SWD</p> <p>... Promotes advanced expectations in reading for SWD</p>	<p>... LEAs will create and maintain a culture of high expectations for improving reading proficiency for SWD.</p> <p>... LEAs will provide high quality core reading instruction and individualized services in the least restrictive environment for SWD.</p>
<p><b>Collaboration</b></p>	<p>... Engages strategically with other MDE programs, State agencies, LEAs, and external organizations/ programs/groups including family and community groups to leverage literacy resources and expertise across MDE offices</p> <p>... Aligns literacy initiatives in order to more effectively leverage resources to improve services for SWD</p>	<p>... LEAs will include families and community groups in educational decision making.</p>
<p><b>Professional Development and Technical Assistance</b></p>	<p>... Increases its capacity to support LEAs in delivering effective intervention</p> <p>... Develops and provides high quality professional learning directed toward improving reading instruction and individualized services for SWD</p> <p>... Develops and implements a differentiated system of technical assistance including coaching to support LEAs in improving reading proficiency</p>	<p>... LEAs will increase the number of effective personnel to provide reading instruction and services to SWD</p> <p>... LEAs will access and use resources (e.g. funding, technical assistance, and professional development) needed to provide high quality, evidence-based reading and related instruction for SWD</p>
<p><b>Accountability</b></p>	<p>... Develops and implements accountability systems that are aligned and lead to improved reading proficiency for SWD</p> <p>... Uses information from accountability systems to differentiate technical assistance and professional development for LEAs</p>	<p>... LEAs will hire qualified literacy coaches to support the implementation of evidence-based practices with fidelity.</p>

## SSIP Logic Model

### Project: State Systemic Improvement Plan

**Goal: The State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), a multi-year plan, is based on high expectations for students with disabilities and is focused on building the capacity of local districts to implement and scale-up evidence-based practices in reading with a focus on improving third grade reading proficiency.**

<p><b>INPUTS: What we invest</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fund half the salary (plus benefits) of a literacy coach, up to \$35,000</li> <li>• Collaborate with internal/ external stakeholders</li> <li>• Implement the MS College- and Career- Readiness Standards</li> <li>• Align supports with current efforts to implement the Literacy-Based Promotion Act (e.g., professional development, literacy coaches, toolkits, and other resources)</li> <li>• Implement Aligned Accountability Systems</li> <li>• Offer multisensory, evidence-based phonics instruction courses for teachers</li> </ul> <p>*NEW INPUT</p>
<p><b>ACTIVITIES: What we do</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase professional development opportunities to help faculty apply best practices in literacy instruction</li> <li>• Conduct Results- Driven Accountability Review</li> <li>• Provide targeted, data-driven technical assistance to LEAs</li> <li>• Align state initiatives across offices at MDE to leverage resources</li> <li>• Provide additional funding to build instructional capacity in literacy</li> <li>• Provide PD to SLPs and other educators to link language development to literacy development</li> </ul>
<p><b>ACTIVITIES: Who we reach</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Superintendents</li> <li>• Special Education Directors</li> <li>• Administrators</li> <li>• Literacy Coaches</li> <li>• General Education Teachers</li> <li>• Special Education Teachers</li> <li>• Speech Language Pathologists</li> <li>• Parents</li> <li>• Students</li> <li>• Internal/External Stakeholders</li> </ul>
<p><b>OUTCOMES: Why this project? (Short-term results)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase number of teachers attending PD focused on literacy</li> <li>• Improve LEA data-driven decision-making process</li> <li>• Identify and address barriers to student success</li> <li>• Increase student engagement in the learning process</li> </ul>
<p><b>OUTCOMES: Why this project? (Intermediate results)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased teacher knowledge in providing highly effective literacy instruction</li> <li>• Improved implementation of effective instructional practices</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased student literacy scores</li> </ul>
<b>OUTCOMES: Why this project? (Long-term results)</b>	Increase the percentage of third grade students with Specific Learning Disability and Language/Speech rulings in targeted districts who score proficient or higher on the regular statewide reading assessment to 24 percent by FFY 2018.

New Input: Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, the MDE Office of Special Education began offering Brainspring's Phonics First® course, a multisensory, evidence-based course using an Orton-Gillingham approach to teach teachers how to explicitly and systematically teach phonics to meet the needs of all learners.

## **Coherent Improvement Strategies, Including Infrastructure Improvement Strategies**

- Strategy One: Collaborate with other offices in the MDE to provide literacy professional development for educators to support the delivery of high quality, evidence-based literacy instruction for students with disabilities.
- Strategy Two: Collaborate with other offices in the MDE to align efforts and resources to support the delivery of aligned, differentiated technical assistance to targeted districts to improve high quality, evidence-based literacy instruction for students with disabilities.
- Strategy Three: Develop and disseminate resources to support districts in implementing inclusive practices.

To implement Phase I of the SSIP, Mississippi identified three key improvement strategies:

### **Strategy One**

Since the beginning of SSIP implementation, the MDE OSE has partnered with the Office of Elementary Education and Reading, the Office of School Improvement, and the Office of Professional Development to increase the number of special education teachers who participated in Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS).

This partnership was strengthened during the 2017-2018 school year as the MDE OSE began offering Brainspring's Phonics First® course to teachers, interventionists, and literacy coaches in participating SSIP districts. The Office of Elementary Education and Reading and the Office of Professional Development were instrumental in helping to recruit teachers in participating SSIP districts to attend. In the 2018-2019 school year, the MDE OSE began offering Phonics First® to teachers, interventionists, and literacy coaches in all districts across the state.

### **Strategy Two**

The MDE has continued to make a progress in implementing strategy two. First, the MDE OSE funded half the salary plus benefits (up to \$35,000) for three literacy coaches during the 2015-2016 school year (in the eleven participating SSIP school districts), sixteen literacy coaches during the 2016-2017 school year (in the twenty-five participating SSIP districts), twenty-four literacy coaches during the 2017-2018 school year (in the thirty-six participating SSIP districts), and twenty-two literacy coaches during the 2018-2019 school year (in the thirty-six participating SSIP districts). These SSIP literacy coaches attend State literacy coach training alongside the MDE literacy coaches employed to implement Mississippi's Literacy-Based Promotion Act. Their approach to coaching teachers is a tiered approach, with differentiated support based upon the teachers' needs.

Second, in 2017-2018 the MDE OSE contracted with a former MDE Regional Literacy Coordinator to serve as the SSIP Literacy Coach Supervisor, providing leadership as well as consistency across offices at MDE with literacy coaches.

Finally, the MDE OSE continued its partnership with the Office of Elementary Education and Reading, and MDE OSE staff by participating in learning walks to identify commendations, recommendations, and next steps for schools in SSIP districts to build capacity in the teaching force in providing effective literacy instruction. Using a research-based protocol developed by the Office of Elementary Education and Reading, teams of at least three observed all classes in grades K-3 in participating schools, using the protocol to document specific indicators of effective literacy instruction. Participants were also directed to “look for” differentiation and indicators of co-teaching and Universal Design for Learning. A debriefing session followed at each school, and “next steps” were developed into an action plan for the school to improve literacy instruction in each school.

### **Strategy Three**

To implement strategy three, the MDE offered co-teaching and inclusion training regionally throughout Mississippi in 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, and many resources were offered to SSIP districts to help them more effectively provide inclusion services to students with disabilities. Beginning in the 2015-2016 school year, technical assistance was provided to districts, as needed, to help them understand and implement co-teaching and inclusive practices.

In October 2017, the MDE OSE issued district determinations, similar to State determinations from OSEP, LEA Determination Reports, are based on outcomes and compliance indicators which result in tiered designations for technical assistance and support from the MDE OSE, including support for co-teaching and inclusive practices.

Collaboration between offices at the Mississippi Department of Education, specifically the Office of Special Education, the Office of Elementary Education and Reading, the Office of School Improvement, and the Office of Professional Development, has been key in the implementation of the activities identified to fulfill each strategy.

### **Specific Evidence-Based Practices That Have Been Implemented to Date**

Mississippi’s SSIP was developed with an emphasis on three specific evidence-based practices to build teachers’ capacity in providing effective literacy instruction to ALL students, including students with disabilities:

1. Phonics First® (Orton-Gillingham methodology)
2. Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) Training
3. Ongoing Professional Development Using Literacy Coaches (MDE Literacy Coach Model)

### **Phonics First® (Orton-Gillingham methodology)**

In October 2017, the MDE OSE began offering Brainspring’s Phonics First® course at no cost to special education teachers (grades preK-5), general education teachers (grades preK-3), interventionists, and literacy coaches in participating SSIP districts. In 2018, the training was made available to those educators mentioned previously across the state. Phonics First® is a thirty (30) hour course offered by Brainspring to instruct teachers in the use of multisensory literacy instructional strategies rooted in Orton-Gillingham methodology. Internationally accredited through both the

International Dyslexia Association and the International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council, the Phonics First® course provides an evidence-based program that teaches educators to explicitly and systematically deliver phonics-based, structured, multisensory, direct instruction to reach ALL students (Davidson, 2007). Phonics First® is designed to be course content specific:

- Phonics First® (K-5<sup>th</sup>) is designed for K-3 general education teachers, K-5 special education teachers, literacy coaches, and interventionists;
- Phonics First® (6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>) is designed for 6-12 special education teachers and interventionists;
- Level II is designed for K-12 general education, special education, and interventionists who have taken either Phonics First® course.

*Source: Davidson, M. (2007). Phonics First white paper: Scientific research and response to intervention. Bloomfield Hills, MI: Brainspring.*

### **Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) Training**

The MDE Office of Elementary Education and Reading (OEER) and Office of Professional Development (OPD) initially offered LETRS training in March 2014 to build capacity in literacy instruction as part of the statewide implementation of the Literacy-Based Promotion Act. Since then, LETRS training has been offered at no cost to teachers and administrators every year, throughout Mississippi, so that all general education and special education teachers in grades K-3 had the opportunity to attend training. LETRS is a comprehensive training for educators that is focused on raising literacy achievement for all learners. LETRS training:

- Integrates innovative research-supported practices to deepen educator knowledge;
- Directs and empowers educators as they develop a comprehensive road map for meeting standards-based outcomes;
- Sharpens educators' ability to diagnose why students are struggling and illustrates how to provide proven intervention;
- Is backed by more than a decade of demonstrated success in a schools and districts across the United States;
- Includes relevant, timely, and actionable content and strategies; and
- Is compatible with any reading curriculum.

*Source: Where Best Practice Becomes Everyday Practice. (n.d.) Voyager Sopris Learning. Retrieved from <http://www.voyagersopris.com/docs/librariesprovider7/professional-development-resources/letrs-overview.pdf?sfvrsn=4>*

LETRS Phase I training consists of fifteen to twenty hours of online content, followed by a 2-day face-to-face training. The topics of professional study include challenges in learning to read, speech sounds in English, how spelling works, and methods for teaching phonics, word study, and the alphabetic principle.

LETRS Phase II training also consists of fifteen to twenty hours of online content, followed by a 2-day face-to-face training. The topics of professional study in Phase II include building vocabulary, developing fluency, and teaching text comprehension.

LETRS Phase III consists of only online content.

At the beginning of the 2019-2020 school year, the MDE and Voyager transitioned to the new and revised **LETRS 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition**. This new edition consists of 8 units of study which participants must complete over a two-year period.

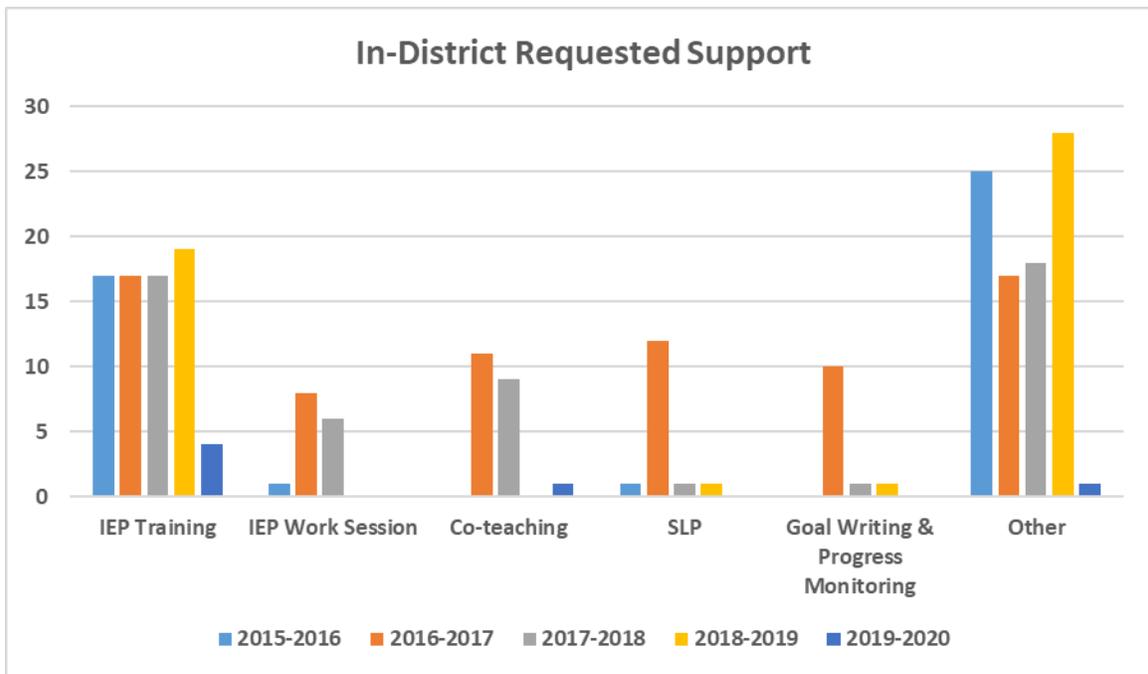
The number of teachers in Mississippi trained in MDE-sponsored LETRS training is reflected in the table below.

*Statewide Participation in MDE-Sponsored LETRS Training by School Year and Phase*

	March 2014 – June 2014	SY 2014-2015	SY 2015-2016	SY 2016-2017	SY 2017-2018	SY 2018-Feb 2019	SY 2019-2020	TOTAL
Phase I	1,663	1,836	1,094	1,186	933	961		7673
Phase II	809	995	1,642	1325	311	483	75	5640

**In-District Requested Professional Development Trainings**

The Office of Special Education, as well as the Office of Professional Development has provided in-district requested professional development trainings. The trainings were requested based on data such as Educational Benefit Reviews. The Technical Assistance staff from the OSE and the Professional Development Coordinators from the Office of Professional Development conducted face-to-face professional developments and coaching support. The trainings are provided to increase teachers’ capacity in all areas of providing a student FAPE. This increase in capacity will help teachers as the meet with IEP committees in developing supports and services that will increase student literacy skills.



**MDE Literacy Coach Model**

As a participating SSIP district, the MDE OSE offered to pay half the salary plus benefits, up to \$35,000, for the district to hire an SSIP literacy coach. Eleven SSIP districts had an SSIP literacy coach in 2015-2016, sixteen had an SSIP literacy coach in 2016-2017, twenty-four had an SSIP literacy coach in 2017-2018, twenty-two had an SSIP literacy coach in 2018-2019, and eleven had an SSIP literacy coach of which five were funded by the MDE OSE and six were being sustained through professional development in 2019-2020. The OSE has partnered with the Office of Elementary Education and Reading to offer high quality, ongoing, professional development and support to SSIP literacy coaches, and they train alongside the MDE literacy coaches who work throughout Mississippi to implement the Literacy-Based Promotion Act. In schools and/or districts where both MDE literacy coaches and SSIP literacy coaches work, both coaches work together, as their shared end goal is to improve literacy instruction provided to all students, with an emphasis in grades K-3.

**Why the MDE literacy coach model?** The SSIP is aligned to the MDE Literacy Coach Model for several reasons. First, the MDE Office of Elementary Education and Reading has been utilizing literacy coaches in schools throughout Mississippi for several years and have already identified barriers to implementation and solutions to overcome the barriers. Using knowledge gained from others’ implementation efforts, SSIP literacy coaches are armed with purpose, knowledge, and resources while navigating charted territory. Second, SSIP literacy coaches have access to resources developed and/or used by the MDE literacy coaches, providing consistency through Mississippi as we all work together to improve literacy instruction. Third, data supports the MDE Literacy Coach Model. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Statewide Assessment results are very clear: in schools with MDE literacy coaches, student achievement improved at a higher rate than did the rest of the State.

Because of improved student achievement, the MDE OSE has decide to employ SSIP coaches for the upcoming 2020-2021 school year. The OSE will put out a Request for Application to employ an SSIP Literacy Coordinator (K-8), SSIP Regional Coordinators (K-3 & 4-8) and SSIP Literacy Coaches (K-3 & 4-8). The OSE will collaborate with the Office of School Improvement in identifying the schools with the greatest needs when determining where to place coaches. The coaches will be a bridge between the OSE and the Office of Elementary Education and Reading when decisions are made pertaining to ways to improve literacy instructional practices that affect ALL students. The coaches will provide the same high-quality literacy support that is currently provided, but solely through the MDE. This will allow the OSE to implement non-negotiables that will ensure schools are actively engaged in activities that builds teacher capacity and improves outcomes for ALL students.

**Data supporting the MDE literacy coach model.** In schools served by MDE literacy coaches, student achievement is improving at a higher rate than the rest of the State. The data are even more impressive when considering that students in schools selected to receive MDE literacy coach support were selected due to low performance in literacy skills as measured on State assessments.

The tables below show growth in the number and percentage of students meeting requirements of the Literacy-Based Promotion Act (LBPA).

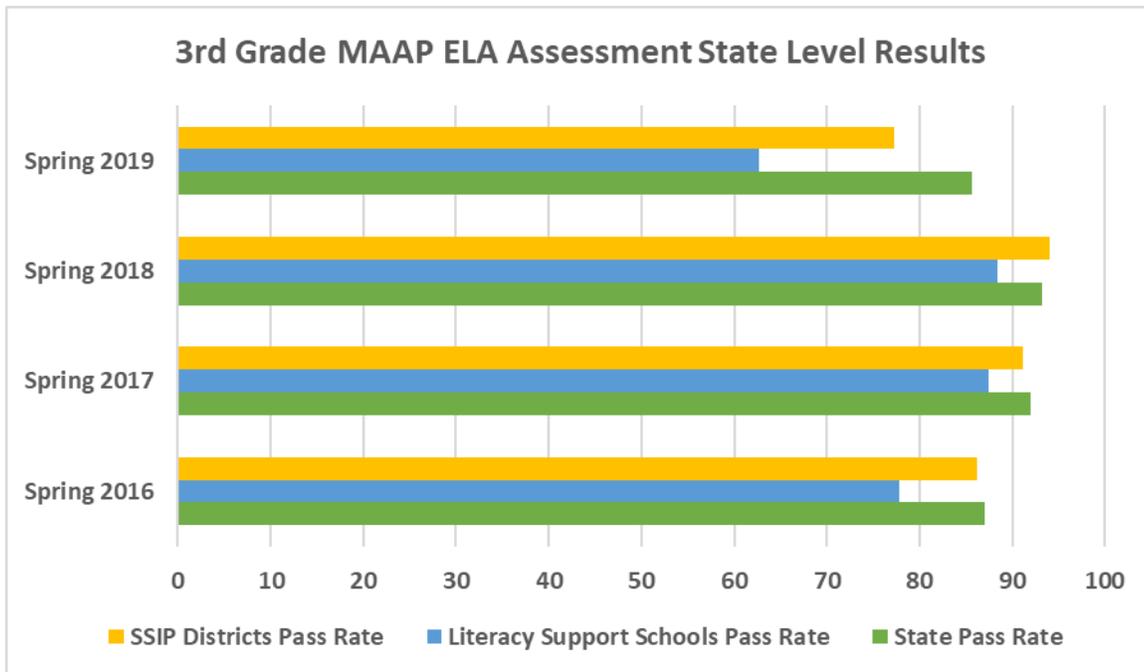
**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade MAAP ELA Assessment State Level Results**

<b>Aggregate Scale Score Analysis</b>	<b>Spring 2016 Primary Administration</b>	<b>Spring 2017 Primary Administration</b>	<b>Spring 2018 Primary Administration</b>	<b>Spring 2019 Primary Administration</b>
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Students Meeting LBPA Requirements	34,280 (87.0%)	36,057 (92.0%)	36,465 (96.3%)	26,057 (74.5%)
Students Not Meeting LBPA Requirements	5,132 (13.0%)	3,119 (8%)	1,398 (3.7%)	8,941 (25.5%)
<i>Total Test-Takers</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>

**3<sup>rd</sup> Grade MAAP ELA Assessment Literacy Support Schools Results**

Aggregate Scale Score Analysis	Spring 2016 Primary Administration	Spring 2017 Primary Administration	Spring 2018 Primary Administration	Spring 2019 Primary Administration
Students Meeting LBPA Requirements	6,939 (77.8%)	10,564 (87.5%)	11,159 (93.7%)	7,447 (76.4%)
Students Not Meeting LBPA Requirements	1,979 (22.2%)	1,510 (12.5%)	744 (6.3%)	2,290 (23.6%)
<i>Total Test-Takers</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>100%</i>



As you can see, both the number and percentage of students meeting LPBA requirements improved at a higher rate than did results viewed at the State-level for the Spring 2018 administration. For the

Spring 2019 administration, the proficiency rate for ALL students declined due in part to the more rigorous assessment standards.

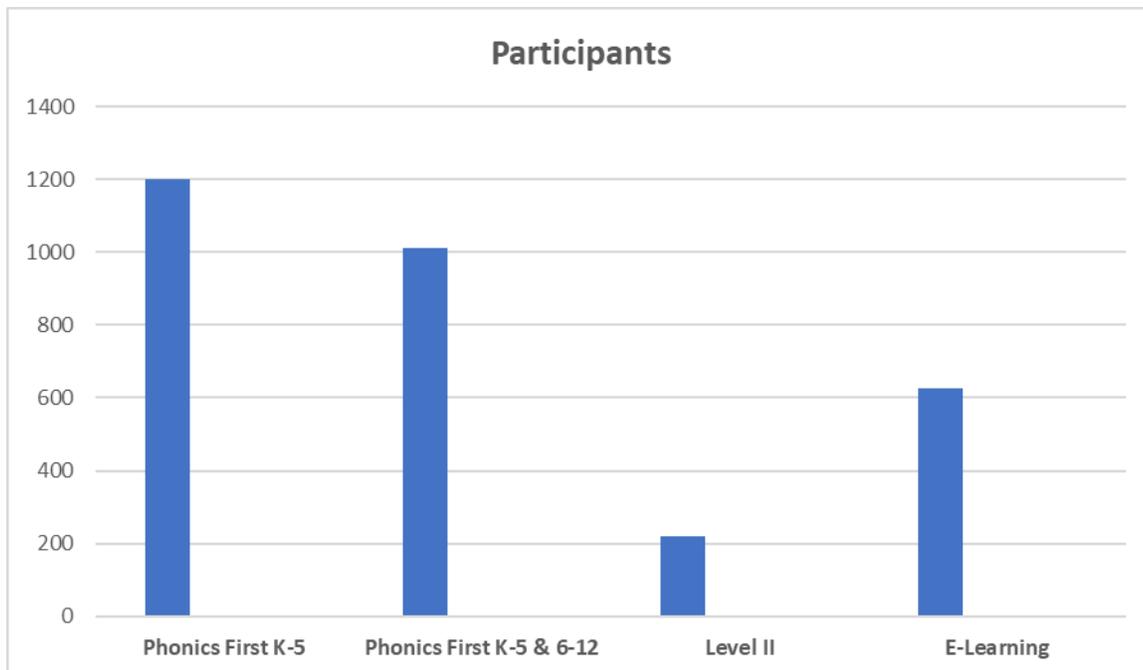
### **Brief Overview of Evaluation Activities, Measures, and Outcomes**

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) Office of Special Education (OSE) has continued to use the evaluation tools, activities, and measures previously described in Phases II and III to evaluate the impact of SSIP activities and efforts on short-term, intermediate, and long-term indicators. Both quantitative and qualitative data are used, such as surveys, statewide assessment data, and data from Learning Walks. These data, along with the sources of the data, are provided in component C.

### **Highlights of Changes to Implementation and Improvement Strategies**

The Phonics First® course utilizing an Orton-Gillingham approach has been accessed by participants across the State. Between October 2017 and December 2018 some 1882 general education teachers, special education teachers, literacy coaches and interventionists have been trained. As part of the initiative between Brainspring and the MDE, teachers trained in Phonics First® were surveyed for feedback regarding the instruction and its impact on student learning. Survey responses were overwhelmingly positive with 342 teachers from 103 different districts completing the survey. Of the participants attending the trainings, 85.4% attended the Phonics First® Level I grades K-5 and 14.6% attended the Phonics First® Level I grades 6-8. Of the teachers that responded, over 85% have already begun using Phonics First® strategies. Results show that 98% of the teachers using Phonics First with students agree that they have seen improvements in student learning as a result of implementing Phonics First®. Additionally, 98% of respondents using Phonics First® with students also agree that their students are more engaged in phonics instruction since implementing Phonics First®. There has been a push across the State to have trained and using the approach with ALL students.

#### **Educators trained to date**



Due to school closures amid the Covid-19 (coronavirus) teachers were unable to complete the surveys sent out by Brainspring for the 2019-2020 school year. When schools resume normal operations, teachers will have the opportunity to complete the surveys. The information will be used as the OSE reevaluates its SiMR.

## **Component B: Progress in Implementing the SSIP**

### **Description of the State’s SSIP Implementation Progress**

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) Office of Special Education (OSE) has made substantial progress in its implementation of planned SSIP activities to date, including infrastructure improvements at the State-level. As you can see from the information in Component A, interoffice collaboration has substantially increased at MDE to leverage resources and maximize the benefits of initiatives with similar desired outcomes, such as implementation of the SSIP and the Literacy-Based Promotion Act. Infrastructure improvements include more effective communication between several State offices, better working relationships, and consistent, regular collaboration involving staff from multiple offices.

Key to meeting the desired outcomes of the SSIP is the building of teacher capacity in providing effective, evidence-based literacy instructional strategies to meet the needs of ALL students. Through the continuation of LETRS training, the introduction of Phonics First® courses, and the expansion of the MDE Literacy Coach Model to build capacity at the district-level and school-level in SSIP districts, the SSIP has the tools in place to positively impact outcomes for students with disabilities.

### **Timelines for SSIP Implementation**

Organized by coherent improvement strategy and key activities, the following table provides implementation information, including intended and actual timelines for implementation.

<b>Activities to Implement Coherent Improvement Strategy 1:</b>	<b>SY Intended Implementation</b>	<b>SY Actual Implementation</b>	<b>Original Timeline Met</b>
Provide professional learning opportunities in LETRS	2015-2016 2016-2017 2017-2018	2015-2016 2016-2017 2017-2018 2018-2019	Yes
Provide professional development on inclusive practices for teachers and administrators in targeted schools	2015-2016 2016-2017	2015-2016 2016-2017	Yes
Provide professional learning opportunities in Orton-Gillingham	2015-2016 2016-2017	2017-2018 2018-2019	No, but implemented later
<b>Activities to Implement Coherent Improvement Strategy 2:</b>	<b>Intended Implementation</b>	<b>Actual Implementation</b>	<b>Original Timeline Met</b>

Provide funding for literacy coaches in SSIP Districts	2015-2016 2016-2017 2017-2018	2015-2016 2016-2017 2017-2018 2018-2019	Yes
Re-purpose the TA unit in the OSE to provide differentiated TA to focus on literacy	2016-2017 2017-2018	2016-2017 2017-2018 2018-2019	Yes
Provide training for teachers and administrators to support a coherent continuum of system-wide, evidence-based practices	2015-2016 2016-2017 2017-2018	2015-2016 2016-2017 2017-2018 2018-2019	Yes
Provide the opportunity for SSIP districts not hiring a literacy coach to apply for a one-time PD grant to be used to build instructional capacity in literacy instruction	July-Sept. 2017	November 2017	No, but implemented later
<b>Activities to Implement Coherent Improvement Strategy 3:</b>	<b>Intended Implementation</b>	<b>Actual Implementation</b>	<b>Original Timeline Met</b>
Implement a results-focused accountability monitoring system for SSIP districts that is aligned with other MDE monitoring activities	October 2016	October 2017	No, but implemented later
Develop a common definition of “access” and provide to districts and parents	July-Sept. 2016	December 2018	No, but implemented later
A self-assessment similar to the “Best Practices for Inclusive Education” will be developed to be completed at the beginning of SSIP participation and then revisited at least annually	June 2016	June 2016	Yes

### Barriers to SSIP Implementation

The MDE OSE has made great progress in SSIP implementation, but barriers to implementation and evaluation with fidelity still exist. Staff turnover in the MDE OSE has continued to present a challenge. Another major barrier within the past years has been low participation rates in SSIP districts in completing SSIP evaluation surveys, creating data quality issues. As it pertains to the SSIP literacy coaches, one barrier is SSIP literacy coaches are employed by the district, thus making it difficult to require the coaches to participate in certain MDE mandated activities. SSIP coaches are often pulled from literacy coaching duties to perform other district activities. The changes to the coaching model will alleviate this barrier. Once SSIP coaches are employed by the MDE OSE, requirements will be placed on the coaches that cannot be placed on a district employee. The coaches will also be able to support SSIP activities at the school level which should increase district participation.

### Intended Outputs Resulting from SSIP Implementation

The MDE OSE has celebrated several intended outputs resulting from SSIP implementation.

Input or Activity	Intended Output	Actual Data
Provide funding for literacy coaches in SSIP Districts	SSIP districts will hire an SSIP literacy coach to build capacity in the teaching force through job-embedded professional learning	<p>15-16: three SSIP literacy coaches were hired</p> <p>16-17: sixteen SSIP literacy coaches were hired</p> <p>17-18: twenty-four SSIP literacy coaches were hired</p> <p>18-19: twenty-one SSIP literacy coaches were hired</p> <p>19-20: At the start of the school year, there were 11 SSIP coaches. Six coaches were being partially funded by the MDE and five were being sustained through professional development and MDE Literacy Coach meetings. At the time of submission, two districts were no longer actively participating</p>
Re-purpose the TA unit in the OSE to provide differentiated TA to focus on literacy	LEAs will receive differentiated technical assistance with a focus on literacy to improve outcomes for students with disabilities	<p>17-18: Each SSIP district was assigned an MDE contact from the TA unit to identify training needs and provide support</p> <p><b>Completed</b></p>
Provide professional learning through LETRS training	All K-3 general education and special education teachers in SSIP districts will attend LETRS training	<p>17-18 with 25 of 36 districts reporting, 65% of general education and special education teachers are reported to have been trained in LETRS (at least Phase I)</p> <p>18-19 with 21 of 36 districts reporting, 587 general education and 117 special education teachers have been trained in LETRS (at least Phase I)</p> <p>19-20 with 2 districts reporting, 19 general education teachers and 9 special education teachers have been trained in LETRS (at least Phase I)</p>
Provide a PD grant to SSIP districts that did not hire an SSIP literacy coach	Provide all SSIP districts that did not hire a literacy coach with the opportunity to apply for and receive a PD grant to improve literacy instruction	Seven of the nine districts that did not hire an SSIP literacy coach applied for and received a PD grant in 2016-2017, the only year that the SSIP PD grant was offered

		<b>Completed</b>
Align supports with current efforts to implement the Literacy-Based Promotion Act	Improved implementation of effective instructional practices	<p>Baseline (16-17): 16 of 16 literacy coaches (100%) report growth in implementation of effective literacy practices</p> <p>17-18: With 23 of 24 SSIP literacy coaches reporting, growth was reported in the implantation of effective literacy instructional practices in all 55 schools</p> <p>18-19: With all 21 SSIP Literacy Coaches reporting, 100% indicated growth in the implantation of effective literacy instructional practices in the 35 schools supported</p> <p>19-20: With 7 of 8 literacy coaches reporting, 100% indicated growth in the implementation of effective literacy instructional practices in the schools they support</p>
Provide PD to SLPs and other educators to link language development to literacy	Participation from all SSIP districts	<p>16-17: 16 of the 25 participating SSIP districts attended this training</p> <p><b>Completed</b></p>

**Stakeholder Involvement in SSIP Implementation**

The MDE has kept stakeholders informed regarding and involved with the implementation of the SSIP in several ways. In the State educational community, the SSIP and key activities are frequently discussed in statewide meetings with district superintendents and administrators, and teachers attending the Phonics First® courses also have received information regarding SSIP implementation and progress at the beginning of the course.

District personnel in participating SSIP districts were involved in decision-making regarding the implementation of Phonics First® courses, as they were given the opportunity to host courses in their districts (at no cost to the district) to enable them to train more of their teachers and limit travel-related professional learning expenses. External stakeholders, including the Special Education Advisory Panel, have been informed regarding implementation and progress during their meetings.

The MDE OSE will meet with stakeholders during the 2020-2021 school year as we reevaluate the SiMR. Stakeholders will provide feedback on key SSIP activities as well as provide insight as to the type supports districts consider to be a need in building teachers’ capacity through the SSIP.

## **Component C: Data on Implementation and Outcomes**

In Phase I, the MDE developed a theory of action which included four action strands: *Leadership, Collaboration, Technical Assistance, and Accountability*. Following the development of the theory of action, the State developed a logic model that clearly linked the inputs, outputs, and outcomes leading to Mississippi's SiMR of improving literacy proficiency for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students with SLD and LS rulings. Development of evaluation questions based on the logic model then led to the development of performance indicators/measures, data sources, and targets. The four strands of the theory of action provide the foundation for the improvement strategies and activities that are being implemented in Mississippi's SSIP. Improving literacy skills is an important goal of the leadership of the MDE, and it is a cornerstone of the MDE's Strategic Plan. The State Superintendent of Schools, the Mississippi Department of Education, and the State Board of Education strongly support improvement strategies designed to improve literacy proficiency and growth.

### **Data Sources for Each Key Measure**

The evaluation plan developed during Phase II included key measures for assessing implementation progress and outcomes. These measures used both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. When possible, data were obtained via the MDE's various data collection systems to reduce the burden of data collection for districts and to increase the accuracy of reported data. MDE has extensive systems in place to ensure high levels of data quality. Literacy proficiency data for the SiMR are obtained through the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP) and reported through the Department's Office of Technology and Strategic Services (OTSS).

The SSIP also leveraged qualitative data collection sources that were developed for other literacy initiatives such as the literacy Learning Walks which were created by the Office of Elementary Education and Reading to obtain a snapshot of instructional literacy practices and student learning. The Learning Walks are used in SSIP districts to assess the implementation of evidence-based practices implemented to improve literacy skills and outcomes. The SSIP also utilizes the *Teacher Knowledge of Early Literacy Skills* (TKELS) test, which was developed by the MDE and educational researchers from the Regional Educational Laboratory – Southeast (REL-SE) to assess teacher capacity via the use of a skill-based test of early literacy skills that teachers should know. This test is a measure used to assess improvements in teacher knowledge in the SSIP. When data were not available through current MDE data collections, customized data methods were developed, such as the *SSIP Infrastructure Analysis*. This survey is used in SSIP districts to measure improvements in infrastructure resulting from SSIP improvement activities. Finally, the SSIP evaluation includes results from the *Literacy Instructional Capacity Survey for Teachers*, which measures teacher self-efficacy in literacy instructional practices.

The following charts include information on the key measures used to assess both process and outcomes. Baseline data, methods/data sources and timelines are provided for each.

**Short-Term Outcomes**

**Short-term Outcome: Increase number of teachers attending PD focused on literacy.**

Key Measure	Method/Data Source	Timelines	Baseline/Results
<p>Percentage of participating SSIP districts that have increased the number of teachers who have been trained in LETRS (or have 100% of the general education and special education teachers trained)</p>	<p>LETRS Survey: This customized survey was sent to local district administrators to obtain the number and percentage of teachers who have completed LETRS.</p>	<p>Proposed: Annually, Spring  Actual: Spring 2018</p>	<p>Baseline (SY 2016-2017): With 14 of 25 districts reporting, 88% of general education and special education teachers have been trained in LETRS (at least Phase I)</p> <p>17-18: With 25 of 36 districts reporting, 65% of general education and special education teachers have been trained in LETRS (at least Phase I)</p> <p>18-19: With 21 of 36 districts reporting, 587 general education and 117 special education teachers have been trained in LETRS (at least Phase I)</p> <p>19-20: With 2 districts reporting, 19 general education teachers and 9 special education teachers have been trained in LETRS (at least Phase I)</p>

**Short-term Outcome: Increase number of teachers attending PD focused on literacy.**

Key Measure	Method/Data Source	Timelines	Baseline/Results
<p>Percentage of participating SSIP districts that report increased capacity on the Literacy Instructional Capacity Survey</p>	<p>Literacy Instructional Capacity Survey – Teacher Version: This survey was completed by all general education and special education teachers in grades K – 3 in participating SSIP districts to gather perception data regarding their capacity to provide high quality, evidence-based literacy instruction to all students, including students with disabilities.</p>	<p>Proposed: Annually, Fall  Actual: Spring 2017</p>	<p>Baseline: In SY 2015-2016, there were 11 participating SSIP districts, and 10 of the 11 completed the LICS. Of those 10 districts, 4 of the 10 (40%) showed growth in SY</p>

			<p>16-17 on the Professional Capacity section</p> <p>Seventeen of 25 participating SSIP districts completed the LICS. Of those 17, 5 (29%) reported growth in SY 17-18 on the Professional Capacity Section</p> <p>Twenty-nine of 36 participating districts completed the LICS. Of those 29, 11 (38%) reported growth in SY 18-19 on the Professional Capacity Section</p> <p>Of the nine districts that participated last year, 5 (55%) reported growth in SY 19-20 on the Professional Capacity Section</p>
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**Short-term Outcome: Improve LEA data-driven decision-making process**

<b>Key Measure</b>	<b>Method/Data Source</b>	<b>Timelines</b>	<b>Baseline/Results</b>
Percentage of participating SSIP districts that demonstrated growth on data-based decision-making items of the SSIP Infrastructure Analysis Survey	SSIP Infrastructure Analysis Survey: This survey assesses the current structures, systems, and processes in place in a school district that affect operational efficiency in the school district and, ultimately, impact student literacy proficiency. The intent of this tool is to assist districts in identifying areas of infrastructure to target for improvement at the beginning of SSIP participation and then at least annually to measure infrastructure improvement over time. The District- Level Support section, items 2, 3, and 4, are used to measure this indicator.	<p>Proposed: Annually, Fall</p> <p>Actual: Spring 2017</p>	<p>Baseline: In SY 2015-2016, there were 11 participating SSIP districts, and 8 of the 11 completed the Infrastructure Analysis. Of those 8 districts, 3 (38%) showed growth in SY 16-17 on items 2, 3, and 4 of the District-Level Support section of the Infrastructure Analysis</p>

			<p>Seventeen of 25 participating SSIP districts completed the Infrastructure Analysis. Of those 17, 7 (41%) reported growth in SY 17-18 on items 2, 3, and 4 of the District-Level Support section of the Infrastructure Analysis</p> <p>Twenty-nine of 36 participating districts completed the Infrastructure Analysis. Of those 29, 11 (38%) reported growth in SY 18-19 on items 2, 3, and 4 of the District-Level Support section of the Infrastructure Analysis</p> <p>Of the nine districts that participated last year, 4 (44%) reported growth in SY 19-20 on the District-Level Support section of the Infrastructure Analysis</p>
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**Short-term Outcome: Identify and address barriers to student success**

<b>Key Measure</b>	<b>Method/Data Source</b>	<b>Timelines</b>	<b>Baseline/Results</b>
Percentage of participating SSIP districts that identified barriers to improving literacy proficiency on their District Data Analysis Forms	Data Analysis Form: The SSIP District Data Analysis Form was developed by the MDE to support districts in analyzing data to determine root causes and causal factors contributing to low literacy performance. This measure is based on the item related to identifying root causes and causal factors impacting improved literacy performance.	<p>Proposed: Annually, Fall</p> <p>Actual: Spring 2017</p>	<p>Baseline: In SY 2016-2017, 25 of 25 (100%) participating SSIP districts identified one or more barriers</p> <p>17-18: With 25 of 36 districts reporting, 88% identified barriers to improving literacy proficiency</p> <p><b>Completed</b></p>

**Short-term Outcome: Identify and address barriers to student success**

Key Measure	Method/Data Source	Timelines	Baseline/Results
<p>Percentage of districts that demonstrated growth on the SSIP Infrastructure Analysis Survey</p>	<p>SSIP Infrastructure Analysis Survey: This survey assesses the current structures, systems, and processes in place in a school district that affect operational efficiency in the school district and, ultimately, impact student literacy proficiency. The intent of this tool is to assist districts in identifying areas of infrastructure to target for improvement at the beginning of SSIP participation and then at least annually to measure infrastructure improvement over time. For this measure, the Overall SSIP Infrastructure Analysis Form score is used.</p>	<p>Proposed: Annually, Fall</p> <p>Actual: Spring 2017</p>	<p>Baseline: In SY 2015-2016, there were 11 participating SSIP districts, and 8 of the 11 completed the Infrastructure Analysis. Of those 8 districts, 4 (50%) showed growth in SY 16-17 on the Overall Score of the Infrastructure Analysis</p> <p>Seventeen of 25 participating SSIP districts completed the Infrastructure Analysis. Of those 17, 7 (41%) reported growth in SY 17-18 on the Overall Score of the Infrastructure Analysis</p> <p>Twenty-eight of 36 participating districts completed the Infrastructure Analysis. Of those 28, 9 (32%) reported growth in the SY 18-19 on the Overall Score of the Infrastructure</p> <p>Of the nine districts that participated last year, 5 (55%) reported growth in the SY 19-20 on the Overall Score of the Infrastructure Analysis</p>

**Short-term Outcome: Increase student engagement in the learning process**

<b>Key Measure</b>	<b>Method/Data Source</b>	<b>Timelines</b>	<b>Baseline/Results</b>
Percentage of participating SSIP schools showing increases in student engagement levels from the Fall to the Winter Learning Walks Form	Literacy Learning Walks: Completed by the school/district leadership team in the fall and spring of each year, these learning walk provided a snapshot of instructional literacy practices and student learning. Indicators were developed in three key areas: Instruction; Routines/Environments; and Preparation/Planning. Items measuring student engagement are used for this measure. Following completion of the learning walk, an action plan is developed.	Proposed: Annually, Fall and Winter  Actual: Annually, Fall and Winter	Baseline (16-17): 100% of the schools in which SSIP literacy coaches provide support report increased student engagement from Fall to Winter  17-18: With 23 of 24 SSIP literacy coaches reporting, improvements in student engagement were noted by all (100%) literacy coaches in the schools in which they work  18-19: Twenty of 21 SSIP literacy coaches (95%) reported improvement in student engagement  19-20: With 7 of the 8 literacy coaches reporting, 100% reported improvement in student engagement

**Intermediate Outcomes**

**Intermediate Outcome: Increased teacher knowledge in providing highly effective literacy instruction**

<b>Key Measure</b>	<b>Method/Data Source</b>	<b>Timelines</b>	<b>Baseline/Results</b>
Percentage of SSIP districts and schools that report an increase teacher knowledge on the Teacher Knowledge of Early Literacy Skills Test	The Teacher Knowledge of Early Literacy Skills Test: The Teacher Knowledge of Early Literacy Skills was developed by the MDE and educational researchers from the Regional Educational Laboratory – Southeast (REL-SE) to assess teacher capacity via the use of a skill-based survey of early literacy skills that teachers should know. Through the random assignment of two available forms, teachers in grades K – 3 in participating SSIP districts completed the survey at the beginning of participation in the SSIP and then at least annually after targeted technical assistance and professional development to address identified needs. The resulting data will measure changes in knowledge of early literacy skills over time.	Proposed: Annually,  Actual: Dec. 2017 through January 2018	Percentage of SSIP districts and schools that report an increase teacher knowledge on the Teacher Knowledge of Early Literacy Skills Test  Baseline: In SY 2015-2016 SY 2017-2018 SY 2018-2019:

		December 2019- January 2020	<p>Only 47 teachers took the test more than once and they may have taken the test in different years which did not allow for a measure of growth to be calculated</p> <p>SY 2019-2020: 70 general education teachers and 13 special education teachers completed the TKELS. Both had an average T-score of 48.</p>
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**Intermediate Outcome: Increased teacher knowledge in providing highly effective literacy instruction**

<b>Key Measure</b>	<b>Method/Data Source</b>	<b>Timelines</b>	<b>Baseline/Results</b>
Percentage of participating SSIP districts and schools where teachers reported improved literacy capacity on the Literacy Capacity Survey-Teacher Version	Literacy Instructional Capacity Survey – Teacher Version: This perception survey was completed by all general education and special education teachers in grades K – 3 in participating SSIP districts in order to gather perception data regarding their capacity to provide high quality, evidence-based literacy instruction to all students, including students with disabilities.	<p>Proposed: Annually, Fall</p> <p>Actual: Dec. 2017 through January 2018</p>	<p>Baseline: In SY 2014-2015, there were 11 participating SSIP districts, and 10 of the 11 completed the LICS. Of those 10 districts, 4 of the 10 (40%) showed growth in SY 15-16 on the Professional Capacity section</p> <p>Seventeen of 25 participating SSIP districts completed the LICS. Of those 17, 5 (29%) reported growth in SY 17-18 on the Professional Capacity section</p> <p>Twenty-nine of 36 participating districts completed the LICS. Of those 29, 11 (38%) reported growth in SY 18-19 on the Professional Capacity section</p> <p>Of the nine districts that participated, 5 (55%) reported growth in the SY 19-20 on</p>

the Professional Capacity section

**Intermediate Outcome: Improved implementation of effective instructional practices**

Key Measure	Method/Data Source	Timelines	Baseline/Results
<p>Percentage of participating SSIP schools showing growth in the implementation of effective literacy practices as measured by Literacy Learning Walks</p>	<p>Literacy Learning Walks: Completed by a school/district leadership team in the fall and spring of each year, these learning walk provided a snapshot of instructional literacy practices and student learning. Indicators were developed in three key areas: Instruction; Routines/Environments; and Preparation/Planning. Following completion of the learning walk, an action plan is developed</p>	<p>Proposed: Annually, Fall and Spring</p> <p>Actual: Fall and Spring</p>	<p>Baseline (16-17): 100% report growth in implementation of effective literacy practices</p> <p>17-18: With 23 of 24 SSIP literacy coaches reporting, growth was reported in the implantation of effective literacy instructional practices in all 55 schools</p> <p>18-19: With all 21 SSIP Literacy Coaches reporting, 100% indicated growth in aligning instruction to the College and Career Readiness Standards, data analysis, and the five components of reading. 95% reported growth in small group teacher led instruction and implementation of center instruction. 71% reported growth in writing in response to text, 67% indicated growth in utilization of higher order thinking questions, and 62% identified growth in differentiated instruction</p> <p>19-20: 100% of districts reported growth in aligning instruction to the College</p>

			and Career Readiness Standards, data analysis, and the five components of reading, 86% of districts reported growth in small group teacher led instruction and implementation of center instruction, 57% of districts reported growth in writing in response to text, 86% reported growth in utilization of higher order thinking questions, 43% reported growth in differentiated instruction, and 100% reported growth in student engagement
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**Intermediate Outcome: Increased student literacy scores**

<b>Key Measure</b>	<b>Method/Data Source</b>	<b>Timelines</b>	<b>Baseline/Results</b>
Percent of SSIP districts with literacy coaches reporting growth in grades K-3 from the 2016-2017 STAR Fall Benchmark assessment to the STAR Winter Benchmark Assessment	STAR Reading Assessment: The data sources for this measure are the Reading Assessment Reports for each of the participating districts. STAR provides for periodic assessment of 46 reading skills in 11 domains. The Core Progress learning progressions for reading tell documents what students know and what they are ready to learn next on an empirically validated learning continuum.	Proposed: Spring  Actual: Spring 2017	Baseline (16-17): 15 of 16 (94%) SSIP districts with literacy coaches report growth from the Fall to the Winter benchmark of the STAR assessment  17-18: With 23 of the 24 SSIP literacy coaches reporting, 19 of 23 (83%) report growth from the Fall to the Winter benchmark of the STAR assessment  18-19: Districts could select a state approved universal screener. Of the 21 districts with SSIP literacy coaches, 15 selected STAR, 5 NWEA

		<p>MAP, and 10 i-Ready. Data from districts utilizing STAR reveals that 80% of the schools supported by SSIP literacy coaches demonstrated an increase of the students projected to score proficient or advanced on the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade assessment. Twenty percent of the schools with coaches using NWEA MAP demonstrated growth and 20% of schools utilizing i-Ready revealed an increase in the projected proficiency rate from beginning of year to middle of year assessments.</p> <p>19-20: Districts could select a state approved universal screener. Of the approved screener, four districts selected i-Ready with 71% of the schools increasing projection of SLD and 29% of LS students projected to score proficient or advanced. Two districts selected the NWEA with 75% of the schools increasing SLD and 100% of LS students projected to score proficient or advanced.</p> <p>Two districts selected STAR with 33% of the schools increasing SLD and 0% of LS students projected to score proficient or advanced.</p>
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## Long term Outcome

**Long-term Outcome (SiMR):** *Increase the percentage of third grade students with Specific Learning Disability and Language/Speech rulings in targeted districts who score proficient or higher on the regular statewide reading assessment to 24 percent by FFY 2018.*

Key Measure	Method/Data Source	Timelines	Baseline/Results
<p>Percentage of third grade students with Specific Learning Disability and Language/Speech rulings in targeted districts who score proficient or higher on the regular statewide reading assessment to <b>24</b> percent by FFY 2018.</p>	<p>MDE Office of Technology and Strategic Services (OTTS) Data Report: The OTSS produced a customized report that documented the proficiency rates for students with Specific Learning Disability and Language/Speech rulings in targeted SSIP districts and statewide MS Academic Assessment Program (MAAP).</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>State Identified Measurable Results (SiMR)</u>            FFY 2014 (Baseline) 16%            FFY 2015 – 18%            FFY 2016 – 20%            FFY 2017 – 22%            FFY 2018 – 24%</p>	<p>Annually</p>	<p>Baseline 2014-2015: <b>16%</b> proficient and above</p> <p>2015-2016 <b>20%</b> for ALL SSIP districts</p> <p>2016-2017 <b>19%</b> for ALL SSIP districts</p> <p>2017-2018 - <b>25.1%</b> for ALL SSIP districts; <b>29.2%</b> for SSIP districts employing a literacy coach</p> <p>2018-2019 – <b>32.6%</b> for ALL SSIP districts</p>

Mississippi Evaluation Plan: Key Outcome Measures

## **Data Collection Procedures and Timelines**

Data collection procedures were developed for each of the key measures included in the SSIP evaluation plan. These procedures were communicated with relevant individuals using a variety of methods. Information regarding procedures were provided in writing via letters and email messages to participating SSIP district administrators, discussed in kick-off visits with each district team, and reviewing with literacy coaches during Literacy Walks and on-site visits. MDE staff also provided technical assistance via phone calls to discuss data collection procedures. Timelines for each of the performance measures are included in the tables on the preceding pages.

## **Data Use in Informing SSIP Implementation**

The MDE OSE has continued to use implementation and outcome data to inform and make changes to implementation and improvement strategies. For example, a Spring 2017 poll of SSIP literacy coaches regarding student growth in literacy benchmark scores revealed several schools reporting only slight growth, two schools reporting no growth, several reporting moderate growth, and five literacy coaches reporting significant growth in the schools they serve. Using these data, the MDE OSE understood that SSIP literacy coaches needed hands-on, differentiated support themselves to problem-solve and brainstorm solutions. To meet this need, the MDE OSE hired with a full-time SSIP Literacy Coach Supervisor in SY 2017-2018 to provide on-site training to the SSIP literacy coaches throughout the State. Previously an MDE Regional Literacy Coordinator, the SSIP Literacy Coach Supervisor has the experience and access to the resources to be able to professionally develop the SSIP literacy coaches and take them to the “next level”.

Also, the MDE OSE has analyzed statewide assessment data and determined that proficiency for students with disabilities fell in the 2016-2017 school year in both ELA and math overall. Because of this, the MDE OSE has begun to seek input from internal and external stakeholders regarding possible contributing causes and possible solutions to improve proficiency and growth for all students with disabilities.

Although the MDE OSE planned to sustain the SSIP Literacy Coaches, an analysis of data identified the need to fully replicate the MDE Literacy Coach Model implemented by the Office of Elementary Education and Reading. Since the SSIP coaches are district employees, the district can dictate if coaches are permitted to attend professional development trainings or literacy meetings. The district can also instruct the literacy coach to perform duties that are outside the scope of work for a literacy coach. Beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, SSIP Literacy Coaches will become employees of the MDE OSE through a Request for Application process. The coaches will attend professional development trainings and meetings with the MDE Literacy Coaches, as they do now, but they will also be required to perform the same duties as outlined in the MDE Literacy Coach Model.

## **Changes to Intended Outcomes**

In the past, no changes are being proposed for the intended outcomes. However, OSE leadership decided to fund SSIP literacy coaches in the eleven districts beginning SSIP participation in SY 2017-2018 so that the districts had the opportunity to employ an SSIP literacy coach for three years. Although not a change to the outcomes, this effort by the State reinforces the commitment to helping

ALL students, including students with disabilities, to achieve at least grade-level reading proficiency, improving future outcomes for all Mississippi students.

Due to the suspension of all federal and state assessment for the 2019-2020 school year because of the Covid-19(coronavirus), assessment data will not be available to address the SiMR. The OSE will use the 2020-2021 school year to analyze data as a means of revising the SiMR. The analysis will include disaggregating the results data in an effort to determine critical areas of need. The strengths and challenges of the infrastructure and how the State will continue to build teacher capacity will be a determining factor as well. Stakeholders will be key factors in the process, as they are key players in reaching the SiMR.

## Component D: Data Quality

### Data Quality Issues

Participating SSIP districts to complete two surveys (*SSIP Infrastructure Analysis* and *Literacy Instructional Capacity Survey for Teachers*) and a test of early literacy skills (*Teacher Knowledge of Early Literacy Skills*). In some districts, the participation numbers were low, and some districts did not complete the survey and/or test at all. For the Teacher Knowledge of Early Literacy Skills (TKELS) only 47 teachers took the test more than once and they may have taken the test in different years. This did not allow for valid data in accessing teacher growth over three years.

In early March of 2020, many school districts began to close due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus). On March 19, 2020, Gov. Tate Reeves signed an executive order closing schools statewide through April 17, 2020. This may result in data quality issues for some of the district reported data. Survey participation of special education directors and SSIP literacy coaches were lower than anticipated.

### Implications for Assessing Progress or Results

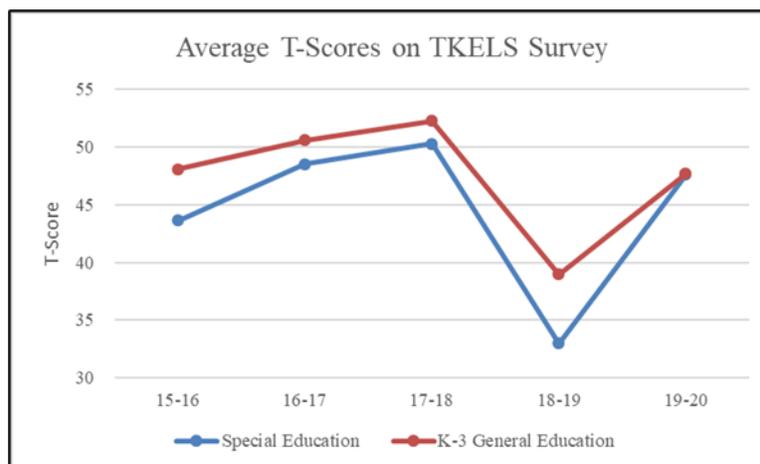
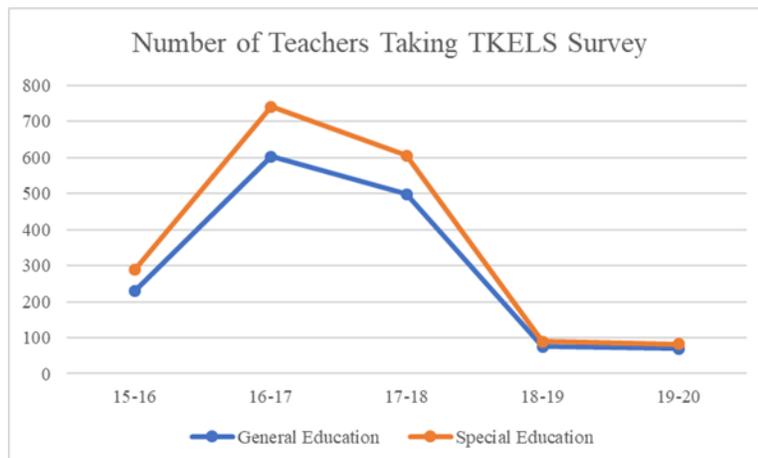
The *TKELS*, which measure changes in knowledge of early literacy skills over time and the *Literacy Instructional Capacity Survey for Teachers*, which teachers rate their perception of their ability to provide literacy instruction in the five essential components of reading instruction as well as other indicators, are measures of professional learning that SSIP districts have available to them. In these measures of professional learning, the data from each school and district will represent an overall perception level, and growth in the perception of their abilities to provide effective literacy instruction can be measured from year to year.

In January 2014, the MDE began to provide early literacy professional development to schools identified as being the most in need based on the percentage of students in the lowest two achievement levels on the statewide literacy assessment. To determine if teachers' knowledge changed over time, the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southeast developed the Teacher Knowledge of Early Literacy Skills (TKELS) survey and the Coach's Classroom Observation Tool (COOT). Teachers of students K-3 were invited to complete the TKELS four times between spring 2014 and fall 2015. The MDE literacy coaches observed classrooms four times between winter 2014 and spring 2015. One finding of the study was that the knowledge of early literacy skills increased from 49.56 to 52.28. This increase was aligned to the progress made in the professional development program. The quality of instruction and student engagement also increased. For teachers who completed the program, they were rated 0.30 points higher in quality of instruction and 0.22 for student engagement.

SSIP districts began to utilize the same test and data collected during the 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018, 2018-2019, and 2019-2020 administrations of the TKELS survey was analyzed. The data were intended to be representative of all K-3 general and special education educators. Thirty-five districts, 102 schools, and 2,077 educators took the TKELS survey between 2015 and 2020. In total, 333 special education and 1,476 general education teachers took the TKELS survey. The average TKELS survey scores of special education and general education teachers were compared. An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare the mean TKELS survey scores for special education and general education teachers. Although general education teachers scored slightly higher than special education teachers, results of the independent samples *t*-test indicated that the difference in mean scores for both special education and general education teachers were only statistically significant for the 2016-2017 TKELS survey scores. Special education teachers who took the test in 15/16 and retested in 17/18 had a significantly higher increase in their T-scores than those teachers who retook the test in consecutive test administrations. This is most likely due to LETRS® training. Of the 333 special education teachers

taking the TKELS survey, 58 took the test more than once and when scores of those who retested were analyzed, there was not a significant difference between the scores of special education and general education teachers. In terms of professional development, the scores of special education and general education teachers who attended LETRS® I and II training were on average higher than those who did not attend training.

The MDE OSE has identified implications for assessing progress or results stemming from the data quality issues above. First, the low participation rate on the surveys in some schools and districts may limit their use as baseline measures or measures of progress (for districts in their second or third year of SSIP participation). To increase the participation rate, SSIP districts were each assigned an MDE contact person to monitor progress and provide support. This lack of participation is not a limitation solely for SSIP districts. As with the study referenced above, this is a limitation for many districts across the State. For the research study, the MDE emailed superintendents and curriculum coordinators, who in turn emailed principals to disseminate the information to teachers. Even if teachers received the email invitation to complete the survey, there was no way to require teachers to complete the survey.



Source: Folsom, J. S., Smith, K. G., Burk, K., & Oakley, N. (2017). *Educator outcomes associated with implementation of Mississippi's K-3 early literacy professional development initiative (REL 2017-270)*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs>.

### **Plans to Improve Data Quality**

The MDE OSE has already begun implementing steps to improve data quality. First, the MDE OSE has assigned an MDE OSE contact to each SSIP district to assist with implementation to encourage better participation rates. Additionally, the MDE OSE will report SiMR data, but will also report more in-depth data regarding the SiMR, including student proficiency data in districts by intervention length (number of years of SSIP participation). By reporting data in this way, the MDE OSE can better analyze the impact of SSIP participation.

Moving to fully engage in the MDE literacy coach model through employing coaches is another step to improve data quality. The SSIP coaches will be convey the importance of district participation as well as monitor the level of participation.

## Component E: Progress Toward Achieving Intended Improvements

### Infrastructure Changes that Support SSIP Initiatives

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) recognizes the importance of infrastructure in an organization's ability to effectively function and work to reach its goals.

#### State-level

During the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years, the offices at MDE serving under the Chief Academic Officer have made intentional efforts to increase collaboration between offices, improve communication, and build effective work relationships to serve ALL of Mississippi's students. In offices charged with implementing statewide initiatives with similar intended outputs, such as the MDE OSE and the MDE Office of Elementary Education and Reading, these intentional efforts have resulted in more effective and efficient use of resources to achieve similar goals, such as improved 3<sup>rd</sup> grade literacy proficiency desired in both the SSIP and the Literacy-Based Promotion Act.

In the 2019-2020 school year, the OSE began to engage in strategic cross-office collaborations with several office within the MDE. A staff member from the Office of Student Intervention Services and Early Childhood are now part of the OSE Leadership Team. This allows the offices to be included in decision-making that affect students with disabilities. The Offices of Special Education, Student Intervention Services, and School Improvement, as well as a staff member of Realizing Excellence for ALL Children in Mississippi (REACH MS), now engage in Cross-State Learning Collaborative (CSLCs) through the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI). The collaboratives are designed to increase SEA capacity in improving outcomes for students with disabilities. Our State team has joined the following Learning Collaboratives:

- Evidence- Based Practices
- Improving Low-Performing School Systems
- Results-Based Accountability and Support

#### District/School-level

***SSIP Infrastructure Analysis.*** At the district/school level, the *SSIP Infrastructure Analysis* is a measurement tool administered annually, with item, domain, and overall scores reported by school to district and school officials in each participating SSIP district. Most third- and second-year SSIP districts will now have now have 3 and 2 years of data, respectively, so that growth can be determined by item, domain, and overall scores. The eleven first-year SSIP districts and the second- and third-year districts that did not complete the *SSIP Infrastructure Analysis* in year one (or two) will only have one year of data (baseline). It is the intent that district and school officials analyze score reports when they receive them and then consider the results when planning for district and school improvement efforts.

***Learning Walks.*** At the school level, participation in Learning Walks has opened the door to professional development for administrators and teachers while, at the same time, building infrastructure and clearly communicating expectations, grounded in research, that support effective literacy instructional practices. In schools served by SSIP Literacy Coaches, a fall and winter Learning

Walk is conducted. During a Learning Walk, a team, including the SSIP Literacy Coach, observes core reading instruction in all classes in grades K-3 in the school, which includes classrooms where students with disabilities are being taught reading. Each member of the team is responsible for a focused portion of a protocol developed by the MDE Office of Elementary and Reading. The protocol was developed from reading research and consists of indicators of effective instructional practice in reading.

After observing all classes in grades K-3, the team convenes to discuss findings and develops a list of commendations, recommendations, and next steps. The next steps are further developed into an action plan for the school year. The fall Learning Walk provides baseline data, an action plan, and areas of focus for the SSIP Literacy Coach. The winter Learning Walk provides a means of evaluating if the strategies on the action plan have resulted in improvement, with qualitative data from the Learning Walk protocol to measure improvement.

### **How These System Changes Support the SiMR and Sustainability**

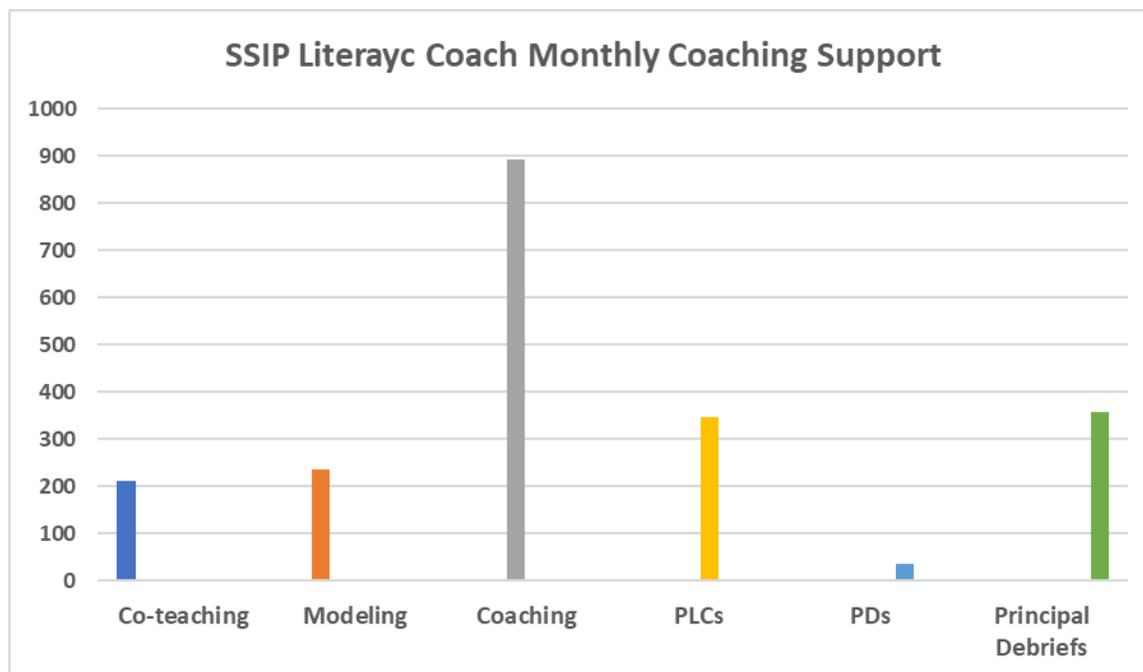
One of the main change agents identified in the SSIP is the SSIP literacy coach. The concept of coaching teachers is a relatively new one (i.e., within the last 5 years) in most areas of Mississippi. Several school districts have hired academic coaches or even literacy coaches in recent years, but it was not until implementation of the Literacy-Based Promotion Act within the last 4 years, when MDE (State-level) literacy coaches were hired and assigned to schools throughout the State, that the literacy coach role was well defined. With the “coaching model” has come a paradigm shift. Professional development was previously a one-time meeting away from campus, but the coaching model brings professional development to the classroom on an ongoing basis. Many teachers rarely, if ever, saw another educator or administrator in their classroom, the literacy coach is a regular visitor/colleague. Some principals may not have known what to “look for” regarding effective instructional practices in literacy, but now have indicators that are grounded in research.

As teachers and administrators have adapted to this new model of professional development, changes in practices have evolved that support sustainability, the SiMR, and scale-up. The Learning Walk practice has been embraced at almost every school where it has been held, with many principals deciding to conduct Learning Walks to observe math instruction as well. Some districts have developed protocols with indicators of effective instruction for secondary schools, and they are conducting Learning Walks in their middle schools and high schools. District superintendents often participate, which communicates the importance of effective instructional practices and high expectations from the leader of the district.

Schools with SSIP literacy coaches have data from several educators for each classroom in grades K-3 in the schools they serve, which focuses efforts of the SSIP literacy coach on strategies that will improve results measured in the SiMR. Because these Learning Walks also take place in schools with MDE literacy coaches using the same protocol, capacity is being built in Mississippi’s administrators as well as the teachers statewide.

### **SSIP Literacy Coach Monthly Report**

Literacy coaches work with the MDE OSE to coordinate the *Literacy-Based Promotion Act* and provide appropriate services to schools so that there can be a cohesive, sustained, intensive and classroom-focused approach that is rigorous, engaging, and relevant for students. Literacy coaches provide a non-threatening, open, professional, and collaborative work relationship with district-level school personnel, school-based literacy coaches, principals, and teachers. They effectively identify the needs of assigned schools to prioritize, schedule, organize, and provide technical assistance so that students in assigned schools achieve grade level reading by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The graph shows the support provided to schools in SSIP districts for the 2019-2020 school year.



To support the SiMR and Sustainability, the MDE OSE will be replicating the MDE Literacy Coach model. The OSE will put out a Request for Application to employ an SSIP Literacy Coordinator (K-8), SSIP Regional Coordinators (K-3 & 4-8) and SSIP Literacy Coaches (K-3 & 4-8). The OSE will collaborate with the Office of School Improvement in identifying the schools with the greatest needs when determining where to place coaches. The coaches will be a bridge between the OSE and the Office of Elementary Education and Reading when decisions are made pertaining to ways to improve literacy instructional practices that affect ALL students.

### **How These System Changes Support Scaling-Up the SSIP**

First, with the alignment of the SSIP with the Literacy-Based Promotion Act and the efforts to implement it, many barriers have been eliminated. For example, both MDE and SSIP literacy coaches have participated in the Phonics First® course, the multisensory, evidence-based, literacy instructional strategies course that uses an Orton-Gillingham approach. This consistency in training of literacy coaches supporting both initiatives helps to bring consistency to the services provided statewide to improve literacy instructional practices to benefit ALL students.

Additionally, the SSIP literacy coaches have participated throughout SY 2015-2016, SY 2016-2017, SY 2017-2018, SY 2018-2019, and SY 2019-2020 in training with the MDE literacy coaches and through MDE Regional Literacy Coach Meetings, building their capacity as literacy coaches to support principals and teachers after the supplemental funding through the SSIP is removed. All SSIP districts have had the opportunity to send their teachers to the Phonics First® course, and other districts not participating in the SSIP were given the opportunity to train teachers, which is a main area of “scale-up” planned in the State Systemic Improvement Plan.

In an effort to scale-up and include teachers beyond elementary schools, Phonics First® began offering courses to teachers on the secondary level in the 2017- 2018 school year. This course provides teachers access to multi-sensory instruction for student in grades 6-12 whose reading skills range from 1<sup>st</sup> grade and up.

**Progress Towards Short-Term and Long-Term Objectives to Achieve the SiMR**

The MDE identified several key short-term and intermediate desired outcomes in the SSIP Logic Model necessary to achieve the long-term desired outcome, the SiMR. The chart below provides progress data for the short-term and intermediate outcomes that are necessary steps toward achieving the SiMR.

Short-Term Desired Outcomes

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Progress Demonstrated?</b>	<b>Results</b>
Increase number of teachers attending PD focused on literacy	Yes	<p>Baseline (SY 2016-2017): With 14 of 25 districts reporting, 88% of general education and special education teachers have been trained in LETRS (at least Phase I)</p> <p>17-18: With 25 of 36 districts reporting, 65% of general education and special education teachers have been trained in LETRS (at least Phase I). All 25 reporting districts have sent teachers to a Phonics First® course</p> <p>18-19: With 21 of 36 districts reporting, 69% of general education teachers and 72% of special education teachers have been trained in LETRS (at least Phase I). All 25 reporting districts have sent teachers to a Phonics First® course</p>

		19-20: With 2 districts reporting, 31% of general education teachers and 75% of special education teachers have been trained in LETRS (at least Phase I). All 2 reporting districts have sent teachers to a Phonics First® course
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Short-Term Desired Outcome

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Progress Demonstrated?</b>	<b>Results</b>
Identify and address barriers to student success	Yes	<p>Baseline (16-17): 25 of 25 (100%) of participating SSIP districts identified barriers to student success</p> <p>17-18: With 25 of 36 districts reporting, 88% of participating SSIP districts identified barriers to student success</p> <p>18-19: With 21 or 36 districts reporting, 95% of participating SSIP districts identified barriers to student success</p> <p>19-20: With 2 districts reporting, 100% identified barriers to student success</p>

Intermediate Desired Outcomes

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Progress Demonstrated?</b>	<b>Results</b>
Increased teacher knowledge in providing highly effective literacy instruction	Yes	<p>Baseline: In SY 2014-2015, there were 11 participating SSIP districts, and 10 of the 11 completed the LICS. Of those 10 districts, 4 of the 10 (40%) showed growth in SY 15-16 on the Professional Capacity section</p> <p>Seventeen of 25 participating SSIP districts completed the LICS. Of those 17, 5 (29%) reported growth in SY 17-18 on the Professional Capacity Section</p>

		<p>Twenty-nine of 36 participating districts completed the LICS. Of those 29, 11 (38%) reported growth in SY 18-19 on the Professional Capacity Section</p> <p>Of the nine districts that participated last year completed the LICS. Of those 5 (55%) reported growth in SY 19-20 on the Professional Capacity Section.</p>
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Intermediate Desired Outcomes

<b>Outcome</b>	<b>Progress Demonstrated?</b>	<b>Results</b>
Improved implementation of effective instructional practices	Yes	<p>Baseline (16-17): 100% report growth in implementation of effective literacy practices</p> <p>17-18: With 23 of 24 SSIP literacy coaches reporting, growth was reported in the implantation of effective literacy instructional practices in all 55 schools</p> <p>18-19: With all 21 SSIP literacy coaches reporting, 100% indicated growth in implementation of effective literacy practices in the 35 schools supported in the 21 districts employing a literacy coach.</p> <p>19-20: With 7 of 8 SSIP literacy coaches reporting, 100% indicated growth in implementation of effective literacy practices</p>

Intermediate Desired Outcomes

Outcome	Progress Demonstrated?	Results
Increased student literacy scores	Yes	<p>Baseline (16-17): 15 of 16 (94%) SSIP districts with literacy coaches report growth from the Fall to the Winter benchmark of the STAR assessment</p> <p>17-18: With 23 of the 24 SSIP literacy coaches reporting, 19 of 23 (83%) report growth from the Fall to the Winter benchmark of the STAR assessment</p> <p>18-19: Districts could select a state approved universal screener. Of the 21 districts with SSIP literacy coaches, 15 selected STAR, 5 NWEA MAP, and 10 i-Ready. Data from districts utilizing STAR reveals that 80% of the schools supported by SSIP literacy coaches demonstrated an increase in the projected proficiency rate from beginning of year to middle of year assessments</p> <p>19-20: Districts utilizing i-Ready, 83.3% report growth from the Fall to Winter benchmark assessment</p> <p>Districts utilizing NWEA MAP, 83.3% growth reported from the Fall to Winter benchmark assessment</p> <p>Districts utilizing STAR, 25% growth reported from the Fall to Winter on the STAR benchmark assessment</p>

## Measurable Improvements in the SiMR in Relation to Targets

*The State will increase the percentage of third grade students with Specific Learning Disability and Language/Speech rulings in targeted districts who score proficient or higher on the regular statewide reading assessment to 24 percent by FFY 2018.*

FFY	Targets
FFY 2014 – Baseline*	16%
FFY 2015	18%
FFY 2016	20%
FFY 2017	22%
FFY 2018	24%

*\*Note: The annual targets represented a 2% increase per year, which was determined to be an achievable target. The baseline was set based upon the twenty-one identified SSIP districts at the time.*

### 2016-2017 MAAP 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade % Proficient and Above

	All Students	SwD Only	Gen Ed Only (No SwD)	SLD & L/S
<b>Statewide</b>	36%	18.2%	38.8%	22.8%
<b>ALL 36 SSIP Districts</b>	31.2%	15.3%	33.8%	19%

### 2017-2018 MAAP 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade % Proficient and Above

	All Students	SwD Only	Gen Ed Only (No SwD)	SLD & L/S
<b>Statewide</b>	44.7%	25.4%	47.9%	30.6%
<b>ALL 36 SSIP Districts</b>	38.73%	20.46%	42.03%	25.1%
<b>24 SSIP Districts Employing Literacy Coaches</b>	42.7%	24%	46.3%	29.2%

### 2018-2019 MAAP 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade % Proficient and Above

Mississippi's SSIP includes cohorts of school districts with the first cohort entering the SSIP in SY 2015-2016, the second in SY 2016-2017, and the final cohort entering in SY 2017-2018. Although

districts entered the project in different years, the SiMR is set to measure the proficiency rates of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students with SLD and L/S disabilities in all SSIP districts without accounting for length of SSIP participation. The baseline of 16% was established in March 2016 based upon SY 2014-2015 PARCC data for the twenty-one SSIP districts identified as of March 2016, including the eleven districts participating in the SSIP during SY 2015-2016 and ten districts that had been identified to begin SSIP participation in SY 2016-2017. Four additional districts requested participation in the SSIP beginning in SY 2016-2017, bringing the number of participating districts to twenty-five in SY 2016-2017. Eleven additional districts were identified and joined the final cohort of SSIP districts beginning in SY 2017-2018, bringing the total number of SSIP districts whose progress is measured by the SiMR to thirty-six.

#### SY 2014-2015

The original SiMR baseline and annual targets were established using statewide data for students with SLD and LS disabilities based on the Spring 2014 administration of the MCT2.

#### SY 2015-2016

Districts were recruited to participate in the SSIP, and implementation began in Mississippi. Eleven districts participated in the SSIP, with three of the SSIP districts hiring literacy coaches. The MAP was administered to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students.

However, the baseline and annual targets were reset based on the 11 districts who were participating in the project during SY 2015-2016 and the ten additional districts recruited for SY 2016-2017. It should be noted that that the baseline and targets were established based on the PARCC assessment which was administered to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students in the 2014 – 2015 school year.

#### SY 2016-2017

In 2016-2017, the twenty-five districts (i.e., the eleven who began participating in 2015- 2016, the ten districts recruited in March 2016, and four additional districts that requested to join the project) participated in the SSIP, and sixteen of those SSIP districts hired literacy coaches. Of the remaining nine districts, seven of the nine accessed a PD grant. The Mississippi Assessment Program (MAP) was the statewide assessment administered to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students.

#### SY 2017-2018

In 2017-2018, the final cohort of school districts joined the SSIP, bringing the total number of school districts participating to thirty-six. The name of the statewide assessment for 3rd grade students was adjusted from MAP to MAAP, the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program; however, the statewide assessment did not change.

#### SY 2018-2019

In 2017-2018, the final cohort of school districts joined the SSIP, bringing the total number of school districts participating to thirty-six. The name of the statewide assessment for 3rd grade students was adjusted from MAP to MAAP, the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program; however, the statewide assessment did not change. The current thirty-six districts are expected to participate in the SSIP, and the MAAP is expected to be used.

#### SY 2019-2020

In the 2019-2020, eleven districts began the school year participating in the SSIP. By March 2020, one district elected not to participate any longer and two districts did not actively participate in the SSIP activities. The name of the statewide assessments for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students will be the Mississippi Academic Assessment Program (MAAP). Due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus), on March 19, 2020, the Mississippi State Board of Education (SBE) voted to suspend all federal and state assessments for the 2019-2020 school year and to submit a waiver request to the U. S. Department of Education (ED) for exemption of those federal requirements.

## **Discussion**

**SiMR not met.** Although the SiMR was not met when using data for all thirty-six SSIP districts (twenty-five of which were participating in SY 2016-2017), other data regarding SSIP implementation can be gleaned from the table on the preceding page.

*Progress in first cohort.* It is important to note that the eleven participating SSIP districts making up the first cohort of SSIP districts (that joined the SSIP during SY 2015-2016) met the target of 20% proficiency in SY 2016-2017 (their second year of implementation), improving from 17% proficiency in SY 2015-2016 to 20% proficiency in SY 2016-2017 for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students with SLD and L/S disabilities. Although the group of tested students in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade changes from year to year, this improvement is a possible indicator of improved literacy instructional capacity to meet the needs of ALL students.

*Data anomaly.* The data anomaly in the table includes the 21% proficiency of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students with SLD and L/S disabilities in the six new (i.e., first year of participation) SSIP districts that did not hire a literacy coach. It should be noted that all six of these districts applied for and received the one time (up to) \$35,000 Professional Development Grant that was offered to SSIP districts not hiring a literacy coach in 2016-2017.

*Number of students.* It should also be noted that the number of students used in the calculation of the SiMR (i.e., 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students with SLD and L/S disabilities in all thirty-six SSIP districts) is relatively small. Of the 721 students in the calculation, 137 students demonstrated proficiency. Statewide, there were a total of 3,145 grade 3 students with SLD and L/S disabilities tested, with 718 (22.8%) demonstrating proficiency. When breaking down the data into cohorts and further dividing into those districts hiring SSIP literacy coaches and those not hiring SSIP literacy coaches, the numbers used in the calculations are very small

## **Component F: Plans Moving Forward into FFY 20**

### **Planned Evaluation Activities, Including Data Collection, Measures, and Expected Outcomes**

The State will continue to implement the evaluation activities included in the SSIP Evaluation Plan submitted in Phase II. As part of Phonics First® implementation, the company that produces Phonics First® (i.e., Brainspring) plans to contract with an external research group to conduct a study of Mississippi's Phonics First® implementation. No other changes in evaluation activities, measures, or data collection methods are anticipated at this time.

Staff from the technical assistance unit in the OSE, as well as the SSIP literacy coaches, will continue to work with district administrators to increase response rates to surveys such as the Literacy Instruction Capacity Survey. The OSE will continue to work through issues such as high staff turnover as it continues to provide support and technical assistance to districts. SSUP literacy coaches will continue to provide coaching to teachers in areas of the five components of reading. As general education and special education teachers' capacity is built in providing effective, evidence-based literacy instruction, especially in grades K-3, it is expected that more students' needs will be met in both general education and special education settings.

Due to the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) and the subsequent suspension of all federal and state assessments for the 2019-2020 school year, there will be no new MAAP assessment data of expected outcomes for 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students with SLD and L/S disabilities. The OSE will take this time to analyze data to determine a new SiMR.

### **Anticipated Barriers to Evaluation Activities, Including Steps to Address Barriers**

MDE OSE staff will continue working to resolve identified barriers to completing the evaluation activities, including increasing the response rate on surveys. Employing SSIP Literacy Coaches will help in the OSE's efforts in increasing participation by working with the district staff to monitor the completion of surveys.

### **Additional Support or Technical Assistance Needed**

The Mississippi Department of Education has received technical assistance from several technical assistance agencies to support the development of Phase III of the SSIP and/or the ongoing implementation of the SSIP. These include the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, the National Center for Systemic Improvement, Learning Forward, IDEA Data Center, Regional Educational Laboratory-Southeast, and WestEd. As the MDE continues the implementation of the SSIP and works to evaluate the SSIP, assistance from OSEP and national technical assistance providers will be requested as appropriate.