

Arkansas FFY 2019 Indicator B-17 Annual Performance Report (APR)

Section A: Data Analysis

What is the State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR). (Please limit your response to 785 characters without space).

The State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR) is the percent of students with disabilities (SWD) in grades 3-5, from the targeted schools, whose value-added score (VAS) in reading is moderate or high for the same subject and grade level in the state. The calculation for the SiMR includes the total number of SWD with a VAS in reading at participating schools and grade levels, and then is further broken down into the following components: Number of SWD whose VAS in reading is categorized as low; Number of SWD whose VAS in reading is categorized as moderate; Number of SWD whose VAS in reading is categorized as high. The SiMR is reported as the percent of students categorized as moderate or high.

Has the SiMR changed since the last SSIP submission? No

If “Yes”, provide an explanation for the change(s), including the role of stakeholders in decision-making. (Please limit your response to 1600 characters without space).

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Progress toward the SiMR

Please provide the data for the specific FFY listed below (expressed as actual number and percentages).

Baseline Data: 59.53%

Has the SiMR target changed since the last SSIP submission? No

FFY 2018 Target: 62.53% **FFY 2019 Target:** 62.53%

FFY 2018 Data: 59.45% **FFY 2019 Data:** Not Applicable

Was the State’s FFY 2019 Target Met? No

Did slippage¹ occur? No

If applicable, describe the reasons for slippage. (Please limit your response to 1600 characters without space).

Due to the pandemic, the U.S. Department of Education waived statewide assessments for the 2019-2020 school year; therefore, Arkansas is unable to report FFY 2019 SiMR data. In August 2020, Arkansas school districts reopened and the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education encouraged districts to administer interim assessments to monitor student growth during the 2020-2021 school year. Districts were provided information on four state-approved interim assessments and allowed the autonomy to select the interim assessment tool that best fit district needs. Most of the SSIP schools selected the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measure of Academic Progress (MAP), but the state did not require a specific interim assessment to be used. The interim assessment data was not available in a timely manner to analyze and determine variability for demonstration of progress toward the SiMR by the time of submission.

¹ The definition of slippage: *A worsening from the previous data AND a failure to meet the target.* The worsening also needs to meet certain thresholds to be considered slippage:

1. For a "large" percentage (10% or above), it is considered slippage if the worsening is more than 1.0 percentage point. For example:
 - a. It is not slippage if the FFY 2019 data for Indicator X are 32% and the FFY 2018 data were 32.9%.
 - b. It is slippage if the FFY 2019 data for Indicator X are 32% and the FFY 2018 data were 33.1%.
2. For a "small" percentage (less than 10%), it is considered slippage if the worsening is more than 0.1 percentage point. For example:
 - a. It is not slippage if the FFY 2019 data for Indicator Y are 5.1% and the FFY 2018 data were 5%.
 - b. It is slippage if the FFY 2019 data for Indicator Y are 5.1% and the FFY 2018 data were 4.9%.

*Refer to SPP/APR Measurement Language for required information for Phases I-III including requirements for SiMR, baseline, targets, theory of action, and components of the implementation and evaluation plan.

Optional: Has the State collected additional data (i.e., benchmark, CQI, survey) that demonstrates progress toward the SiMR? No

If “Yes”, describe any additional data collected by the State to assess progress toward the SiMR.
(Please limit your response to 1600 characters without space).

Click or tap here to enter text.

Did the State identify any provide describe of general data quality concerns, unrelated to COVID-19, that affected progress toward the SiMR during the reporting period?

Yes

If “Yes”, describe any data quality issues specific to the SiMR data and include actions taken to address data quality concerns. (Please limit your response to 3000 characters without space).

Though assessment data were unavailable on the SiMR for FFY19, the Arkansas SiMR uses a value-added growth model which provides a prediction score for each student instead of a set projection score. The difference between the actual score and the prediction score results in a residual or the value-added score (VAS). However, a student must have two or more years of state assessment data to be included in the growth model. The Percentile Rank of the Residual (PRR) or VAS of all students allows for categorization of student growth into low, moderate, or high by subject and grade level. By utilizing the same model approved in the Arkansas ESSA Plan, there are less data quality concerns.

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

If data for this reporting period were impacted specifically by COVID-19, the State must include in the narrative for the indicator: (1) the impact on data completeness, validity and reliability for the indicator; (2) an explanation of how COVID-19 specifically impacted the State's ability to collect the data for the indicator; and (3) any steps the State took to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the data collection.
(Please limit your response to 3000 characters without space).

The State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR) is the percent of students with disabilities (SWD) in grades 3-5, from the targeted schools, whose value-added score (VAS) in reading is moderate or high for the same subject and grade level in the state. The Arkansas SiMR is directly tied to growth scores obtained from statewide assessment data. In the 2019-2020 school year, events related to COVID-19 caused a substantial disruption to onsite instruction, assessment, accountability, and reporting. On March 11, 2020, Governor Asa Hutchinson declared a public health emergency in response to the first presumptive case of COVID-19 in Arkansas. On March 12, 2020, the U.S. Department of Education (ED) released a Fact Sheet: Impact of COVID-19 on Assessments and Accountability under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. On March 12, the Arkansas Governor ordered school closings for onsite instruction in Saline, Jefferson, Pulaski, and Grant counties until March 30. All public schools were ordered to close for onsite instruction beginning Tuesday, March 17. On March 19, Governor Hutchinson announced new measures to help limit the spread of the disease, including keeping public schools closed to onsite instruction through April 17. On March 20, 2020, Secretary DeVos issued a letter inviting states to request a waiver for assessment, accountability, and reporting. On March 23, 2020, the Arkansas DESE submitted a letter to Frank Brogan, Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education, requesting a waiver from assessment, accountability, and reporting for School Year 2019-2020. The waiver was approved on March 27, 2020, by Frank Brogan. On April 6, 2020, the Governor ordered public schools to close for onsite instruction for the remainder of 2019-2020 school year. Because of these events, several items typically included in accountability and reporting were not available. Due to the COVID-19 disruption, Arkansas was approved for multiple assessment, accountability, and reporting waivers; therefore no statewide assessment data were available to aggregate for the SiMR. To mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on student learning, Districts in Arkansas were encouraged to develop local assessment purposes and strategies to address student needs. Decisions about interim assessments were made with consideration focused on necessity and feasibility which caused SSIP targeted schools to use a variety of assessments. Amidst the uncertainties created by COVID-19, the Arkansas Department of Education: Division of Elementary and Secondary Education supported districts in measuring student learning by providing K-2 interim assessments under the state contract through 2024 and by establishing partnerships to provide districts with optional assessment tools for grades 3-8 for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years. The 3-8 assessment tools were used for instructional purposes only and did not replace the ACT Aspire for summative assessment.

Section B: Phase III Implementation, Analysis and Evaluation

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

If "Yes", please provide a description of the changes and updates to the theory of action (Please limit your response to 1600 characters without space).

Continuing Phase III of the SSIP, the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has expanded the plan's implementation of two coherent strategies concentrated on improving DESE's infrastructure and increasing the SiMR. Arkansas's SiMR is focused on improving the literacy achievement of students with disabilities in grades 3-5. To better reflect the expansion of the SSIP, Arkansas's Theory of Action has been revised to better illustrate the connectivity with DESE's strategic initiatives. While the SiMR still remains focused on literacy results for SWD in grades 3-5, SSIP supports have expanded to reflect the need for coordinated literacy efforts throughout the system beyond grade 5. The Strategic Instruction Model (SIM™) aligns well with the science of reading focus of the Arkansas R.I.S.E. Initiative and with the High Leverage Practices for Inclusive Classrooms. The instructional processes built into SIM have complementary and related research foundations with effect sizes that demonstrate improved outcomes for all students through a tiered system of supports. The revised theory of action reflects the addition of the SIM™ to other statewide initiatives and reads as follows:

Arkansas SSIP Theory of Action:

If DESE aligns and coordinates existing resources, systems, and DESE initiatives: High Reliability Schools (HRS), Professional Learning Communities (PLC), High-Leverage Practices (HLPs) for Inclusive Classrooms, Inclusive Principal Leadership, Reading Initiative for Student Excellence (R.I.S.E.), Response to Intervention (RTI) and the Strategic Instructional Model (SIM™), then DESE will more effectively leverage resources to improve services for SWD and will increase the reach and impact of its work with LEAs.

Did the State implement any new (previously or newly identified) infrastructure improvement strategies during the reporting period? No

If “Yes”, describe each new (previously or newly identified) infrastructure improvement strategy and the short-term or intermediate outcomes achieved. (Please limit your response to 1600 characters without space).

Click or tap here to enter text.

*Refer to SPP/APR Measurement Language for required information for Phases I-III including requirements for SiMR, baseline, targets, theory of action, and components of the implementation and evaluation plan.

Provide a summary of each infrastructure improvement strategy that the State continued to implement in the reporting period, including the short-term or intermediate outcomes achieved (Please limit your response to 3000 characters without space).

Strategy One: Create a system of support that is aligned with other DESE Units and is differentiated based on LEAs' needs as evidenced by data.

This phase of the SSIP continued to center on creating a coordinated system of support that provides the necessary organizational and teaming structures for the way in which LEA services and supports are identified, managed, and differentiated at the state-level. This strategy was directly built into the DESE's Theory of Action. By focusing on building infrastructure, the DESE is more effective in leveraging resources that will improve services for all students (including students with disabilities) and increase the reach and impact of the work with LEAs. The State Performance Management Team is directly involved with agency leaders in all initiatives reflected in the theory of action including High Reliability Schools (HRS), Professional Learning Communities (PLC), High-Leverage Practices (HLPs) for Inclusive Classrooms, Inclusive Principal Leadership, Reading Initiative for Student Excellence (R.I.S.E.), Response to Intervention (RTI) and the Strategic Instructional Model (SIM™). The SSIP Theory of Action reflects Arkansas' commitment to ensuring that all students have access to highly reliable schools that are safe, supportive, collaborative and that provide a guaranteed and viable curriculum with effective teaching in every classroom (High Reliability Schools). Through a multi-tiered system of support (RTI Arkansas) educators build collective efficacy through team-based and action-oriented coaching, modeling and support with the following four critical questions in mind: 1) What is it we expect students to learn? 2) How will we know when they have learned it? 3) How will we respond when they don't learn? 4) How will we respond when they already know it? (PLC at Work™). The system of support in Arkansas is dependent upon administrators who advance inclusive leadership and practices (Inclusive Principal Leadership). The SSIP promotes knowledge and implementation of high-leverage and other evidence-based practices that promote inclusive classrooms to facilitate novice and experienced educators' self and collective efficacy to meet the needs of diverse learners (PLC at Work™, R.I.S.E., HLPs and SIM™).

Strategy Two: In collaboration with other DESE Units, restructure Arkansas' RTI model using evidence-based personnel development to implement a multi-tiered system of supports for behavior and academics, with a focus on literacy. This strategy continues to focus on RTI and is being implemented in SSIP targeted districts with intensively provided support by DESE through the RTI Arkansas initiative. The State Personnel Development Grant was written to directly align and support the SSIP with the following goals:

- Develop statewide RTI resources and tools in the areas of behavior and literacy.
- Increase the capacity of regional and LEA teams to deliver high quality RTI professional development.
- Improve educators' ability to implement RTI with a focus on evidence-based literacy and behavior support practices.
- Improve literacy and behavior outcomes for all students, especially students with disabilities.

The RTI Framework provides the model to organize and assess LEAs' literacy services as well as behavior services and supports. The purposeful selection of strategies that intentionally focus heavily on building systems is what differentiates the SSIP strategies from previously implemented improvement efforts.

*Refer to SPP/APR Measurement Language for required information for Phases I-III including requirements for SiMR, baseline, targets, theory of action, and components of the implementation and evaluation plan.

Provide a description of how the State evaluated outcomes for each improvement strategy and how the evaluation data supports the decision to continue implementing the strategy. (Please limit your response to 3000 characters without space):

The DESE continued to implement two coherent infrastructure improvement strategies. Relative to strategy one, the State Performance Management Team (SPMT) met monthly to improve the LEA system of support. Representatives from the SPMT participated in NCSI's Cross-State Learning Collaboratives focused on scaling evidence-based practices (EBPs) and low-performing school systems (LPSS) with a focus on students with disabilities. To measure change across multiple agency initiatives, Arkansas continued to utilize the SSIP Infrastructure Development Planning and Progress Management Tool: Using Implementation Drivers and Stages of Implementation. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = pre-exploration and 5 = full implementation) year-to-year comparisons for Arkansas revealed improved implementation scores for the competency drivers of training (FFY18 = 4.0 / FFY19 = 4.5) and coaching (FFY18 = 3.0 / FFY19 = 4.0), and improved scores for organizational drivers in facilitative administration (FFY18 = 3.0 / FFY19 = 4.0) and systems intervention (FFY18 = 3.5 / FFY19 = 4.5). Overall performance assessment of the Arkansas system coherence also improved (FFY18 = 4.0 / FFY19 = 4.5) as did the technical & adaptive leadership drivers (FFY18 = 3.5 / FFY19 = 4.0). The SPMT advanced interdepartmental collaboration and coordination through regular involvement and initiative alignment presentations at DESE Learning Services Unit Leaders' Meetings, Quarterly Content Specialists Meetings at each regional cooperative and with The Center for Exceptional Families (TCFEF), Arkansas' PTI Center. Because of cross-collaboration, initiative alignment and measured progress on the SSIP Infrastructure Tool, continuation of this improvement strategy will occur in the next phase of the SSIP with an emphasis on coaching and facilitative administration.

Relative to strategy two, the State Implementation Team (SIT) continued to assess, plan, and monitor statewide RTI implementation supports. The State Implementation Team reviewed RTI data from districts receiving intensive RTI support and continued to meet with the RTI State advisory to gain stakeholder feedback on RTI implementation strengths and barriers. Complete RTI modules and facilitator guides for academics and behavior are now accessible on the DESE website for statewide educator use. Cross-alignment and revisions to these modules occurred through rigorous review by SPDG staff, the Arkansas Behavior Support Specialists, The Arkansas Collaborative Consultants, and DESE Literacy and Math Specialists. Module overviews were provided to all Arkansas Regional Education Cooperatives to ensure equity of educator access to these materials. The SPDG serves as the implementation team for strategy two of the SSIP, and systemic improvements are measured through the SISEP State Capacity Assessment (SCA) tool. Year-to-year comparisons on the SCA from revealed improvements in all areas: SMT Investment (FFY18 = 92% / FFY19 = 100%), System Alignment (FFY18 = 70% / FFY19 = 90%), Commitment to Regional Implementation Capacity (FFY18 = 38% / FFY19 = 56%) and Total Implementation Score (FFY18 = 70% / FFY19 = 84%). These data indicate improvements with this strategy, and highlight the need to continue efforts to heighten the focus toward regional implementation supports.

*Refer to SPP/APR Measurement Language for required information for Phases I-III including requirements for SiMR, baseline, targets, theory of action, and components of the implementation and evaluation plan.

Provide a summary of the next steps for each infrastructure improvement strategy and the anticipated outcomes to be attained during the next reporting period. (Please limit your response to 3000 characters without space):

Arkansas plans to continuously improve upon the two infrastructure strategies by utilizing supports from agency initiatives to expand a statewide culture of inclusive practices. Relative to strategy one, intensified efforts to promote high-leverage and evidence-based practices outlined in the SSIP Theory of Action will be a focus. Survey data acquired during this phase of the SSIP revealed that only 22% of Arkansas novice special educators feel confident in applying high-leverage practices (HLPs) in their everyday work, while 29% indicated average confidence and 49% indicated low or no confidence in applying HLPs. As a next step, the SSIP will leverage agency infrastructure and supports to increase state-level capacity and knowledge of HLPs, with a focus on agency unit leaders, regional content specialists, agency technical assistance providers, and the state's parent training center. Arkansas recognizes that administrators play an important role in guaranteeing that students and teachers have access to necessary supports. DESE has been directly involved with CCSSO's Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership (AIPL) initiative and the SiMR will continue to be the overarching goal for this work. An integral component of AIPL will center on embedding HLPs into statewide professional learning for principals and school leadership teams. In addition, DESE plans to develop and expand the Professional Learning Communities (PLC at Work®) process within selected SSIP schools to serve as working laboratories for the PLC at Work® process, conducting action research, and sharing best inclusive practices with other schools throughout the state. This project will have an intentional focus on ensuring that students who are IEP eligible as well as other groups of struggling learners have meaningful access to core instruction and established systems of intervention. Arkansas will also advance strategy one by creating an inclusive practices training campaign and a presence on the DESE Website with implementation supports and resources for LEAs. Beyond improvements to the SiMR, DESE anticipates that improvements in Least Restrictive Environment may also result from these next steps.

Relative to strategy two, Arkansas will leverage a newly awarded SPDG to embed HLPs and other EBPs to directly continue and align with the SSIP. Given the need for educators to increase their self-efficacy, knowledge, and skills in educating students with various learning needs, the new SPDG will support strategy two of the SSIP by focusing on the following: 1. Transform and expand Arkansas' statewide coherent system of supports through competency-based professional learning and coaching that will increase the implementation of high-leverage and other evidence-based practices (including RTI), which will result in improved outcomes for SWD. 2. Through personnel development and ongoing assistance, increase the capacity of regional and LEA teams to offer high-quality professional learning with a focus on implementing and sustaining integrated HLPs and other EBPs within a coherent system of support. 3. Increase the knowledge, skill, and implementation of HLPs and EBPs by offering general and special educators choice in competency-based professional learning with the added goal of certification and/or badge-recognition as well as a potential educator stipend. In addition to improving the SiMR, outcomes from this work are anticipated to promote improvements with LRE and teacher efficacy.

*Refer to SPP/APR Measurement Language for required information for Phases I-III including requirements for SiMR, baseline, targets, theory of action, and components of the implementation and evaluation plan.

Did the State implement any new (previously or newly identified) evidence-based practices? No

If “Yes”, describe the selection process for the new (previously or newly identified) evidence-based practices. (Please limit your response to 1600 characters without space):

Click or tap here to enter text.

Provide a summary of the continued evidence-based practices and how the evidence-based practices are intended to impact the SiMR. (Please limit your response to 1600 characters without space):

The aligned Arkansas SSIP and SPDG were built around implementation science for Response to Intervention (RTI) for academics and behavior, with an emphasis on literacy. Through the previous cycles of the SSIP, a multi-tiered system of supports known as RTI Arkansas was formed. During phase III grant cycles, the SSIP/SPDG worked diligently to support the implementation of an aligned system within the DESE that is responsive to LEAs in personalizing student learning. The SPDG finalized 17 Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III PBIS modules and 14 RTI academic modules, including modules on special topics used by Educational Service Cooperatives (ESCs), districts, and schools to improve the fidelity of implementation and develop infrastructure to ensure sustainability. Additionally, all modules align with the DESE's selected frameworks of Professional Learning Communities, High Reliability Schools, HLPs, and R.I.S.E. A system to collect feedback from training participants to assess quality of training and impact on knowledge and skills for implementation of RTI was utilized to support continuous improvement, and schools implementing RTI with fidelity have been data sources for calculating the SiMR. Moving forward, a scale-up of RTI and other initiatives reflected in the SSIP will be a focus of the SPDG. The plan is to efficiently utilize technology to transform and expand Arkansas's statewide coherent system of supports through competency-based professional learning and ongoing coaching that will increase the implementation of HLPs and EBPs (including RTI) at the regional, district, and school levels. The shift from a one-size-fits-all professional development system to a targeted, individualized multi-tiered approach to professional learning will reform and improve Arkansas's system for personnel preparation and impact results towards the SiMR.

*Refer to SPP/APR Measurement Language for required information for Phases I-III including requirements for SiMR, baseline, targets, theory of action, and components of the implementation and evaluation plan.

Describe the data collected to evaluate and monitor fidelity of implementation and to assess practice change. (Please limit your response to 1600 characters without space):

The evaluation of improvement on implementation of RTI, is directly aligned with the SPDG evaluation plan. The SPDG's comprehensive evaluation system measures RTI capacity, fidelity of implementation, and student outcomes. The State Implementation Team completed the SISEP State Capacity Assessment with a focus on RTI. The SCA is designed to support scaling up of evidence-based practices by providing a regular measure of state capacity, a structured process for completing a state action plan, information on progress towards goals, and a common infrastructure for implementation. Year-to-year comparisons on the SCA revealed improvements in all areas: SMT Investment (FFY18 = 92% / FFY19 = 100%), System Alignment (FFY18 = 70% / FFY19 = 90%), Commitment to Regional Implementation Capacity (FFY18 = 38% / FFY19 = 56%) and Total Implementation Score (FFY18 = 70% / FFY19 = 84%). These data indicate continuous improvement with this strategy, and highlight the need to continue efforts focused on regional implementation supports. Results from the SCA have ranged from a baseline of 50% of RTI indicators in place in 2016 to 84% of indicators in place in 2020.

Historically SSIP reporting included the Regional Capacity Assessment (RCA), the District Capacity Assessment, the PBIS Tiered Fidelity Inventory, and the Reading-Tiered Fidelity Inventory. These measures are designed to assist stakeholders in their efforts to effectively gauge change in implementation. Due to the impact of COVID-19 and district and educational cooperative closures, RCA, DCA and academic and behavior tiered fidelity data were not able to be obtained.

Describe the components (professional development activities, policies/procedures revisions, and/or practices, etc.) implemented during the reporting period to support the knowledge and use of selected evidence-based practices. (Please limit your response to 1600 characters without space):

The Arkansas RTI training modules and facilitator guides incorporate the essential behavioral and academic components found at each level of the RTI framework. The modules are intended to help educational service cooperatives, districts, and schools improve the fidelity of implementation and develop infrastructure to ensure sustainability. Module content was fully aligned to agency initiatives, completed, edited, and approved by DESE leadership for placement on the DESE Website during this reporting period. Overview trainings on the modules were provided to all regional cooperatives in Arkansas during this phase of the SSIP. DESE Division of Learning Services unit leaders were apprised of the modules for use with content specialists across the state during monthly collaboration meetings. The SPDG Literacy Coordinator provided additional coaching support to instructional facilitators in SSIP schools with targeted feedback on RTI and the science of reading (R.I.S.E.). The Center for Exceptional Families' (TCFEF) provided nine parent/caregiver professional development sessions for to families across the state related to quality core instruction, essential components of a coherent system of support and RTI. Efforts to further engage with families in RTI professional development sessions were abbreviated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Beyond RTI, the State Director for Special Education and SSIP Coordinator provided statewide overviews of inclusive, high-leverage practices to more than 400 special educators, administrators and related service providers. The SSIP Coordinator and SPDG Literacy Coordinator participated in quarterly meetings of the Advisory Council for the Education of Children with Disabilities and the RTI Advisory Council to support policy and procedure guidance related to RTI, special education and related services.

Section C: Stakeholder Engagement

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

(Please limit your response to 3000 characters without space):

The stakeholder engagement strategies primarily utilized for the SSIP include clarifying goals, working with partner organizations, using multiple meeting opportunities, communicating often, qualitative interviews and identifying key individuals who will champion the work. The SSIP Coordinator and State Implementation Team from DESE provided regular updates to, and requested feedback from, external stakeholders including the Special Education State Advisory Council and Special Education LEA Supervisors to keep these groups informed. Increased involvement with the state's family engagement center, The Center for Exceptional Families (TCFEF), was a primary focus during this cycle of the SSIP. The SSIP partnered with TCFEF to gather qualitative interview data on the educational experiences of families within Arkansas with diverse experiences navigating public schools and special education. This information will be used to refine the Theory of Action for supports and services that best leverage family involvement and engagement.

The SSIP Coordinator was involved with the Arkansas Association of Special Education Administrators' meetings and presents SSIP information regularly to gather feedback. As part of the annual DESE monthly LEA technical assistance calls, the SSIP Coordinator and the Associate Director of Special Education provided updates to LEA Special Education Supervisors about the infrastructure work taking place as well as solicit their feedback on the process. Continued intentional collaboration between the DESE and the Arkansas Collaborative Consultants (Professional Development Outreach) to better support LEAs occurred through monthly meetings and the coordinated application of the SSIP Theory of Action into professional development, coaching and training support and facilitation.

With the impact of COVID-19, stakeholder engagement strategies were adapted to include virtual discussion groups that included administrators, general and special educators, and related services. Beginning in April of 2020, these virtual discussion groups met weekly and addressed remote-learning tiered supports in the areas of elementary and secondary resource, elementary and secondary self-contained, related services and evaluations. These groups were facilitated by the SSIP Coordinator, DESE-SEU staff and practitioners from across Arkansas who were collectively working to meet the needs of students during the pandemic.

Were there any concerns expressed by stakeholders during engagement activities? No

If "Yes", describe how the State addressed the concerns expressed by stakeholders. (Please limit your response to 1600 characters without space):

Click or tap here to enter text.

If applicable, describe the action(s) that the State implemented to address any FFY 2018 SPP/APR required OSEP response. (Please limit your response to 3000 characters without space):

As reflected in the FFY 2018 SPP/APR required response from OSEP, Arkansas was asked to provide: (1) a narrative or graphic representation of the principal activities implemented in Phase III, Year 4; (2) measures and outcomes that were implemented and achieved since the State's last SSIP submission (i.e., April 1, 2019); (3) a summary of the SSIP's coherent improvement strategies, including infrastructure improvement strategies and evidence-based practices that were implemented and progress toward short- and long-term outcomes that are intended to impact the SiMR; and (4) any supporting data that demonstrates that implementation of these activities are impacting the State's capacity to improve its SiMR data. Arkansas provided all of these components in the FFY 2019 SSIP APR Submission.