STATE PERFORMANCE PLAN / ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT: PART B

for STATE FORMULA GRANT PROGRAMS under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

For reporting on
FFY 2021

Arkansas

PART B DUE February 1, 2023

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

17 - Indicator Data

Section A: Data Analysis

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

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.

Has the SiMR changed since the last SSIP submission? (yes/no)

NO

Is the State using a subset of the population from the indicator (*e.g.*, a sample, cohort model)? (yes/no)

YES

Provide a description of the subset of the population from the indicator.

Historically, Arkansas has interpreted the population for this indicator as the special education population of grades 3-5 in SSIP-supported buildings. All students may be exposed to SSIP activities or the results.

The SiMR is comprised of value-added growth scores for students with multiple years of data on the regular assessment. The State has decided to change this response to "yes" (previous years was indicated as "no") to reflect that the data are reflective of a subset of the special education population in SSIP-supported buildings since the SiMR does not include students who took the alternate assessment.

Is the State's theory of action new or revised since the previous submission? (yes/no)

NO

Please provide a link to the current theory of action.

https://arksped.ade.arkansas.gov/documents/ssip/SSIP-SPDG-OSE-TOA.pdf

Progress toward the SiMR

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

Select yes if the State uses two targets for measurement. (yes/no)

NO

Historical Data

Baseline Year	Baseline Data
2016	59.53%

Targets

FFY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target >=	61.50%	62.33%	63.16%	63.37%	64.50%

FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data

Number of SWD with a high or moderate VAS in reading at participating schools and grade levels	Number of SWD with a VAS in reading at participating schools and grade levels	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
877	1,304	64.37%	61.50%	67.25%	Met target	No Slippage

Provide the data source for the FFY 2021 data.

The data is the RLA value added score based on the State's approved ESSA plan. Upon the receipt of the data file from the Office of Innovation for Education (OIE) at the University of Arkansas (state contractor for accountability), student level records are filtered based on the participating school buildings. Only students with value added scores (VAS) for RLA are included.

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

The data is the RLA value added score based on the State's approved ESSA plan.

In the first step, a longitudinal individual growth model is used to produce a predicted score for each student. The individual growth model uses as many years of prior scores for each student to maximize the precision of the prediction (best estimate) and accounts for students having different starting points (random intercepts). In the value-added model, each student's prior score history acts as the control/conditioning factor for the expectation of growth for the individual student. In the second step, the student's predicted score is subtracted from his or her actual score to generate the student's value-added score (actual – predicted = value-added score). The magnitude of value-added scores indicates the degree to which students did not meet, met, or exceed expected growth in performance. Student value-added scores are averaged for each school. School value-added scores indicate, on average, the extent to which students in the school grew compared to how much they were expected to grow, based on how the students had achieved in the past. The school value-added scores answer the question, "On average, did students in this school meet, exceed, or not meet expected growth?" (Arkansas ESSA Plan p. 45) While the school average tells us about the building, it does not tell us about how the individual student is doing compared to their peers. Therefore, to look at an individual student's growth in relation to their peers, the Office of Innovation for Education (OIE) at the University of Arkansas (state contractor for accountability) ranked the value-added scores of all students and categorized them into low, moderate, or high based on the percentile rank of students' growth scores, or residuals. This is commonly Percentile Rank of the Residual (PRR). An explanation of each category is as follows:

•Low indicates that a student's VAS, based on the PRR, was in the bottom 25% of all student VAS for same subject and grade level in the state

• Moderate indicates that a student's VAS, based on the PRR, was between 25% and 75% of all student VAS for the same subject and grade level in the state

• High indicates that a student's VAS, based on the PRR, was in the top 25% of all student VAS for the same subject and grade level in the state

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

NO

Did the State identify any general data quality concerns, unrelated to COVID-19, that affected progress toward the SiMR during the reporting period? (yes/no)

NO

Did the State identify any data quality concerns directly related to the COVID-19 pandemic during the reporting period? (yes/no)

NO

Section B: Implementation, Analysis and Evaluation

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

https://arksped.ade.arkansas.gov/documents/ssip/Arkansas-SSIP-Evaluation-Plan-Infrastructure-Tool.pdf

Is the State's evaluation plan new or revised since the previous submission? (yes/no)

NO

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

Strategy One: Expand 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 with expanding a coordinated system of support that provides the necessary organizational and collaborative structures for the way in which LEA services and supports are identified, managed, and differentiated at the state-level. This strategy is reflected in DESE's Theory of Action. Through intentional alignment and infrastructure expansion, the DESE is more effective in leveraging resources that will improve services for all students, including students with disabilities, and in increasing the reach and impact of the work with LEAs. The State Performance Management Team (SPMT) 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 (AR THRIVE and RTI Arkansas) general and special educators, administrators, and related services professionals build collective efficacy via team-based and action-oriented modeling, coaching and support with

intentional focus on four critical questions: 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 ™ and Inclusive Practices Project). RTI is directly aligned to critical question number three. The system of support in Arkansas is dependent upon administrators who advance inclusive leadership and practices (Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership). The Arkansas SSIP emphasizes the knowledge and implementation of high-leverage and other evidence-based practices that promote access to inclusive classrooms. The goal is to empower novice and experienced educators with knowledge and skills, building self and collective efficacy to meet the needs of diverse learners (R.I.S.E., HLPs, AR THRIVE and SIM™). The focus on alignment and expansion of these initiatives in the SSIP reflects a continuous evolution towards a single, coherent and collaborative system where students with disabilities are considered general education students with additional supports and services as determined by data. This system coalesces around DESE's mission to promote inclusive practices.

Strategy Two: In collaboration with other DESE Units, expand Arkansas' Response-to-Intervention (RTI) and inclusive practices model including Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and using evidence-based personnel development to implement a multi-tiered system of supports for behavior and academics, with a focus on literacy. This strategy has continuously evolved to focus on RTI, UDL and inclusionary practices and is being implemented and supported in SSIP targeted districts by DESE through the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG). This support strategically aligns with the R.I.S.E., Inclusive Principal Leadership, AR THRIVE and the Inclusive Practices initiatives. The State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG), in partnership with other DESE Units, works to transform and expand the statewide coherent system of support through professional learning and coaching. The SPDG professional learning design includes multi-year job-embedded training, differentiated coaching, and follow-up supports, with a focus on increasing the ability of instructional staff to implement high-leverage and other evidence-based practices when teaching all students, especially students with disabilities. In addition, the SPDG project focuses on increasing the capacity of leadership and instructional coaches to support the scale-up and sustainment of Response to Intervention through collaborative processes and structures, and with embedded evidence-based practices. A micro-credential is a verification of proficiency in a job-embedded discrete skill or competency that an educator demonstrates through the submission of evidence assessed via defined evaluation criteria. Micro-credentials allow educators the flexibility to personalize learning experiences that are relevant to the needs of students and are backed by research and best-practices. Additionally, micro-credentials provide a way to recognize educators for existing skills, talents or newly acquired skills that are demonstrated in the educators' own time and in their own space. During this report cycle, DESE has championed the development of micro-credentials around UDL and HLPs to allow educators choice and greater autonomy in the professional learning process. DESE recognizes micro-credentials as part of the agency's comprehensive system of professional learning, and DESE-approved micro-credentials are used in a variety of ways to support teachers at all stages of the career continuum. The DESE Office of Educator Effectiveness and Licensure and the SPDG provide micro-credentials at no cost to Arkansas teachers and administrators, and the SPDG offers stipends to educators who complete the micro-credentials related to the improvement strategies outlined in the SSIP/SPDG Alignment and Evaluation Plan.

Embedded within both of the infrastructure improvement strategies is an initiative called AR THRIVE. AR THRIVE is a collaborative project to support districts in efforts to develop and sustain a Multi-Tiered System of Support, in order for students to have access to the personalized academic, behavior, and mental health supports needed to be successful. AR THRIVE has expanded and rebranded DESEs coherent messaging and supports around RTI for behavior with the goals of increasing coordination of efforts that support behavior and mental health services and programs, increasing capacity in developing and sustaining evidence-based multi-tiered systems of support that address behaviors with a focus on positive behavior supports, and developing the infrastructure that will best support the needs of the whole child.

The purposeful selection of these strategies aligns well with stakeholder feedback, the extant evidence base, and with DESE's mission and vision to lead the nation in student-focused learning.

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

Relative to strategy one, the State Performance Management Team (SPMT) met monthly to improve the LEA system of support. This collaboration strategy involves multiple overlapping agency systems, including governance, data, accountability/monitoring, and quality standards. 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. Representatives form the SPMT and DESE Learning Services also participated in NCSI's Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Deep Dive Group and IDC's SSIP Data Quality Peer Group. To measure change across multiple agency initiatives in the SSIP, Arkansas continued to utilize the SSIP Infrastructure Development Planning and Progress Management Tool: Using Implementation Drivers and Stages of Implementation. Consideration of all initiatives reflected in the SSIP Theory of Action for this improvement strategy resulted in ratings that remained stable. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = pre-exploration and 5 = full implementation) Arkansas SSIP Infrastructure Tool ratings revealed the following implementation scores: Competency drivers of selection (4.5), training (4.0) and coaching (4.0), Organizational drivers of decision support data systems (4.5), facilitative administration (4.5) and systems intervention (4.5). Overall performance assessment of the Arkansas system coherence also remained stable at (4.0). The technical & adaptive leadership drivers improved to (5.0). Multiple initiatives are included in the SSIP and some initiatives are more developed with regard to stages of implementation. Ratings reflect the intentional focus on coherence among multiple initiatives at multiple stages of implementation. The SPMT continued interdepartmental collaboration and coordination through regular involvement and initiative alignment presentations at DESE First Friday Meetings, DESE Learning Services Unit Leader Meetings, Quarterly Regional Content Specialist Meetings, Monthly Office of Special Education Meetings, Statewide LEA Monthly Virtual Calls, Monthly Arkansas Collaborative Consultant Director Meetings, an annual convening of the Arkansas Collaborative Consultants, an annual convening

of LEA Supervisors called the LEA Academy, an annual School-based Therapy Conference for related service providers, and with The Center for Exceptional Families (TCFEF), Arkansas' PTI Center. By focusing on strand one, DESE is increasingly modeling for LEAs the collaborative accountability and decision making that is needed to meet the needs of all learners. This strand assists with facilitating information exchange and reducing the organizational silos that can be obstacles to sustainable systemic change. A coherent message of how multiple initiatives work together in the system to serve all students promotes uniformity of messaging and prioritization of needs. This coherent message was presented to all DESE staff in April of 2022 with positive feedback from across divisions of the agency. Increasing collaboration with strategy one has assisted the agency with focusing direction to build organizational coherence in order to positively impact the SiMR.

Relative to strategy two, The State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG), in partnership with other DESE Units, works to transform and expand the statewide coherent system of support through professional learning and coaching. The SPDG professional learning design includes multi-year job-embedded training, differentiated coaching, and follow-up supports, with a focus on increasing the ability of instructional staff to implement high-leverage and other evidence-based practices when teaching all students, especially students with disabilities. In addition, the SPDG project focuses on increasing the capacity of leadership and instructional coaches to support the scale-up and sustainment of Response to Intervention and Universal Design for Learning with embedded evidence-based practices. These implementation supports directly relate to DESE's professional development and technical assistance system. During this reporting cycle, the State Implementation Team reviewed data from implementation science measures from districts receiving SPDG support, and continued to meet with DESE leaders and a statewide advisory panel to gain stakeholder feedback on systemic implementation strengths and barriers. The completed RTI modules and facilitator guides for academics and behavior from the previous SPDG serve as a foundational component to support the current expansion of the SPDG. The academic modules are aligned with R.I.S.E., the statewide initiative to implement the science of reading, the PLC Project focused on collaboration between general and special educators, and with High Reliability Schools. This alignment promotes equity in access to high quality professional learning, and sustainability of the ongoing initiative for inclusive practices. The behavior modules promote implementation of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and this work is directly aligned to the work of the Arkansas Behavior Support Specialists and their work to install sustainable systems for behavior. This work was scaled during this reporting cycle towards increased coaching and training supports with the AR THRIVE Initiative. AR THRIVE is a collaborative project to support districts in efforts to develop and sustain MTSS in order for students to have access to the personalized academic, behavior, and mental health supports needed to be successful. AR THRIVE is a reflection of DESEs coherent messaging and supports with the goals of increasing coordination of efforts that support behavior and mental health services and programs, increasing capacity in developing and sustaining evidence-based multi-tiered systems of support that address behaviors with a focus on positive behavior, and developing the infrastructure that will best support the needs of the whole child. Data from the first cohort of AR THRIVE indicated that DESE supported 109 building leaders (principals, assistant principals and/or counselors) from 51 LEAs and 92 buildings. Following a 4-day intensive training, AR THRIVE participants then return to their districts to work through the process of implementing Tier 1 and 2 systems of support for behavior and mental health. Leaders have a year to implement what is learned and provide evidence in portfolio submissions due the following September. Future reporting of indicator 17 will highlight data from these submissions.

As the implementation team for strategy two of the SSIP regarding inclusive practices, systemic improvements facilitated by the SPDG are measured through the SISEP State Capacity Assessment (SCA) tool. State Capacity Assessment results from the spring of 2022 were as follows: Leadership (67%), Infrastructure and Resources (100%), Communication and Engagement (61%), and SCA Total Score (73%). Percentages represent the number of SCA items in place and mark significant improvement over the previous year's SCA results. Current SCA ratings will serve as a comparison for future SCA administrations. At the regional educational cooperative level, the SPDG Team administers the SISEP Regional Capacity Assessment (RCA) tool to measure systemic change with regional cooperative partners. The average from all RCA assessments revealed the following results: Leadership (81%), Competency (62%), Organization (59%), Total RCA Score (67%). At the district level, the SPDG team administers the SISEP District Capacity Assessment (DCA). The average from all DCA assessments revealed the following results: Organizational Leadership (31%), Competency (19%), Data Based Decision Making (21%), Total DCA Score (24%). Year-to-year comparative data on the RCA and DCA were not available as this was the first administration of these assessments to these agencies.

Did the State implement any <u>new</u> (newly identified) infrastructure improvement strategies during the reporting period? (yes/no)

NO

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

Strategy One -
Inclusive Practices Project:
This project strategically supports the SSIP, and an additional cohort of Inclusive Practices Project schools will occur during the next reporting cycle.The DESE and a contracted vendor will continue a partnership to expand the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) at Work® process within select SSIP schools. This PLC improvement strategy focuses on building a culture of shared responsibility and collective teacher efficacy between general and special educators to maximize learning for all students. Through collaborative PLC efforts between general and special educators, it is expected that school and district LRE percentages will improve. With greater access to quality core instruction, students will experience moderate to high growth in literacy as measured by the statewide assessment. Exploration of ways to systemically scale this work beyond project schools will also be a next step of this project.

High Leverage Practices:
Survey data acquired during this phase of the SSIP revealed improvement in year-to-year comparisons for Arkansas novice special

educators' self-efficacy with applying high-leverage practices (HLPs) in their everyday work. As next steps, the SSIP will continue to 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, IHEs and the state's parent training center. The SSIP will also continue to intentionally collaborate with DESE Educator Effectiveness and IHEs around efforts to mentor all novice general and special educators with HLPs, and to align this work with the Arkansas Special Education Resource Academy, a DESE partnership with IHEs to increase the number of special educators in Arkansas. It is expected that the scaling of work around HLPs will better equip general and special educators to be more confident in knowledge and skills of working with diverse learners, and that improved self-efficacy will encourage more novice teachers to remain in the profession.

Additionally, the SSIP will partner with The Center for Exceptional Families to highlight how families can engage with teachers and how teachers can engage with families to improve outcomes for students with disabilities. It is anticipated that aggregate survey data will continue to indicate high levels of educator self-efficacy with applying high-leverage practices, and that high percentages of novice teachers will choose to remain in the profession.

Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership:
Arkansas recognizes that administrators play an important role in guaranteeing that students and teachers have access to necessary supports. DESE will continue to be supported by CCSSO's Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership (AIPL) initiative, and the SSIP SiMR will continue to be the overarching goal for this AIPL work. An integral component of AIPL has been related to embedding HLPs into statewide professional learning for principals and school leadership teams. DESE and the work of the SSIP will partner with the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators (AAEA) to provide inclusive practices trainings for all principals involved in the AAEA Beginning Administrators Academy. In addition, DESE plans to invest in inclusive principal leadership through the expansion of the Inclusive Practices Project. Promotion and expansion of the ALL IN inclusive practices branding and an inclusive practices website occurred during this reporting period and will continue to be expanded with increased resources, research, and implementation supports during the next reporting period. The website address for the ALL IN initiative is as follows: https://sites.google.com/view/inclusive-practices/home. With improved website access to resources that align with state initiatives, LEAs will be able to see that this work stretches well beyond special education and is important for all stakeholders, including administrators. Beyond improvements to the SiMR, DESE anticipates a principal-led, continuous cultural shift at the building level that promotes the Least Dangerous Assumption, and ensures that all Arkansas students will be considered general education students. DESE also expects that inclusive leaders will lead buildings towards greater access to core instruction where LRE continuously improves for students with disabilities.

Strategic Instructional Model:
Though the SSIP SiMR is focused on literacy value-added growth scores for SWD in grades 3-5, Arkansas recognizes the need to provide supports for all students regardless of grade. Arkansas will continue to expand supports for the Strategic Instructional Model, with an emphasis on promoting digital access the following SIM Learning Strategies and Content Enhancement Routines: Inference Strategy, Proficiency in Sentence Writing Strategy, Main Idea Strategy, Listening and Note-taking Strategy, Vocabulary LINCing Routine/Strategy, Fundamentals of Sentence Writing Strategy, Unit Organizer Routine, and the Framing Routine. Trainings and follow up coaching on these strategies and routines will continue to be supported through a partnership with the University of Central Arkansas Mashburn Center for Learning. The next steps for this work will be to continue to scale the reach and sustainability of SIM professional learning opportunities via a learning management system, followed by job-embedded coaching. It is expected that providing resources and support for strategy instruction and content enhancement will empower teachers with the knowledge and skills needed help diverse students become self-directed learners. This improvement strategy directly aligns with HLP 14.

Strategy Two -
State Personnel Development Grant
Arkansas will continue to leverage the SPDG to build upon previous work around RTI for academics and behavior, and will revise the PBIS Modules to update them for new content and resource links. The SPDG will continue to embed HLPs and other EBPs to directly align with the SSIP. The SPDG and the Division of Educator Effectiveness began piloting newly developed High-Leverage Practices and Universal Design for Learning Micro-Credentials during this report cycle. Sixty-six Educators from across the state piloted an HLP or UDL micro-credential. Next steps for this improvement strategy will be to add the following new micro-credentials to the current library:
-Teach pro-social behaviors
-Provide scaffolded supports
-Use explicit instruction
-Use flexible groupings
-Use assistive technology
-Organize and facilitate effective meetings with professionals and families
-Collaborate with families to support student learning
-Develop a comprehensive learner profile to understand students' strengths and needs
-Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior
-Conduct functional behavior assessments (FBA) to develop individual student behavior support plans
As an additional next step to the micro-credential work, Arkansas will participate in The Micro-Credentials Partnership of States to further transform the state system to support systems-level quality standards.

The SSIP/SPDG and Division of Educator Effectiveness will increase statewide coaching supports through monthly Coaching Collaborative Calls focused on increasing coaching practices for all. The next steps with this strategy will be to promote 3 Communities of Practice supporting Cognitive Coaching that will pertain to:
-Cognitive Coaching Skills and Practice
-Cognitive Coaching Implementation Challenges
-DESE Implementation Challenges

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
As a next step for increasing UDL in Arkansas schools, DESE will explore the potential adoption of a team-based capacity building pilot project with an internationally respected technical assistance provider focused on concepts and practices of UDL and MTSS.

List the selected evidence-based practices implement in the reporting period:
High Leverage Practices for Inclusive Classrooms - HLPs
Collaboration - Inclusive Practices Project
Response to Intervention - Inclusive Practices
Strategic Instructional Model - Executive Functioning/Content Enhancement Routines/Learning Strategies
Inclusive Administrative Support - Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Provide a summary of each evidence-based practices.

High Leverage Practices for Inclusive Classrooms, as defined by the the Council for Exceptional Children, offers a set of practices that are essential to the support of student learning, and that can be systematically taught, learned and implemented by novice and experienced educators. HLPs have been supported by research to have significant potential for improving academic or behavioral outcomes for students with disabilities and other learners. These practices are best utilized through a tiered system of support with decision making that is based on data to meet individual student needs.

The Inclusive Practices Project has an intentional focus on the promotion of inclusive practices, ensuring that students who are IEP eligible, as well as other groups of struggling learners, have meaningful access to core instruction in established systems of intervention. Through the installation and implementation of collaborative structures and a relentless focus on learning, student outcomes will improve, including achievement and growth performance measured by district and state assessments. Collaboration leads to collective teacher efficacy which is a highly influential factor for improving student outcomes.

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-component, general education model, designed to identify students who may be at risk for learning or behavior challenges, offer support, and monitor progress.

The Strategic Instructional Model (SIM) is a formal model of cognitive and metacognitive interventions for struggling learners designed to focus on the following three broad areas of learning: Acquisition, storage, and/or expression/demonstration. The goal of SIM is for students to grow in executive functioning skills for self-directed learning.

Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership is a DESE initiative in partnership with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). The focus of this initiative is to develop Inclusive principals who are well prepared to serve students with disabilities and support teachers across general and special education in order to improve outcomes. Inclusive leaders create learning environments where all students can excel at high levels and promote distributive leadership to support and retain effective teachers of students with disabilities.

According to ESSA, Universal Design for Learning is a scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice. UDL provides flexibility in the presentation of information, the ways in which students respond or demonstrate learning, and the ways in which students are engaged in the learning. Additionally, UDL removes barriers to instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, and supports, challenges and maintains high achievement expectations for all.

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

Arkansas recognizes the need to improve access for SWD to receive instruction in least restrictive environments. The evidence-based practices outlined in the SSIP support systemic change with the overarching goal of improving students' access to quality core instruction in least restrictive environments. When educators are supported and empowered through quality professional learning that deepens knowledge and skills to serve diverse learners, and when general and special educators and related services professionals collaborate together around student data, students will demonstrate significant growth in literacy scores, which is the Arkansas SSIP SiMR. This intended impact has been demonstrated in SSIP targeted schools as the SiMR target has been exceeded in the past two reporting cycles. As reflected in the SSIP Logic Model, outputs and changes to LEA systems include the following:

-SSIP schools reflect a collaboratively designed multi-tiered system of supports for academics and behavior
-SSIP school building leadership teams build and increase capacity as measured by a Systems Analysis Tool and/or the Professional Learning Communities Continuums Survey
-Educators in SSIP schools build and increase capacity to implement HLPs and other evidence-based practices as measured by the Self-Efficacy Inventory
-Principals in SSIP schools build and increase capacity to establish a culture of high expectations and inclusivity for diverse learners.
-SSIP schools evidence an increase of students with disabilities with moderate or high growth as measured by the DESE and as reflected in the SiMR
-SSIP schools meaningfully engage and collaborate with families to improve outcomes for students with disabilities

The evidence-based practices that will enable and implement the above-listed changes include:

High Leverage Practices for Inclusive Classrooms, as defined by the the Council for Exceptional Children, offers a set of practices that are essential to the support of student learning, and that can be systematically taught, learned and implemented by novice and experienced educators. HLPs have been supported by research to have significant potential for improving academic or behavioral outcomes for students with disabilities and other learners. These practices are best utilized through a tiered system of support, and based data and individual student needs.

The Inclusive Practices Project has an intentional focus on the promotion of inclusive practices, ensuring that students who are IEP eligible, as well as other groups of struggling learners, have meaningful access to core instruction in established systems of intervention. Through the installation and implementation of collaborative structures and a relentless focus on learning, student outcomes will improve, including performance measured by district and state assessments. Collaboration leads to collective teacher efficacy which is a highly influential factor for improving student outcomes.

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-component, general education model, designed to identify students who may be at risk for learning or behavior challenges, and then offering needed support with frequent progress monitoring. With the identification of essential standards and frequent collaborative review of all students' data on common and summative assessments, matching interventions to specific student needs will ensure high levels of learning for all students.

The Strategic Instructional Model (SIM) is a formal model of cognitive and metacognitive interventions for struggling learners designed to focus on the following three broad areas of learning: Acquisition, storage, and/or expression /demonstration. The goal of SIM is for students to increase self-direction in learning how to learn.

Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership is a DESE initiative in partnership with the Council of Chief State School Officers. The focus of this initiative is to develop Inclusive principals who are well prepared to serve students with disabilities and support teachers across general and special education to improve outcomes. Inclusive leaders create learning environments where all students can excel at high levels and promote distributive leadership to support and retain effective teachers of students with disabilities. Effective inclusive leaders will demonstrate increased efficacy to provide support and feedback to educators and improve instruction at the building level.

Micro-credentialing for UDL and HLPs is expected to transform how educators in Arkansas approach lifelong learning. By integrating micro-credentials into the Arkansas system, educators will experience greater autonomy in identifying and developing new competencies, measuring competency of newly implemented skills, and potentially earning recognition along DESE's career continuum. By increasing educator ownership and agency, it is expected that rigorous and high-quality instructional and assessment practices will be implemented by educators for Arkansas students.

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

To measure change across multiple agency initiatives in the SSIP, Arkansas continued to utilize the SSIP Infrastructure Development Planning and Progress Management Tool: Using Implementation Drivers and Stages of Implementation. Consideration of all initiatives reflected in the SSIP Theory of Action for this improvement strategy resulted in ratings that remained stable. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1 = pre-exploration and 5 = full implementation) Arkansas SSIP Infrastructure Tool ratings revealed the following implementation scores: Competency drivers of selection (4.5), training (4.0) and coaching (4.0), Organizational drivers in decision support data system (4.5) facilitative administration (4.5) and systems intervention (4.5). Overall performance assessment of the Arkansas system coherence also remained relatively stable at (4.0) and the technical & adaptive leadership drivers increased (5.0). Multiple initiatives are included in the SSIP and some initiatives are more developed with regard to stages of implementation. Ratings reflect the intentional focus on coherence among multiple initiatives at multiple stages of implementation.

The evaluation of improvement for the SSIP aligns with the SPDG evaluation plan. As the work has evolved across reporting cycles, tools to measure implementation fidelity have been modified. The SPDG's comprehensive evaluation system measures the state, regional and district systems of support for growing educator capacity to proficiently implement high-leverage and other evidence-based instructional practices within daily instruction for academics and behavior. In addition, the SPDG evaluation plan monitors educator self-efficacy and and RTI capacity, fidelity of implementation, and student outcomes with value-added literacy scores. As the implementation team for strategy two of the SSIP, systemic improvements at the state level are measured through the SISEP State Capacity Assessment (SCA) tool. 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. For measurement of implementation at the regional and district levels, the SPDG uses the SISEP Regional Capacity Assessment and the SISEP District Capacity Assessment respectively.

To promote high quality coaching, the SPDG uses the Coaching Fidelity of Implementation Rubric. In the Arkansas model, coaches are defined as educational leaders that build collective capacity and efficacy of a school system based on educators' self-identified needs to improve student outcomes by: Demonstrating knowledge of content and pedagogy; Demonstrating professional flexibility and responsiveness; Developing a comprehensive coaching plan; Establishing a culture for learning and engagement; Creating an environment of respect and rapport; and Communicating effectively in the coaching relationship. To further support coaching capacity, SPDG hosts Collaborative Coaching calls to build relationships amongst coaches across the network, to increase the capacity of coaches' skills and tools based on coaching practices, to support inclusive practices and build a community where coaches receive support with ongoing implementation needs, to problem-solve challenges, and to share positive experiences and successful strategies. An Educator Self-Efficacy Survey is utilized to measure perceived acquisition, growth, knowledge, skill, and implementation of HLPs, UDL, and other evidence-based practices. The Micro-credential Professional Learning Evaluation Criteria assists the team with ensuring high quality standards in the development and implementation of micro-credentials for UDL, RTI and

HLPs. Any training performed by the State team or coaching affiliates follows the Observation Checklist for High-Quality Professional Development (HQPD) Version 3.

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

As measured by FFY 21 pre- and post- surveys of 290 Arkansas educators enrolled the DESE-OSE Novice Special Education Mentoring Program, data indicated that DESE's intensified efforts to provide training and technical assistance around UDL resulted in positive change regarding educators' understanding and implementation of UDL and inclusive practices. Post-survey results indicated that 86.3% of novice special educators understand UDL, while only 77.7 indicated understanding of UDL in the pre-survey. Post-survey results also indicated that 75.8% of novice special educators implemented UDL in the classroom, up from only 63.4% on the pre-survey. A comparison of pre- and post-survey responses on novice special educator confidence with understanding Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) improved from 55% to 67.9%.

Another systemic data point for consideration to continue addressing evidence-based practices was the interest in the DESE Special Education Resource Teacher Academies. The purpose of the Special Education Resource Teacher Academies is to provide current licensed public school educators in Elementary K-6, 4-8, or 7-12 ELA, Math, or Science the opportunity to earn an additional Special Education Resource Endorsement and participate in job-embedded professional development while receiving graduate school credit hours, at no cost to them. Educators obtaining this endorsement are able to provide special education services within the general education classroom, as supplementary supports, or in special education classrooms. One goal of the academies is to expand LEAs' ability to consider and offer a variety of special education service delivery models. With the growing emphasis on inclusive practices, this opportunity assists Arkansas school districts by providing the skilled staff needed to lead the nation in student focused inclusive education. Participating educators are part of the Novice Special Education Teacher Mentoring Program at their local education service cooperative where they will receive additional coaching, professional development, regional networking opportunities, and support throughout the school year. DESE and all partnering higher education programs provide programs that:
-Include 12-15 hours of graduate coursework
-Lead to a Special Education Resource Teacher Endorsement
-Include some summer instruction to prepare teachers for the fall semester
-Include ongoing supports throughout the school year
-Are designed for completion of the Academy in one year
-Cover Tuition, fees, and assessment costs
Following the release of the Commissioner's Memo, 174 educators participated in the initial cohort during the 2021-2022 academic year. Two hundred and ninety four participants (294) will participate in the 2022-2023 academic year. Each educator preparation program agrees to promote HLPs and UDL within the coursework for the academies, and interest to participate exceeded expectations. Survey data on the numbers of participants interested in continuing learning on high-leverage and inclusive practices, UDL, and executive functioning supports the ongoing use of the evidence-based practices outlined in the SSIP.

Qualitative survey feedback from Inclusive Practices trainings that occurred with over 3,000 educators, administrators and families representing districts from every Arkansas Regional Educational Service Cooperative in 2021-2022 indicated that district and school teams overwhelmingly want more support in how to implement inclusive practices, including UDL, PLCs, RTI and HLPs. LEAs are increasingly requesting DESE support for the "how" of implementing inclusive practices, and each evidence-based practice and improvement strategy outlined in the SSIP supports this identified need. For this reason, statewide trainings regarding UDL and Executive Functioning were unveiled in the summer of 2022.

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

Inclusive Practices Professional Learning Communities Project:
Arkansas expects to expand the Inclusive Practices Project with an additional eight schools during the next reporting cycle. DESE and a national technical assistance provider will continue a partnership to develop and expand the Professional Learning Communities (PLC) at Work® process within select SSIP schools in Arkansas based on an application process. This evidence-based practice that focuses on applying PLC structures and building a culture of shared responsibility and collective teacher efficacy between general and special educators in maximizing learning for all students is essential to work of the SSIP. It is anticipated that schools involved in this initiative will install/expand a PLC culture by ensuring that all subgroups of students are addressed collectively. Additionally, it is anticipated that schools will experience increases in the number of students with disabilities being educated in general educated content settings, with access to core instruction. In this PLC culture, it is also anticipated that teachers will grow in self and collective efficacy with knowledge and implementation of UDL, RTI, HLPs and innovative service delivery models.

High Leverage Practices:
Survey data acquired during this phase of the SSIP revealed improvement in year-to-year comparisons for Arkansas novice special educators' self-efficacy with applying high-leverage practices (HLPs) in their everyday work. As next steps, the SSIP will continue to leverage the work of the SPDG with regard to the development of micro-credentials for all HLPs. A focus on building agency infrastructure and supports by focusing on state-level capacity and knowledge of HLPs with agency leaders, regional content specialists, agency technical assistance providers, IHEs and the state's parent training center will continue. The SSIP will also continue to intentionally collaborate with Educator Effectiveness and IHEs around alignment of efforts to mentor all novice administrators and general and special educators with HLPs. It is expected that the scaling of work around HLPs will better equip general and special educators to be more confident in knowledge and skills of working with diverse learners, and that improved self-efficacy will encourage more novice teachers to remain in the profession.

Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership:
Arkansas recognizes that administrators play an important role in guaranteeing that students and teachers have access to necessary supports. DESE has been directly supported by CCSSO's Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership (AIPL) initiative and the SSIP SiMR will continue to be the overarching goal for this AIPL work. An integral component of AIPL has been related to embedding HLPs into statewide professional learning for principals and school leadership teams. In addition, DESE plans to develop and expand the Inclusive Practices PLC Project within additional 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 continue to 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 expanding the ALL IN statewide inclusive practices training campaign focused on "the how" of inclusive practices. Promotion and expansion of the inclusive practices ALL IN branding and website will be an additional next step. With improved website access to resources that align with state initiatives, LEAs will be able to see that this work stretches beyond special education and is important for all stakeholders. Beyond improvements to the SiMR, DESE anticipates a continuous cultural shift that follows the Least Dangerous Assumption, where all Arkansas students will be considered general education students and will be served in Least Restrictive Environments. It is expected that Arkansas' LRE data will continue to improve with this continuous cultural shift. It is also anticipated that principals will grow in self-efficacy as inclusive instructional leaders and become champions for the inclusive practices work.

Strategic Instructional Model:
Though the SSIP SiMR is focused on literacy value-added growth scores for SWD in grades 3-5, Arkansas recognizes the need to provide supports for all students regardless of grade. Arkansas will continue to expand supports for the Strategic Instructional Model, with an emphasis on the following SIM Learning Strategies and Content Enhancement Routines: Inference Strategy, Proficiency in Sentence Writing Strategy, Main Idea Strategy, Listening and Note-taking Strategy, Vocabulary LINCing Routine/Strategy, Fundamentals of Sentence Writing Strategy, Unit Organizer Routine, and the Framing Routine. These strategies and routines have been offered via face-to-face and virtual sessions by content specialists through a partnership with the University of Central Arkansas Mashburn Center for Learning Team. The next steps for this work are to promote the developed training through DESE's Digital Learning Unit to scale the reach and sustainability of this work by offering SIM professional learning opportunities via a learning management system, followed by job-embedded coaching.

Response to Intervention/HLPs/UDL Micro-credentials:
Arkansas will continue to leverage the SPDG to build upon previous work around RTI for academics and behavior, and will revise the PBIS Modules to update them for new content and resource links. The SPDG will continue to embed HLPs and other EBPs to directly align with the SSIP. The SPDG and the Division of Educator Effectiveness began piloting newly developed High-Leverage Practices and Universal Design for Learning Micro-Credentials during this report cycle. Next steps for this improvement strategy will be to add the following new micro-credentials to the current library:
-Teach pro-social behaviors
-Provide scaffolded supports
-Use explicit instruction
-Use flexible groupings
-Use assistive technology
-Organize and facilitate effective meetings with professionals and families
-Collaborate with families to support student learning
-Develop a comprehensive learner profile to understand students' strengths and needs
-Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior
-Conduct functional behavior assessments (FBA) to develop individual student behavior support plans
As an additional next step to the micro-credential work, Arkansas will participate in The Micro-Credentials Partnership of States to further transform the state system to support systems-level quality standards.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
As a next step for increasing UDL in Arkansas schools, DESE will explore the potential adoption of a team-based capacity building pilot project with an internationally respected technical assistance provider focused on concepts and practices of UDL and MTSS.

Coaching:
The SSIP/SPDG and Division of Educator Effectiveness will increase statewide coaching supports through monthly Coaching Collaborative Calls focused on increasing coaching practices for all. The next steps with this strategy will be to promote 3 Communities of Practice supporting Cognitive Coaching that will pertain to:
-Cognitive Coaching Skills and Practice
-Cognitive Coaching Implementation Challenges
-DESE Implementation Challenges

Does the State intend to continue implementing the SSIP without modifications? (yes/no)
YES

If yes, describe how evaluation data support the decision to implement without any modifications to the SSIP.

The above-listed SiMR data indicates that Arkansas has exceeded the target across two reporting cycles in SSIP-supported LEAs implementing the coherent improvement strategies. Stakeholder feedback from novice special educators, beginning administrators, educators seeking resource endorsement in the Special Education Resource Academies and from parent engagement sessions indicate that the SSIP is well-calibrated to the needs of Arkansas LEAs. Results from the SSIP Infrastructure Tool, and the State,

Regional and District Capacity Assessments indicates that systemic change is occurring throughout the cascade of supports from the SEA to the classroom.

Section C: Stakeholder Engagement

Description of Stakeholder Input

Following the submission of the new targets for the FFY 2020-2025 SPP/APR cycle, the OSE has continued to collaborate closely with numerous partners and through various initiatives to obtain authentic engagement and reciprocal exchange of information regarding the targets, including Indicator 17. These partners and/or initiatives include:

The State Special Education Advisory Council is an integral group of stakeholders who provide input on target setting and improvement activities. The State Special Education Advisory Council meetings are held in April, July, October and January. Each meeting provides a forum for solicitation of feedback regarding SPP/APR targets and the SSIP Theory of Action. The Advisory Council representation includes: Parents (10), Adult Corrections, Advocates (2), AR Rehabilitation Services (2), Career & Technical Education (2), Center for Exceptional Families (PTI), Foster Care, Higher Education, Juvenile Corrections, LEA Special Education Supervisors, McKinney-Vento Administrator, Teachers (4), Private School, and Public Charter Schools. During these meetings, the council members and public participants are provided updates on the previously held stakeholder input sessions, compliance indicators, dispute resolution indicators, and the SSIP.

The Center for Exceptional Families (TCFEF) is a Parent Training and Information (PTI) center for the state with the mission of improving educational opportunities for students with disabilities, including students transitioning to adult life beyond high school. TCFEF maintains a large database of families of students with disabilities, and engages with them via social media, virtual and in-person meetings and through email. The OSE partnered with TCFEF during the target setting for the FFY 2020-2025 SPP/APR cycle and maintains ongoing collaboration to solicit stakeholder feedback regarding indicator target updates and the SSIP. TCFEF is also a contracted partner of the State Personnel Development Grant which directly aligns with the SSIP Theory of Action.

The Inclusive Practices Project has an intentional focus on inclusive practices, 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. Participating schools engage in a collaborative evaluation process that gathers data regarding student achievement, teacher practices, and effective professional development. This project directly aligns with several key indicators, but is especially integral to supporting Indicator 5 (LRE) and Indicator 17 (SSIP). Schools supported by this initiative are factored into the Arkansas State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR). These LEAs form a key constituency group for ongoing input on targets and revisions. More information about this project can be found at this website: https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/special-projects/inclusive-practices-project

The Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators (AAEA) is an agency of diverse school leaders that promotes quality public education for all children in Arkansas. AAEA's mission is to ensure high standards of leadership by providing quality professional development, influencing education legislation and policy, stimulating and fostering support and building successful coalitions. The OSE maintains a close partnership with AAEA, and particularly the constituent groups of Beginning Administrators (BA) and Special Education Administrators (AASEA). These partnerships provide avenues for broad stakeholder input on all targets in the SPP/APR, and any need for subsequent revisions to the targets. The BA subgroup has had increasing input over the past year through the OSE and AAEA's Advancing Inclusive Principal Leadership (AIPL) initiative.

The ALL IN Initiative of the DESE-OSE promotes equitable access to core instruction to foster greater opportunities for students to reach college, career, and life goals. A new Inclusive Practices website was unveiled during this reporting cycle and houses important information for stakeholders in the areas of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), Universal Design for Learning (UDL). High-Leverage Practices (HLPs), Inclusive Principal Leadership, Inclusive Related Services, Parent Resources, Flexible Service Delivery, Scheduling, IEP Documentation and Videos for Implementation Support. Additional information on this initiative can be found on the following website https://sites.google.com/view/inclusive-practices/home. As part of the ALL IN initiative, Learning for All statewide trainings were unveiled in this reporting period and were presented across the entire state in every educational service cooperative to over 3000 participants. Learning for All emphasizes two key considerations for achieving inclusive education: Universal Design for Learning and Executive Functioning. These statewide trainings provide an avenue for broad stakeholder feedback regarding Indicator 17.

The Arkansas Collaborative Consultants (ACC) Convening and ACC Monthly Director Meetings represent key stakeholders from DESE-OSE's technical assistance arm. These diverse stakeholders provide leadership, support and service to LEAs in all 75 counties in the state, in alignment with the vision and mission of DESE-OSE and the SSIP. Discussions regarding data, targets, planning, and action steps for the SSIP occur during these meetings in order to establish performance measures to meet the targets outlined in the SPP/APR and to prioritize performance measures within discretionary grants.

The Arkansas School-Based Therapy Conference is an opportunity for the constituencies of special education administrators, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech-language pathologists to discuss indicator 17 targets and data, and to have meaningful dialogue to connect their roles to the targets when considering flexible service delivery, scheduling, funding, collaborative teaming structures, and high-leverage practices.

In partnership with the State Personnel Development Grant and the SSIP, the Office of Innovation for Education (OIE) at the University of Arkansas engages stakeholders through Innovation Landscape Focus Groups, Coaching Communities of Practice, Empathy Interviews, and Process Mapping to transform of Arkansas' professional learning system from a traditional compliance

model, to a nested model that encourages choice, educator capacity and efficacy.

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

The stakeholder engagement strategies primarily utilized for the SSIP include clarifying goals, working with partner organizations, using multiple meeting opportunities, communicating often, using multiple means of submitting feedback and identifying key individuals who will champion the work. The SSIP Coordinator, UALR Data and Research Director and State Implementation Team from DESE have 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 as well as to solicit their feedback. 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 host five statewide workshops to gather qualitative data and feedback on baseline and targets for Indicator 17. The feedback from these workshops provided valuable perspectives to guide the SSIP Theory of Action and align supports and services that best leverage identified family needs and support family involvement and engagement. This effort directly aligns with HLP 3, which pertains to Collaborating with Families to Support Student Learning and Secure Needed Services.

The SSIP Coordinator is frequently involved with SPDG and SPMT leadership, as well as with the Arkansas Association of Special Education Administrators' meetings. Feedback on the SSIP is regularly solicited through these collaborations. The SSIP Coordinator also serves as a team member on the AIPL initiative to increase the capacity of administrators to be inclusive leaders. As part of the annual DESE monthly LEA technical assistance calls, the SSIP Coordinator and the Associate Director of Special Education provide 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 has occurred through monthly meetings and the coordinated application of the SSIP theory of action into professional development, coaching and training support and facilitation.

In December of this reporting cycle, TCFEF, the IDEA Data and Research Manager, and the SSIP Coordinator facilitated a statewide virtual event for families to provide feedback on the setting targets, data analysis, and improvement strategies. For families who could not attend the live virtual session, a link to a recording of the event was sent to TCFEF's broad network of families to review and provide input at their convenience. In partnership with the SSIP, TCFEF hosted five additional workshops during this reporting cycle for Arkansas parents/caregivers focused on gathering their perceptions of special education in Arkansas through the lens of lived experiences. The workshop dates were 5/20/21, 8/6/21, 10/15/21, 1/11/22, and 3/10/22. Participants were shown a video created by DESE-OSE and TCFEF that highlights diverse perspectives and reflections of 15 families navigating special education in Arkansas. Feedback was then requested from workshop participants on ways to improve special education services in Arkansas, including coverage of the established baselines and targets. Emphasis of these meetings centered around Indicators 1, 4, 5, 8, and 17 and highlighted HLP 3: Collaborating with Families to Support Student Learning and Secure Needed Services. Average attendance at each workshop was 12, with a total attendance of 59 across the five workshops. TCFEF also presented the video for families at the ASPA conference with 150 participants.

During this reporting cycle, the DESE-OSE launched a new Inclusive Practices website https://sites.google.com/view/inclusive-practices/home. This website houses information that describes the systemic change occurring within special education in Arkansas, and provides implementation resources and supports. The website has provided effective and efficient delivery of information for key stakeholders, including individuals with disabilities, families, educators, administrators, institutions of higher education and community members.

Were there any concerns expressed by stakeholders during engagement activities? (yes/no)

NO

Additional Implementation Activities

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

SAIL Literacy Support:
Recognizing the need to calibrate initiatives and supports for all learners, and to ensure that the SSIP is reflective of supports for diverse disabilities, a collaborative group of stakeholders will meet monthly to discuss the evidence-base and application of literacy supports for students with complex learning needs. The State's Lead R.I.S.E. Specialist, the DESE-OSE Coordinator for Curriculum and Assessment and the SSIP Coordinator will continue to participate in the Standards-Aligned Instruction for Literacy (SAIL) cross-state collaborative addressing the evidence base and literacy supports for students with complex learning needs. Application of the Science of Reading (SoR) to individuals with complex and multiple disabilities will be an intensified focus in the next fiscal year. The State will use the SAIL Matrix Rubric for Literacy to mark progress towards systemic change at the agency level. The goal is to ensure high expectations and access to rigor for all students, including students with complex and low incidence disabilities.

Assistive Technology Application:
In the next reporting cycle, DESE will explore proposals to support the State's focus and priorities through a strategic technology purchase. The Arkansas Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan highlights the need for a system of aligned supports across the ADE to improve outcomes for all students. ADE will seek a suite of web-based accessibility tools for students accompanied with training and technology integration to support the implementation of inclusive practices and accessibility to high-quality instruction. In addition, the statewide purchase of universal support tools will help Arkansas strive toward the goal of general and special education systems (in this case technology systems) working collaboratively to provide the supports needed for all students to be successful. The use of universal support tools advances Arkansas' current work with High Leverage Practices (HLPs), Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Equitable Access to Accessible Educational Materials (AEM) and leadership training and commitment to

inclusive practices. Since 2014, Arkansas has been heavily invested in transitioning away from teaching reading from a whole language approach to a phonics-based approach that is grounded in the Science of Reading. The Reading Initiative for Student Excellence (R.I.S.E) is backed by legislation and is a focal point for literacy instruction in Arkansas that spans grades K-12 and across content areas. The statewide training in the Science of Reading has sharpened the focus of reading instruction and strengthened teachers' abilities to instruct all students. High quality instruction also reduces the need for additional and specialized supports. While students are receiving evidenced-based intervention aligned with the Science of Reading to address deficiencies, the expectation for classroom instruction is at grade-level for every student. For the students reading independently below grade level, assistive technology accommodations provide access to grade-level reading in all appropriate content areas. DESE will seek a partnership with a global leader in educational technology to procure a system of easy to use, universally designed, supplemental software solutions, with the goal of providing access to students in Arkansas in order to achieve the vision for teaching and learning: all students will be actively literate, and critical thinkers who are community engaged. Through this project, Arkansas will increase the capacity for inclusive education. Providing inclusive tools for all students promotes confidence, independence, and life-long success. The goal is for Arkansas students to graduate ready for college, careers, and community engagement. Goals for this project will include:

-Provide accessibility options for Arkansas students from a host of easy-to-use tools to support their literacy and math that work in alignment with district technologies

-Foster the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) by providing Arkansas students multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement through an array of informational/assistive technology options

-Promote self-directed learners who use support tools that assist students in grades 3-12 with math, reading, and writing to understand and express themselves more confidently and independently

-DESE expects that the system will ready students for the same or similar tools available on the statewide assessment.

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

SAIL Literacy Support:
The timeline for above-listed SAIL activity will be monthly literacy group stakeholder meetings. Data collection will include qualitative conversations based on agendas and meeting minutes. Quantitative data will be captured at the agency level by using the SAIL Matrix Rubric for Literacy in the spring of the next reporting period. Aligning the evidence base of the science of reading with UDL, high leverage and evidence-based practices and through the lens of diverse high and low incidence disabilities will inform the SSIP coherent improvement strategies, and guide the development of professional learning supports for LEAs in Arkansas to provide better instruction for students with cognitive/communicative/behavioral or other complex needs. With improved, standards-aligned instruction in the area of literacy, it is anticipated that students with diverse learning needs will demonstrate progress on the regular and alternate assessments.

Assistive Technology Application Expected Timeline:
Request For Proposal Release to Prospective Contractors: December 5, 2022
Bidders Conference: December 9, 2022
Deadline for Prospective Contractor Questions: December 12, 2022
Answers to Questions Posted to ARBuy: December 16, 2022
Proposal Due Date: January 6, 2023
Initial Proposal Evaluation: January 12, 2023
Interviews: January 18-19, 2023
Final Proposal Evaluation: January 19, 2023
Discussions Kick Off Meeting: January 27, 2023
Finalize Discussions: February 17, 2023
Post Anticipation to Award: February 21, 2023
Award Contract: April 3, 2023

Expected Outcomes for the Assistive Technology Application:
Integration of assistive technology as a universal design for all students in grades 3-12 will provide accessibility options for Arkansas students from a host of easy-to-use tools deployed in least restrictive environments. Increasing educator competency and use of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) opportunities available through technology will improve access to LRE and equip learners to be more self-directed in the acquisition and selection of tools that best supplement quality instruction in math, reading, and writing. DESE expects that the assistive technology application/system will ready students for the same or similar tools available on the statewide assessment which will help students with disabilities demonstrate what they know and are able to do. Data collection will be centered around the metrics of the application and feature use by students, and the training/coaching of educators in the features available on the application, and how data-driven feature matching assists diverse Arkansas learners.

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

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional).
NA

17 - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

17 - OSEP Response

17 - Required Actions