

**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**

Conneticut



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)?

Increase the reading performance of all third-grade students with disabilities (SWDs) statewide, as measured by Connecticut's English Language Arts (ELA) Performance Index.

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)

NO

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://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Special-Education/SPP/CT-Part-B-State-Systemic-Improvement-Plan.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
2018	51.50%

Targets

FFY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target >=	47.50%	47.50%	48.50%	49.00%	51.60%

FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data

Sum of Individual Performance Indices	Number of Student with Disabilities	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
2,773	5,584		47.50%	49.66%	Met target	N/A

Provide the data source for the FFY 2021 data.

The data source used by the CSDE is the statewide ELA summative assessments: the Smarter Balanced (SB) Assessment and the Connecticut Alternative Assessment (CTAA), administered statewide to students in Grades 3-8 and 11 in the spring of 2022. The SiMR data are directly derived from the State's approved ESSA Accountability Index.

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

The State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR) for the Connecticut State Department of Education's State Systemic Improvement Plan is to increase the reading performance of all third-grade students with disabilities (SWD) statewide, as measured by Connecticut's English Language Arts (ELA) Performance Index. The methodology for calculating the ELA Performance Index starts by taking the scale score on the statewide ELA assessments: the Smarter Balanced (SB) Assessment and the Connecticut Alternate Assessment (CTAA), administered statewide each spring, and converting that scale score into an appropriate index point value that ranges from 0 to 110 (the individual performance index). The ELA Performance Index is then calculated by averaging the individual performance indices (numerator) earned by all participating third grade students with disabilities (denominator).

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://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Special-Education/SPP/CT-Part-B-State-Systemic-Improvement-Plan.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:

SSIP Leadership Team

The CSDE formed an SSIP Leadership Team, to increase the collaboration between the Bureau of Special Education (BSE), the Academic Office, the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success, the Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities, as well as other internal CSDE colleagues and external partners; share expertise, research, and resources; support the State's SSIP; plan professional learning (PL) opportunities to build capacity on reading/literacy strategies for SWDs; and support local education agencies (LEAs) as they work toward improving the reading performance of third grade students with disabilities (SWDs) – Connecticut's SiMR. There are a variety of existing initiatives in the state that are coordinated by the CSDE, which directly relate to and support the SSIP. The CSDE's infrastructure has improved through the development of an SSIP Leadership Team. The regularly scheduled virtual meetings has allowed the CSDE colleagues to discuss the content, implementation, and effectiveness of these initiatives, and restructure existing and create new activities to ensure that CSDE initiatives continue to evolve in a way that best supports the reading instruction of SWDs in the state. Through this collaborative effort, the SSIP Leadership Team worked to develop and maintain the Web-based repository of resources, plan for ongoing PL opportunities, and support the Connecticut Intensive Intervention Implementation Initiative (CONNI4) project, which will support LEAs in implementing the data-based individualization (DBI) process.

Online TA and Resource Library

While previous SSIP-related resources focused almost solely on evidence-based reading instruction and intervention, it was necessary to broaden the scope of this work this past year in preparation for the statewide implementation of the new IEP document and the Connecticut Special Education Data System (CT-SEDS). An intra-department approach to formulate a strategy, develop resources, and provide technical assistance (TA) was utilized. The BSE worked collaboratively with internal CSDE colleagues, as well as external partners such as the State Education Resource Center (SERC), the Connecticut Alliance of Regional Educational Service Centers (RESCs), and the state's parent training and information (PTI) center in order to provide TA and online resources. In its effort to build capacity statewide, and to support the implementation of the new IEP and the CT-SEDS, the BSE created a New IEP/CT-SEDS webpage to provide information, documents, and tools, and to assist in the roll-out of the new IEP, as well as developed a CT-SEDS Preview Series to provide a preview of how CT-SEDS will support various special education processes. A five-part Specific Learning Disability (SLD) Preview Series was developed to assist planning and placement team's (PPT) engagement in thoughtful, comprehensive, data-driven dialogue about students referred for special education due to a suspected SLD:

- 1) Overview,
- 2) Subject-Specific Worksheets,
- 3) Multidisciplinary Evaluation Report,
- 4) Understanding Common Profiles of Reading Disabilities, and
- 5) Understanding a Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses.

Ongoing Professional Learning

The CSDE, in collaboration with the SERC and the RESCs, also provided two robust PL opportunities to build capacity and support the statewide implementation of the new IEP and CT-SEDS: IEP Quality Training and CT-SEDS Expert User Training.

In its effort to build capacity statewide to address the needs of students with reading difficulties, including those identified with SLD and SLD/Dyslexia, the CSDE, in collaboration with the SERC, made the following nine, free online webinars available to districts. Webinars 1-3 are included in an online module, available to educator preparation programs (EPPs) (see #10 below).

1. Increasing Awareness of SLD/Dyslexia: Implications for CT Educators
2. Using Literacy Screening Data to Support Students with Reading Difficulties
3. Remediating and Accommodating Students with SLD/Dyslexia at the Secondary Level
4. Identifying Students with SLD/Dyslexia: An Online Module
5. It's Never Too Late: How to Motivate and Teach Older Struggling Readers with SLD/Dyslexia

6. Case Study Review of a CT Student with SLD/Dyslexia
7. Identifying Students who are Gifted and Talented and Have SLD or SLD/Dyslexia
8. Distinguishing Between Typically Developing English Learners and Students with Reading Difficulties
9. SLD/Dyslexia: Connecting Research to Practice in Connecticut
10. Online Module for EPPs

The CSDE, in collaboration with the RESCs, sponsored six, free cohorts of “Systematic Teaching of Basic Literacy Skills” available to districts. Participants learned systematic, structured methods for teaching decoding, encoding, oral, and written expression to students with learning disorders and specific language disabilities.

Additionally, as part of its Structured Literacy Program Training Series, the CSDE, in collaboration with the SERC, provided the following sixteen, free training sessions available to districts.

1. Wilson Reading System Introductory Training (5 sessions)
2. Wilson – Just Words Virtual Launch Workshop (2 sessions)
3. Orton-Gillingham Introductory Training Program (5 sessions)
4. Lindamood Bell Phoneme Sequencing Program for Reading, Spelling, and Speech (2 sessions)
5. Lindamood Bell Visualizing and Verbalizing for Language Comprehension and Thinking (1 session)
6. Lindamood Bell Seeing Stars (1 session)

CONNi4/DBI Project Leadership Team

The DBI Leadership Team meets bi-weekly to monitor the progress of the CONNi4/DBI project. Members of the DBI Leadership Team include BSE staff members and researchers at the University of Connecticut (UConn). During DBI Leadership Team meetings, the team discusses the development of training and implementation resources and materials, data gathered from the districts/schools participating in Cohort 1, recruitment of districts/schools for Cohort 2, the deliverables, timeline, and outcomes of the project, and information and communications regarding the SSIP/SiMR and the CONNi4/DBI project to be shared with stakeholders, including the State Advisory Council on Special Education (SAC) and CT’s PTI.

The CONNi4 project consists of a series of PL activities: 1) DBI Launch training, which provides: an overview of the CONNi4/DBI project, information on the importance of intensive intervention, how DBI aligns with multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) and specially-designed instruction, the steps of the DBI process (pre-DBI data review and selection of an evidence-based intervention, progress monitoring, diagnostic assessment, and intervention adaptation), the conditions needed for DBI success (leadership, capacity and infrastructure, and communication and collaboration), and an opportunity for teams to create a DBI plan using a case study; 2) Job-embedded PL (i.e., District DBI Leader Check-ins, School DBI Team Meetings, Teacher DBI Check-ins); 3) DBI Diagnostic Assessment and Adaptation PD; 4) Cross-District Site Visits; and 5) Cross-Cohort DBI Summit. Surveys are completed by participants, consisting of items corresponding to assessment and intervention skills and beliefs, frequency of data-based decision making at the district/school level, implementation of evidence-based practices, reflection activities corresponding to the training, and an evaluation.

The UConn Research Team meets weekly to discuss the scope of work, provide updates on job-embedded PL and the desktop application/graphing system developed for DBI plans, which allows for data visualization to identify if response to intervention is strong or limited, and to create supplemental materials and resources. This team also recruits educators statewide for a DBI Advisory Board that meets at least once per year to provide input on project materials (e.g., reading intervention resource map, intervention selection tip sheet, fidelity form).

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.

SSIP Leadership Team

The regularly scheduled virtual SSIP Leadership Team meetings have allowed the CSDE colleagues to discuss the content, implementation, and effectiveness of these initiatives, and restructure existing and create new activities in order to ensure that CSDE initiatives continue to evolve in a way that best supports the reading instruction of SWDs in the state. Through this collaborative effort, the SSIP Leadership Team worked to develop and maintain the Web-based repository of resources, plan for ongoing PL opportunities, and support the CONNi4 project, which will support LEAs in implementing the DBI process.

Online TA and Resource Library

The following list highlights some of the content resulting from this improvement strategy and the associated metrics illustrate the short-term outcomes that were achieved.

- CT-SEDS Preview Series Page views: 13,406
- Specific Learning Disability (SLD) Preview Series Page views: 4,421
- Session 1: Overview views: 639
- Session 2: Subject-Specific Worksheets views: 577
- Session 3: Multidisciplinary Evaluation Report views: 440
- Session 4: Understanding Common Profiles of Reading Disabilities views: 313
- Session 5: Understanding a Pattern of Strengths and Weaknesses views: 118

While quantitative metrics data reviewed to evaluate the outcome of individuals accessing the electronic repository of resources

developed during FFY 2019, FFY 2020, and FFY 2021 showed that a high number of individuals viewed or downloaded this information over the past 12 months, qualitative data in the form of stakeholder input yielded additional valuable information regarding the topics and content of the resources posted this past year. Feedback on the resources was received from a diverse group of individuals including district administrators and teachers, parents, parent advocates and attorneys throughout the state, via Office Hours and ongoing PL opportunities, which suggest that the newly developed resources were generally regarded as timely, appropriate, accessible, and practical. Although the ever-changing educational landscape provided a challenge in finalizing and releasing some of the guidance quickly, CSDE staff members worked extremely hard to be responsive to the immediate needs of the state's school districts and will continue to work to provide helpful guidance, TA, and resource documents moving forward.

Ongoing Professional Learning

Several activities were planned during the FFY 2021 as part of ongoing PL activities. The following list highlights the PL offerings from this improvement strategy and the associated metrics illustrate the short-term outcomes that were achieved.

Two robust trainings were made available to districts to assist in the implementation of the new IEP and CT-SEDS. In total, 5,910 educators participated in these sessions. Below is a breakdown of total participants for each training.

1. CT IEP Quality Training

- Fall 2021 PILOT: 1,010 educators (from 20 Pilot districts) trained across 20 sessions (virtual, in-person, hybrid)
- Spring 2022: 2,611 educators trained across 55 sessions (virtual, in-person)

2. CT-SEDS Expert User Training

- Summer 2022: 2,289 educators trained across 52 training sessions (virtual)

Nine SLD and SLD/Dyslexia online webinars were made available to districts and one online module was made available to EPPs. In total, 1,549 participants attended these online sessions. Below is a breakdown of total participants for each online offering, as well as participants response to two evaluation prompts: "As a result of this session, I have increased my knowledge and skills" and "The information was useful and relevant and will assist with informing my practice".

1. Increasing Awareness of SLD/Dyslexia: Implications for CT Educators: 196

- 89% strongly agree or agree; 91% strongly agree or agree

2. Using Literacy Screening Data to Support Students with Reading Difficulties: 110

- 91% strongly agree or agree; 93% strongly agree or agree

3. Remediating and Accommodating Students with SLD/Dyslexia at the Secondary Level: 126

- 79% strongly agree or agree; 83% strongly agree or agree

4. Identifying Students with SLD/Dyslexia: An Online Module: 51

- 74% strongly agree or agree; 84% strongly agree or agree

5. It's Never Too Late: How to Motivate and Teach Older Struggling Readers with SLD/Dyslexia: 80

- 82% strongly agree or agree; 85% strongly agree or agree

6. Case Study Review of a CT Student with SLD/Dyslexia: 131

- 82% strongly agree or agree; 86% strongly agree or agree

7. Identifying Students who are Gifted and Talented and Have SLD or SLD/Dyslexia: 46

- 71% strongly agree or agree; 93% strongly agree or agree

8. Distinguishing Between Typically Developing English Learners and Students with Reading Difficulties: 95

- 88% strongly agree or agree; 86% strongly agree or agree

9. LD/Dyslexia: Connecting Research to Practice in Connecticut: 39

10. Online Module for EPPs: 675

The Structured Literacy Series, "Systematic Teaching of Basic Literacy Skills," in which participants: defined and modeled strategies to teach students who have specific reading disabilities; identified skills needed to develop basic proficiency in reading and spelling; and learned the developmental progression of oral language skills that prepare students for reading proficiency, was offered across six cohorts during the FFY 2021. In total, 104 participants attended these sessions.

The Structured Literacy Program Training Series provided sixteen training sessions during the FFY 2021. In total, 379 participants attended these sessions. Below is a breakdown of total participants for each different training offered.

1. Wilson Reading System Introductory Training (5 sessions): 124

2. Wilson – Just Words Virtual Launch Workshop (2 sessions): 39

3. Orton-Gillingham Introductory Training Program (5 sessions): 123

4. Lindamood Bell Phoneme Sequencing Program for Reading, Spelling, and Speech (2 sessions): 33

5. Lindamood Bell Visualizing and Verbalizing for Language Comprehension and Thinking (1 session): 30

6. Lindamood Bell Seeing Stars (1 session): 30

CONNi4/DBI Leadership Team

The CONNi4/DBI project is currently in the initial implementation phase with four districts/six schools participating in Cohort 1. Forty-six educators participated in the two-part DBI Launch Training. Feedback was collected from all participants. During session 1, 100% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that all of the training objectives were met, the training activities were useful for reinforcing concepts, and the training activities were useful for thinking about practice. During session 2, 95% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that all training objectives were met and 90% of participants found the training activities useful for reinforcing concepts and thinking about their practice.

Participants receive ongoing, job-embedded PL through District DBI Leader Check-ins, School DBI Team Meetings, and Teacher DBI Check-ins. During the first round of School DBI Team Meetings, DBI plans were created for 15 students, ranging from first through fifth grade. Thirteen of the 15 students (87%) receive special education/related services. Ten of the individuals providing the interventions are special education teachers and three individuals are literacy specialists/interventionists. Fidelity checklists were

created to monitor the success of the DBI implementation. Fidelity of the first round of School DBI Team Meetings, ranged from 89% to 100%, and ranged from 78% to 100% during the second round of School DBI Team Meetings. A protocol is sent to School DBI Teams in advance of the meeting in order to assist in meeting preparation and facilitation. During the second round of School DBI Team Meetings, when asked to categorize student response to intervention, based on the progress monitoring data collected, the response was categorized as Strong for 9 of 15 students and was categorized as Limited for 6 of 15 students.

Did the State implement any new (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.

SSIP Leadership Team

A key infrastructure improvement strategy for successful SSIP implementation and evaluation will be the continuous enhancement of intra-agency collaboration. The BSE's joint efforts with colleagues in the Academic, Turnaround, and Performance Offices, as well as the Center for Literacy Research and Reading Success and the Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities (within the Talent Office) will continue to be critical in supporting districts in providing effective reading instruction to SWDs in grades K-3 in the upcoming year.

Considering the reading needs of SWDs during the Alliance District improvement planning meetings as well as promoting the disaggregation of data by specific subgroups will help to ensure that the district-level work targeted for the SIMR is embedded into the greater improvement efforts of the districts and not viewed as a separate, burdensome requirement. It is anticipated that a BSE staff member will attend planning meetings, review Alliance District applications, and act as a liaison with the Turnaround Office is expected to continue as a priority during the next reporting period.

Special attention will still need to be given to the social, emotional, and behavioral well-being of our students. Many students throughout the state have experienced personal and family health issues and deaths, housing and food insecurity, disengagement from the school community and challenges with returning to in-person instruction. In order for students to be available to learn and make academic progress, a holistic approach to assessing, understanding, and appropriately addressing their needs will be necessary during the upcoming year and potentially thereafter. SWDs may require more support in this area than their typical peers and focused intra-agency collaboration between the Office of Student Supports and the BSE will be important to the outcome of creating useful resources and supporting district staff in this area.

Online TA and Resource Library

The expansion of the Web-based repository to include new SSIP resources, further resources to support the implementation of the new IEP and the CT-SEDS, as well as additional resources as determined by the SSIP Leadership Team, and through other intra-agency meetings, will continue into the FFY 2022.

Ongoing Professional Learning

During the FFY 2022, the CSDE, in collaboration with the SERC and the RESCs, will continue to make available the IEP Quality Training and CT-SEDS Expert User Training. Additionally, the CSDE, in collaboration with the SERC, will continue to make available the nine, free online webinars to districts, as well as the free online webinar for EPPs during the FFY 2022. In addition, the CSDE, in collaboration with the RESCs, will sponsor another six, free cohorts of the series "Systematic Teaching of Basic Literacy Skills" during the FFY 2022. Finally, as part of its Structured Literacy Program Training Series, the CSDE, in collaboration with the SERC, will provide the following fifteen, free training sessions during the FFY 2022.

1. Wilson Reading System Introductory Training: 7 sessions
2. Orton-Gillingham Introductory Training Program: 5 sessions
4. Lindamood Bell Phoneme Sequencing Program for Reading, Spelling, and Speech: 1 session
5. Lindamood Bell Visualizing and Verbalizing for Language Comprehension and Thinking: 1 session
6. Lindamood Bell Seeing Stars: 1 session

CONNi4/DBI Leadership Team

The CONNi4/DBI project is a multi-year initiative between the CSDE and UConn. Cohort 2 will launch DBI during the 2023-24 school year. By the next reporting period, we will have identified two additional schools from each of the four districts currently participating in Cohort 1 and recruit three new districts with 2 schools/district to participate in Cohort 2. The schools in the new cohort will complete a revised version of the DBI Readiness Assessment. The questions will be revised based on lessons learned from working with Cohort 1. Additionally, participating schools will be asked to share artifacts during the readiness discussion to fully understand the infrastructure established to approach data-based decision-making, and how quantitative data about student progress are used when implementing research-based reading interventions. The UConn Team will continue to collect data throughout the implementation of the DBI project to evaluate a) student achievement, b) changes in educators' perceptions and skills, and c) how districts sustain, maintain, and scale up implementation of intensive intervention/tiered instruction. Furthermore, by the next reporting period all data from Cohort 1 will be reported.

List the selected evidence-based practices implement in the reporting period:

Connecticut Literacy Model

Ongoing Professional Learning of Evidence-Based Practices

CONNi4/DBI Project

Provide a summary of each evidence-based practices.

Connecticut Literacy Model

The CSDE, along with literacy initiative partners (i.e., UConn, Hill for Literacy, and Literacy How), have worked to implement and refine an intensive reading strategy to serve as a model for use by schools. The intensive reading strategy, known as the CT K-3 Literacy Initiative (CK-3LI) includes priority goals and actions that reading research has identified as effective for improving reading outcomes for Kindergarten through Grade 3 students, including students with disabilities and English Learners.

Ongoing Professional Learning of Evidence-based Practices

Through its SSIP efforts, the BSE remains committed to building district capacity to meet the needs of SWDs in the area of reading through the training of special education teachers statewide in the area of Structured Literacy (see "Provide a summary of the next steps for each infrastructure improvement strategy and the anticipated outcomes to be attained during the next reporting period." for details about specific training offerings). Structured Literacy is a highly explicit, systematic approach to teaching foundational skills and components of literacy.

CONNi4/DBI Project

The CONNi4 project implements data-based individualization (DBI). DBI is a specific way of implementing intensive intervention using a five-step process that involves intervention, progress monitoring, and adaptation. In step 1, pre-DBI data is reviewed to select an evidence-based intervention program aligned to the student's need. The program should be: a) validated by rigorous experimental studies; b) implemented with groups of students who have not responded to secondary prevention; and c) one used for secondary prevention but—in DBI—at the student's instructional level. Initially, interventionists provide small-group or individual instruction with only those adjustments agreed upon in collaboration with the school team. In step 2, progress monitoring is used to track student response to the intervention. Progress monitoring assessments should be: a) general outcome measures (usually) with reliability and validity for target skills; b) done weekly or more frequently; and c) used for secondary prevention but—in DBI—is at the student's instructional level. Progress should be evaluated relative to an aimline based on a pre-defined goal and adequate based on tracking the aimline. In step three, diagnostic assessment data are examined. These data include standardized assessments, teacher-made tests, and observations. Discussion focuses on how the data might reveal issues in the dimensions of the taxonomy. Step 4 involves the creation of a student-specific intensive intervention plan. During the meeting, the school-based team agrees on a plan that is based on the examination of the diagnostic assessment data, focuses on one or more areas of the taxonomy, and includes the ideas most likely to increase achievement. In step 5, the plan developed is implemented, student response to the intervention is tracked, and the school team cycles back to step 3 as needed. The interventionist implements the plan and tracks the student's progress closely, meeting with the school team every 5-6 weeks to evaluate the student's performance data relative to the student's aimline. If progress is strong, then intervention is continued but the team may choose to incorporate adaptation to further accelerate student progress and if the progress is inadequate, the team returns to step 3.

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.

Connecticut Literacy Model

The CSDE, along with literacy initiative partners (i.e., UConn, Hill for Literacy, and Literacy How), have worked to implement and refine an intensive reading strategy to serve as a model for use by schools. The intensive reading strategy, known as the CT K-3 Literacy Initiative (CK-3LI) includes priority goals and actions that reading research has identified as effective for improving reading outcomes for Kindergarten through Grade 3 students, including students with disabilities and English Learners, which directly supports the State's SSIP and SiMR.

Ongoing Professional Learning of Evidence-based Practices

Through its SSIP efforts, the BSE remains committed to building district capacity to meet the needs of SWDs in the area of reading through the training of special education teachers statewide in the area of Structured Literacy (see "Provide a summary of the next steps for each infrastructure improvement strategy and the anticipated outcomes to be attained during the next reporting period." for details about specific training offerings). Structured Literacy is a highly explicit, systematic approach to teaching foundational skills and components of literacy, which supports the State's SSIP work and SiMR. Below are examples of two of the trainings offered by the CSDE.

1. Orton-Gillingham Introductory Training Program: The program introduces the rationale for providing structured literacy instruction and the O-G Approach, which is based on best practices. Educators receive training in the components of language that underlie reading acquisition and a scope and sequence of instructional approaches appropriate for struggling learners.
2. Wilson Reading System Introductory Training: This course provides participants with an overview of the Wilson Reading System (WRS) 4th Edition curriculum. The course examines how WRS addresses the teaching of phonemic awareness, word identification, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension through an integrated study of phonology, morphology, and orthography with students in grade 2 and above with persistent phonological coding deficits.

CONNi4/DBI Project

The CONNi4 project implements the DBI process through explicit, systematic, and strategic training and support for the participating districts and schools in the cohort. By the next reporting period, the six schools from four districts (Cohort 1) will have completed the first year of DBI implementation. Three new districts (2 schools per district) and two additional schools from the four districts in Cohort 1 will be recruited to participate in Cohort 2 and have received the refined version of the launch training based on lessons learned from Cohort 1. A DBI Coaching Cycle will be initiated, which includes a series of meetings. At the initial meeting, the UConn

Coach will review the DBI process with the School DBI Team and work with the school on the selection of students. At the next meeting, student progress monitoring data will be discussed along with adaptations that may need to be made to the delivery of the intervention based on the student response to intervention. The UConn Coach will provide modeling throughout the first and second meeting. The third meeting consists of reviewing the adaptations made to the student intervention and discussing implementation fidelity. After this meeting, the UConn Coach begins completing site visits to monitor implementation fidelity. At the fourth meeting, the School DBI Team discusses if additional students may benefit from DBI. The School DBI Team leads this meeting with support from the UConn Coach. At the fifth meeting, the DBI Coaching Cycle begins for a new student, and the School DBI Team will lead this meeting along with all other meetings in this DBI Coaching Cycle, with support from the UConn Coach. The DBI process will support the progress of the State's SiMR through this intensive intervention implementation initiative.

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

Connecticut's Literacy Model

CK-3LI was evaluated through a series of rigorous research studies that meet the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) evidence standards and recommendations for selecting evidence-based practices. Results indicated statistically significant impact on measures of phonemic awareness, word reading, and reading fluency with increasing effects across years of implementation. Results suggest that Connecticut's Literacy Model (CK-3LI) had a strong impact on key reading outcomes of students in participating schools and that impacts increased over multiple years of implementation.

Ongoing Professional Learning of Evidence-based Practices

The evaluation of professional learning opportunities is ongoing. In total, 379 participants attended these sessions. Below is a breakdown of participants response to two evaluation prompts: "As a result of this session, I have increased my knowledge and skills" and "The information was useful and relevant and will assist with informing my practice".

1. Wilson Reading System Introductory Training: 124
 - 99% strongly agree or agree; 99% strongly agree or agree
2. Wilson – Just Words Virtual Launch Workshop: 39
 - 97% strongly agree or agree; 100% strongly agree or agree
3. Orton-Gillingham Introductory Training Program: 125
 - 99% strongly agree or agree; 98% strongly agree or agree
4. Lindamood Bell Phoneme Sequencing Program for Reading, Spelling, and Speech: 33
 - 100% strongly agree or agree; 100% strongly agree or agree
5. Lindamood Bell Visualizing and Verbalizing for Language Comprehension and Thinking: 30
 - 100% strongly agree or agree; 100% strongly agree or agree
6. Lindamood Bell Seeing Stars: 30
 - 100% strongly agree or agree; 96% strongly agree or agree

CONNi4/DBI Project

The CONNi4/DBI project is a multi-year initiative between the CSDE and the UConn. The first cohort of districts and schools began implementation during the 2022-23 school year, and the second cohort of districts and schools will begin implementation during the 2023-24 school year. By the next reporting period, we will have identified three new districts (2 schools per district) and two additional schools from the four districts in Cohort 1 to participate in Cohort 2. The DBI Leadership Team will have analyzed statewide summative assessment results for third grade students with disabilities, in addition to the student-level data from universal screening and progress monitoring assessments gathered through the DBI process, as well as data gathering from educators participating in Cohort 1.

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.

The data source used by the CSDE for the SiMR is the statewide ELA summative assessments: the Smarter Balanced (SB) Assessment and the Connecticut Alternative Assessment (CTAA), administered statewide to students in Grades 3-8 and 11 in the spring of 2022. The SiMR data are directly derived from the State's approved ESSA Accountability Index. See "Describe the data collected to monitor fidelity of implementation and to assess practice change." above for a summary of additional data collected during FFY 2021.

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

Connecticut Literacy Model

The CSDE, along with literacy initiative partners (i.e., UConn, Hill for Literacy, and Literacy How), will continue to implement and refine an intensive reading strategy to serve as a model for use by schools. The intensive reading strategy, known as the CT K-3 Literacy Initiative (CK-3LI) includes priority goals and actions that reading research has identified as effective for improving reading outcomes for Kindergarten through Grade 3 students, including students with disabilities and English Learners, which directly supports the State's SSIP and SiMR.

Ongoing Professional Learning of Evidence-based Practices

Through its SSIP efforts, the BSE remains committed to building district capacity to meet the needs of SWDs in the area of reading through the training of special education teachers statewide in the area of Structured Literacy (see "Provide a summary of the next steps for each infrastructure improvement strategy and the anticipated outcomes to be attained during the next reporting period." for details about specific training offerings). Structured Literacy is a highly explicit, systematic approach to teaching foundational skills and components of literacy, which supports the State's SSIP work and SiMR.

CONNi4/DBI Project

DBI will launch with the second cohort of districts and schools during the 2023-24 school year. By the next reporting period, we will have identified three new districts (2 schools per district) and two additional schools from the four districts in Cohort 1 to participate in Cohort 2. The participants in Cohort 2 will undergo the same project activities as the participants in Cohort 1, however refinements are already being made based on lessons learned throughout the implementation with Cohort 1.

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.

SSIP Leadership Team

The CSDE's infrastructure has improved through the development of an SSIP Leadership Team.

Online TA and Resource Library

While quantitative metrics data reviewed to evaluate the outcome of individuals accessing the electronic repository of resources showed that a high number of individuals viewed or downloaded this information, qualitative data in the form of stakeholder input yielded additional valuable information regarding the topics and content of the resources posted. Feedback suggest that the newly developed resources were generally regarded as timely, appropriate, accessible, and practical.

Connecticut's Literacy Model

Results suggest that Connecticut's Literacy Model (CK-3LI) had a strong impact on key reading outcomes of students in participating schools and that impacts increased over multiple years of implementation.

Ongoing Professional Learning/Ongoing Professional Learning of Evidence-based Practices

Results suggest that these ongoing PL opportunities, including ongoing PL of evidence-based practices, had a strong impact on participating educators.

CONNi4/DBI Leadership Team/Project

While we are only in our first year of DBI implementation, preliminary quantitative and qualitative results suggest the CONNi4/DBI project had a positive impact on participating districts/schools, teachers, and students.

Evaluation data for infrastructure and evidence-based practices support the decision to implement the SSIP without any modifications. However, a variety of data will continue to be collected and analyzed; data-based modifications to the SSIP will be made, if necessary.

Section C: Stakeholder Engagement

Description of Stakeholder Input

The Part B results indicator data targets were set during the previous year. Over a period of five months, the CSDE solicited stakeholder input on the indicator targets for each FFY (2020-2025) during discussions with a diverse group of stakeholders, including parent representatives across each of the six regions of the state. The CSDE conducted 21 virtual meetings with interpreters available for participants to solicit broad stakeholder input. The participants of these sessions were sent follow-up surveys to capture input that was not provided during the meetings. The survey was also made available to the public through the newly created State Performance Plan Website. Extensive and thoughtful consideration was given to the intersection of improvement activities and the targets for performance of students with IEPs. Additionally, student feedback was collected via a live interactive presentation through Connecticut's Youth Advisory Council. As such, the CSDE and its SPP/APR stakeholders did not identify a need to revise any of the indicator targets during FFY 2021. Additionally, we are still seeing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and remote learning on some of the data and think it prudent not to revise any targets until the data stabilize.

A virtual meeting was held with the State Advisory Council on Special Education (State Advisory Panel) to build capacity on understanding the progress of SSIP implementation and to solicit stakeholder feedback. Virtual presentations were also held for parent leadership forums, the Commissioner's Round Table for Parent Engagement, and parent informational sessions collaboratively facilitated by our Parent Training and Information Center (Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center). Input was received in the form of live comments/discussions and survey questions and was reviewed by CSDE staff to inform further development of Indicator 17.

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

Online TA and Resource Library

The CSDE employed multiple strategies to engage stakeholders with regard to the key improvement efforts that occurred during the FFY 2021.

- The Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center (CPAC), the State's PTI Center, attended a series of virtual meetings to provide input in several guidance documents revised with the implementation of the new IEP and the CT-SEDS. Additionally, the BSE, in conjunction with the CPAC, hosted multiple webinars for families regarding the new IEP and the CT-SEDS.
- Other stakeholder activities that occurred during FFY 2021 included the BSE Back-to-School Event; the BSE Office Hours meetings with a special educators; meetings with the Connecticut Council of Administrators of Special Education (ConnCASE) Executive Board; meetings with Regional ConnCASE Directors; and State Advisory Council on Special Education (SAC)

presentations and updates. Engaging in meaningful dialogues with these groups helped to inform the content of the BSE guidance and the development of resources for the online library, specifically with regards to the implementation of the new IEP and the CT-SEDS.

SiMR/SSIP and CONNi4/DBI Project

The BSE obtained feedback regarding the SSIP/SiMR and the CONNi4/DBI Project from the SAC. The CSDE formed a SSIP stakeholder group to assist the agency with the development of Phase One of the SSIP. This group (described in the state's SSIP Phase One submission) provided the State with the expertise and diverse perspectives needed for planning and development. Since the submission of Phase One, the CSDE has been using the SAC as its primary stakeholder group for input (including the resetting of targets), feedback and dissemination of information related to the SSIP. SAC members must be individuals involved in, or concerned with the education of children with disabilities; and representative of the ethnic and racial diversity of, and the types of disabilities found in, the state population.

The SDE provided the opportunity for the UConn Team to attend in the 2-day IEP Quality Training to ensure alignment of the CONNi4/DBI Project with other statewide initiatives. The SSIP Leadership Team and the UConn DBI Leadership Team prepared and delivered a presentation at the BSE Back-to-School Event to share information about the CONNi4/DBI Project, answer questions from stakeholders, and recruit districts/schools for the Cohort. Additionally, a presentation was prepared and delivered during the SAC Indicator 17 (SSIP) and CONNi4/DBI Update Meeting. The presentation provided a review of the SSIP/SiMR, a review of SSIP activities, including the CONNi4/DBI Project, defined the DBI process, provided examples of each of the five DBI steps, and shared status updates of the implementation of the CONNi4/DBI project. After the presentation, there were opportunities for the stakeholders to ask questions and write comments in the chat. Additionally, a survey was made available to all participants and allowed them to confidentially share feedback and comments. Items on the survey included: a) additional questions stakeholders still had about DBI and the CONNi4 project, b) an opportunity to share how they felt the CONNi4 project would contribute to supporting the SSIP goal to increase the reading performance of all third grade students with disabilities, c) outcomes from the CONNi4 project that they are most interested in learning more about, d) how they would like to receive ongoing updates about the CONNi4 project, and e) feedback on DBI materials created for families and caregivers.

Furthermore, as part of the CONNi4 project, an Advisory Board has been established, consisting of educators from across the state, which meets at least once annually to provide feedback concerning the project's activities and its implementation design. The Advisory Board shall include teachers, administrators, and experts on intervention, progress monitoring, DBI implementation, and implementation science. In addition, research and community partners across the United States who have implemented DBI/MTSS provide ongoing feedback.

Work with stakeholders on the State Board of Education's five-year strategic plan will likely address reading achievement for all students with an emphasis on equity and closing the achievement gap for SWDs.

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

YES

Describe how the State addressed the concerns expressed by stakeholders.

Online TA and Resource Library

Similar themes have been identified by the various stakeholder groups that have been convened to support districts with the implementation of the new IEP and the CT-SEDS. Those themes have included. The BSE addressed these concerns expressed by stakeholders in the development/revision of guidance, resources, and tools, and in the offering of PL opportunities, which were added to the Online TA and Resource Library.

SiMR/SSIP and CONNi4/DBI

During the SAC Indicator 17 (SSIP) and CONNi4/DBI Update Meeting, several themes were identified by various stakeholders regarding the CONNi4 project and the DBI process. One theme shared amongst stakeholders was the importance of communicating with parents at the onset and throughout the DBI process regarding their child, including informing parents of their child's progress monitoring data; sharing with parents the specific intervention their child receives and how it addresses reading foundational skills, so they can support their child at home; including parents in the School DBI Team discussions regarding their child, so they are full, equal, and equitable partners in their child's education; and sharing information about the DBI process. Another theme discussed by stakeholders was if DBI would be accessible to all students with disabilities (i.e., students who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind, students with emotional or behavioral issues, and students who are English Learners). A third theme related to the implementation of DBI, including: fidelity and feasibility, the importance of selecting both rural and urban districts for the cohort, and the potential for the CONNi4 project to be scaled up. The SSIP Leadership Team and UConn DBI Leadership Team addressed all questions, comments, and concerns raised during the meeting. DBI Family Materials were developed specifically for families about DBI and the DBI process to allow parents to fully understand and be informed about the process. Additionally, DBI training provided to schools/districts contain information on how to involve families in the DBI process, and how to use the DBI Family Materials to promote family engagement. The SSIP Leadership Team and UConn DBI Leadership Team will provide regular updates to the SAC on the status of the CONNi4 project by email and at future meetings.

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.

CT IEP Quality Training

New IEP document and the CT-SEDS

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

IEP Quality Training

- Background: During the 2020-21 school year, the BSE worked with the American Institutes of Research (AIR) to develop the CT IEP Quality Training materials. The CT IEP Quality Training was piloted in Fall 2021. Revisions were made to the materials, based on feedback from the pilot. The CT IEP Quality Training was launched statewide in Winter 2022 to “train the trainers” and build state and district capacity. During the summer following the 2021-22 school year, revisions will be made to the training materials, based on feedback from the state and district trainers. The CT IEP Quality Training is comprised of eight segments: IEP Basics, Present Levels of Performance, Measurable Goals and Objectives Part I, Measurable Goals and Objectives Part II, Supplementary Aids and Services, Secondary Transition, Special Education Service Delivery, and Progress Monitoring in the IEP. Participants in the CT IEP Quality Training will be able to understand how the IEP components create cohesive programs for students with disabilities; develop quality IEPs that (a) are grounded in a student’s present levels of performance; (b) have aligned, rigorous, and measurable goals and objectives; and (c) have established progress monitoring processes; describe how educators in different roles contribute to the IEP development process; and understand how the IEP is documented in the new CT IEP form/CT-SEDS.
- Timeline: During the 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 school years, the CT IEP Quality Training will continue being implemented statewide. The CSDE is committed to a cycle of continuous evaluation and improvement of the materials and trainings throughout the implementation.
- Anticipated data collection and measures: Evaluation data will be collected from participants in the pilot, state and district trainers, and all participants in the statewide training, including, but not limited to, school and district administrators, special education leaders, special educators and related services personnel, general educators, approved private special education programs, state agency personnel, institutes of higher education, parents, advocacy groups, and youth.
- Expected outcomes that relate to SiMR: The CT IEP Quality Training will build statewide capacity in not only developing quality IEPs that are not only grounded in a student’s present levels of performance, have aligned, rigorous, and measurable goals and objectives, and have established progress monitoring processes, but will build capacity to better identify a student’s unique needs, design, implement, and monitor the specially-designed instruction and evidence-based interventions for each student, ultimately, improving instruction for and the performance of students with disabilities.

New IEP document and the CT-SEDS

- Background: In the 2018-19, the BSE began work with both an internal team and an external stakeholder group to develop the new IEP document in CT; stakeholder comments were open through October 2019. In September 2020, the CSDE entered into a partnership with the Public Consulting Group (PCG) to support its goals and vision of developing a comprehensive statewide Special Education Data System (CT-SEDS) to make available to all of its local school district partners. CT-SEDS adaptive electronic IEP document is being designed to improve format and flow of information with intuitive, easy to use displays. The new system will include a parent portal for families to access their student’s IEP and other important information as well as a language translation feature to ensure that parents receive information in their native language. The new and improved document will also assist PPTs in navigating the special education process, leading to the development of high-quality IEPs for Connecticut’s students. During the 2020-21 school year, the BSE worked with PCG to design the CT-SEDS. The CT-SEDS Pilot Training was launched in Winter 2022. During the spring of the 2021-22 school year, revisions will be made to the CT-SEDS, based on feedback from the pilot.
- Timeline: The BSE is planning to implement the new IEP document and the CT-SEDS statewide in the 2022-23 school year. CT-SEDS Training will continue statewide through the 2024-25 school year, with ongoing technical support, as needed.
- Anticipated data collection and measures: In addition to the IEP Module, the CT-SEDS will also have a Services Plan Module, Section 504 Accommodation Plan Module, Gifted and Talented Module, and a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Module. Data from the IEP Module, including Progress Reports, as well as data from the MTSS Module will be collected to determine the ELA performance of students with and without disabilities on progress monitoring measures.
- Expected outcomes that relate to SiMR: The year-to-year analysis of the achievement for students with disabilities will be used as a factor in determining the effectiveness of instruction and interventions, as well as the need for additional professional learning and technical assistance.

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

- CSDE staff/time to commit to current plan – assess current proposed staffing assignments and consider the need to revise the current SSIP implementation methodology
- Scaling up professional learning activities for SSIP – consider increasing the role of other organizations to address SSIP professional learning support
- Ability to sustain current intra-agency partnerships (with the creation of two new offices) – continue to expand current levels of communication and collaboration throughout the calendar year

The State has benefitted from both the virtual and in-person technical assistance opportunities provided by the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) and appreciates this additional support. We plan to continue our involvement with the Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) Collaborative and engage with other states in an effort to best support the SSIP and the reading achievement of students with disabilities.

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional).

17 - Prior FFY Required Actions

The State did not provide data for FFY 2020. The State must provide the required data for FFY 2021 in the FFY 2021 SPP/APR.

Response to actions required in FFY 2020 SPP/APR

17 - OSEP Response

17 - Required Actions