

**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**

New Jersey



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)?

By utilizing targeted and comprehensive school data and the Implementation Science framework to identify schools, New Jersey will establish literacy "Transformation Zones" that receive intensive coaching and support in early reading. By 2027, New Jersey will increase the percentage of students with IEPs in the Transformation Zone schools who score at or above benchmark on a district-selected literacy assessment tool by a minimum of 10% (compared to baseline) by the end of their third-grade year.

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.

By utilizing targeted and comprehensive school data and being guided by the principles and framework of implementation science, New Jersey examined relevant data sources (cycle data, proficiency, growth, graduation rate, etc.) to identify a pool of districts that would be invited to participate in the initial cohort of Transformation Zones (TZ). The inclusion criteria for the selection of TZ districts were: whether the Local Education Agency (LEA) had targeted schools in status for students with disabilities, whether the LEA had comprehensive schools, whether the district has schools below the 10th percentile in New Jersey's statewide accountability system, whether the LEA had a high percentage of students with disabilities ("high" being a classification rate of at least 20%), whether the district was on remote instruction at the time of the data pull (Spring 2021), and whether the district had a low graduation rate (in the bottom 10% of districts with high schools statewide). All five districts selected for participation met at least two of the inclusion criteria mentioned above.

From a pool of five districts, four districts have committed to participating in the initiative. Participating TZ districts will be trained and supported in the use of implementation science to build district and school capacity in the adoption, integration, and implementation of evidence-based instructional practices in early literacy that are effective and sustainable to enhance student learning outcomes.

The demographic description of participating TZ districts is as follows:

- District 1, Asbury Park, located in Monmouth County, has 4 schools and serves approximately 1728 students. In fall 2021, approximately 50.3% of students were identified as economically disadvantaged, 17.9% qualified for special education services, 9.4% are English Language Learners, and 3.3% experienced homelessness. The percentage of students by racial and ethnic group is 3.4% White, 45.5% Hispanic, and 50.5% Black or African American.
- District 2, Willingboro, located in Burlington County, has 9 schools and serves approximately 3407 students. In fall 2021, approximately 65.3% of students were identified as economically disadvantaged, 19% qualified for special education services, 2.6% are English Language Learners, and 1% experienced homelessness. The percentage of students by racial and ethnic group is 2.8% White, 16.3% Hispanic, and 76.3% Black or African American.
- District 3, Palisades Park, located in Bergen County, has 3 schools and serves approximately 1667 students. In fall 2021, approximately 27.4% of students were identified as economically disadvantaged, 11.5% qualified for special education services, 36.2% are English Language Learners, and 0.2% experienced homelessness. The percentage of students by racial and ethnic group is 9.4% White, 55.8% Hispanic, 1.7% Black or African American, and 31.7% Asian.
- District 4, Bridgeton, located in Cumberland County, has 8 schools and serves approximately 6173 students. In fall 2021, approximately 6.9% of students were identified as economically disadvantaged, 8.7% qualified for special education services, 28% are English Language Learners, and 2.6% experienced homelessness. The percentage of students by racial and ethnic group is 19.8% Black or African American, 3% White, and 75.5% Hispanic.

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.

The Theory of Action is described below:

- By using SISEP's implementation science framework to structure the work, and the NJTSS resources and menus of evidence-based assessment and interventions, SEA capacity will be increased to provide K-3 literacy supports to schools within the Literacy Transformation Zone.
- By providing support and coaching to districts in the Literacy Transformation Zone, the SEA will impact each LEA by assisting in the development of:
 - (a) evidence-based benchmark assessment practices;
 - (b) the use of evidence-based screening and identification processes;
 - (c) building capacity for an NJTSS-ER structure of interventions; and
 - (d) the use of appropriate evidence-based reading intervention developed as part of the NJTSS-ER framework to address the reading needs of students.

- These changes at the LEA and school level will lead to classroom improvement in:
 - (a) Standards-based literacy instruction
 - (b) Implementation of evidence-based interventions matched to student need(s)
 - (c) Goal setting and progress monitoring
- These classroom-level changes will lead to:
 - (a) An increase in individualized instruction and student growth in the area of literacy
 - (b) An increase in the number of students with disabilities with access to quality, evidence-based instruction in reading
 - (c) An increase in the number of students with disabilities who perform at or above benchmark at the end of the third grade within the Literacy Transformation Zone (SiMR)
- Scaling up of these practices will eventually lead to statewide gains in third grade reading achievement proficiency for students with disabilities.

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)

YES

Historical Data

Part	Baseline Year	Baseline Data
A	2021	4.55%
B	2021	4.79%

Targets

FFY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target A >=	4.00%	6.00%	8.00%	10.00%	12.00%
Target B >=	4.00%	6.00%	8.00%	10.00%	12.00%

FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data

Part	Total number of Students with IEPs in the Transformation Zone Scoring Proficient or Better on the A) NJSLA (Spring 2022) and B) NJ Start Strong (Fall 2022)	Total number of Students with IEPs in the Transformation Zone Who Took the A) NJSLA (Spring 2022) and B) NJ Start Strong (Fall 2022)	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
A	14	308		4.00%	4.55%	N/A	N/A
B	9	188		4.00%	4.79%	N/A	N/A

Provide the data source for the FFY 2021 data.

- The New Jersey Student Learning Assessments for English Language Arts (NJSLA-ELA) measures student proficiency with grade-level skills, knowledge, and concepts that are critical to college and career readiness. On each assessment, students read and analyze passages from authentic fiction and nonfiction texts. The test can also include multimedia stimuli such as video or audio. The NJSLA-ELA assessments emphasize the importance of close reading, synthesizing ideas within and across texts, determining the meaning of words and phrases in context, and writing effectively when using and/or analyzing sources.
- The Start Strong Assessments for English Language Arts provide educators and parents with a beginning-of-year

indication of some conceptual or skill gaps that might exist in a student's understanding of the prior year's New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLs) and the level of support students may need to inform instruction.

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

Data are collected through the NJSMART Education Data System a statewide data collection system that is used for many of the SPP/APR indicators. As the activities of the SSIP continue to progress from the analysis (Phase I) to the planning (Phase II) phase, each school will be providing student-level and classroom-level data to inform decisions regarding evidence-based practices, fidelity of implementation, and selection of appropriate benchmark assessments.

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.

As OSE and the SISEP team are completing Phase I (analysis) and entering Phase II (Planning) of the SSIP, an evaluation plan has not been developed yet. An evaluation plan will be included in the FFY2022 SSIP.

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:

The State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices (SISEP) Center is a national technical assistance center funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs. The center's goal is to support the implementation of instructional and leadership practices that lead to improved outcomes for students with disabilities. The SISEP Center has worked collaboratively with the NJDOE to cultivate the department's knowledge and skills in the use of implementation science practices and tools to improve our implementation infrastructure. NJDOE's SISEP team consists of the State Transformation Specialists (STS), State Management Team (SMT), State Implementation Team (SIT), and Executive Sponsors. The teams are intra-departmental and include members from the Office of Special Education, Office of Comprehensive Support, Office of Recruitment, Preparation and Certification, Office of K-3 Education, Office of Standards, the Office of Supplemental Educational Programs, and Student Support Services. Having a diverse group of participants with knowledge of existing systems across the department and state has allowed NJDOE to complete a comprehensive assessment to identify the focus area (early literacy), identify initiatives within each division related to the focus area, and identify potential programs, practices, and innovations to address the area of focus area.

In an effort to continue alignment with current initiatives and leverage potential future initiative development, NJ reviewed the NJDOE Initiative Inventory. The following highlights initiatives and infrastructure improvement strategies that were recently implemented at the department level:

- The SISEP initiative has allowed the Office of Comprehensive Support (OCS) to intensively collaborate with the Office of Special Education, Office of Student Services, and Office of Supplemental Programs. The role of OCS during this collaboration has been multifold; their main role has been that of liaison between district teams and the State Implementation Team under SISEP. OCS works to advocate for the district teams, bring issues and questions to the forefront to be resolved, help to reflectively craft training that will meet the needs of New Jersey's diverse districts and their learners, and maintain relationships between the district and the SISEP team to ensure fidelity to roll out and implementation. Throughout the 2022-2023 school year the SISEP Team, in collaboration with the Office of Comprehensive Support, has launched the work in school districts, identifying four across the state. District-level training is underway, with each district completing at least two modules, and participating in follow-up district meetings and coaching. Subsequent trainings have been planned and scheduled. Furthermore, Regional Support Team (RST) leads are working directly with the districts to provide 1:1 follow-up and support. OCS is also engaged in the State Management Team (SMT) for SISEP planning and support. Through that work, OCS provides insight, as well as gains clarity and understanding on the ways in which the office can systematically support initiatives roll-out now and in the future
- The work of the Office of Standards has been augmented meaningfully by the collaboration with SISEP. Over the past year, the Office of Standards leveraged SISEP's early literacy expertise to inform the review and revisions of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLs). The NJ SISEP team assisted in draft reviews and connected the office with their early literacy consultants to advise and inform the content of the NJSLs -- ELA. Over the next several months, the Office of Standards will continue discussions with the SISEP team to help inform a set of resources to be released at the point of NJSLs adoption.
- The Division of Early Childhood Services is focused on high-quality early education for students in preschool to grade three. The K-3 Office has contributed its expertise in the area of improving early literacy in targeted schools by providing responses to inquiries

regarding best practices in early literacy and the history of the Reading First and the Reading Coaches Initiatives. In addition, the office provided feedback during the development of the Practice Profile and Get/Give documents. This collaborative work with the SISEP team members has impacted the office's recent professional development planning and resource materials review process. As the office plans professional development sessions and reference materials for early childhood educators, they are also connecting the research and evidence-based practices referred to in the SISEP training modules.

- The Department proposed a new N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-14.23 to create a new educational services endorsement to support early literacy at the school and school district levels. The proposed early literacy specialist endorsement is part of the Department's focus on literacy development for early learners and is aligned to, and supports the work being done in the literacy TZs. Currently, a number of individuals with varying levels of training and expertise support the State's youngest readers. Existing training equips reading specialists to support students in kindergarten through grade 12, but the training does not necessarily require a deep understanding of the foundational support necessary to serve students in preschool through third grade. The introduction of a new educational services endorsement specific to meeting the literacy development needs of young readers aligns with the Department's goals to create opportunities for all students to be reading at or above grade level by third grade.

- Learning acceleration is an ongoing instructional process by which educators engage in formative practices to improve students' access to and mastery of grade-level standards. The goal of learning acceleration extends beyond recovering the ground lost to COVID-19, and is a long-term, comprehensive framework that anchors districts' academic, social, and behavioral interventions to the common purpose of promoting global competitiveness for all students. Using principles derived from the Council of the Great City Schools resource entitled "Addressing Unfinished Learning After COVID-19 School," NJDOE developed The Learning Acceleration Guide which summarizes the developing base of literature on learning acceleration approaches and shared promising practices from New Jersey schools. It has been crafted for LEA administrators with the goal of improving student outcomes. The guide includes key evidence-based practices that LEAs can implement, examples of learning acceleration in action across the state of New Jersey and prompts that encourage reflection.

- The OSE also continues to engage with institutes of higher education to expand its capacity to provide professional development and supports to LEAs across the state. In FFY 2022, the OSE entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with William Paterson University to provide an additional 42 training sessions, many of which will be in a multi-session/series format, to LEAs across the Northern region of NJ as well as remote engagement of LEAs statewide. This will ultimately expand the options utilized to provide supports to TZ schools and support scaling-up during Phase III of SSIP implementation.

Infrastructure improvement strategies were also implemented in the TZ schools. Please see the heading "Provide additional information about this indicator (optional)" for a description of these strategies.

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.

As the SISEP work has evolved, the immediate impacts seen complement our existing work of implementing structures and systems, reflecting on current practices, and operationalizing theory into action. The NJDOE is committed to utilizing the principles of implementation science to build each the LEA's capacity to provide access to high-quality and equitable educational opportunities for all students, utilize measures to assess the efficacy and fit of evidence-based practices, and using multiple forms of data to inform decision making and measure impact. While short-term impacts have not been measured at the time of this report, the following outcomes have been observed:

- Professional Development opportunities in TZ schools that match the individualized needs of educators based on Exploration Phase activities and needs assessment.
- Increased capacity to capture and analyze data through collaboration within the NJDOE between the OSE and Office of Comprehensive Support.
- The adoption of quality standards for the implementation of current evidence-based practices in TZ schools.

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.

The following are the next steps and anticipated outcomes for the infrastructure improvement strategies:

Next Steps

- Formation of District Implementation Team (DIT) and Building Implementation Teams (BIT) to guide work.
- Support TZ in team selection, ensuring diverse and representative stakeholders are engaged in supporting and leading implementation, which results in increased buy-in, ownership, and sustainability for the work.
- Support districts in developing a Terms of Reference and Communication Protocol.
- Guide districts in the assessment of the fit and feasibility of evidenced-based programs or practices; and the development and adoption of a formal procedure for selecting innovations.
- Completion of the District Capacity Assessment (DCA) (Ward et al., 2015) to align efforts and resources around practices intended to impact student outcomes.

Anticipated Outcomes

- The overarching goal of SISEP is to systematically improve academic outcomes and support; this is in direct alignment

with the overarching goals of OCS. By engaging in the SISEP initiative, the department anticipates seeing an improvement in literacy achievement for all students.

- Research shows that for students who experience difficulty acquiring proficient literacy skills, a central factor is often underdeveloped phonemic awareness. Phonemic awareness assessment and instruction as essential evidence-based components of a comprehensive literacy program. Long-term, implementation science, and phonics training will impact student growth and proficiency as teachers become well-versed in instructional strategies, paradigms, and pedagogy of phonemic instruction.
- Over the next several months, the Office of Standards will continue discussions with the SISEP team to help inform a set of resources to be released at the point of NJSLs adoption. This will include resources designed to support diverse learners in meeting the NJSLs expectations, including students with disabilities.
- The development sessions and reference materials for early childhood educators designed by the Division of Early Childhood will reflect the research and evidence-based practices referred to in the SISEP literacy training modules.
- The introduction of a new educational services endorsement specific to meeting the literacy development needs of young readers aligns with the Department's goals to create opportunities for all students to be reading at or above grade level by third grade. Once passed, the proposed endorsement will increase the support available to students to actualize this goal.
- The NJDOE Learning Acceleration guide will support educators in examining their existing instructional practices and policies and assist in designing systems that support learning acceleration for all students leading to improved academic and social-emotional outcomes.
- The OSE has increased its capacity to provide and coordinate professional development with the hiring of new staff in FFY2021. In addition to OSE staff who can provide support and professional development to LEAs re: early literacy, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with William Paterson University (WPU) will provide an additional 42 professional development sessions and a series of supports on early literacy. Coordination between WPU in Northern NJ and TA providers at Rowan University in Southern NJ will greatly expand the opportunities for NJDOE OSE to support teachers in TZ schools as well as providing a foundation of resources to support the scaling up of efforts in the future.

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

The NJ SISEP Team will support and guide districts through the intentional process of determining the suitability of their evidence-based literacy program. Districts will be supported in examining the following criteria needed to ensure that the selected evidence-based practice is usable: clear description or program, clear program components that define the program, operational definition or program components, and practical fidelity assessments.

For some districts, the process of selecting an evidence-based literacy program has not yet been completed. With guidance from the state's team, districts will conduct a needs assessment including administrative data and perspectives of staff, community partners, students, and families to identify the needs of the identified focus population. Additionally, districts will be supported in the selection of an evidence-based literacy program that meets the needs of their organization.

The following evidence-based literacy programs are currently being implemented in TZ districts: iReady, Estrellita, and IMSE Orton-Gillingham.

Provide a summary of each evidence-based practices.

- iReady is an evidenced-based online program for reading and/or mathematics that will help teacher(s) determine your student needs, personalize learning, and monitor progress throughout the school year. i-Ready includes diagnostic and personalized instruction and allows teachers to meet students exactly where they are and provides data to increase student learning gains.
- Estrellita delivers a streamlined curriculum, utilizing an evidence-based, systematic, and accelerated approach to ensure quality teaching for successful learning. This approach guarantees a rigorous and effective Beginning Spanish Reading program that serves as a bridge to English by laying a strong foundation in Spanish literacy. Estrellita's supplemental program meets other benchmarks and practices evidenced as critical for students, such as the five effective practices by the National Reading Panel: Phonological Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Reading Comprehension, and Vocabulary Development.
- Orton-Gillingham is a research-based, scientific approach to reading and writing instruction. It is direct, explicit, systematic, and sequential instruction that incorporates multi-sensory elements. IMSE's program is based on the science of reading research.

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.

- iReady provides a foundation for teachers to address the individualized needs of students and to differentiate instruction. It is intended to support the SiMR by providing teachers in TZ schools with tools to address the learning needs of a diverse variety of students. This intended impact may only be evident if programs are implemented with fidelity.
- As mentioned above, Estrellita serves as a bridge to English by laying a strong foundation in Spanish literacy. Estrellita's supplemental program meets other benchmarks and practices evidenced as critical for students, such as the five effective practices by the National Reading Panel: Phonological Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Reading Comprehension, and Vocabulary Development. This is intended to impact the SiMR by providing a more individualized approach to the growing number of ELL students in TZ schools.
- Orton-Gillingham (O-G) is an approach influences several reading programs that have been studied. The first task for TZ schools is to determine to what extent the O-G is being followed/implemented by teachers and if appropriate Tier 3 intervention programs for students who need intensive support in learning are being matched to individualized student needs. The intention of developing strong Tier 3 interventions for identified students is to reduce the learning gap in literacy for students through intensive, evidence-based instruction which will impact the SiMR by impacting students with the most need of literacy support. It is important to note that the three evidence-based practices listed above may change as the work of the SISEP team progresses. It may be found that a different approach is more appropriate, or an approach may be more effective depending on the readiness

and capacity of the LEA to implement the approach with fidelity. This is one of the first goals of this work in the TZ schools: to determine if the right program has been selected for the appropriate students and is being implemented with fidelity.

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

At this early stage of Exploration with the identified TZ schools, fidelity data has not been collected.

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.

Data needs to be collected in each TZ school in order to determine if the evidence-based practices identified should continue or if new practices should be identified and implemented. This is one of the next steps in the Exploration stage of Implementation Science and will inform the Installation Stage as the SISEP team continues to work with each school.

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

The following information will be collected for each evidence-based practice in order to inform the work of the SISEP team during the next reporting period:

- The extent to which each evidence-based practice is being implemented with fidelity
- The extent to which each school has the capacity to implement each evidence-based practice with fidelity
- The extent to which each evidence-based practice currently being implemented in each TZ school is matched to the needs of the students and teachers in each school
- The criteria (if any) that each school uses to identify students who may need additional reading instructional supports
- The criteria (if any) that each school uses to identify evidence-based practices that may be considered to replace currently selected practices.

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

NO

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

As Phase II of the SSIP continues, it is inevitable that changes and adjustments will be made since data is still being gathered from the TZ schools. All changes will be documented and articulated in the SSIP for FFY2022.

Section C: Stakeholder Engagement

Description of Stakeholder Input

The New Jersey Office of Special Education (OSE) meets monthly with stakeholders who are members of the State Special Education Advisory Council (NJ-SSEAC). The meeting allows for the following:

- the Director of the Office of Special Education to provide updates to members regarding office activities, resources, and progress towards goals;
- discussion and input regarding NJDOE priorities and initiatives;
- presentations from programs, districts and stakeholder groups to highlight exemplar programs, initiatives and opportunities;
- dissemination of meeting information the public with a process to allow public comment and the recording of minutes; the public to be privy to meeting information and to be able to comment and have those comments recorded in the minutes, and
- discussion of SPP indicators, targets, and initiatives towards improving statewide outcomes for students with disabilities.

NJ-SSEAC meetings focused on sharing of SPP/APR indicator data each month to provide updates, discuss upcoming changes, review aligned initiatives, and gain feedback. Input into future targets was also collected. For each monthly discussion, stakeholders, along with staff from OSE, accomplished the following:

- reviewed current data;
- discussed current initiatives and activities aligned to the indicator(s);
- collected input regarding improvement activities;
- determined Council priorities that evolved into three subcommittees (see stakeholder attachment)
- received suggestions to examine additional available data; and
- engaged in a collaborative dialogue about the implementation and evaluation of the SSIP.

For FY20, the OSE reported 24 organizations as stakeholder representatives. For FY21, the OSE focused on efforts to enhance outreach and engagement through various strategies. In doing so, the OSE expanded its outreach to 68 stakeholder organizations. Additionally, the NJ-SSEAC has formed subcommittees to formulate strategic planning strategies to further engage internal and external representatives to inform the work on the OSE as well as outreach through NJ-SSEAC activities.

- Alliance for the Betterment of Citizens w/Disabilities

- Alliance of Private Special Education Schools North Jersey
- American Physical Therapy Association of New Jersey (APTANJ)
- ASAH Private School
- AutismNJ
- Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey
- Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health
- Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- Developmental Disabilities Association of New Jersey (DDANJ)
- Disability Rights New Jersey
- Division for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Early Intervention Providers Association
- Educational Services Commission of New Jersey
- Learning Disabilities Association of NJ
- Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (MHTTC)
- New Jersey Assistive Technology Center (Advancing Opportunities)
- New Jersey Coalition for Inclusive Education
- New Jersey Council for Exceptional Children
- New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- New Jersey Literacy Association
- New Jersey Occupational Therapy Association
- New Jersey Regional Family Support Planning Councils
- New Jersey Speech Language Hearing Association
- NJ Association of Learning Consultants
- NJ Association of School Psychologists
- NJ Association of School Social Workers
- NJ Center for Tourette Syndrome
- New Jersey Integrated System of Care for Children
- NJ Chapter: American Academy of Pediatrics
- NJ Commission for the Blind
- NJ Council on Developmental Disabilities
- NJ Department of Children and Families
- NJ Department of Corrections
- NJ Principals and Supervisors Association/Foundation for Educational Administration
- NJ School Boards Association (NJSBA)
- NJ School Counselor Association (NJSCA)
- NJ Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages/NJ Bilingual Educators
- The New Jersey Affiliate of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
- Richard West Assistive Technology Advocacy Center
- SEL4NJ
- Special Olympics New Jersey
- State Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN)
- The Adaptive Technology Center
- The Arc of New Jersey
- The College of New Jersey
- The Learning Disabilities Association of New Jersey
- Kean University
- William Paterson University
- Caldwell College
- Monmouth University
- Seton Hall University
- Montclair State University
- Centenary University
- Rutgers University
- Rowan University
- Stockton University

The COVID-19 pandemic presented a unique opportunity to engage stakeholders remotely through videoconferencing and focused on specific issues related to the changes in New Jersey's educational practices. Stakeholder and NJ-SSEAC meetings remained online during the 2021-22 school year because feedback from members suggested that it was a more efficient use of their time and did not require travel from various regions of the state.

For additional information on a narrow scope of the NJ OSE's approach to stakeholder engagement, please see the attached narrative for part B.

The primary method utilized to engage stakeholders at the state level in SSIP activities was through the NJ-SSEAC and Stakeholder meetings. The change in the SIMR and SSIP were proposed and enthusiastically accepted by the NJ-SSEAC during FFY 2020 and an update to SISEP and SSIP-related activities was provided as recently as the January 19, 2023 NJ-SSEAC meeting. NJOSE will continue to provide semi-annual updates to the NJ-SSEAC.

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

Stakeholder engagement in regard to the SSIP has two targeted levels: engagement with the SISEP team and engagement within the TZ schools. At this time, the inclusion of specialists from across different offices and initiatives at the NJDOE informs the activities of the SSIP with a variety of input from the New Jersey Tiered System of Support project to the county offices of education across the state. The statewide stakeholder engagement described above occurs through the NJ-SSEAC and will eventually scale up beyond the OSE.

Within the TZ schools, the first step in engaging with the schools has been taken by working with administration to identify needs, teach the concepts and framework of Implementation Science, and plan professional development sessions. As engagement with each TZ school evolves, local stakeholder engagement will be necessary and critical. Informing parents about literacy strategies at home to support school-based learning, engaging teachers in effective professional development and coaching, and identifying opportunities for community supports (after-school programs, etc.) will be key activities in the next two years of the SSIP.

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.

All activities have been described above.

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

N/A

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

State partners at our institutes of higher education such as the BOGGS Center and the Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health have reported significant challenges in engaging schools in intensive coaching and technical assistance supports due to staffing shortages, a lack of release time for participants, and related difficulties scheduling team meetings because of class coverages and operational needs. As a result, several programs have already moved towards asynchronous training models with on-site coaching components and follow-up activities. NJDOE and OSE intends to utilize these strategies that have demonstrated promise in engaging schools during the COVID-19 pandemic to engage with TZ schools and will adjust the supports provided accordingly.

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional).

TZ Infrastructure Improvement Strategies:

Since the spring of 2022, NJ engaged TZ districts in an "Exploration" process to reach a mutually-informed agreement to participate in a collaborative partnership. The process consists of exchanges of information, meetings with senior leadership and stakeholders, and both parties assessing current readiness and fit. The goal of the Exploration Stage is to collaboratively determine which evidence-based literacy practice or program is the best fit by examining the degree to which a particular practice or program meets the school and district needs from the perspective of students, staff, families, and community partners. This stage involves an examination of whether the programs or practices are actually implemented as intended (NIRN, 2020). Additionally, key functions of Exploration include the formation of a representative implementation team to guide the work, demonstrated need for practice or program, and the selection of a practice or program that matches the demonstrated need and is feasible to implement. Each of these activities help create the infrastructure necessary to achieve organizational readiness for implementation. The information below highlights some of the activities in which NJ and districts have engaged in the exploration process.

- District Engagement & Readiness - An invitation letter from Assistant Commissioner Kathy Ehling was emailed to district Superintendents with a general description of the TZ work, and an offer to engage in exploration by setting up an initial meeting. After a positive response, the department scheduled initial meetings with participating districts to provide an overview of the SISEP project and implications for systems change within literacy, provide a general overview of time and personnel commitments for work in the TZ, and engaged in question-and-answer sessions. Soon after, an initial meeting was scheduled with participating districts to gather information related to district/NJDOE readiness and fit and continue the mutual selection process. During this process, districts were given an overview of the Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria which were used to determine eligibility and fit. Additionally, district leadership teams completed an exploration questionnaire to examine organizational readiness in areas such as principles, core competencies, and contextual conditions.

- Developing Training and Coaching Plans – Training and coaching are the principle ways in which behavior change is brought about and professional development, support, and feedback are keys to quality service delivery and to improving service delivery over time (NIRN, 2015). The NJ SISEP team developed an infrastructure of training and coaching for TZ district administrators, implementation teams, and teachers. As part of the exploration stage, district implementation teams participated in professional learning sessions on Implementation Science, Stages of Implementation, and Teaming Structures. Coaching sessions are scheduled after each professional learning session to ensure that new skills are understood and used in practice, district teams are supported, and fidelity is achieved. In addition, in collaboration with the State Management and State Implementation teams, NJDOE literacy consultants created a training module that will introduce educators to relevant research and theoretical models of skilled reading with a focus on connecting the research to best practices for phonemic awareness instruction. The module will introduce and explain phonemic awareness, one critical component of reading instruction, through online lectures, background reading, instructional demonstrations, and an activity workbook to support notetaking and the application of new learning.

- Developing Communication Plans and Protocols – The SISEP Team developed three documents that support communication protocols and planning. The Give / Get document provides an overview of the commitment of the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and State Implementation and Scaling Up of Evidence-based Practices (SISEP) and TZ districts; and what each gets in return. This document was reviewed, agreed upon, and signed by TZ districts during the initial stages of the partnership. The Practice Profile is a tool used to operationalize a conceptually defined strategy through community engagement and research methods so that it is clear what practitioners will do as they carry out the innovation (Metz, 2016). The NJDOE's Practice Profile focuses on phonemic awareness (an advanced subcategory of phonological awareness that involves attending to, thinking about, and consciously manipulating the smallest, individual units of sound in a word called phonemes) and provides a fully operationalized practice model for consistent delivery. In addition, the NJ SISEP Team will work with districts to develop a Terms of Reference (TOR) that will serve as a working agreement to provide clarity about the work of the team, orient new members, and assist the team to stay on mission.

17 - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

17 - OSEP Response

The State has revised the baseline for this indicator, using data from FFY 2021, and OSEP accepts that revision.

The State revised its FFY 2021 through FFY 2025 targets for this indicator, and OSEP accepts those targets.

17 - Required Actions