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

North Carolina

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)?

NC will reduce the 6.83% point gap between students of color (SoC) with disabilities (4.19% career and college ready; CCR) and white students with disabilities (11.02% CCR) by 90% in the 40 public school units (PSUs) with <25% all-student proficiency in 4th grade reading that opted-in as SiMR Support partner PSUs.

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

YES

Provide a description of the system analysis activities conducted to support changing the SiMR.

INFRASTRUCTURE ANALYSIS – This was conducted in summer 2021 with full Office of Exceptional Children (OEC) staff participation. We created our own reflection tool based on the NCSI's eight-component General Supervision framework. This analysis illuminated both strengths and opportunities for growth in OEC resources, organization, talent, and processes. The full analysis can be viewed at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/15WLfD6nfRAnIcfTYnDBTnbMWHLkbf4PK/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=114466409737524691690&rtpof=true&sd=true

Please list the data source(s) used to support the change of the SiMR.

• Longitudinal 4th and 8th grade reading and math end-of-grade assessment data
• Longitudinal SWD graduation data
• SEA and PSU demographic and geographic data
• Discipline and attendance data; School Report Card data
• Significant Disproportionality and Indicator 4/9/10 data
• PSU Determinations
• EC Director and Teacher Attrition data
• Teacher Demographic data

Provide a description of how the State analyzed data to reach the decision to change the SiMR.

In collaboration with our stakeholders, including our external evaluator and national TA center state leads, the OEC conducted multiple analyses in determining whether to continue with the original graduation-focused SiMR or identify a new area of focus. NC made significant progress on the original SiMR, and as presented in the FY2020 Indicator 17 response several factors (i.e., adverse impacts of lost instructional time during COVID, SWD outcome data from statewide assessments, shifting agency priorities to early elementary literacy, and opportunities for better alignment with NCDPI's Every Student Succeeds Act Consolidated State Plan), led all stakeholders to look for a new, more relevant SiMR. Beginning with longitudinal analyses of Indicator 1 and 3 data, the OEC followed stakeholder preference/interests in narrowing the investigation to reading outcomes for SWD. Stakeholders selected 4th grade reading as the target for improvement over the course of four meetings in summer/fall 2021. In 2022, the OEC conducted several more rounds of analysis, disaggregating SEA and PSU data by racial subgroups, region, charter/traditional PSU, etc. The OEC determined we could make significant improvement on Indicator 3b/4th grade reading by focusing efforts on PSUs (97 of 294 submitting data in 2020-21) with <25% of all students scoring in the College and Career Ready (CCR) range (a score of 4 or 5 on EOG). Additional analyses were then run with these 97 PSUs to determine if any opportunity gaps existed in 4th grade reading and found that within the SWD subgroup we had a 6.35% point gap between non-white and white SWD. (The OEC later ran this battery of analysis on all NC PSUs to be able to track PSU and SEA progress over time). After identifying the intervention group of PSUs for the new SSIP (via 40 of the 97 PSUs opting in as SiMR-Support PSUs), the OEC recalculated the opportunity gap among the 40 PSUs to arrive at the final SiMR.

Please describe the role of stakeholders in the decision to change the SiMR.

As described above, the OEC has been in consistent and close contact with stakeholders since summer 2021 related to the SiMR change. In addition to participation in bi-monthly open EC stakeholder meetings in 2022, stakeholders contributed to the SiMR decision via participation on three SPP work groups which include multiple internal and external stakeholders, including parents of SWD, parent TA center representatives, PSU staff, and advocacy organizations. Along with Regional Data Teams (RDTs), these work groups design and implement SSIP priorities. Notably, one of the work groups with stakeholder membership is focused on Data Literacy; this group coordinated and presented most of the SiMR-related analyses with all other stakeholders. In addition, external stakeholders are the intended audience for NCDPI SPP/APR website (https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/exceptional-children/program-and-fiscal-monitoring/federal-reporting/state-performance-plan-spp-annual-performance-report-apr#:~:text=The%20NCDPI%20State%20Performance%20Plan,outcomes%20for%20students%20with%20disabilities.), as well, which provides current information about the SSIP and all other indicators.

The OEC also maintains ongoing EC Director communications in the form of monthly webinars, weekly emails, Directors Advisory Council meetings, and quarterly regional EC Director meetings keep local EC leaders engaged in SSIP implementation (e.g., SiMR selection process) throughout the year. The OEC also engaged our state Council on Educational Services for Exceptional Children (advises the NC State Board of Education on unmet needs of SWD and in development/implementation of policies related to coordination of services for SWD) in the SiMR decision-making process.

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.

40 PSUs that opted in as SiMR-Support partners from a group of 97 invited PSUs with <25% of all students scoring in the College and Career Ready (CCR) on the 2020-21 4th grade reading state assessment. Within these 40 PSUs, no more than six elementary schools will be selected as targeted intervention/pilot sites.

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

YES

Please provide a description of the changes and updates to the theory of action.

The OEC modified the SSIP Theory of Action (ToA) to reflect what we learned from our infrastructure analysis and our initial, state-level root cause analysis of opportunity gaps in 4th grade reading among SWD racial subgroups. Where the previous ToA relied heavily on OEC-supported identification and implementation of evidence-based practices to improve graduation rates for SWD, the revised ToA incorporates a broader application of the whole general supervision system to support local improvement. By strategically coordinating OEC talent and resources in three lanes of effort—Data,

Accountability, and Capacity-building—we anticipate providing more specific and customized support to our SiMR Support PSUs and more actionable/relevant universal support to all PSUs. Further, in targeting two main constructs as the path to improvement—early elementary literacy and beliefs systems involving SWD and students of color—we anticipate a more efficient and coherent installation and monitoring of local supports.

Please provide a link to the current theory of action.

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1V8ABybJdn12i0DJgw66ifyWsmw7SXX5onxJO0e3OCLY/edit?usp=sharing

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
2020	4.19%

Targets

FFY	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Target>=	6.00%	8.50%	11.00%	12.50%	15.00%

FFY 2021 SPP/APR Data

SWD of Color in SiMR Support PSUs Who Scored at Career and College Ready on 2020-21 4th Grade Reading State Assessment	SWD of Color in SiMR Support PSUs Who Took the 2020-21 4th Grade Reading State Assessment	FFY 2020 Data	FFY 2021 Target	FFY 2021 Data	Status	Slippage
49	1,224	74.51%	6.00%	4.00%	Did not meet target	Slippage

Provide reasons for slippage, if applicable

Although there is a slight reduction (less than 1% point) in our data for the new SiMR, the table above is comparing FFY2021 Data for the new SiMR for NC to our FFY2020 data from our previous SiMR (Graduation) automatically. This comparison is not accurately reflecting the data for the current SiMR.

Provide the data source for the FFY 2021 data.

DATA SOURCE FOR FFY 2021 - 2021-22 4th Grade End of Grade Reading data for SiMR Opt-In PSUs
DATA SOURCE FOR FFY 2021 - 2021-22 4th Grade End of Grade Reading data for SiMR Opt-In PSUs
Based on OSEP's guidance for Indicator 17, NC is reporting only on Career and College Ready progress in performance for SWD of Color in 4th grade reading in the SPP/APR table above.
The definition of SoC in North Carolina's SiMR is all non-white students.

The NC SiMR is looking to reduce the gap between white SWD and students of color (SoC) SWD in 4th Grade Reading for districts that have less than 25% College and Career Ready for all students and have opted-in to receive support from the OEC.

The formula is: 4th Grade Reading data for SiMR Opt-In PSUs - % WHITE SWD CCR - % SoC SWD CRR = GAP

The actual percentage point gap data for FY2021 is
%White CCR:12.34%
%SoC CCR:4.00%
FFY2020 Percentage Point Difference: 6.83
FFY2021 Percentage Point Difference: 8.34
Status: Did Not Meet Target

North Carolina has established decreasing percentage point gap targets to significantly reduce the gap between SWD of Color and White SWD over the next 5 years. The targets are:
FFY 2021 - 6
FFY 2022 - 5
FFY 2023 - 3.5
FFY 2024 - 2.0
FFY 2025 - .68

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

4th grade reading end-of-grade assessment data are collected from our statewide accountability system and transferred to an internal NCDPI data warehouse (CEDARS). The OEC extracts the file from CEDARS and disaggregates/compares the 4th grade reading data by PSU, region, PSU type,

race, gender, disability status, and disability category, at minimum. We also calculate compounding effects of two or more of these conditions (e.g., race x disability status) to determine magnitude of risk for different subgroups. PSUs may also request customized analysis for their unique context (e.g., military affiliation). For the SiMR, we compare white SWD and non-white SWD 4th grade reading CCR status at the district and school level. From there, we can calculate the size and magnitude of opportunity gaps among subgroups which allow for more strategic selection of intervention schools and EBPs.

For the purposes of SPP/APR Reporting, NC will report the College & Career Ready percent of SWD of Color each year with the goal of increasing the percent College and Career Ready as defined in the targets.

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.
FY 2021 SSIP Evaluation Plan - https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_iGuokd857I-WIX515OSWcb5HO_Se7fv/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=1144664097375246916906&rtpof=true&sd=true

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

If yes, provide a description of the changes and updates to the evaluation plan.
The SSIP evaluation plan for the new SiMR is a complete overhaul from the original graduation-focused plan. The new evaluation plan uses a quasi-experimental design comparing intervention schools from the 40 SiMR support PSUs to schools from the 57 control PSUs over time. The comparison is designed to determine the impact of intensive and collaborative support between the SiMR Support PSUs and the OEC. A more focused SiMR allows for more focused evaluation, with the new plan using just three summative metrics and a much smaller array of formative metrics.

If yes, describe a rationale or justification for the changes to the SSIP evaluation plan.
The evaluation plan changed because the SiMR changed. The new SiMR has completely different measures of success (4th grade reading), different targets for improvement (select PSUs/schools), different interventions strategies (intensive TA and coaching teams assigned to SiMR support PSUs), and different SWD being positively impacted by improvement efforts (elementary students). As such, we built a new evaluation plan from the ground up in collaboration with our external evaluator at UNC Charlotte over the past six months.

Provide a summary of each infrastructure improvement strategy implemented in the reporting period:
Cycle of Local EC Capacity-building Supports – the OEC coordinates a series of capacity-building activities for local systems improvement which includes:
• Quarterly EC Regional Directors meetings
• Bi-Monthly EC Director/Coordinator webinars
• Weekly EC communications & memos
• Monthly and ad hoc topical office hours
• Quarterly statewide EC webinars
• Web-based toolkits, professional learning, data dashboards, and other resources
• Annual EC Conference, March EC Administrator Institute, and EC Summer Institutes

EC Regional Data Teams (RDT) - OEC staff are assigned to 1 of these 4 teams, which are primary implementing unit of SSIP; RDTs analyze regional- and PSU-level root cause of SWD performance across indicators; implement/support universal SSIP outputs; provide tailored and customized data-based support, problem-solving, and coaching; provide forum for PSUs to collaborate through regional EC Director meetings and new director cohorts

SSIP Work Groups - Data Literacy, Stakeholder & Family Engagement, Research-informed Practices, and Systems Coherence groups produce deliverables in alignment with SSIP priorities identified by stakeholders. External stakeholders, including parents of students with disabilities, are key participants in work groups.

Every Child Accountability and Tracking System (ECATS) – this central data support in NC's infrastructure for special education is in its 3rd year of operation and enhancements continue; MTSS module and early warning system now live. Since its launch in 2019, the ECATS system has documented nearly one million IEP meetings, 180,0856 referral meetings, 15,251 manifestation determination meetings, and 2.7 million EC progress reports. Additionally, the use of the online professional learning series supporting the use of ECATS for meaningful IEP processes continues. The Early Warning System(EWS) within the MTSS Module of ECATS allows for viewing and analyzing multiple pieces of data for systematic, data-driven problem solving. The recommended way to look at data gathered from universal screening is within the context of an Early Warning System or EWS. An early warning system is a place that houses multiple sources and types of data. The data are generally designed around research-based, highly predictive, risk indicators of student performance in the areas of academics, behavior and attendance.

NC State Improvement Project (SIP) – Through OSEP State Personnel Development Grant, the North Carolina State Improvement Project (NC SIP) provides comprehensive, high quality professional development and follow up coaching focused on effective leadership and effective instruction to districts and schools by
-building state-level capacity;
-enhancing leadership skills in administrators;
-delivering research-based professional development on literacy and mathematics instruction;

-aligning state and institutions of higher education instructional content; and
-improving family engagement at all levels of service delivery.

Facilitated Assessment of MTSS-District Level (FAM-D and FAM-S) – NC MTSS measures saturation, implementation, and growth on two self-rating tools: the Facilitated Assessment of MTSS - School Level (FAM-S) and the Facilitated Assessment of MTSS - District Level (FAM-D). Both tools are recommended to complete with a facilitator to guide team conversations. Both tools engage implementation teams - the FAM-S at the school level and the FAM-D at the district level.

The FAM-S is intended to be used within a facilitated administration setting which allows district personnel to review evidence to support the school team's proposed score. Participation in the FAM-S is optional. NC DPI recommends an annual facilitated administration between April and June. The facilitated administration is led by the district MTSS/PBIS Coordinator and/or another member of the District MTSS Team. The instrument can be used at any time as an implementation self-report and guide for school leadership teams. District and school teams can utilize the tool to support and align with school improvement planning.

The state NC MTSS team analyzes the 41 items of the FAM-S to identify statewide trends, strengths, and weaknesses. In 2021-22 the highest rated items on the FAM-S (75% or more of school teams rated as either operationalizing (2) or optimizing (3)) included the following items (item content summarized below, full items and rubric are available in the FAM-S:
1. Principal actively involved
3. Teaming structures
21. Engage students, families, stakeholders in MTSS
29. Core Academic Practices
30. Core Behavior Practices

In addition to the item strengths, IABS also identifies areas for improvement. In 2021-22, the following items were rated by 10-13% of schools as not implementing:
10. PD/Coaching is provided to school staff on multiple tiers of instruction and intervention
19. Staff provided data on implementation and outcomes
33. Supplemental behavior and social-emotional practices
34. Intensive academic practices
35. Intensive behavior/social and emotional practices

The FAM-D measures district implementation of the NC MTSS framework. Data from the FAM-D assists district-level personnel to identify and prioritize implementation steps. The instrument contains 25 items in 6 critical components (Leadership, Building Capacity/Implementation Infrastructure, Communication and Collaboration, Problem-Solving Process, Multi-Tiered Instruction/Intervention Model, and Data/Evaluation). Each item is rated using a rubric with the following responses: Not Implementing, Emerging/Developing, Operationalizing, Optimizing.

The FAM-D was developed and validated by the NC MTSS team during the 2020-21 school year. 2021-22 is the first year of available FAM-D data.

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.

Cycle of Local EC Capacity-building Supports – (addressed GOVERNANCE/DATA/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE) In FY 2021, the focus for local SiMR-related capacity-building has been on orientation to the new SiMR, the new SiMR Self-Assessment (SiMR-SA; see new infrastructure improvement strategies section below), and the Phase I local 4th grade reading data analysis. Spring and Fall 2022 Administrator institutes, regional meetings, and webinars included intensive sessions for PSU EC Directors and their teams to build common language and understanding around opportunity gaps, systemic and structural inequity, belief systems, and courageous conversations when looking at subgroup data. Retention and recruitment of local EC leadership was also a priority, using the community of practice model to strengthen resilience and relationships at the regional level. The outcome of this strategy is that local EC leadership is equipped to engage in Phase I Data Analysis of the SiMR-SA with their stakeholders.

EC Regional Data Teams (RDT) - (addressed DATA/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE) highlights of work in FY2021 include data analysis and PSU reviews of educational equity indicators (4, 9, 10), SiMR-focused EBP/improvement strategy inventory, orientation to SiMR Data Analysis, internal systems-level coaching capacity building, PSU EC staffing recruitment and retention, and establishing/strengthening regional communities of practice with local EC Directors. The outcome of this strategy is increasing collaboration between NCDPI and PSUs and between general and special education leaders at the local level.

SPP Work Groups – (addressed GOVERNANCE/DATA/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT /TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE); five work groups—Data Literacy, Stakeholder & Family Engagement, Research-informed Practices, Educational Equity, and Systems Coherence—were extremely productive in FY 2021. Each group started the year identifying priorities based on findings from the 2021 OEC Infrastructure analysis. Data Literacy coordinated multiple state, district and school-level analyses for the SiMR and led capacity-building sessions for local EC leadership across a variety of meetings and platforms. Stakeholder & Family Engagement developed multiple IEP resources for parents in collaboration with our EC parent TA center and partnered with NCPTA's EC subcommittee on multiple presentations. They also supported development and analysis of the Indicator 8 survey, which will serve as a formative measure for one of the SSIP evaluation plan goals. Research-informed Practices supported literature reviews and maintenance of the professional learning library. Educational Equity continued internal capacity-building for OEC staff on belief systems, biases, and disproportionality. Systems Coherence continued to coordinate all internal and external stakeholder meetings, OEC and RDT capacity-building related to the new SiMR, and development of the annual Indicator 17 report. The outcome of this strategy is increased stakeholder engagement, increased collaboration within NCDPI, and more efficient and meaningful development of resources for PSUs.

Every Child Accountability and Tracking System (ECATS) - (addressed GOVERNANCE/DATA/ACCOUNTABILITY) – The outcome of this strategy is that user satisfaction with ECATS continues to grow and utilization of the required IEP module is robust. System repairs are conducted in a timely manner and feedback cycles from field to DPI and back support system maintenance/currency with policy and practice changes.
For the ECATS MTSS Early Warning System (EWS), we adopted the common measures at the high school level and then adapted what we know about academic screening indicators to provide indicators at the middle and elementary levels. With the data available in a state-wide EWS, we will be able to refine the indicators and cut points on a regular basis to better predict students who may require intervention.
The early warning indicators in ECATS MTSS include attendance, behavior data in the form of office discipline referrals and In-School Suspension/Out

of School Suspensions, and academic indicators. The academic indicators include historical information such as grades and end of year test scores as well as universal screening results from third party vendors. The indicators are associated with risk levels. These risk levels are informed by research, national guidance, and third party vendor recommendations. The Attendance indicators are triggered by attendance data – excused & unexcused absences; attendance data is the single data source that informs the attendance indicator in the EWS; the Behavior indicators are triggered by discipline data – in school and out of school suspension; behavior incidents and in-school/out of school suspension incidents are the data source that informs the behavior indicator in the EWS; the attendance and behavior indicators are the most straightforward and align most closely with the original design of an early warning system.

For academics, we have a variety of measures that may inform the indicator in the EWS. In order to prevent over identification of students at-risk these measures fire in a hierarchical fashion based on what we know are the most accurate indicators. Across all grades, if districts are using one of the third party screening tools that will feed into ECATS, the cut points for risk associated with the assessment will inform the EWS. Generally, screening and progress monitoring measures are well researched and the cut points are an accurate predictor of later success in the associated academic area.

NC State Improvement Project (SIP) - (addressed DATA/FINANCE/QUALITY STANDARDS/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE) North Carolina State Improvement Project (NC SIP) is the professional development and technical assistance branch of our systems framework addressing achievement gaps for SWD to promote evidence-based practices in literacy and mathematics instruction. FFY2021 outcomes include launch of Asynchronous Online Course for All Leaders aimed at building district and school administrators capacity to dig deeper using Implementation Science to support improvement of core content instruction and achievement of SWDs; expansion of Institutes of Higher Education partners from seven to ten to include representation of every region across the state; inclusion of representatives from the Office of Academic Standards, English Language Arts consultants, on the Adolescent Literacy Planning team. The outcome of this project is that more SWD have increased access to a teacher trained in the science of reading and foundations of math.

Facilitated Assessment of MTSS-District Level (FAM-D and FAM-S) - (addressed DATA/QUALITY STANDARDS/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE) - see FAM-D/S description in previous item for outcomes.

THIS SECTION IS CONTINUED IN ADDITIONAL INFO AT THE BOTTOM OF THE INDICATOR.

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

Describe each <u>new</u> (newly identified) infrastructure improvement strategy and the short-term or intermediate outcomes achieved.
Given the work groups are the main design structures for the SSIP, new improvement strategies are organized by each group's new output for FY 2021 below:
-Data Literacy – developed the SiMR Self-Assessment website and associated resources, including multiple interactive data dashboards for PSUs as they conduct the phase I data analysis; completed and delivered to PSUs a school-level subgroup gap analysis for 4th grade reading. The outcome of this effort is that PSUs are engaging in focused data and root cause analysis of SWD opportunity gaps in early elementary reading.

-Stakeholder & Family Engagement - created data sharing templates for PSUs to use with local stakeholders. No outcomes yet due to the early stage of implementation.

-Research-informed Practices – designed and delivered for OEC capacity-building a Systems-Level Coaching Practice Profile which will guide activity and assessment of OEC SiMR Support teams. No outcomes yet due to the early stage of implementation.

-Educational Equity – coordinated monthly statewide equity speaker series webinars. No outcomes yet due to the early stage of implementation.

-Systems Coherence – designed the new SiMR Self-Assessment, replacing the previous PSU Self-Assessment; designed online workspaces and submission portal for SiMR Self-Assessment, Phase I Data Analysis submission. The outcome of this effort is that PSUs are engaging in focused data and root cause analysis of SWD opportunity gaps in early elementary reading.

Provide a summary of the next steps for each infrastructure improvement strategy and the anticipated outcomes to be attained during the next reporting period.
Cycle of Local EC Capacity-building Supports – for FY 2022, the OEC will be supporting local capacity to conduct root cause analysis of 4th grade reading outcomes and opportunity gaps with a major emphasis on stakeholder partnerships. Spring Administrator Institutes will prepare local EC leaders to conduct root cause analysis and respond via relevant/district and school wide improvement planning channels. OEC SiMR Support teams will model and coach local stakeholder data reflection and problem-solving meetings. We will continue to expand/evolve the SiMR Self-Assessment website as we move into subsequent phases of the project. Anticipated outcomes are local district and school improvement planning will be more inclusive of SWD/special education programs and problem-solving will target systemic inequities in opportunities to learn.

EC Regional Data Teams (RDT) – RDTs will review PSU submissions of SiMR data analysis, root cause analysis, and improvement plans; RDT members will provide universal support to PSUs in each region via regional meetings, webinars, and conferences. Anticipated outcomes are the OEC will design and deliver support based on local strengths and needs.

SPP Work Groups – Work groups will be developing tools and resources for PSUs, SiMR Support teams, and RDTs as each phase of the SiMR Self-Assessment is implemented. PSUs will continue to be provided tools and resources for completing each phase of the SiMR Self-Assessment via the capacity-building activities described above. Anticipated deliverables for RDTs include review tools for data and root cause analysis, as well as data for formative assessment of progress on SSIP evaluation goals. SiMR Support teams will be equipped with coaching logs, implementation planning templates, and reflection tools to use in their work with SiMR Support PSUs. Anticipated outcomes are local district and school improvement planning will be more inclusive of SWD/special education programs and problem-solving will target systemic inequities in opportunities to learn.

Every Child Accountability and Tracking System (ECATS) – Our goal is to integrate identified third party vendors screening and progress monitoring data to increase the data in the EWS to help districts, charters and state operated programs to inform their core and intervention planning, problem solving and progress monitoring within this system.

NC State Improvement Project (SIP) – Through Priority 3 work, NC SIP staff and PSU partner have identified and invited a high needs school (Low Performing School within a Low Performing District) to participate in a focused support to improve achievement of students with disabilities through a selection of evidence-based professional development. After a data analysis, the identified school has chosen to focus their professional development and coaching support around literacy and family engagement. The NC SIP State Team is currently working on improvement and extension of our data collection system to include a student engagement measure for the project and data visualizations of submitted data per PSU. These

improvements/enhancements will promote improved analysis and data-driven problem solving /improvement planning for literacy and mathematics instruction across partnering PSUs.

Systems-level Coaching Practice Profile – as mentioned above, we will be developing a coaching log and reflection tool for each systems-level coaching session held with OEC and PSUs SiMR Support teams. Given the fundamental 'intervention' in our SSIP evaluation strategy is intensive coaching and TA for SiMR Support PSUs, PSUs experience/assessment of OEC support will be one important aspect of determining intervention effectiveness.

Facilitated Assessment of MTSS-District Level (FAM-D and FAM-S) - As in the past, we are using this data and other data to tailor our statewide support.   We are leveraging the strengths demonstrated in teaming structures and core and academic practices to strengthen our areas of opportunities. Therefore, we are supporting district and school teams with supplemental and intensive academic and behavioral practices and support, creating implementation plans, using and analyzing data for problem solving. This statewide support is happening during Regional, Statewide Networking Sessions and through district and school team and coordinator/stakeholder technical assistance and coaching. We anticipate seeing increased implementation of all essential elements and critical components of NC MTSS.

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

While the OEC will continue to implement many of the EBPs associated with/documented in the previous SSIP, we are excited to create more focus and alignment with other NCDPI literacy efforts in this more streamlined array of EBPs for early elementary reading. The relevant EBPs for achieving the new SiMR targets are:
-Reading Research to Classroom Practice (RRtCP)
-Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS)
-Literacy Instruction Standards
-Preschool Pyramid Model

Provide a summary of each evidence-based practices.

Reading Research to Classroom Practice (RRtCP) - this course provides educators and administrators with foundational knowledge needed to support students with persistent challenges in reading, including dyslexia. Course utilizes evidence-based strategies along with a comprehensive assessment system to guide instructional planning and delivery.

Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) addresses four critical outcomes for effective literacy instruction: understanding the science of reading, converting research to practice, enhancing teacher effectiveness, and transforming instruction. By understanding the "why" behind science and evidence-based research, educators can effectively know how to aid students in learning to read."

Literacy Instruction Standards - On October 7, 2021, the North Carolina State Board of Education approved the Literacy Instruction Standards (LIS) as outlined in Section V of SB 387: Excellent Public Schools Act of 2021. The LIS serves as a framework for the development and alignment of curriculum and instruction for all public schools. These standards are defined as a level of quality and equity to be used consistently within core literacy instruction statewide. While the NC Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) sets student expectations, the LIS and their associated instructional practices set expectations for teaching literacy. The LIS are organized by grade-band and can be used to ensure that all teachers across North Carolina have a common understanding and delivery of literacy instruction.

Preschool Pyramid Model - This project is designed to help improve child outcomes for preschool children with disabilities and to increase opportunities for instruction in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Based on the preschool pyramid model, developed by the Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning, this tiered framework of evidence-based practices promotes healthy social-emotional development for ALL children birth through 5 years of age. The Preschool Pyramid Model (PPM) promotes strategies to help teaching staff build positive relationships with and among children by creating supportive learning environments, teaching children to understand and express their emotions, and use problem solving skills. The PPM aligns with school-age Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), which is integrated in NC's MTSS framework. The rationale for this EBP as it relates to 4th grade reading outcomes for SWD is that kindergarten readiness–which the PPM effectively promotes–is a strong predictor of early elementary literacy success.

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.

-Reading Research to Classroom Practice (RRtCP) - improved instructional efficacy in reading leads to greater student engagement and success in early elementary grades, increasing likelihood of SWD scoring at College/Career-Ready level on 4th grade reading state assessment

-LETRS - When general education and EC teachers learn and apply the information contained in LETRS and when a supportive context is in place, such substantive professional development has been shown to have powerful beneficial effects on student learning. Overall achievement levels increase and fewer children experience reading difficulties. Students—and especially students with disabilities—experiencing instruction based on science of reading have increased likelihood of scoring at College/Career-Ready level on 4th grade reading state assessment

-Literacy Instruction Standards – The LIS are a set list of literacy instruction practices that have the potential to positively impact students' literacy achievement in K-12. New literacy research could modify and/or add to the instructional practices listed.

-Preschool Pyramid Model (PPM) – The Pyramid Model has been tested in multiple research projects and has shown evidence for promoting young children's social and emotional skills and decreasing child challenging behavior; PPM implementation increases the likelihood of kindergarten readiness for SWD and creates conditions favoring SWD access to structure literacy learning environments.

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

The SiMR-aligned literacy EBPs being implemented in NC/listed above include fidelity monitoring as follow:
-Reading Research to Classroom Practice (RRtCP) - RRtCP Observation/Teacher Reflection Tool used at all NC SIP sites

-LETRS and Literacy Instruction Standards – K-5 Literacy Look-fors Toolkit is designed to support school leaders (e.g. instructional coaches, principals, assistant principals, etc.) conduct productive learning walks and coaching cycles to observe alignment to the NC Literacy Instruction Standards and accompanying research-based practices. The tool includes a pre-walkthrough conversation guide, Look-For indicators, a post-walkthrough reflection guide, and a post-walkthrough conversation guide; going forward, use will be actively supported in the 40 SiMR Support PSUs and universally endorsed

for all PSUs

-Preschool Pyramid Model - Teaching Pyramid Observation Tool (TPOT) provides practitioner coaches concrete information as to how teachers are implementing Pyramid practices in the classroom; used at all NC PPM sites; NC Early Learning Network (NC-ELN) project staff provided a total of 963 technical assistance (TA) contacts to both PPM and non-PPM PSUs; these TA contacts were requested by 95 PSUs and provided by NC-ELN project staff, with an average of 10 TA contacts provided to each of the PSUs requesting support. The project also developed content for, organized, and presented a total of 32 professional development events that were attended by 769 educators from across the state. ELN staff also participated in a total of 121 project implementation planning and data meetings to support, track and report progress on the contract scope and related work. Of those meetings, 34 included the Part B 619 Coordinators.

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.

This is our first year of implementation of this SSIP, so we do not yet have progress monitoring data to use for EBP continuation decisions.

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

-Reading Research to Classroom Practice (RRtCP) - currently working on improvement and extension of our data collection system to include a student engagement measure and data visualizations of submitted data per PSU. The anticipated outcome is that these enhancements will promote improved analysis and data-driven problem solving /improvement planning for literacy and mathematics instruction across partnering PSUs.
-LETRS – continue statewide 3-cohort training model implementation
-Literacy Instruction Standards (LIS) – create/disseminate crosswalks with LIS and High-Leverage Practices, explicit instruction, and specially designed instruction principles
-Preschool Pyramid Model – continue reviewing and updating content and trainer materials to include new research and clarification, as well as a number of facilitated Stakeholder meetings to review and inform the newly developed Foundations for Early Learning and Development/Pyramid Tier III Practices modules.

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.

This is our first year of implementation of this SSIP, so we do not yet have evaluation data to use for continuous improvement.

Section C: Stakeholder Engagement

Description of Stakeholder Input

In FY2021, the OEC continued to engage stakeholders in the review and revision of the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP), data analysis and target setting around the new State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR). OEC consultants and leadership met with both internal and external stakeholders twice monthly to review progress on all Indicators, with a focus on Indicators 3, 4, 9 and 10 and the new collaborative review process as well as engage in resource gathering, training on data analysis and vetting of tools in preparation for the new SiMR Self Assessment. The external SSIP team includes representation from across the agency as well as, The Council on Educational Services for Exceptional Children, PSU EC Directors, Coordinators and administrators, OSEP funded technical Assistance Centers and Parent Advocacy groups. Additional external feedback is routinely solicited from the EC Directors' Advisory Council, the NC Council of Administrators of Special Education, national technical assistance centers, and content experts at state institutions of higher education (IHEs).

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

In addition to the stakeholder engagement strategies described in the introduction, SSIP work groups membership includes multiple internal and external stakeholders, including parents of SWD, parent TA center representatives, PSU staff, and advocacy organizations. Along with RDTs, these work groups design and implement SSIP priorities (see description of work group activity in the Infrastructure improvement section above). Notably, one of the work groups is focused on Stakeholder and Family Engagement; this group has conducted surveys with parents and created educational resources (in English and Spanish) re: the IEP process, discipline for SWD, etc.

External stakeholders are the intended audience for the NCDPI SPP/APR website, as well, which provides current information about the SSIP and all other indicators.

Ongoing EC Director communications in the form of monthly webinars, weekly emails, Directors Advisory Council, and quarterly regional EC Director meetings keep local EC leaders engaged in SSIP implementation (e.g., PSU Self-assessment process) throughout the year.

Council on Educational Services for Exceptional Children - advises the NC State Board of Education on unmet needs of SWD and in development/implementation of policies related to coordination of services for SWD. The Council also advises the SBOE on developing evaluations, reporting on data, and developing corrective action plans to address findings in federal monitoring reports. Currently consists of 25 members - 20 appointees and 5 ex-officio. Members are appointed for 4 -year terms by the Governor, President Pro Tem of the Senate, Speaker of the House, and the SBOE. Appointees represent SWD from the ranks of parents, teachers, higher education, public and private schools, business/vocational community, and charter schools. A majority of representatives are persons with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities. The SPP team brings data analyses, proposals, reports, and resources to the Council (many of which are requested by the Council) for input quarterly.

Parent Liaison - employed by EC Division; collaborates with community partners; develops/posts a parent newsletter 2x/mo; shares announcements from partner agencies; hosted Family Engagement webinar series to build local capacity for engaging families, specifically through parent liaison positions and special education advisory councils.

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.

1. Universal and intensive support for PSUs' completion of SiMR Data Analysis
2. OEC Review of PSUs' submitted SIMR Data Analysis
3. Universal and intensive support for PSUs' completion of SiMR Root Cause Analysis
4. OEC Review of PSUs' submitted SIMR Root Cause Analysis
5. Universal and intensive support for PSUs' aligned early elementary literacy improvement/intervention plan

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

1. Universal and intensive support for PSUs' completion of SiMR Data Analysis – Jan, 2023; submissions will be collected via Qualtrics; will inform state and local root cause analysis of opportunity gaps for SWD in early elementary literacy
2. OEC Review of PSUs' submitted SIMR Data Analysis – Feb-Mar, 2023; thematic analysis of review data will inform both universal and customized OEC coaching, professional learning, and technical assistance with PSUs re: data literacy and root cause investigation
3. Universal and intensive support for PSUs' completion of SiMR Root Cause Analysis Mar-June, 2023; submissions will be collected via Qualtrics; will ensure stakeholder participation/perspective in identifying local drivers of inequity in opportunity and outcome for SWD in early elementary literacy
4. OEC Review of PSUs' submitted SIMR Root Cause Analysis – July-Aug, 2023; thematic analysis of review data will inform OEC coaching, professional learning, and technical assistance with PSUs re: coherent improvement planning for SWD in early elementary literacy
5. Universal and intensive support for PSUs' aligned early elementary literacy improvement/intervention plan, Fall, 2023; data will be collected from revised local Literacy Intervention Plans and will drive state and local collaboration between general and special education programs to ensure SWD access to general education curriculum in early elementary literacy

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

None in addition to what we reported in FY 2021 (i.e., EC staffing crisis and impact on opportunities to learn for SWD)

Provide additional information about this indicator (optional).

CONTINUED: 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.

In addition to the item strengths, IABS also identifies areas for improvement. In 2021-22, the following items were rated by 10-13% of schools as not implementing:
10. PD/Coaching is provided to school staff on multiple tiers of instruction and intervention
19. Staff provided data on implementation and outcomes
33. Supplemental behavior and social-emotional practices
34. Intensive academic practices
35. Intensive behavior/social and emotional practices

As with the FAM-S, the FAM-D results are analyzed to determine areas of strength and opportunity. In 2021-22 the highest rated items on the FAM-D (55-75% or more of district teams rated as either operationalizing (2) or optimizing (3)) included the following items (item content summarized below, full items and rubric are available in the FAM-D:
1. MTSS is evident in district policy
2. There is a district team leading MTSS
5. The essential elements of MTSS are understood by district staff
9. The district ensures school schedules provide adequate time for implementation of multiple tiers of instruction and intervention
16. Core Academic practices
22. A comprehensive assessment plan exists

The following items were most frequently rated as "not implementing" by district MTSS teams:
3. A 3-5 year MTSS implementation plan exists
4. District staff receive professional learning related to MTSS
14. Student outcome data is problem-solved
15. Implementation data is problem-solved
21. Intervention protocols are evident for behavior/social and emotional learning

17 - Prior FFY Required Actions

None

17 - OSEP Response

The State has revised the baseline for this indicator, using data from FFY 2020, and OSEP accepts that revision. OSEP notes that the FFY 2020 data in the FFY 2021 data table reflects a different data source than the FFY 2021 data.

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

OSEP notes that the State reported "SWD of Color in SiMR Support PSUs Who Scored at Career and College Ready on 2020-21 4th Grade Reading State Assessment" as the numerator, and "SWD of Color in SiMR Support PSUs Who Took the 2020-21 4th Grade Reading State Assessment" as the denominator in its calculation of the SiMR. However, the State reports the SiMR is, "NC will reduce the 6.83% point gap between students of color (SoC) with disabilities (4.19% career and college ready; CCR) and white students with disabilities (11.02% CCR) by 90% in the 40 public school units (PSUs) with <25% all-student proficiency in 4th grade reading that opted-in as SiMR Support partner PSUs." Therefore it is unclear whether the State has revised its SiMR.

17 - Required Actions

In the FFY 2022 SPP/APR, the State must ensure that its SiMR reflects what is being measured in the SPP/APR data table.