Maryland State Systemic Improvement Plan: Part B Phase III Report

The Maryland State Department of Education Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (DSE/EIS) selected the participating SSIP districts based on their readiness for systems change and capacity to implement evidence-based practices (EBPs) with fidelity. The selected SSIP districts had previously partnered with DSE/EIS in one of three intensive programmatic projects: the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG), School-wide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT), or a State designed grant to support systems change at a local level called Expanding Bridges for Systems Change (Bridges).

While these districts were engaged in different projects, there were similarities threaded throughout all three which included a focus on improving mathematics outcomes for students with disabilities, a coaching relationship established between local and state staff, and the use of the basic principles of Implementation Science in the project design. The Local School System's (LSS) evaluation measures were inherently different for each project due to the differences in overall focus of the work that ranged from the implementation of classroom practices (SPDG), to the implementation of district and school-wide practices (SWIFT), and to the implementation of system practices at the district level (Bridges).

Data that will be discussed in Maryland's Phase III Report will reflect the evaluation measures from each of the three different project designs with the acknowledgement that Maryland is moving towards coherence and alignment of the evaluation measures and overall project design to enhance the SSIP implementation. The six SSIP districts are at different stages of implementation based on their initial alignment with the SSIP. The SPDG project was most closely aligned to the SSIP, therefore we discuss a "phased approach" to implementation where the SPDG districts were in initial implementation and the SWIFT and Bridges districts were in the exploration stage during Year 1. We expect that by Year 2, evaluation measures will be more aligned thereby providing us with more coherent data so we can improve the monitoring of SSIP implementation progress.

A. Summary of Phase III

1. Theory of action and logic model

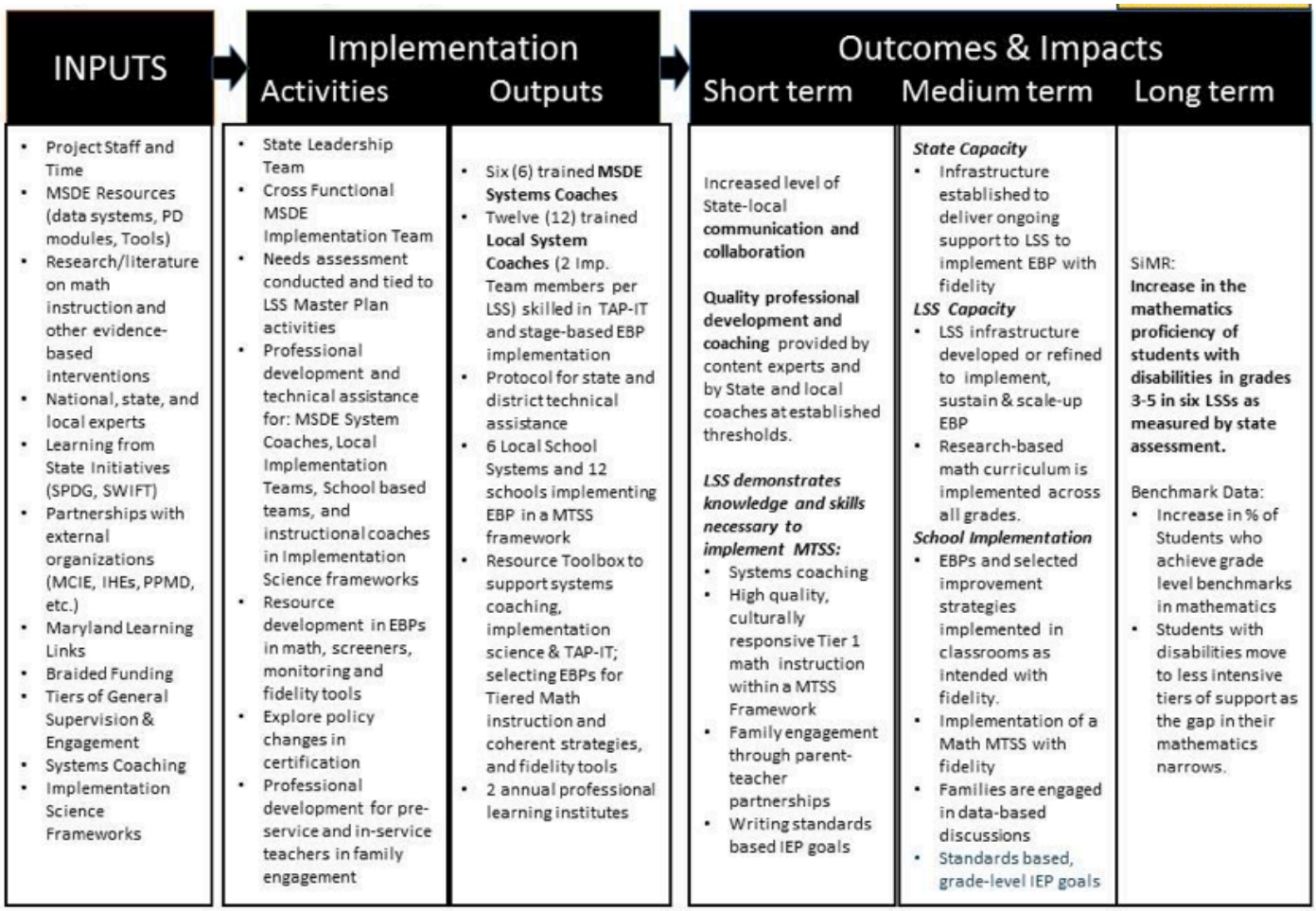
The Maryland *Theory of Action* for the SSIP- Part B is: **If** the Maryland State Department of Education and its partners provide high quality professional learning and support to Local School System Implementation Teams (LSS-IT) in the areas of *Systems Coaching*, *Implementation Science*, and *TAP-IT* (Team, Analyze, Plan, Implement, and Track) **then** Local School Systems will have the capacity to provide ongoing support to schools to engage in data-informed decision making and to implement evidence-based instructional practices with fidelity.

Evidence-based practices include:

- Data-informed decision making;
- Family Engagement;
- Tier I evidence-based mathematics instruction that incorporates the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL);
- An integrated (academic and behavioral) tiered system of supports; and
- Culturally responsive instruction.

Implementation of these evidence-based practices will increase mathematics proficiency of students with disabilities in grades 3, 4, and 5 in six local school systems and will assist participating jurisdictions in meeting the State Identified Measurable Result (SiMR). Maryland's Part B SiMR was developed in consultation with our internal and external stakeholders over a series of meetings during Phase I. Stakeholders examined data and learned about State-level initiatives and priorities to build a shared vision that selected mathematics as the area for Maryland's SiMR which is identified as the long-term outcome in the Part B Logic Model (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Maryland State Department of Education Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services SSIP Part B Logic Model.



2. Coherent improvement strategies implemented in Phase III Year 1

The Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (DSE/EIS) is unique in the improvement strategies that they are focused on putting into place, which include structural components, that support local capacity building for stage-based implementation. In other words, Maryland is not asking LSSs to just implement evidence-based practices, but is building their capacity to implement, scale-up and sustain them with fidelity. Maryland has chosen improvement strategies that are sound, logical, and aligned from a research perspective, as well as, from the data and infrastructure analyses that will result in improvement in the State's SiMR. The following is a description of our coherent improvement strategies.

Data-informed Decision Making for Continuous Improvement

Over the past decade, educators in Maryland and elsewhere have become interested in and committed to using data-informed decision making. Its use at the central office, school, and classroom levels is encouraged. Teachers, principals, and administrators systematically collect and analyze various types of data, including input, process, outcome, and satisfaction data, to guide a range of decisions to help improve the success of students and schools. Achievement test data, in particular, play a prominent role among practitioners – in large part due to increased emphasis on data as a result of the requirements of NCLB (Massell, 2001).

However, the existence of data does not guarantee its use. Raw data must be organized and combined with an understanding of the situation to yield information. Information becomes actionable knowledge when data users synthesize the information, apply judgment to prioritize it, and weigh the relative merits of possible solutions. At this point, actionable knowledge can inform different types of decisions that might include: setting goals and assessing progress, addressing individual or group needs, evaluating the effectiveness of practices, assessing whether the needs of students or others are being met, reallocating resources, or improving processes to improve outcomes. To promote improvement decisions based on data and to support strategy alignment, the MSDE promotes the routine use of improvement cycles such as the practice-policy feedback loops and Team Analyze Plan Implement Track (TAP-IT) process.

The *practice-policy feedback loop* provides organizational leaders and policy makers with information (data) about implementation barriers and successes so that a more aligned system can be developed. Feedback from the practice level engages and informs organization leaders so that they can ensure that policy, procedures, resources, etc. enable innovative practices to occur in classrooms, schools, and districts as intended (AI Hub: Topic 3: Practice-Policy Feedback Loops). To encourage communicating implementation challenges to the appropriate level, during Year 1, MSDE has ensured that membership on school, district, and state implementation teams include designated representatives from varying levels. For example, school implementation teams have a designated district liaison on the team, and the district implementation team has principal representation, the instructional coach, and their State liaison.

The TAP-IT process (Team, Analyze, Plan, Implement, Track) promotes continuous improvement for student outcomes and system alignment for implementation of evidence-based practices. The TAP-IT process was implemented in two SSIP districts during Year 1. LSS Implementation Teams met quarterly to (1) review student performance data and teacher implementation data, (2) determine if implementation and student performance targets were met, and (3) identify any barriers and successes around implementation and student learning so that teacher training and coaching adjustments could be made in order to improve the implementation of the selected evidence-based practices. As part of the implementation process a TAP-IT Usable Innovation description and fidelity check were developed. Also, the TAP-IT Digital Portfolio was developed and podcasts describing each step of TAP-IT were developed and uploaded onto Maryland Learning Links.

Family Engagement and Partnership to Promote Family Involvement and Student Success
Given the power of family involvement to influence learning, it is not surprising that the IDEA strongly supports the right of parents to be involved in the special education services that their child receives. As the IDEA states: "Almost 30 years of research and experience has demonstrated that the education of children with disabilities can be made more effective by… strengthening the role and responsibility of parents and ensuring that families…have meaningful opportunities to participate in the education of their children at school and at home." Maryland's strategic plan promotes engaging families and school staff in active regular two-way, meaningful communication as equal partners in decisions. As part of the SSIP work, Maryland will provide training opportunities that include the development of training modules for Parent-Teacher partnerships to improve attitudes, skills and dispositions of school and district personnel towards family-school partnerships to support student learning. In addition, families of students who will be in schools participating in the SSIP work will also be engaged through the provision family-friendly information (on using math in daily activities, on their child's performance and progress) in an effort to connect what is being learned in the classroom to daily life and providing meaningful ways for the student and her/his family to engage in the life of the school. By engaging families in these processes, there is no intent to teach parents "today's math" but rather to help families use math, incorporate positive behavior supports at home and be engaged in their child's education.

During Year 1, through continued partnership with The Parents' Place of Maryland (PPMD), the State's Parent Training and Information (PTI) Center in OSEP's Parent Technical Assistance Center Network, we used a strategy in two SSIP LSSs that was developed in our current SPDG to support mathematics instruction. The "Honeycomb for Home" provides parents/families with ways to engage children around "what are you learning" rather than around "how to solve problems" as a means to improve home/school communication. Three other SSIP LSSs made Trusting Family Partnerships a priority and implemented creative approaches to increase family partnerships i.e., church collaboration, lunchtime with children, interactive home assignments

and Family Fun nights. In addition, Maryland disseminated an RFP to Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) for development of parent-teacher partnership modules.

High Quality General Education Math Instruction Based on Principles of Universal Design for Learning to Increase Student Engagement and Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is based on educational research that finds students are highly variable in their response to instruction. Accordingly, to meet the challenge of high standards, the UDL approach shuns "one size fits all" curricula and instruction in favor of flexible designs with customizable options to meet individual needs. UDL has three major principles that include providing multiple means of representation, multiple means of action and expression, and multiple means of engagement (Meyer, A., Rose, D.H., & Gordon, D., 2014). Each of these principles addresses the diversity of student learning styles and means of demonstrating learning. The use of UDL along with high quality math instruction and interventions increases opportunities for students with disabilities to both engage in instruction and effectively demonstrate what is learned.

During Year 1, one district implementation team identified UDL as a priority goal for 2016-17 and developed a walk-through classroom observation tool that is specific to UDL and strategies that work for all students; this tool will be used across all schools by all administrators; two districts implemented a classroom level EBP – Team Based Cycle of Instruction (TBCI) and Structured Cooperative Learning (SCL). The three UDL principles – present information and content in different ways, differentiate the ways that students can express what they know, and stimulate interest and motivation for learning – are integrated into each TBCI stage (Set-Up, Presentation, Learning Together, Just for Me, Assessment, and Wrap-Up).

Multi-Tiered System of Supports with Evidence-Based Math Instruction and Intervention Tailored Instruction to Math Deficits

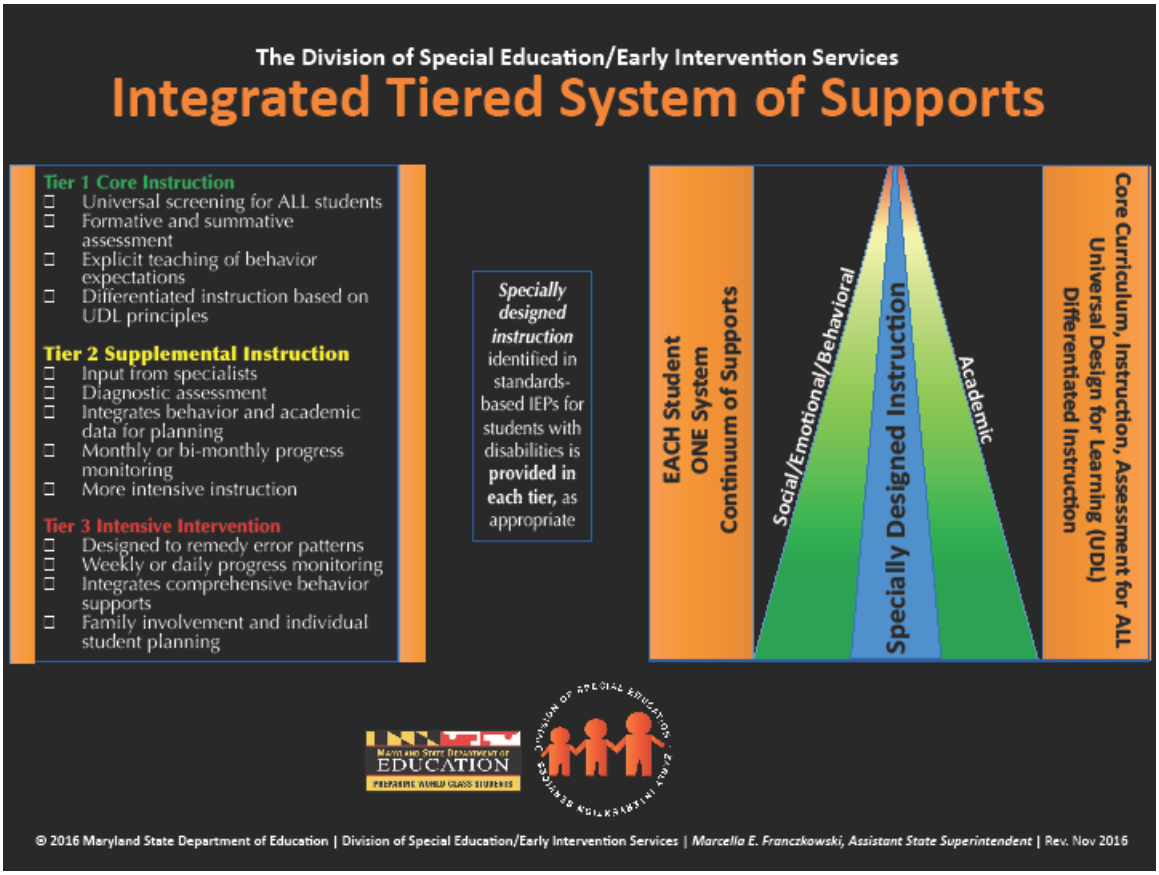
The Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) models (Greenwood, Carta, Baggett, Buzhardt, Walker, & Terry, 2008; Greenwood Kratchowill & Clements, 2008), such as Response to Intervention (RtI) (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2001) and School-Wide Positive Behavior Supports (SWPBS) (Sugai & Horner, 2009), are based on the premise that classroom instruction should be high quality, evidence-based, and universally designed for all students, considering their linguistic and cultural backgrounds, disabilities, and other learning needs. Through the use of student performance and progress data, the acquisition of targeted skills can be monitored and the need for more intensive instruction or specific interventions for students who continue to struggle can be identified. A second tier of intervention focusing on those target skills or behaviors is provided to students who have not acquired the targeted skills. Through ongoing data monitoring, the need for a third tier of more individualized and intensive intervention can be identified and designed for specific students based on their unique needs. Evidence-based instructional strategies, progress monitoring, and fidelity of intervention characterize the

implementation of all tiers. Copeland and Cosbey (2008/2009) describe four key MTSS principles:

1. The tiers should be additive, not exclusionary: Tier 1 instruction should be supplemented by Tiers 2 and/or 3, and not replaced by them.
2. This model should be an instructional decision-making model, not a placement model.
3. Decisions to change interventions, moving a student from one tier to the next, should be based on data.
4. Teachers should evaluate student performance based upon the documented delivery of strategies that have been demonstrated to be effective for their specific students.

During Year 1, the Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services described An Integrated Tiered System of Supports in its strategic plan *Moving Maryland Forward: Sharping the Focus for 2020*. The DSE/EIS supports the implementation of a tiered system that integrates a focus on student's social emotional learning needs in conjunction with behavioral and academic instructional interventions to decrease opportunity and achievement gaps in performance among student groups (See Figure 2). For schools, this means implementation of a school-wide organizational framework and data systems to provide evidence-based targeted and intensive interventions through collaborative planning.

Figure 2. DSE/EIS Integrated Tiered System of Supports.



In Year 1, MSDE staff realized there was a need to develop a statewide definition of the Integrated Tiered System of Support (ITSS). DSE/EIS will continue to discuss ways of developing consensus. Developing a shared statewide understanding of the framework will promote consistency and coherence throughout the state. We are currently focusing on Tier I through our work with districts implementing evidence-based classroom practices (Team Based Cycle of Instruction/Structured Cooperative Learning and Main-Menu Lesson using information from Concrete-Representational-Abstract Assessments) that provide access to the MD College and Career Mathematics Standards.

Equitable Access to the General Education Curriculum Through Culturally Responsive Practices and Specialized Instruction for Student with Disabilities

We know that educating students with disabilities in classes with their non-disabled peers increases their learning progress. Cole, Waldron, Majd, and Hasazi (2004) found that 41.7% of students with learning disabilities made progress in mathematics in general education classes compared to 34% in traditional special education settings without the presence of non-disabled peers. When comparing progress with their typical peers, 43.3% of students with disabilities made comparable or greater progress in mathematics in inclusive settings versus 35.9% in traditional settings.

One strategy that ensures equitable access to the general education curriculum is culturally responsive instruction/teaching. Aceves, T.C., & Orosco, M. J. (2014) conducted a review of the literature and found emerging research that identifies four effective culturally responsive evidence-based practices (EBP):

1. *Collaborative teaching* – an umbrella term for instructional methods (e.g., cooperative learning, differentiated instruction, peer teaching, reciprocal teaching) that involve joint intellectual effort (i.e., requiring individual accountability, positive interdependence, and strong interpersonal skills) between students and teachers (Klingner & Vaughn, 1996, 1999; O'Connor & Vadasy, 2011; Vaughn et al., 2011).
2. *Responsive feedback* – teachers offer critical, ongoing, and immediate feedback regarding students' responses and participation and incorporating students' responses, ideas, languages, and experiences into the feedback that is provided (Gersten & Geva, 2003) while inviting students to construct new understandings regarding what they are learning (McIntyre & Hulan, 2013).
3. *Modeling* – involves explicit discussion of instructional expectations while providing examples based on students' cultural, linguistic, and lived experiences (Aceves, T.C., & Orosco, M. J. , 2014), and;
4. *Instructional scaffolding* – teachers control for task difficulty and promote a deeper level of understanding using students' contributions and their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Scaffolding skills include using different types of questions, providing appropriate wait time and taking turns; extending and acknowledging students'

responses; and using supporting instructional materials e.g., visual organizers, story maps (Aceves, T.C., & Orosco, M. J. , 2014).

During Year 1, two districts were implementing structured cooperative learning which promotes individual accountability, positive interdependence, and strong interpersonal skills by teaching and modeling for students *High Performing Teaming Principles:* Positive Interdependence: Sink or Sail together, Performance Monitoring: Check It Out, Collaborative Competence: CAP, Individual Accountability: No Free Riders, Engagement and Momentum: Engage, and Technology Optimization: Power Up. One other district was exploring the possibility of receiving training for their teachers in culturally responsive teaching during Year 2.

As can be seen in Figure 2, specially designed instruction is identified in standards-based IEPs for student with disabilities and is provided in each tier as appropriate. As explained earlier, we are exploring the possibility of developing consensus around a statewide framework during Year 2 as we continue to implement evidence-based practices for Tier I.

Maryland identified four areas for *infrastructure improvement* – governance, data, professional development/technical assistance, and accountability/monitoring that are described in the following:

Governance

During Year 1, implementation team structures were formed at the State and local levels to provide leadership and prepare for strategic collaboration and resource management. This infrastructure improvement addressed the governance area. Implementation teams at the State and district levels were formed. At the State level an Executive Leadership Team, Birth-21 (B-21) Core Planning Team, and Division Implementation Team were formed. At the district level, participating SSIP districts formed Local School System (LSS) Implementation Teams. All teams began meeting during Year 1.

Data

The strategy to improve the data area focused on preparing the Division Implementation Team and the LSS Implementation Teams to use TAP-IT and Implementation Science to promote continuous improvement for student outcomes and system alignment for implementation of evidence-based practices. During Year 1, podcasts describing each TAP-IT step were developed and put on Maryland Learning Links and a digital portfolio was developed using the TAP-IT process.

Professional Development/Technical Assistance

Maryland's strategy to improve professional development/technical assistance focused on building the capacity of State and local district implementation team members to engage in stage-based implementation of evidence-based practices. During Year 1, training for

system coaching was provided to selected members of both teams. In addition, Maryland disseminated an RFP to Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) for the development of parent-teacher modules.

Accountability/Monitoring

During Year 1, in the area of accountability/monitoring, DSE/EIS reassigned division staff (monitors, programmatic, fiscal, family support and dispute resolution) to cross-functional teams assigned to local jurisdictions. These teams provide technical assistance support based on the *Differentiated Framework: Tiers of Supervision and Performance Support to Improve Birth-21 Special Education and Early Intervention Results.* In addition, the DSE/EIS staff began the development of a technical assistance manual for use by division staff.

3. Evidence-based practices implemented at the school level in Year 1

Maryland invited six Local School Systems to participate in the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) – Allegany, Cecil, Charles, Prince George's and Worcester counties. During Year 1, two of these LSSs, Charles and Prince George's were participating in the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG), three of these LSSs were participating in SWIFT, and one LSS was the recipient of the Bridges Grant.

During Year 1, in the two SPDG LSSs (Charles and Prince George's), a Tier 1 evidence-based mathematics strategy was implemented. Three schools in these LSSs implemented an instructional delivery system, designed by Johns Hopkins University-Center for Technology in Education (JHU-CTE) that integrates UDL and positive behavioral supports – the Team Based Cycle of Instruction (TBCI) and Structured Cooperative Learning (SCL). As explained earlier, UDL principles are integrated into every step of the TBCI and culturally responsive teaching EBPs are integrated into structured cooperative learning. In addition, both districts have implemented TAP-IT at the district and school levels.

During Year 1 two of the LSSs implemented standards aligned mathematics curriculum – Eureka and enVision Math. Another LSS identified UDL as a priority goal and developed a walk-through classroom observation tool that is specific to UDL. Another LSS was piloting Tier II supports for math programs and exploring the Main Lesson-Menu Lesson, Concrete-Representational-Abstract (CRA) Assessment strategies of Dr. John Tapper to determine if this Tier I evidence-based mathematics strategy would be implemented in the district.

During Year 1, the Bridges Grant LSS (Worcester) was engaged in the *exploration* stage of implementation and investigating the Main Lesson-Menu Lesson, Concrete-Representational-Abstract (CRA) Assessment strategies of Dr. John Tapper to determine if this Tier I evidence-based mathematics strategy would be implemented in their district.

4. Evaluation activities, measures, and outcomes

Evaluation activities, measures, and outcomes of the MD SSIP evaluation are designed, through a formative evaluation process, to monitor the provision of:

1. High quality professional learning and support to Local School System Implementation Teams in the area of systems coaching, implementation science, and the TAP-IT data-informed decision making process;
2. Increased collaboration and communication across MSDE divisions and stakeholder groups;
3. Increased district capacity to provide ongoing support to schools to implement, scale-up, and sustain evidence-based practices with fidelity, and
4. Increased engagement of families.

Through formative evaluation, any needed adjustments to implementation activities can be made so that we might make progress towards achieving our long-term outcome, which is to increase the mathematics proficiency of students with disabilities in grades 3-5 in participating SSIP districts. The evaluation is conducted by MSDE in collaboration with external evaluators. Internal stakeholders, such as the B-21 Core Leadership Implementation Team and the Cross-Departmental Implementation Team and external stakeholders, such as LSS implementation teams and Advisory Committees were involved in evaluation planning and results will be disseminated to them on a regular basis. The following is a list of the overarching evaluation questions that are attached to our evaluation plan (Appendix A). In addition, readers can refer to the Table 2 for the measures, data sources, and analysis aligned to each of the outputs.

1. Did we produce what we planned to produce:
    a. A minimum of six (6) trained MSDE Systems Coaches
    b. Twelve (12) trained LSS System Coaches (2 Imp. Team members per LSS) skilled in TAP-IT and stage-based EBP implementation
    c. Protocol for technical assistance aligned with implementation science
    d. 6 Local School Systems and 12 schools implementing EBP in a MTSS framework
    e. Resource Toolbox to support systems coaching, implementation science & TAP-IT; selecting EBPs for tiered math instruction and coherent strategies, and fidelity tools
    f. 2 annual professional learning institutes
    g. Family engagement, including parent-teacher partnerships, higher education coursework for administrators, teachers, and parents
2. Did we increase collaboration and communication across Divisions and stakeholders?
3. Did we provide high quality professional development and coaching?
4. Did Local School System partners learn:
    a. Systems coaching;

b. How to provide high quality, culturally responsive tiered math instruction within the MTSS Framework;
c. How to engage families in data-based discussions

5. Did the participating LSSs build their capacity to support the implementation, sustainability and scale up of EBPs?
6. Did schools install and implement with fidelity a math MTSS that includes specially designed instruction based upon a standards-based IEP?
7. Were families of students with disabilities engaged in data-based decision making?
8. Did students with disabilities in grades 3, 4, and 5 improve in math performance?

In Year 1 (July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016), the following evaluation activities occurred:

- Administered a Pre and Post Knowledge Assessment on Implementation Science as part of the systems coaching training
- Conducted observations on the implementation of the TAP-IT process using the TAP-IT Fidelity Check in two LSSs
- Conducted observations on the implementation of the TBCI/SCL Tier 1 instructional EBP using the TBCI/SCL Fidelity Check in two LSSs

5. Changes to implementation and improvement strategies during Year 1

Implementation of SSIP occurred as planned during Year 1, i.e. implementation teams were formed at the State (with the exception of the Cross-Departmental Implementation Team) and local levels, systems coaching training began, the TAP-IT Digital Portfolio was developed, and Usable Innovation descriptions and Fidelity Checks for TAP-IT and TBCI/Structured Cooperative Learning were developed and made available. However, two implementation activities – conducting a needs assessment tied to the LSS Master Plan activities and exploration of policy changes in certification were adjusted during Year 1.

The needs assessment activity was originally conceived as a task to inform the selection of schools to implement the evidence-based strategies in order to ensure alignment between Master Plan activities and evidence-based practices selected by the LSS. However, participating LSS implementation teams decided this activity, during Year 1, would be redundant. Participating LSSs had already done this work.

The second implementation activity that was not addressed during Year 1 was exploration of policy changes in certification. The reason Maryland was unable to address this activity was the forum for exploring policy changes in certification is the Cross-Departmental Implementation Team. Since there were so many leadership changes at MSDE during Year 1 including the State Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and Assistant State Superintendents, this team was not formed, yet we anticipate that once things have stabilized we will be able to form this team in Year 2. There were no changes made to infrastructure improvement strategies.

B. Progress in Implementing the SSIP

1. Description of the State's SSIP Implementation Progress During Year 1

The Maryland SSIP Part B Action Plan was based on strategies developed to address State infrastructure needs in the areas of governance, data, professional development/technical assistance and accountability/monitoring. Maryland's Part B infrastructure development has several foci that include:

- Team formation across MSDE, within the DSE/EIS Division, and participating Local School Systems;
- Systems Coaching training for two leaders from participating SSIP districts and all monitoring and programmatic Division staff;
- Utilization of a specific data-informed decision-making process, TAP-IT, which integrates the stages of implementation and the other implementation science frameworks into the process; and
- The breaking down of Division silos by forming a cross-functional team (monitors, programmatic, fiscal, family support, and dispute resolution) to work with each LSS in the state.

Division teams will have a shared understanding of the Division's selected technical assistance strategies, i.e., Systems Coaching, Implementation Science, and TAP-IT. In addition, Maryland disseminated an RFP to IHEs to develop the Parent-Teacher Partnership modules. Our rationale for developing these modules is to improve communication between families and schools in order to promote student learning. Following is a list of each infrastructure area and the Action Plan Strategy (in the Phase II Plan) and Year 1 activities associated with it:

- **Governance** – the *action plan strategy (#1)* is to provide leadership to prepare for strategic collaboration and resource development; the Year 1 *activity* was formation of the SSIP Implementation Structure consisting of the following teams: Executive Leadership Team, SSIP B-21 Core Planning Team, Cross-Departmental Implementation Team, Division Implementation Team, and LSS Implementation Teams.
- **Data** – the *action plan strategy (#2)* is to provide technical assistance and support focused on building the capacity of Local School Systems to build an implementation infrastructure that enables them to implement evidence-based practices with fidelity and (#4) is to prepare the Division Implementation Team (D-IT) and the Local School System Implementation Teams (LSS-IT) to use the TAP-IT process and Implementation Science for stage-based implementation of EBP in order to develop a practice-to-policy feedback loop to ensure system alignment around implementation; the Year 1 *activities* were the development of the TAP-IT podcasts and the TAP-IT Digital Portfolio and development of a professional learning/training plan for the TAP-IT Digital Portfolio.
- **Professional development/technical assistance** – the *action plan strategy (#3)* is to provide professional learning opportunities focused on building the capacity of Local School Systems

to implement evidence-based strategies; the Year 1 activities were training in systems coaching (beginning in Year 1 and extending through Year 2) for the DSE/EIS staff and 2 district leaders from each participating district and the development and dissemination of an RFP to Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) to develop parent-teacher partnership modules.

- **Accountability/Monitoring** – the *action plan strategy (#1)* is to provide leadership to prepare for strategic collaboration and resource management; the Year 1 activities were the formation of the Division Implementation Team consisting of Part B and C programmatic staff and monitors. This team focuses on SSIP implementation and development of a technical assistance protocol/manual for DSE/EIS. In addition, a larger cross-functional team for technical assistance was formed consisting of monitors, programmatic, fiscal, family support and dispute resolution staff to provide programmatic support and technical assistance as described in the DSE/EIS *Differentiated Framework: Tiers of Supervision and Performance Support to Improve Birth-21 Special Education and Early Intervention Results.*

a. The following tables (Table 1) *provides a description of the extent to which the State has carried out its planned implementation activities f*rom our Action Plan in the Phase II submission.

Table 1. Action plan implementation activities during Year 1.

Action Plan **STRATEGY #1**: Provide leadership to prepare for strategic collaboration and resource management.				
Implementation Activity	**Long and Short Term Activities**		**Responsibility**	**Status**
Formation of partnerships with Local School Systems for participation in SSIP	1.1.1	DSE/EIS invites six Local School Systems (LSS) to participate in SSIP. Each invited LSS is associated with one of the key initiatives in the State and has an existing LSS Implementation Team (LSS-IT) working in partnership with DSE/EIS.	Division Implementation Team	1.1.1 Invitations were sent on 2-19-16 and all six LSSs agreed to participate. This short-term activity is completed.
Formation of DSE/EIS teams to provide technical assistance to Local School Systems	1.1.2	The formation of a cross-functional teaming structure at DSE/EIS focused on providing technical assistance and support to districts. The formation of the Division Implementation Team (D-IT) consists of monitors and TA providers to provide support to LSS Implementation Teams who will be overseeing	DSE/EIS Branch Chiefs	1.1.2 The DSE/EIS cross-functional TA team formation has been completed during year 1. There is ongoing work associated with implementation of TA by this team. Formation of the Division Implementation Team (D-IT) consisting of the Part B and C programmatic staff and monitoring staff was completed during year 1. The D-IT meets

Action Plan **STRATEGY #1**: Provide leadership to prepare for strategic collaboration and resource management.			
Implementation Activity	**Long and Short Term Activities**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
Develop a technical assistance manual for DSE/EIS	implementation of selected EBP at the school level.		once a month to discuss issues related to SSIP implementation.
	1.1.3 DSE/EIS develops a new protocol and timeline for technical assistance activities aligned to the Differentiated Framework: Tiers of Engagement (Universal, Targeted, Focused, and Intensive).	Performance Support and Technical Assistance (PSTA) Branch Leadership	1.1.3 The Division Implementation Team, in partnership with NCSI, is working on the development of a technical assistance manual to be completed in Year 2.
Formation of the MD SSIP Implementation Structure	1.1.4 DSE/EIS develops a logistics plan for deploying D-IT to support LSS Implementation Teams in order to build their capacity to develop an infrastructure for the implementation of EBP with fidelity.	PSTA Branch Leadership	1.1.4 This task was not completed during Year 1 and is continuing to be discussed.
	1.1.5 Formation of the Executive Leadership Team.	MSDE Executive Leadership Team DSE/EIS	1.1.5 This activity was completed during Year 1.
	1.1.6 Formation of the Cross-Departmental Implementation Team.	Assistant State Superintendent	1.1.6 This team was not formed during Year 1 because of changes in MSDE leadership.

Action Plan **STRATEGY #2**: Provide technical assistance and support focused on building the capacity of Local School Systems to build an implementation infrastructure that enables them to implement evidence-based practices with fidelity.			
Implementation Activity	**Long and Short Term Activities**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
Participate in systems coaching training and provide TA on implementation to LSS and schools.	2.1 Selected members of Division Implementation Teams (D-IT), LSS Implementation Teams (LSS-IT), and external partners are trained in Systems Coaching.	Performance Support and Technical Assistance (PSTA) Branch Leadership, LSS Implementation Teams, Policy and Accountability Branch (Monitoring Team)	2.1 Division Implementation Team members (Part B, C & monitors) and two members from each of the six LSS Implementation Teams began training in Systems Coaching during Year 1.
Disseminate resources toolbox to support systems coaching, implementation science & TAP-IT.	2.1.1 DSE/EIS develops technical assistance protocol for		2.1.1 Discussions about a technical assistance protocol for

Action Plan **STRATEGY #2**: Provide technical assistance and support focused on building the capacity of Local School Systems to build an implementation infrastructure that enables them to implement evidence-based practices with fidelity.			
Implementation Activity	**Long and Short Term Activities**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
Conduct needs assessments/ surveys in EBP with locals. Collaborate with LSS data analysts to use student performance data to identify instructional needs. Provide TA support to use data based on strengths/needs to select EBP priorities. Provide TA support to apply implementation science to install/implement EBPs.	systems coaching. 2.1.2 D-IT systems coaches provide coaching support to LSS Implementation Teams (LSS-IT) for the development of an implementation infrastructure that enables the LSS-IT to support schools with the implementation of EBP with fidelity. 2.1.3 MSDE will provide online tools and resources to support system coaching.	DSE/EIS Branch Chiefs, PSTA Branch Leadership, Policy and Accountability Branch (Monitoring Team)	systems coaching began in Year 1. 2.1.2 Through the systems coaching training, the system coaches selected for both the D-IT and LSS-IT are working through staged-based implementation of the selected EBPs in participating districts. For example, they are revisiting the work they did during the *Exploration* stage of implementation i.e. selection of members for their implementation teams, assessing needs, and ensuring selected EBP is a good fit with schools. Additional support will be provided to LSS-IT by the D-IT during three face-to-face meetings scheduled during Year 2. 2.1.3 We have established a private systems coaching community group on Maryland Learning Links. Resources and discussions can occur on this site.

Action Plan **STRATEGY #3**: Provide professional learning opportunities focused on building the capacity of Local School Systems to implement evidence-based practices.			
Implementation Activity	**Long and Short Term Activities**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
Identify/develop training on EBP i.e., Family Engagement, MTSS, UDL, Culturally Responsive Teaching.	3.1 MSDE provides content experts, including IHEs, to develop professional learning training on Family Engagement through parent-teacher partnerships, MTSS, UDL, and Culturally Responsive Teaching. 3.1.1 MSDE convenes SSIP LSS-IT, at least three times a year, to discuss and assess how well they are using the implementation drivers and share how they have addressed some of the implementation barriers they have encountered. 3.1.2 MSDE's expert team identifies/develops training for practitioners implementing EBP i.e., UDL, and culturally responsive teaching within TBCI & SCL. 3.1.3 Conduct practitioner training for EBP at LSS level. 3.1.4 Convene Instructional Coaches for fidelity check training on TAP-IT, TBCI & SCL. 3.1.5 MSDE convenes SSIP participants from the school and district levels to learn about mathematics strategies.	Parents' Place of Maryland, The Ohio State Department of Education, JHU-CTE Division – IT JHU/CTE Dr. John Tapper	3.1 An RFP for development of training modules for parent-teacher partnerships was prepared for dissemination during Year 1. 3.1.1 Three dates were selected for face-to-face meetings during Year 2 with the six Local School Systems participating in SSIP. These dates are: January 18, 2017, March 2, 2017, and May 10, 2017. 3.1.2 and 3.1.3 JHU-CTE conducted practitioner training in TBCI & Structured Cooperative Learning during Year 1. Dr. John Tapper is working with one of the SSIP districts and will provide training in August 2016 for practitioners in his Main Lesson/Menu Lesson and CRA Assessment strategy. 3.1.4 Three SSIP districts, Charles, Prince George's and Worcester will meet monthly beginning in Year 2 October 2016. 3.1.5 During Year 1, SWIFT sponsored a Professional Learning Institute (PLI) and invited the six SSIP districts to attend. At this PLI Dr. John Tapper provided training on Main Lesson/Menu Lesson. As a follow-up to this PLI activity the Division System Coaches will be facilitating discussions with the LSS-Implementation Teams to determine if Tapper's strategy is a good fit with selected schools.

Action Plan **STRATEGY #3**: Provide professional learning opportunities focused on building the capacity of Local School Systems to implement evidence-based practices.			
Implementation Activity	**Long and Short Term Activities**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
Disseminate resources toolbox to support EBP i.e., MTSS, UDL, Culturally Responsive Tier I math instruction.	3.1.6 MSDE will provide online tools, resources, and fidelity measures to support EBP professional development and instructional coaching	SSIP Lead	3.1.6 During Year 1, Usable Innovation descriptions for TAP-IT, TBCI & SCL and fidelity checks for each of these practices were developed.

Action Plan **STRATEGY #4**: Preparing Division Implementation Team (D-IT) and Local School System Implementation Teams (LSS-IT) to use TAP-IT and Implementation Science for a practice-to-policy feedback loop that informs decision-making.			
Implementation Activity	**Long and Short Term Activities**	**Responsibility**	**Status**
Conduct needs assessments/ surveys with local programs around TAP-IT	4.1 Assess current knowledge of D-IT and LSS-IT members on TAP-IT and Implementation Science frameworks.	SSIP Lead	4.1 A knowledge assessment on Implementation Science was administered before Systems Coaching training began. A post training knowledge assessment will be administered in May 2017 when training is completed. 4.1.2 This activity was completed during Year 1. 4.1.3 Training will occur during Year 2.
Develop professional learning (PL)/training for Division Implementation Teams and LSS Implementation Teams for TAP-IT and Implementation Science frameworks.	4.1.2 Develop a training plan to address D-IT and LSS-IT needs in TAP-IT and Implementation Science. 4.1.3 Provide training to D-IT and LSS-IT on TAP-IT and Implementation Science.	SSIP Lead SSIP Lead	The Division Implementation Team (D-IT) will receive training on the TAP-IT Digital Portfolio. In addition, two days of training are scheduled for September 2016 on the TAP-IT Digital Portfolio for three SSIP districts that have agreed to field-test it during the 2016-2017 school year. Division systems coaches will provide support to these districts as they use the TAP-IT Digital Portfolio during their quarterly meetings during the 2016-2017 SY. It is MSDE's intent to use the TAP-IT Digital Portfolio with all six SSIP districts once the field-testing is completed. Additional TAP-IT training will occur for LSS-IT during the Coaches Clinics in Year 2. Implementation Science training is part of the Systems Coaching training that is received by selected System Coaches from the D-IT and LSS-IT. In addition it will be part of the LSS-IT face-to-face convening conducted during Year 2.

b. Intended outputs that have been accomplished as a result of the implementation activities.
The Part B SSIP identified six outputs that would result from implementation activities. These outputs are:

- Six (6) trained MSDE Systems Coaches;
- Twelve (12) trained Local School System (LSS) System Coaches skilled in TAP-IT and stage-based implementation of evidence-based practices (EBP);
- Protocol for state and district technical assistance;
- Six (6) Local School Systems and twelve (12) schools implementing EBP in an MTSS framework;
- Resource Toolbox to support systems coaching, implementation science and TAP-IT; selected EBP (TBCI & SCL and Main Lesson-Menu Lesson and CRA Assessment) for Tiered Math instruction and coherent strategies and fidelity tools; and
- Two (2) annual professional learning institutes

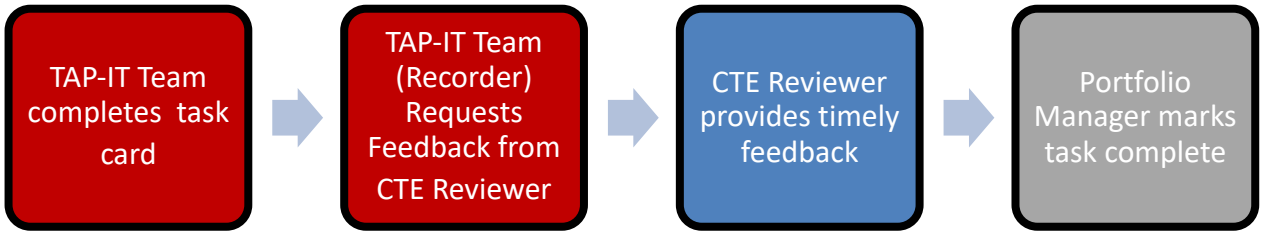
During Year 1, Maryland began to make progress on these intended outputs. The following is a description of the progress that the State has made on each of these outputs:

Six (6) Trained MSDE Systems Coaches - Maryland began training MSDE staff as Systems Coaches in June 2016. Barbara Sims of the State Implementation & Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices Center (SISEP) conducted two days of training. Seventeen (17) MSDE staff attended. Staff responsibilities include Part B, C, and monitoring work. Training has continued into Year 2 and will be completed in May of 2017.

Twelve (12) trained Local System Coaches skilled in TAP-IT and stage-based implementation of evidence-based practices (EBP) - During Year 1, Maryland completed a training plan for the LSS System Coaches in TAP-IT and stage-based implementation of evidence-based practices (EBP). The plan for TAP-IT training in Year 2 consists of two days training for six (6) LSS System Coaches in September 2016. These six System Coaches are from the three LSSs who agreed to field test the TAP-IT Digital Portfolio. They will also have additional training on TAP-IT during monthly Coaches Clinics and ongoing support as they use the TAP-IT Digital Portfolio at quarterly TAP-IT meetings.

In addition, there is a coaching feature embedded into the digital portfolio that allows feedback from the Portfolio Manager, that is, the State Liaison who supports each LSS-IT as they work through each step of the TAP-IT process (Figure 3). During the field-testing year (2016-17 SY) there will be additional support from the developer – the JHU-CTE Reviewer.

Figure 3. Draft TAP-IT Digital Portfolio overall feedback process.



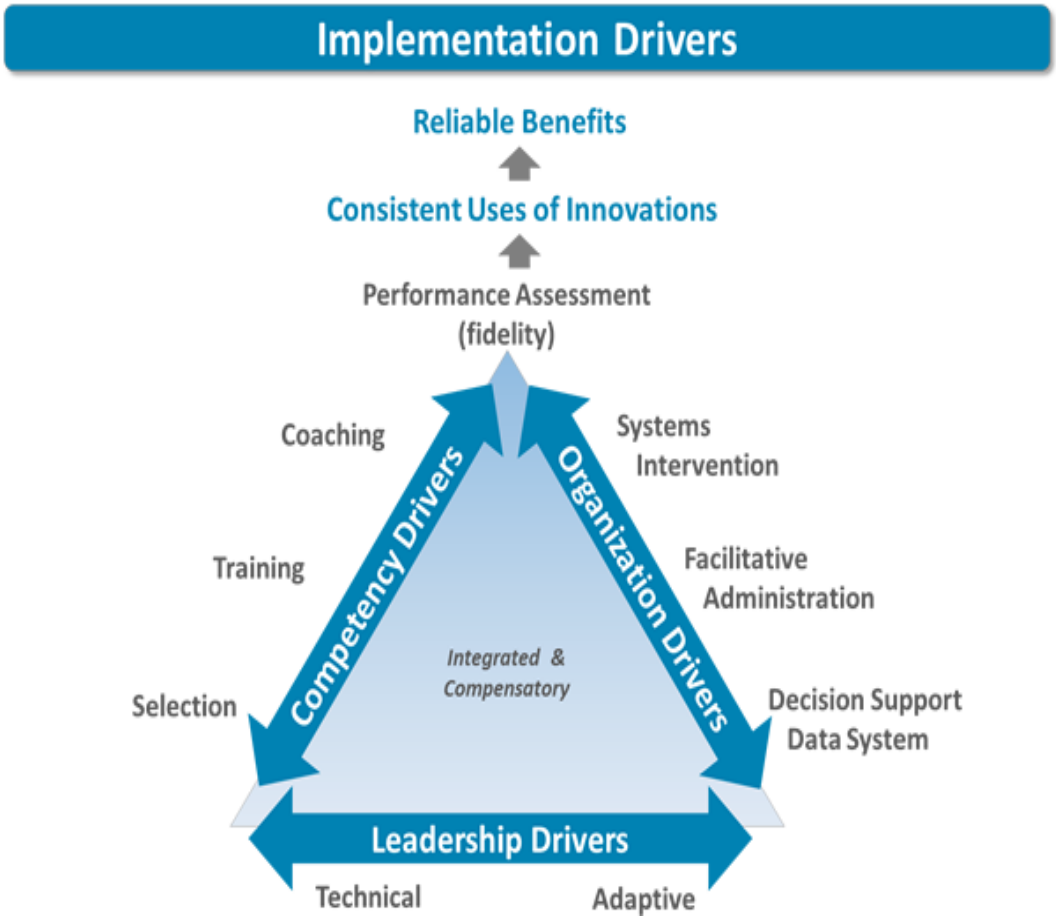
As part of the Systems Coaching training, all twelve System Coaches from the participating SSIP districts are being trained in stage-based implementation for evidence-based practices (EBP).

Protocol for state and district technical assistance **-** In 2013 the Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (DSE/EIS) under the leadership of its new Assistant State Superintendent, Marcella Franczkowski, introduced a strategic plan – *Moving Maryland Forward*. In that plan a state technical assistance framework – *Differentiated Framework: Tiers of General Supervision and Engagement* – was described.

During Year 1, DSE/EIS revisited the initial plan in order to sharpen its focus to narrow the gaps for children (B-21) with disabilities and to continue its commitment to Results Driven Accountability (RDA). In doing so, the Division engaged in conversations about technical assistance and revised its description of the Differentiated Framework which was renamed *Differentiated Framework: Tiers of Supervision and Support to Improve Birth-21 Special Education and Early Intervention Results.* The Division also agreed that their system of technical assistance would, in addition to the Differentiated Framework, include a technical assistance protocol describing the actions steps of State liaisons to begin technical assistance once districts are assigned to a tier of performance support in the *Differentiated Framework*, the TAP-IT Implementation Process and Tool (Digital Portfolio), Systems Coaching, and evaluation. The Division engaged the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) to assist in the development of a Technical Assistance Manual, encompassing all five components that will describe the Division's technical assistance provided to Local School Systems and Public Agencies. The Technical Assistance Manual development work is ongoing in Year 2.

With regard to district technical assistance, our initial thinking has been that we will engage our LSS Systems Coaches in a conversation on this topic once they have completed the Systems Coaching training. State thinking on this topic leans towards defining technical assistance at the district level as the supports provided to schools as they implement, sustain and scale-up implementation of evidence-based practices. This focused technical assistance work is aligned to the Implementation Drivers (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Implementation drivers (Fixsen, Blase, Naoom, Friedman, Wallace, 2005).



For example, the LSS systems coaches and other members of the LSS Implementation Team (LSS-IT) will engage in *facilitative administration*, they will provide support for *Decision Support Data System* through the use of the TAP-IT Digital Portfolio at the school level, and they will also attend to the competency and leadership drivers.

Another way to describe district technical assistance is by answering the following questions:

- What is it (district TA)? The support provided to practitioners and schools when implementing an evidence-based practice.
- Who does it? The LSS Systems Coaches and Implementation Teams.

- How do they do it? By using Systems Coaching skills and the TAP-IT Digital Portfolio tool.
- Why do they do it? So that practitioners and schools can implement, sustain, and scale-up selected evidence-based practices.

These discussions will continue at the State and LSS levels during Year 2.

Six (6) Local School Systems and twelve (12) schools implementing EBP in an MTSS framework - During Year 1 there were two LSSs, Charles and Prince George's counties, who were participating in the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG). As part of this grant they were implementing an evidence-based mathematics strategy (the JHU-CTE Team Based Cycle of Instruction and Structured Cooperative Learning) in three (3) schools. In addition, our Bridges district, Worcester County, was in the process of selecting the Main Lesson-Menu Lesson and Concrete-Representational-Abstract Assessment strategies of Dr. John Tapper for three (3) of their schools. Although none of these districts have formally implemented an MTSS framework, they recognize that the EBP math practices they are selecting/implementing represent Tier I instruction that provides access to the core mathematics curriculum to all students. In addition, these districts began discussions about formally adopting the MTSS framework in these schools. The two SWIFT LSSs implemented different evidence-based practices. In Queen Anne's County, a Tier II math program/intervention for struggling students was piloted. In Cecil County the curriculum *enVision Math* was implemented and the implementation team was engaged in the Exploration stage of implementation for Dr. Tapper's CRA Assessment strategy.

Resource Toolbox to support systems coaching, implementation science and TAP-IT; selected EBP for Tiered Math instruction and coherent strategies and fidelity tools - During Year 1, an Online Learning Event (OLE) was developed to provide an overview of Implementation Science for SSIP partners who were unfamiliar with this body of work. As part of the Systems Coaching training, Barbara Sims plans to introduce specific Implementation Science resources/tools (Terms of Reference MOU, Hexagon Tool, District Initiative Inventory, Communication Protocol) to participants in order to familiarize them for use during their stage-based implementation work.

In addition, we shared existing *Usable Innovations* documents describing EBPs (Team Based Cycle of Instruction and Structured Cooperative Learning) that are being implemented in SSIP districts and their *fidelity checks* as well as the *Usable Innovation* document and *fidelity check* for TAP-IT. Finally, the *Digital Portfolio* for the TAP-IT process was developed during Year 1 and will be field-tested during Year 2 and podcasts were posted on Maryland Learning Links. http://www.marylandlearninglinks.org/tap-it-podcasts

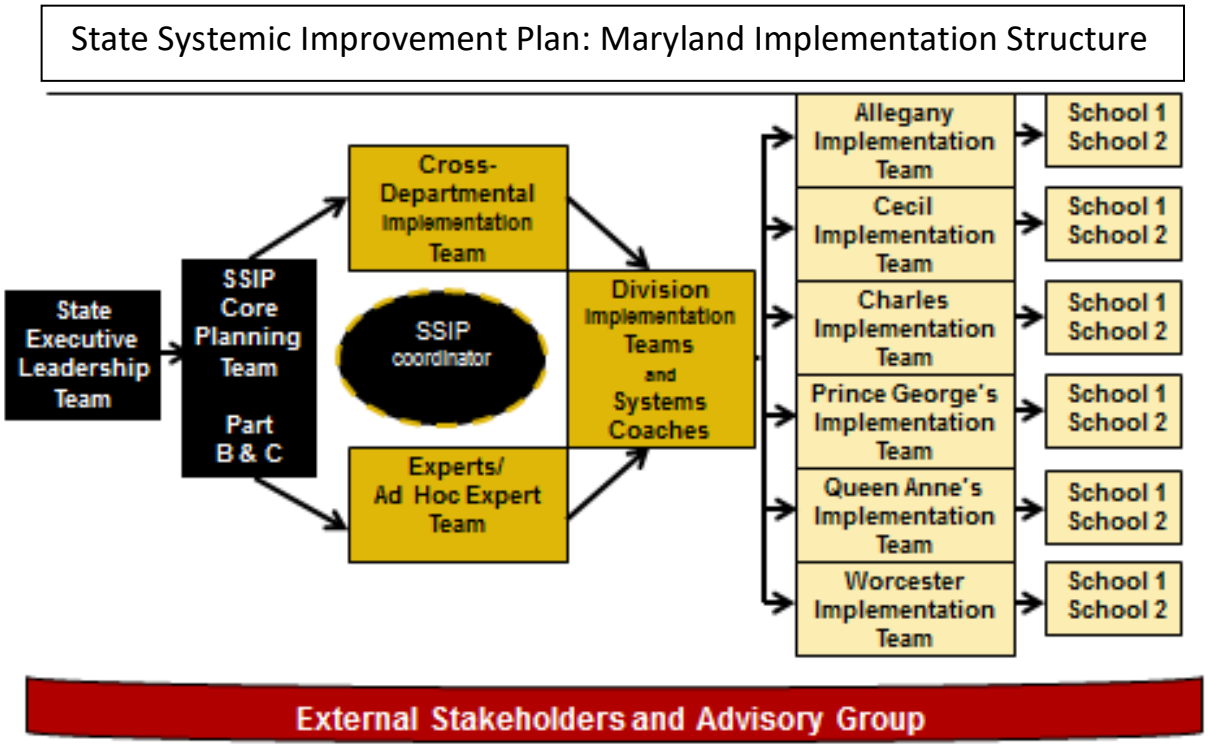
Two (2) annual professional learning institutes - As part of Maryland's SWIFT initiative, two Professional Learning Institutes (PLIs) were held during Year 1. Most of our SSIP districts (only

one district did not attend) participated in these sessions. In Year 1, Dr. John Tapper presented his Tier I math strategies – Main Lesson-Menu Lesson and Concrete-Representational-Abstract Assessment. These sessions were held on November 9-10, 2015 and February 10-11, 2016. The State expectation was that these sessions would provide the necessary information for district teams to determine if they were interested in implementing this strategy in their schools and if interested their implementation teams would then engage in staged-based work with the support of their State Liaison.

2. Stakeholder involvement in SSIP implementation during Year 1

In Phase II, a SSIP implementation structure was proposed (Figure 5). The teams that make up this structure consist of internal and external stakeholders. Internal stakeholders consist of MSDE staff in the State Executive Leadership Team, SSIP B-21 Core Planning Team, Cross Departmental and Division Implementation Teams. External stakeholders are the implementation teams at the local school system level and members of advisory committees. The ad hoc Expert Team consists of math experts from MSDE and others e.g., Dr. John Tapper, JHU-CTE.

Figure 5. DSE/EIS SSIP Part B Implementation Structure at the state and local level.



a. *How stakeholders have been informed of the ongoing implementation of the SSIP*

Maryland engaged key external stakeholder groups during Year 1 to inform them about ongoing planning and implementation of SSIP. Presentations on the SSIP implementation

planning were conducted and participants were asked for their feedback on these plans, submitted in the Phase II report, which were considered by the State Executive Leadership Team and the B-21 Core Planning Team. Following is a list of external stakeholder meetings:

- Education Advocacy Coalition (EAC) October 20, 2015
- Individualized Education Program (IEP) Users Group October 28, 2015
- Special Education State Advisory Committee (SESAC) November 16, 2015
- Local School system Stakeholders November 24, 2015
- Local School System/Public Agency/Institutes of Higher Education/General Education Partners/Advocacy Community Leaders and Strategic Partners December 9, 2015
- Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services December 16, 2015
- Local School System Stakeholders January 8, 2016
- State Mathematics Advisory Group February 10, 2016
- SPDG Presenting SSIP to Stakeholders February 23, 2016

b. *How stakeholders have had a voice and been involved in decision-making regarding the ongoing implementation of SSIP*

During Year 1, stakeholder involvement regarding the ongoing implementation of SSIP consisted of forming and meeting with key teams e.g., the State Executive Leadership Team, the SSIP B-21 Core Planning Team (Part B and C), and the Division Implementation Team who are internal stakeholders within MSDE. The only key team within MSDE that was unable to meet was the Cross-Departmental Implementation Team as the team was not formed during Year 1 because of personnel changes within the department. The State Executive Leadership Team met on 3-14-16. The DSE/EIS Assistant State Superintendent presented the SSIP plans for Part B and C and asked for and received approval for including other staff across the department to participate in the Cross-Departmental Implementation Team. The SSIP Core Planning Team (Part B & C) had regular monthly meetings beginning on 3-11-16. This team also met on 4-28-16, 5-19-16 and 6-9-16 in Year 1. Meetings focused on preparing materials to inform external stakeholder groups, planning of the Phase II submission, and discussions on how Part B & C plans might align. The Division Implementation Team consisting of Part B, Part C, and monitoring staff was formed and had its first meeting on 6-8-16 and a second meeting on 6-22-16. Topics for 6-8-16 included: overview of SSIP and purpose of the Division Implementation Team, a review of implementation tasks on Indistar performance management tool, collaboration across the Division, Systems Coaches training. The topics for the 6-22-16 meeting included discussions about the roles of the Division Implementation Team members, purpose of the Cross-Departmental Implementation Team, building coherence between SSIP and the Tiers of Engagement protocols, and implementation tasks for the performance management tool.

External stakeholders are engaged on a regular basis during quarterly/monthly advisory group meetings and monthly meetings with the local school system implementation teams.

C. Data on Implementation and Outcomes

1. How the State monitored and measured outputs to assess the effectiveness of the implementation/action plan

The MD SSIP evaluation is designed, through a formative evaluation process, to monitor the provision of (1) high quality professional learning and support to Local School System Implementation Teams in the area of Systems Coaching, Implementation Science, and the TAP-IT data in-formed decision making process, (2) increased collaboration and communication across MSDE divisions and stakeholder groups, (3) increased district capacity to provide ongoing support to schools to implement, scale-up, and sustain evidence-based practices with fidelity, and (4) increased engagement of families. In the Maryland Part B Evaluation Plan, the following chart lists the implementation outputs, the measures, and data sources. In Year 1**,** the Knowledge Assessment Pre and Post was administered to participants in the Systems Coaching training, the TAP-IT fidelity check was administered in two participating LSSs, and observations were conducted in three schools to collect implementation data of the selected EBP (TBCI and SCL) using a fidelity check. In addition, a survey measuring the quality, relevance and usefulness of the Professional Learning Institutes was administered. As the MD SSIP evaluation is a formative assessment process, there is ongoing data analysis occurring so that we can engage in a continuous improvement process in the areas of professional learning, implementation of evidence-based practices, and data-informed decision-making. Table 2 outlines the implementation outputs, measures, data sources, and the analysis that informs the SSIP implementation plan.

Table 2. Implementation outputs, measures, data sources, and analysis.

IMPLEMENTATION OUTPUTS	MEASURES	DATA SOURCES	ANALYSIS
Six trained MSDE Systems Coaches Twelve trained LSS Systems Coaches	Knowledge Assessment Pre-Post; Coaching Roles & Responsibilities & qualifications; Practice Profile; Survey measuring quality, usefulness and relevance of systems coaching	Participants receiving the training; Systems Coaches will self-assess using practice profile; LSS administrators receiving system coaching services	Pre and Post assessments analyzed; Self-assessment twice a year; Annual Survey
Twelve trained Local System Coaches skilled in: TAP-IT and Stage-Based EBP implementation	TAP-IT Artifacts; TAP-IT Fidelity Check	Implementation Team members self-assess fidelity of TAP-IT process	Conducted after each TAP-IT Cycle is completed 3times a year
Protocol for state and district technical assistance	In development	In development	In development

IMPLEMENTATION OUTPUTS	MEASURES	DATA SOURCES	ANALYSIS
6 Local School Systems and 12 schools implementing EBP in a MTSS framework that includes specially designed instruction	EBP Fidelity Check; IEP Audit/Reflection Tool – Evidence of Standards: IEP Goals and Objectives	Instructional Coach Self-Assessment by LSS special education staff	Conducted three times a year October (baseline) February and May; Annual self-assessment
Resource Toolbox to support: Systems Coaching, Implementation Science & TAP-IT, selecting EBP for tiered math instruction and coherent strategies and fidelity tools	In development	In development	In development
2 annual Professional Learning Institutes (PLI)	Survey measuring quality, usefulness and relevance of PLI; Observation of training for content fidelity and HQPD indicators	Participants receiving training Evaluator will observe training for content fidelity & HQPD	Survey administered after training Three times a year

The following evaluation questions were developed in relation to the outputs identified in the Phase II evaluation plan: Did we produce what we planned to produce: (a) a minimum of six (6) trained MSDE Systems Coaches, (b) twelve (12) trained Local System Coaches skilled in TAP-IT and stage-based EBP implementation, (c) protocol for technical assistance aligned with implementation science, (d) 6 local school systems and 12 schools implementing EBP in a MTSS framework, (e) resource toolbox to support systems coaching, implementation science and TAP-IT; selecting EBP for tiered math instruction and coherent strategies, and fidelity tools, (f) 2 annual professional learning institutes, (g) family engagement, including parent-teacher partnerships, higher education coursework for administrators, teachers, and parents.

a. *How evaluation measures align with the theory of action* – Maryland's Part B theory of action is: **If** the Maryland State Department of Education and its partners provide high quality professional learning and support to Local School System Implementation Teams (LSS-IT) in the areas of *Systems Coaching, Implementation Science, and TAP-IT* **then** Local School Systems will have the capacity to provide ongoing support to schools to implement evidence-based practices with fidelity. The focus of Maryland's Theory of Action is professional learning and support to Local School System Implementation Teams around implementation of EBP with fidelity. Maryland is collecting data on the State's effectiveness at providing high quality professional learning and support to Local School Systems Implementation Teams and on local capacity to provide ongoing support to schools to implement evidence-based practices with fidelity. The measures that Maryland identified in Phase II are aligned to professional learning and implementation of fidelity and hence, our Theory of Action.

Following is a list of Maryland's measures.

I. Survey measuring quality, usefulness and relevance.
II. Observation of training for content fidelity and HQPD indicators
III. Knowledge Assessment measuring MSDE and LSS Systems Coaches knowledge of implementation science.
IV. Fidelity Check to measure the fidelity of implementation of the TAP-IT data-based decision making process.
V. Fidelity Check to measure the fidelity of implementation of the selected EBP for Tier 1 mathematics instruction (TBCI and SCL). As explained earlier, TBCI and SCL integrate the EBP of Universal Design for Learning, Culturally Responsive Teaching, and Positive Behavior Supports into one instructional delivery system.

b. The data sources for each key measure are presented in Table 2. Many of the key measures rely on self-assessment e.g., systems coaching practice profiles, TAP-IT fidelity check, the IEP Reflection Tool. The rationale for using self-assessment measures is that a key feature of adult learning is to "engage the learner in self-assessment of his or her acquisition of knowledge and skills as a basis for identifying next steps in the learning process" (Donovan et al., 1999). Instructional coaches will use fidelity checks to assess levels of implementation. This information will also be used to identify further training needs of teachers. In addition, participant surveys on coaching services, training and evaluator observations of training will be used. In this way, we will have multiple sources of data to determine SSIP implementation progress. Implementation Science Knowledge Assessment results. On June 14, 2016, MSDE offered a Systems Coaching session focused on Implementation Science and Data-Informed Decision Making to support their strategy of providing TA to build state and LSS partner capacity to select and implement EBPs within an ITSS framework. A knowledge assessment instrument was developed to collect data on gains in knowledge of the participants as a result of the session. This instrument included items addressing some basic concepts of Implementation Science, as well as, the TAP-IT framework. Of the 29 participants, 18 completed a *pre*- assessment of their knowledge and of those, 10 completed a *post*-assessment. The assessment was comprised of 20 items including multiple choice and true/false options. Knowledge scores were calculated based on the number of correct answers divided by total possible ($x \div 20$) and a percentage score calculated by multiplying the result by 100. For the 18 completing the pre-assessment, the average knowledge across all the items was 62%, with individual scores ranging from 25% to 85%. The analysis focused on the 10 who completed both the pre- and the post- assessments and provides more detail as to the gains in knowledge. For this group, there was an overall gain in knowledge of 1.5% (*pre*: 70% to *post*: 71.5%). While three (3) respondents' knowledge scores decreased, five (5) had gains in knowledge ranging from 5% to 15%. Two (2) of the respondents had no gain in knowledge from *pre* to *post*. Because not all of the participants completed the post-assessment, we use these results cautiously. In addition, the instrument itself was created for this specific session and was not one that had been implemented previously to ensure it was

on target for assessing the key elements that participants should have knowledge of for these topics. For that reason, we are not necessarily using this as a baseline for the measure of knowledge gain and will refine the instruments and method of collection to ensure we have sufficient and consistent data to report this measure. This pre/post data collection provided critical information about how we might develop and administer a knowledge assessment to ensure we have accurate data from which to make decisions about supporting specific knowledge and skill development.

c. *Description of baseline data for key measures* - During Year 1, while MSDE conducted an analysis of the *pre* and *post* knowledge assessments regarding the professional learning session on Implementation Science and Data-Informed Decision Making, the results do not provide enough information to use them as the baseline for future implementation. We were able to test the instrumentation and the data collection method to know that changes will be necessary. We have plans to develop consistent data collection instrumentation across all of the areas for which we assess knowledge gain so that the results are reliable and can lead to decision-making based on those results.

   In the area of implementation of EBP, fidelity checks were conducted for the implementation of TAP-IT, TBCI, and SCL. It was not the first year of implementation at the sites, so the data collected during Year 1 was not baseline data. With regard to baseline data for the SiMR, a new PARCC baseline of 5% was set for students with disabilities who meet or exceed expectations in grades 3, 4, and 5.

d. *Data collection procedures and associated timelines* - Maryland is using a phased approach for data collection in order to align evaluation measures. As was explained in the introductory narrative, the participating districts were invited to participate in SSIP because of their participation in SPDG, SWIFT, or Bridges. As a result, tools and evaluation measures have not been the same across all districts. For example, three districts are using the TAP-IT Digital Portfolio and its fidelity check, EBP fidelity checks, practice profiles, and coaching satisfaction surveys. However, these tools are not being used in all districts. Our plan is to work with participating districts to ensure the alignment of SSIP evaluation measures. Consequently, we are continuing to work on our data collection procedures and associated timelines. During Year 1, the knowledge assessment on Implementation Science was administered prior to the first day of Systems Coaching training. Implementation data for TAP-IT, TBCI and SCL were collected from two participating SSIP districts. Additional data collected during Year 1 were process data from team meetings. These data (agendas, meeting minutes) are stored in the Indistar database and are accessible to evaluators. With regard to future data collection procedures and associated timelines, MSDE stakeholders in partnership with our external evaluator Evergreen Evaluation & Consulting, Inc. (EEC) will develop a data collection plan.

e. *Sampling procedures* – Maryland has identified pilot schools in all six SSIP LSSs based upon participation in SPDG and SWIFT. Data will be collected from all participating schools in the SSIP LSSs so sampling procedures are not applicable.

f. *Planned data comparisons* – Maryland will use student results change over time. Baseline and targets have been established to measure improvements in mathematics proficiency. The targets will measure whether student results changed over time in the targeted grade levels in the schools in the six LSSs. Formative assessments will also be used to monitor progress.

g. *How data management and data analysis procedures allow for assessment of progress toward achieving intended improvements* – Data are managed through Indistar, a web-based system used by the Division Implementation Team. This system has been customized to reflect our Phase II SSIP Action/Implementation Plan, listing the four implementation strategies and the multiple activities under each strategy. In addition to the strategies and activities already in the SSIP Action/Implementation Plan, the Division Implementation Team identified the tasks needed to accomplish the activities, assigned a team member responsibility for completing the task, and agreed on a date when the task is to be completed. Hence, this process allows us to track and report on implementation progress by guiding the team through a continuous cycle of assessment, planning, implementation, and progress tracking. As a result, the team has a clear focus, assigned responsibilities, and efforts are synchronized. Data aligned to implementation activities (e.g., team formation and training and outputs, knowledge about Implementation Science and implementation of EBPs) are uploaded and stored in this system. Please refer to Table 2 for an explanation as to how these data are analyzed. As explained earlier in section C, data analysis is an ongoing process that allows us to continuously improve professional learning, implementation of evidence-based practices, and data-informed decision-making.

2. How the State has demonstrated progress and made modifications to the SSIP as necessary

During this reporting period, MSDE was in the process of hiring external evaluators. However, MSDE discussed revisions to the logic model to ensure alignment with the Infant Toddler Program logic model where possible (See Appendix A). The evaluation plan will be revised to reflect the changes to the logic model and ensure it includes questions, methods, and measures that will help assess the progress toward desired outcomes. As discussed in the introduction of this report, during Year 1 of SSIP implementation, there was limited data to review. This is due to the lack of consistency across evaluation measures. However, the structures (teams) are in place for regular reviews and decision-making as data are collected and analyzed. To ensure that the evaluation plan is operationalized, the external evaluators will be developing a Data Collection Schedule that will outline the timing, sources, and instrumentation for each of the key measures during Year 2.

3. Stakeholder involvement in the SSIP evaluation

a. *How stakeholders have been informed of the ongoing evaluation of the SSIP*
As part of the pre-implementation process, members of the Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services presented to internal and external stakeholders to keep them informed about the SSIP implementation plan (Phase II). During these meetings, stakeholders were asked for feedback on implementation and evaluation plans and this feedback was brought to the B-21 Leadership Core Planning Team for consideration. During Year 1, there were ten external stakeholder meetings held (see page 23). In addition, internal stakeholders, that is, the B-21 Core Planning Team met monthly and the Division Implementation Team began meeting on a monthly basis.

b. *How stakeholders have had a voice and been involved in decision-making regarding the ongoing evaluation of the SSIP*
We anticipate that there will be changes to evaluation measures as we go through an alignment process between Part C and B and among Part B SSIP districts. These changes will be discussed with both internal and external stakeholders. For example, one proposed change is to use the District Capacity Assessment (DCA) developed by SISEP. Currently, two districts are using this assessment. The Division Implementation Team believes that this assessment is a good measure for assessing how well the district is supporting the use of effective innovations. We plan on proposing this change to the LSS Implementation Team members. In addition, our new SSIP Coordinator will be developing a communication plan and one of the goals is to enable two-way communication around SSIP progress that will be based on evaluation results.

D. Data Quality Issues

The initial administration of the knowledge assessment instruments assisted us in determining that there is a need to make the instrumentation consistent across all of the professional learning we conduct. In this way, we will have a systematic way of assessing where MSDE needs to focus efforts to ensure State staff and LSS partners have the necessary skills to implement EPBs with fidelity. Also, the need to ensure data collection methods that support higher response rates to the assessments is an area on which we will work as we develop the Data Collection Plan and instruments for the next year.

Overall, there has been limited data at this point because of a phased approach for data collection. During Year 1, the data collected has been related to implementation outputs. This data does not allow us to make a comprehensive assessment of progress toward achieving the SiMR. In the future, we plan to provide a detailed description of the data collection schedule, which will outline the timing, sources, and instrumentation for each of the key measures.

E. Progress toward Achieving Intended Improvements

1. Assessment of progress toward achieving intended improvements

Preliminary data on progress of accomplishing intended outputs and short-term outcomes indicate that the MD SSIP is on the right path. Following is a description of the progress made in Year 1 (July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016).

a. Infrastructure changes that support SSIP initiatives, including how system changes support achievement of the SIMR, sustainability, and scale-up.

During Year 1, we formed the teams needed for implementation of the SSIP implementation (State Executive leadership team, Core Planning Team-Part B & C, Division Implementation Team, and LSS Implementation Teams) and began to conduct regular meetings with these teams. Resources and tools (podcasts and the Digital Portfolio) were developed for the TAP-IT process. An Online Learning Event (OLE) was developed to provide an overview of Implementation Science. Systems Coaching training began for 17 State staff and 12 LSS leaders which will increase fluency with Implementation Science and increase foundation skills for active implementation e.g., getting and giving information, connecting through rationales, developing and maintaining relationships, maximizing feedback, conceptual frameworks, and addressing adaptive challenges. An IHE was identified to develop the Parent-Teacher Partnership modules. The Division Implementation Team began working on the description of the Division's technical assistance system.

We believe, as illustrated in our Theory of Action, that Maryland's infrastructure changes will break down organizational silos through the formation of cross-functional teams that work collaboratively (see Governance and Accountability/Monitoring), and that the provision of professional learning and technical assistance on Systems Coaching, Implementation Science, and data-informed decision making will increase the State's and local school system's capacity to provide the supports needed to implement, sustain, and scale-up EBP with fidelity which relates back to the State and local capacity outcomes Maryland identified in its Logic Model:

- *State Capacity: Infrastructure established to deliver ongoing support to LSS to implement EBP with fidelity*.
- *LSS Capacity*: LSS infrastructure developed or refined to implement, sustain and scale-up EBP.

b. Evidence that SSIP's evidence-based practices are being carried out with fidelity and having the desired effects. During Year 1, two of the SSIP districts implemented Tier I evidence-based practice Team Based Cycle of Instruction and Structured Cooperative Learning. The implementation target was: 65% of participating teachers will score at least 80% of fidelity of implementation using the Maryland SPDG Fidelity Assessment: Teacher Level. Of the teachers observed, 61% scored at least 80% fidelity of implementation representing a significant increase

from the 25% of teachers who implemented with fidelity during the first year of implementation. With regard to student performance, the 2015 PARCC assessment results provided only baseline data. For students receiving Tier II or III interventions, the intervention resources such as Number Worlds are used. In the second district, they too administer SLO tests to measure growth and the Scholastic Math Inventory. In addition, both districts used the fidelity check to assess fidelity of implementation of the TAP-IT process and a fidelity check for the mathematics coach. In the SWIFT districts, the District Capacity Assessment was administered to measure district capacity and the FIT was administered to measure fidelity of implementation of the SWIFT components. The Bridges project primarily collected student outcomes data. As explained in the introduction, evaluation measures across districts are different and this is something that will be addressed during Year 2 of implementation.

c. *Outcomes regarding progress toward short-term objectives that are necessary steps toward achieving the SIMR.* Progress towards Maryland's SSIP short-term objectives answers the following questions Table 3:

- Did we increase collaboration and communication across Divisions and stakeholders?
- Did we provide high quality professional development and coaching?
- Did Local School System partners learn:
    - Systems Coaching;
    - How to provide high quality, Culturally Responsive tiered math instruction within the MTSS Framework;
    - How to engage families in data based discussions?

Table 3. SSIP Part B Year 1 progress toward short-term and medium-term objectives.

Short Term Objectives	Medium Term Objectives	Year 1 Progress
Increased level of State-local communication and collaboration	State Capacity – Infrastructure established to deliver ongoing support to LSS to implement EBP with fidelity; LSS Capacity – LSS infrastructure developed or refined to implement, sustain & scale-up EBP; School Implementation – EBP implemented in classrooms with fidelity; implementation of math MTSS with fidelity, Families are engaged in data-based discussions; standards based grade-level IEP goals	Each of the following teams were formed and met during Year 1: State Executive Leadership Team SSIP B-21 Core Planning Team Division Implementation Team LSS Implementation Teams
Quality professional development and coaching provided by content experts and by State and local coaches at established thresholds.		Systems Coaching training began for (17) MSDE staff and (12) LSS staff. Barbara Sims of SISEP conducted this training. Completed a training plan for LSS Systems Coaches in TAP-IT and stage-based implementation of evidence-based practices.

Short Term Objectives	Medium Term Objectives	• Year 1 Progress
LSS demonstrates knowledge and skills necessary to implement MTSS: • Systems Coaching • High quality, culturally responsive tier I math instruction within a MTSS Framework		• Baseline data collected for knowledge assessment on Implementation Science • Two districts implemented Tier 1 strategies - TBCI and Structured Cooperative Learning in two participating LSSs. A third LSS began exploring Dr. Tapper's Main Lesson-Menu Lesson and CRA Assessment as a possible math strategy to implement • Mathematics Proficiency through Specialized Instruction professional learning provided to SSIP Districts as part of the December 2015 Professional Learning Institute
• Family engagement through parent-teacher partnerships • Writing standards-based IEP goals		• An RFP was disseminated to IHEs for development of training modules • High Quality IEP modules were developed in partnership with CTE. Module topics included – Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance, Standards-aligned goals and objectives, Specially Designed Instruction, & family engagement; High-quality IEP Reflection Tool Version 1.0 was developed and distributed to all SSIP districts

d. Measurable improvements in the SiMR in relation to targets. Year 1 was the first year to implement the activities in the MD SSIP Action Plan. It was a year of getting infrastructure improvements in place and building relationships with the SSIP LSSs. Measuring improvement on the SiMR, which is a long term goal/outcome, will take time before measurable improvement occurs both because of the stage of implementation and the change in the summative assessment measuring mathematics proficiency. The Year 1 measurements rely on demonstrating progress through measurement of the outputs.

F. Plans for Next Year

1. Additional activities to be implemented next year - Maryland is planning on providing training and support to Local School Systems and developing a technical assistance manual. Table 4 describes the activities planned for the following year including activities, LSSs, and the timeline for implementation:

Table 4. SSIP Part B implementation plans for year 2.

Additional Activities	Timeline
Development of Parent-Teacher Partnership modules and field testing of modules	October 2016 – June 2017
Implementation of Dr. Tapper's Main Lesson-Menu Lesson and CRA Assessment and the development of Usable Strategies document and Fidelity Checks	August 2016 – June 2017
TAP-IT Digital Portfolio training	Seminar September 2016 Monthly Coaches Clinics October 2016 – June 2017
Scaling-up implementation of TAP-IT Digital Portfolio	January 2017 – June 2017
Conduct three face-3-face meetings with the LSS Implementation Teams from Participating LSS	January 18, 2017 March 2, 2017 May 10, 2017
Development of a manual describing DSE/EIS Technical Assistance System which includes the following components: Differentiated Framework for Performance Support, TA Protocol consisting of action steps needed to begin TA process, TAP-IT Digital Portfolio, Systems Coaching, and Evaluation	August 2016 through June 2017
Develop a description of Local School System technical assistance in partnership with LSS Implementation Teams	January 2017 – June 2017
Develop a digital Version 2 of the High-Quality IEP Reflection Tool	September 2016-June 2017
Provide access to the High Quality IEP modules on Maryland Learning Links and training for LSSs	November 2016-June 2017

2. The Part B SSIP Evaluation Plan has been revised to reflect the changes to the logic model (See Appendix A). Planned evaluation activities including – data collection, measures, and expected outcomes – will be conducted in the coming months. Data collection during Year 1 reflected a need for greater consistency with the evaluation measures being used across SSIP districts. As part of our proposed changes, in Year 2, we anticipate that there will be more coherence across the districts. For example, all districts will use a fidelity check to measure fidelity of implementation for the selected evidence-based Tier I, II, III practices, for the mathematics coach and the TAP-IT data-informed decision making process; the District Capacity Assessment (DCA) will be administered to all SSIP districts to measure their capacity to implement evidence-based practices with fidelity; and all districts will be surveyed about the effectiveness of coaching services and quality of professional development. The external evaluators will work with the SSIP B-21 Core Planning Team to develop a detailed Data Collection Schedule to guide evaluation activities for the year. As this is finalized, they will

develop, pilot, and refine necessary instrumentation required for each of the measures. The evaluators will also outline the timelines for regular reporting to align with key milestones and allow for timely decision making regarding SSIP implementation.

3. *Anticipated barriers and steps to address those barriers* – it is critical as other strategic priorities within the department move forward, that consideration be given to how the work integrates and aligns with the MD Part B SSIP. MSDE DSE/EIS anticipates two barriers that will need to be addressed throughout the SSIP work. One barrier is the leadership turnover at the state, district, and school level. The implementation team structure that we have included as a part of the infrastructure work will reduce the impact of leadership turnover at all levels (state, district, school). If we ensure that implementation teams are working as high-performing teams, which is the T in the TAP-IT process, membership changes will minimally impact the overall work of the team because the team will consist of members who know the innovations and have been a part of the implementation process.

Personnel changes at the classroom level are an additional barrier that can be anticipated. Examples of personnel changes include teachers being moved to different grade levels or new teachers being hired. In order to reduce this barrier DSE/EIS will ensure that professional development materials and resources are available through an online format and replicable. This strategy will enable district level teams to provide ongoing professional development to new staff over time.

4. *The State describes any needs for additional support and/or technical assistance* - Maryland is planning to continue with the support from the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) for development of the DSE/EIS Technical Assistance System Manual. We will also remain part of the Math Collaborative.