

## MARYLAND

### Part B State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) Phase II

#### Introduction

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (Division) in consultation with internal and external stakeholders identified the State Identified Measurable Result (**SiMR**) as increasing the mathematics proficiency of students with disabilities in grades 3-5 in six Local School Systems (LSSs).

Maryland's **Theory of Action** for 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

### Maryland School Age: Theory of Action *Part B SSIP*

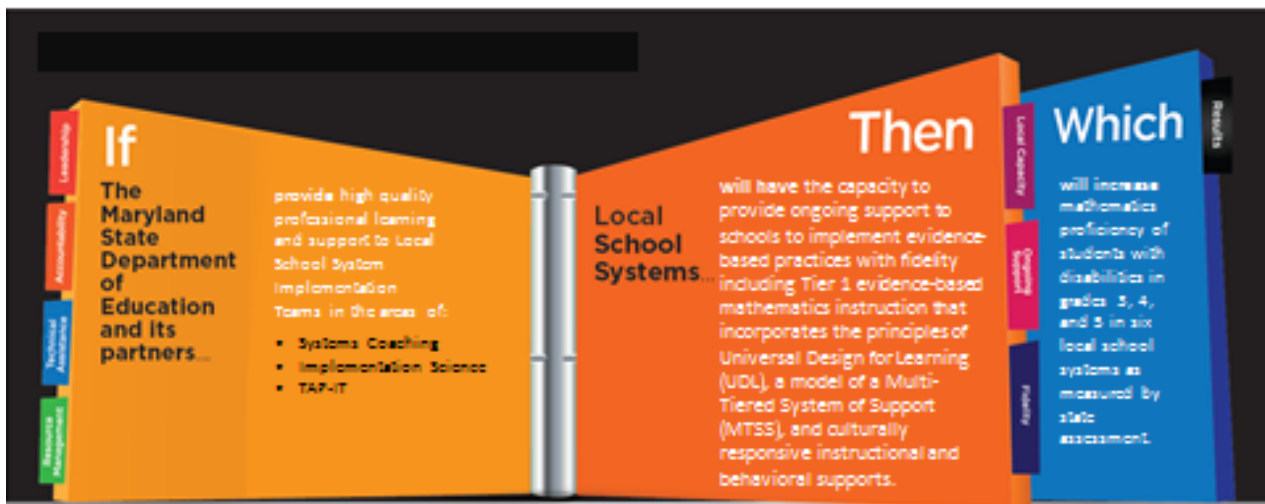


Figure 1: Maryland School Age; Theory of Action

capacity to provide ongoing support to schools to implement evidence-based practices with fidelity including Tier 1 evidence-based mathematics instruction that incorporates the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), a model of a Multi-Tiered System of Support, and culturally responsive instructional and behavioral supports. 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 as measured by state assessment.

The statewide assessment results for years prior to instituting the Partnership Assessment for Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment showed a pattern of decreasing math proficiency as students grow older. A pattern that can also be noted in the 2015 PARCC Assessment results reported in Table 1.

Table 1: PARCC Performance Results

<b>PARCC Performance Results</b>				
	<b>% Met/Exceeded Standards Statewide (Proficiency Levels 4,5)</b>			
	<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>Total Gr 3,4,5</b>
<b>All Students</b>	36%	31%	30%	32%
<b>Special Education</b>	11%	6%	5%	7%

The targets projected in Phase 1 were based on the data from the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) which is no longer used. Based on the baseline PARCC Assessment data, new projected targets are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Projected Targets

<b>Projected Targets</b>			
<b>Federal Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Phase 1 Projected Targets</b>	<b>State PARCC baseline and Targets</b>	<b>SSIP LSSs PARCC Baseline and Targets</b>
	Average % Students with Disabilities <b>at or above Proficiency</b> in Grades 3, 4, and 5 BASED ON <b>2014 MARYLAND SCHOOL ASSESSMENT</b>	Average % of Students with Disabilities who <b>Met or Exceeded Expectations</b> in Grades 3, 4, and 5 BASED ON <b>2015 PARCC ASSESSMENT</b>	Average % of Students with Disabilities who <b>Met or Exceeded Expectations</b> in Grades 3, 4, and 5 BASED ON <b>2015 PARCC ASSESSMENT</b>
2013 (Baseline)	<b>35%</b>		
2014	35%		
2015	35%	<b>7% new baseline</b>	<b>5% new baseline</b>
2016		8%	6%
2017		9%	8%
2018		10%	10%

**Infrastructure Analysis in Phase 1:** As a result of conducting iterative Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis by internal and external stakeholders, the Division has identified four infrastructure components – Governance, Data, Professional Development/Technical Assistance, and Accountability/Monitoring – for improvement. Table 3 summarizes stakeholders SWOT input:

*Table 3: SWOT Summary*

<b>SWOT Summary</b>		
	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Opportunities (Areas for Improvement)</b>
<b>Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision and mission of the MSDE and the Division</li> <li>• Only 24 LSSs – easier to engage in dialogue (autonomy)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared staff by overlapping Divisions to work on similar projects/initiatives</li> <li>• Cross Divisional communications</li> </ul>
<b>Fiscal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal and state competitive grant opportunities</li> <li>• Division offers local priority –local use of funds</li> <li>• Fiscal workgroup that uses data to determines through the use of data where money will be spent (stakeholder input)</li> <li>• Shared initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase cross departmental work plans to leverage funds; increase cost sharing – integrate funding</li> <li>• Continue to explore opportunities for braided funding to support services</li> </ul>
<b>Data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data available online – MD Report Card, Mdideareport.org, mdk12.org, Complaints/due process</li> <li>• Longitudinal Accountability Decision Support System (LADSS)</li> <li>• Maryland Online IEP (MOIEP)/Student Services Information System (SSIS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase use of data-informed decision making to prioritize professional learning/technical assistance</li> <li>• Teach parents how to interpret student data</li> <li>• Increase LSS use of local data for decision making</li> </ul>
<b>Quality Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS)</li> <li>• Early Learning Standards aligned with MCCRS</li> <li>• Professional Development Standards</li> <li>• Operating standards across the Division</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guide LSS administrators, school personnel, and general and specialized educators in the implementation of strategies to improve results for all students.</li> <li>• Identify and put into place standards that promote high productivity and teamwork among all staff</li> </ul>
<b>Professional Development/ Technical Assistance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State provides flexible dollars for LSSs to develop and implement specific professional learning</li> <li>• State monitors use of evidence based practices and standards</li> <li>• Shared initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide onsite professional learning/technical assistance to LSSs</li> <li>• Provide resources to LSS leaders, school administrators, and general and specialized educators</li> <li>• Blending resources with aligned State initiatives</li> </ul>

<b>Accountability / Monitoring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong monitoring and accountability protocols</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment of Department accountability and monitoring for student results</li> </ul>
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Based on the SWOT information and an increased emphasis on Results Driven Accountability (RDA), the Division has understood that it must augment its support to Local School Systems and Public Agencies if the performance gap between special education students and their general education peers is to narrow.

The Division is focusing on improving four of its infrastructure components – governance, data, professional development/technical assistance, and accountability/monitoring. Table 4 describes the improvements for each of the four components targeted for improvement:

Table 4: Infrastructure Improvements

<b>Infrastructure Improvements</b>			
<b>Governance</b>	<b>Data</b>	<b>Professional Development/ Technical Assistance</b>	<b>Accountability/ Monitoring</b>
<p>The SSIP Implementation Structure will form the following teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive Leadership Team,</li> <li>• SSIP Core Planning Team,</li> <li>• Cross-Departmental Implementation Team,</li> <li>• Expert Team and</li> <li>• Division Implementation Teams</li> </ul> <p>as a means to provide direction and support for SSIP implementation.</p>	<p>The TAP-IT (Team, Analyze, Plan, Implement, &amp; Track) process will be used by the State to help Local School System Implementation teams (LSS-IT) to form high performing School Implementation Teams (School-IT) focused on using data in a practice to policy feedback loop when implementing evidence-based practices so that any needed adjustments can be made.</p>	<p>Technical Assistance methods will use systems coaching incorporating implementation science and providing ongoing support to local school systems as they build their capacity to develop an implementation infrastructure that enables them to implement Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) with fidelity.</p> <p>Cross-Departmental efforts will be made to align the technical assistance/systems coaching methodology and create a consistent understanding of implementation science in supporting effective practices in local school systems.</p> <p>Maryland will build a Parent-Teacher Partnerships Model adopted from the evidence-based work in the State of Ohio Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) to create undergraduate and graduate level courses focused on changing the attitudes of pre-service and in-service teachers around family engagement.</p> <p>MSDE will work in partnership with Towson University, School of Education to provide a parent engagement course for teachers and leaders in identified schools.</p>	<p>The Division will assign Division staff to cross-functional teams (consisting of monitors and TA providers) that will work together to understand the root causes of identified needs, identify strategies to address them, and provide the technical assistance support to implement selected strategies with fidelity. These teams will provide the programmatic support and technical assistance outlined in the Division’s tiered system for monitoring and technical assistance – the <i>Differentiated Framework: Tiers of General Supervision and Engagement</i>.</p>

In addition to State-level infrastructure improvement efforts, Maryland has identified 5 improvement strategies for Local School Systems. Stakeholders engaged in the SSIP believe these strategies will support improved outcomes for mathematics and more specifically improve mathematics achievement results for students with disabilities:

- (1) Data-informed decision making for continuous improvement using the Team, Analyze, Plan, Implement, Track Process (TAP-IT), and Implementation Science
- (2) Family engagement and partnership to promote family involvement and student success,
- (3) High quality general education mathematics instruction based on principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to increase student engagement and learning,
- (4) Multi-tiered system of support with evidence-based mathematics instruction and interventions to provide tailored instruction for mathematics deficits, and
- (5) Equitable access to the general education curriculum and classroom through culturally responsive interactions and Specially Designed Instruction for students with disabilities within the regular classroom.

Research indicates that many interventions/improvement strategies in education fail due to inadequate implementation (Fixsen, D.L., & Blasé, K.A., 2009; Fixsen, D. L., Blasé, K. A., Duda, M. A., Naoom, S. F., & Van Dyke, M., 20110; Fixsen, D., Blasé, K., Horner, Horner, R., Sugai, G., Sims, B., & Duda, M., 2012). During SSIP Phase II, Division leadership and the SSIP Core Planning Team with our internal stakeholders have reached consensus around the need to select a new overarching improvement strategy that builds system capacity to implement EBPs with fidelity. This strategy, Systems Coaching, focuses on developing the capacity of Local School Systems and Public Agencies to effectively implement a program, practice, or approach to enhance student outcomes. This new improvement strategy was presented and discussed with external stakeholders and they agreed that the state should move forward with its implementation.

As a means of organization we have grouped Phase 1 improvement strategies (data-informed decision making (TAP-IT), implementation science, family engagement, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), multi-tiered system of support (MTSS), culturally responsive teaching and Specially Designed Instruction) into two categories – strategies that directly impact **system practices** around implementation of evidence-based strategies, i.e., TAP-IT and implementation science, and strategies that impact **classroom/school practices**, i.e., instruction, positive behavior supports , and family engagement.

The Division’s technical assistance strategy used with the SSIP is Systems Coaching, that is, the State will provide TAP-IT and implementation science training and coaching support to each LSS-IT as they select, implement, scale-up and sustain EB **classroom/school** practices. For example, specific mathematics practices will be identified by implementation teams at the local

and school levels as part of the analysis step of TAP-IT. Teams will be guided to use resources compiled on the NCIS math collaborative site for the selection of mathematics strategies matched to the identified needs of their students. In addition three teams (Core Planning, Expert, and Cross-Departmental Teams) from the SSIP Implementation Structure (see Figure 3: Implementation Structure) will provide collaborative support to LSSs in evidence-based practices.

### **Phase-II Component #1: Infrastructure Development**

*1(a) Specify improvements that will be made to the State infrastructure to better support LEAs to implement and scale up EBPs to improve results for children with disabilities.*

Maryland identified four areas for infrastructure improvement – governance, data, professional development/technical assistance, and accountability/monitoring. The following description (*Figure 2*) illustrates specific changes Maryland has made to its State and Division infrastructure to support the implementation of evidence-based practices identified as a result of the SSIP processes.

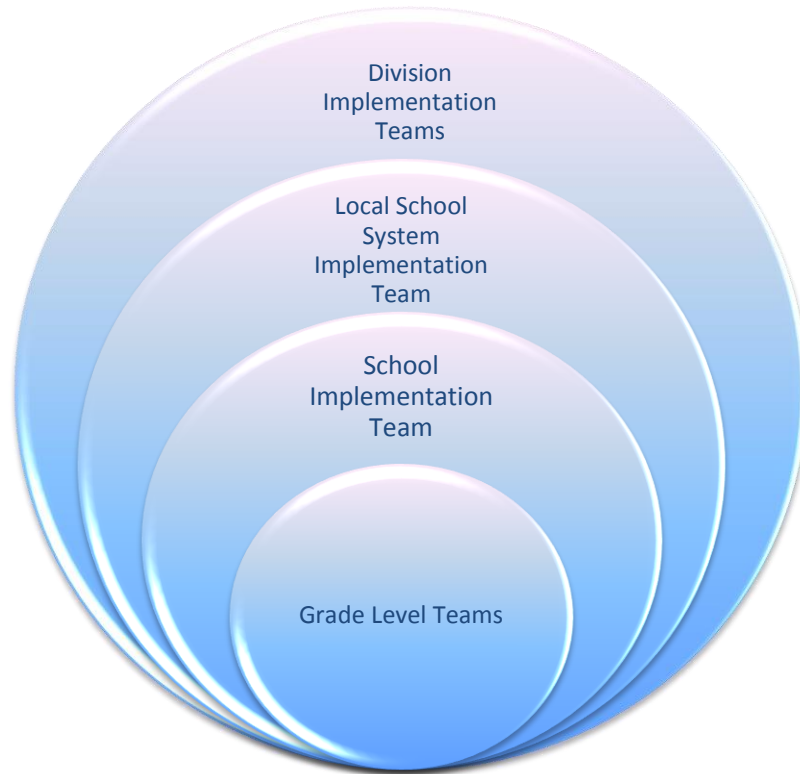
In an effort to improve cross-departmental collaboration and communication within MSDE and external stakeholders, the Core Planning Team proposed a structure for SSIP implementation. This structure is designed to engage both Internal and External Stakeholders. Internal Stakeholders, that is, the State Executive Leadership Team, SSIP Core Planning Team, Cross-Departmental Implementation Team and Expert Team are comprised of personnel from across the department. This engagement will optimistically help to build coherence around the State’s technical assistance and performance support infrastructure across Departments within MSDE. External Stakeholders (Advisory Groups) who provided input during SSIP planning will have an ongoing role during implementation.

The Division of Special Education/ Early Intervention Services (Division) has five branches – Policy and Accountability, Performance Support and Technical Assistance, Family Support and Dispute Resolution, Interagency Collaboration, and Resource Management. Historically, Division personnel have worked in a limited way across branches. The Division has reorganized its staff in an effort to improve its continuing role of accountability and monitoring and to augment its performance support and technical assistance. The Division is committed to building and sustaining an integrated organizational structure that provides ongoing connections to Divisions across the MSDE and with strategic partners. *A Collaborative Matrix Organizational Structure* is defined in the *Division Strategic Plan: Moving Maryland Forward* that is intended to integrate knowledge and skills for improvement of compliance and results, and ensured consistent communication within the Division, throughout MSDE and with external partners.

In support of the intent of the matrix, the Division has created cross-functional teams comprised of monitors and technical assistance providers with established access to experts in assessment, family engagement, general education content, and behavioral specialists. These cross-functional teams are known as Division Implementation Teams (D-IT). Their primary responsibility is to build the capacity of local leaders to collect data to identify needs in relation to LSS/PA APR findings, work in partnership with locals to determine the root causes and then to provide technical assistance support to local school systems as they support schools in the implementation of selected strategies.

To align the role and function of the D-IT when working with SSIP districts, the frequency of support for SSIP LSSs has been aligned to the Division of Special Education/ Early Intervention Services *Differentiated Framework: Tiers of General Supervision and Engagement*. The frequency of support from the State to local leaders is determined by the Division *Differentiated Framework: Tiers of General Supervision and Engagement*. It should be noted that the State's technical assistance for the six SSIP districts is not contingent on the *Differentiated Framework: Tiers of General Supervision and Engagement*. What is described here is meant to illustrate the changes the Division has made to its infrastructure as a result of the SSIP process.

Participating SSIP local systems are currently partnering with the Division in the design, implementation and evaluation of a Local Priority Flexibility Grant (LPF) and one of three intensive programmatic projects: the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG), Schoolwide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT), or a State designed grant to support systems change at a local level called Bridges for Systems Change (Bridges) in each of these projects there is a coaching/liaison relationship established with Division staff and local school system leadership. In addition, the Division and each of its SSIP local school systems have already established implementation teams (see Figure 2).



*Figure 2: Team Development*

The Division has developed a protocol and timeline for technical assistance activities aligned to the *Differentiated Framework for Technical Assistance: Tiers of Engagement* (Universal, Targeted, Focused, and Intensive). Locals are assigned to the Tiers annually based on the IDEA State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR). The Framework describes and defines how the State interacts with locals in the delivery of technical assistance. As the Phase II of the SSIP was under development it was apparent to the SSIP Core Planning Team and the Division leadership that it would be critical create implementation teams across all levels of the system for the successful implementation of the SSIP and the achievement of the SiMR.

In preparation for SSIP implementation, each Local School System/Public Agency, which includes the six SSIP systems, has been assigned to a newly configured Division Implementation Team (D-IT). As a way to build a sustainable structure for Division support to Local School Systems and to integrate the work of current improvement initiatives the SSIP technical assistance support will employ the *Differentiated Framework for Technical Assistance: Tiers of Engagement* structure and language. The support given by the Division to all six SSIP local systems will follow the *Focused* support level with some adaptations to frequency as needed. The contact between the Division Implementation Team (D-IT) and the local SSIP implementation team (LSS-IT) will include bi-monthly check-in with additional F-2-F meetings as



needed, Quarterly TAP-IT meetings (3 cycles per school year), and additional professional learning opportunities directly related to implementation of the EBPs that will include work across the LSSs in mathematics.

*Specific improvement activities that the State (Division Implementation Team) will use to improve the State infrastructure and how will those activities improve the State’s ability to support LEAs?*

The specific improvement strategies the Division will use to improve its infrastructure are related to the **data** and **professional development/technical assistance infrastructure** components. **TAP-IT and Systems Coaching** are the improvement activities that D-IT will use to help local school systems use data more effectively and to build their organizational capacity to implement EBP with fidelity.

TAP-IT has been embedded into Division Technical Assistance protocol. TAP-IT stands for Team, Analyze, Plan, Implement, and Track. It is the Division’s continuous improvement process that ensures the formation of a high performance team who uses data along with specific protocols and tools (e.g., Digital Portfolio for Coaching) to: analyze the root cause of the problem, select an Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) to address the identified need, and oversee the implementation of the selected strategy. Through our SPDG project, Division staff in the Performance Support and Technical Assistance Branch has been trained by experts in the field on TAP-IT and Implementation Science. They, in turn, will provide training to other members of the Division’s Implementation Teams in order to increase their capacity to use these improvement strategies to actively support local school systems as they support schools with the implementation of EBP.

The following table describes the differentiated framework protocol for technical assistance and the projected minimum amount of time that the Division will meet with all jurisdictions assigned to each of the tiers. LSSs who are engaged in the SSIP will have a frequency of support as would an identified **Focused jurisdiction** (shaded in table 5). Changes that will be implemented as part of SSIP to the Division’s technical assistance in each tier of engagement are added to the table in italics.

*Table 5: Differentiated Framework for Tiers of Engagement*

<b>Differentiated Framework for Tiers of Engagement</b>		
<b>TIER</b>	<b>TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>
Universal	In this tier of engagement the Maryland State Department of Education Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (MSDE: Division) provides technical assistance through the development of tools, resources and professional learning opportunities that addresses Statewide needs based on overall State trend data, e.g., performance on State Performance Plan indicators, child outcomes, and student achievement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-<i>Quarterly Professional Learning Institute (PLI)</i></li> <li>-<i>Webinars, phone conferences</i></li> <li>-<i>Ongoing relationship building</i></li> </ul>

Targeted	In this tier the technical assistance focus is on providing ongoing support to LSS/PAs in order to address a specific need identified through monitoring and APR indicators. The LSS/PA leadership will be required to collaborate with the Division to review multiple sources of data in order to (1) isolate the root causes(s) of an identified need, (2) select strategies to address it, and (3) develop an <u>Improvement Plan</u> .	- <i>Monthly Check-In (format optional)</i> - <i>Face-2-Face meetings as needed in addition to monthly check-in</i> - <i>Quarterly TAP-IT Meetings (3 per school year)</i>
<b>Focused*</b>  <i>*All six SSIP LSSs will be supported with Focused Tier Intensity.</i>	<p>When a local jurisdiction receives a <i>Focused</i> designation, the State Superintendent and the Assistant State Superintendent will contact the local School Superintendent to advise local leadership of a need to meet together with cross-departmental, cross-Divisional State and local leaders. The LSS/PA leadership is also required to participate in a quarterly joint State and local Focused Intervention and Accountability Team (FIAT) to review progress. The MSDE may direct federal or State funds.</p> <p>The technical assistance provided in this tier is focused on providing substantial support to LSS/PA in order to address <u>multiple</u> needs identified through monitoring and APR indicators. Substantial support will necessitate a higher frequency of contact between the State and a local jurisdiction in order to take a critical look as to why the LSS/PA has continuously been unable to improve results. The LSS/PA leadership (including the Superintendent) will be required to collaborate with the Division to review multiple sources of data in order to (1) isolate the root causes(s) of an identified need, (2) select strategies to address it, and (3) develop an <u>Improvement Plan</u>.</p> <p><i>*SSIP LSSs will identify a Local School System Implementation Team who will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the SSIP EBPs and will use the TAP-IT process to create a data feedback loop to inform decision making. The identified Systems Coach will be a member of the Local School System Implementation Team. This team will meet with MSDE Systems Coaches quarterly to review both adult practice and student learning data and determine adjustments to the implementation plan based on the information analyzed. The LSS at a minimum will complete three (3) TAP-IT cycles per school year. The MSDE Systems Coach will guide the development of the LSS implementation plan provide direct ongoing technical assistance, act as a broker to State resources, and participate in on-going assessment and evaluation of LSS-IT actions to support the implementation of the EBPs in the schools. Professional learning to address the identified needs and interventions will be supported.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-<i>Bi-monthly Check-In (one of these meetings should be Face-2-Face)</i></li> <li>-<i>Additional Face-2-Face meetings as needed</i></li> <li>-<i>Quarterly TAP-IT meetings (3 cycles per school year)</i></li> <li>-<i>Targeted professional learning on an as needed basis</i></li> </ul>
Intensive	Formal, collaborative agreement between the State and LSS Superintendent to guide improvement and correction, with onsite supervision and sanctions (sanctions may include direction, recovery, or withholding of funds).	

The *Differentiated Framework for Tiers of Engagement* reflects the role and responsibilities of the Division Implementation Teams (D-IT) which embodies the Systems Coaching strategy which is how the Division will increase the LSSs organizational capacity to implement EBPs with fidelity. The Division Implementation Team members serve two distinct roles, Systems Coach and Monitor. The following table outlines the roles and responsibilities of the cross-functional Division Implementation Team members:

*Table 6: Roles and Responsibilities of Division Implementation Teams (DI-T)*

<b>Roles and Responsibilities of Division Implementation Teams (DI-T)</b>
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ROLES	RESPONSIBILITIES
Systems Coach	<p>Team Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a relationship with the LSS team</li> <li>• Facilitate the development of an Implementation Team at the LSS level</li> <li>• Use the “UNITED” protocol (6 high performing teaming principles) to build a high performing team</li> <li>• Facilitate a team based project management process</li> </ul> <p>Engagement and Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship development</li> <li>• Supporting behavior changes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Build relationships</li> <li>○ Listen carefully</li> <li>○ Understand perspectives</li> <li>○ Affirm strength</li> <li>○ Build trust</li> <li>○ Manage distress</li> <li>○ Resolve conflicts</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Change Facilitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation facilitation</li> <li>• Intervention development</li> <li>• Systems Coaching</li> </ul> <p>Discovery and Diagnosis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TAP-IT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Diagnose and strategically analyze data</li> <li>○ Data-informed decision making</li> <li>○ Action Plan for impact</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of APR data to determine which LSS has not met individual Indicators</li> <li>• Require LSS who has not met an Indicator to develop an improvement plan related to the Indicator</li> <li>• Monitor the progress the LSS is making in implementing the improvement plan</li> <li>• Collaborative with TA providers as appropriate</li> </ul>

*These changes to the Division’s technical assistance infrastructure will support Local School Systems with the implementation of coherent improvement strategies and activities in a sustainable manner* because each LSS will have a designated implementation team (LSS-IT) at the district level focused on providing the ongoing support at the school level that is needed to implement an EBP with fidelity. Two members of the LSS-IT will be selected to receive training in Systems Coaching in order to become competent in four essential functions: engagement and collaboration, team development, discovery and diagnosis, and change facilitation. In addition, strategically selected partners from the Maryland Coalition of Inclusive Education (MCIE), the Johns Hopkins University, Center for Technology in Education (JHU/CTE), Parents Place of Maryland (PPMD), and strategically selected Institutes of Higher Education will be invited to participate in the Systems Coaching training and ongoing support to provide opportunities for a shared experience, dialogue on the effectiveness of the coaching model, and the scaling up of the practice. Selection criteria for Systems Coaches include: a special educator familiar/fluent with MTSS, UDL, CRT, and specially designed mathematics instruction,

a general educator fluent in the Standards of Mathematical Practice, Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards for mathematics, differentiated instruction, and formative assessment. In addition, both must be willing to commit the time needed to attend TAP-IT meetings, LSS-IT meetings, school implementation team meetings and briefing sessions with principals and leadership. TAP-IT will be embedded into the discovery and diagnosis function of systems coaching as LSS systems coaches will also be responsible for establishing routines for TAP-IT meetings thereby promoting a practice-to-policy data feedback loop to assess implementation progress and implementation barriers so any needed adjustments can be made.

*1(b) Identify the steps the State will take to further align and leverage current improvement plans and initiatives in the State, including general and special education, which impact children with disabilities.*

With regard to current improvement plans, each LSS/PA in Maryland is required to submit a Master Plan to the MSDE. The Master Plan is a local level improvement plan organized around the four ESEA Flexibility assurance areas: Standards and Assessments, Data Systems to Support Instruction, Great Teachers and Leaders, and Turning-Around Lowest Performing Schools. Currently, Master Plans are reviewed by a State team consisting of general and special educators thereby ensuring that members of the D-ITs are part of the review teams for approval of the plans. In the case of LSSs participating in SSIP, their plans will undergo a further review by their assigned D-IT in order to ensure that SSIP EBP are either aligned with or integrated into current local improvement initiatives.

The selection of Local School Systems (LSS) to participate in SSIP was based on their participation in current initiatives LPF, SWIFT, SPDG and Bridges for Systems Change within the Division which has readied them for SSIP activities. The first initiative is the Division's Local Priority Flexibility Plan (LPF). All LSSs are participants in this initiative and have been guided through the TAP-IT Process to identify a need related directly to narrowing the gap for students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers, research promising/evidence-based practices, and propose innovative solutions for LPF funding provided through the Division. In addition, the SSIP LSSs have participated in two federal grants managed by the Division – SPDG and the School-wide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT). Both of these initiatives have established LSS implementation teams who have used the active implementation frameworks (Usable Interventions, Implementation Stages, Implementation Drivers, Implementation Teams, and Improvement Cycles) and are organized around an implementation plan that identifies implementation and performance measures. The Division sees these initiatives as useful preparation for the implementation of SSIP.

The Maryland Race to the Top initiatives included significant cross-departmental work. The SSIP implementation structure that is defined and detailed in Phase II is a direct result of building on the successes and learning from the challenges of State-scale cross-departmental work in support of selected local schools and systems. A critical learning from this work was that the State/Division is most effective when it works to increase the capacity of the LSS to work with their schools and classrooms to change practice. The approach of providing support from the State/Division to LSS to School is also reflected in the work of the Division's initiatives: SPDG<sup>1</sup>, SWIFT<sup>2</sup> and a two-year Division grant entitled Bridges for Systems Change<sup>3</sup>. Finally, Maryland has Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Regulations and through its *Tiers of Engagement*: Universal Tier of Support, The Division has promoted an enhanced understanding of how MTSS can be used to include students with disabilities and provide them the intensive instruction and interventions that are needed based on performance data. Collaboration to support implementation of MTSS with fidelity will be continued through conversations at the State and local levels.

Improvement plans currently employed by the MSDE and locals that will further aligned and leveraged to support SSIP implementation have been identified to include:

- **Master Plans:** Each LSS/PA in Maryland is required to submit a Master Plan to the MSDE. The Master Plan is a district level improvement plan organized around the four ESEA Flexibility assurance areas: Standards and Assessments, Data Systems to Support Instruction, Great Teachers and Leaders, and Turning-Around Lowest

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<sup>1</sup>The Maryland SPDG is focused on instructional improvement. This work has built the Division's capacity to support local school systems as they implement evidence-based practices with fidelity. It has also increased our ability to successfully build effective partnerships with external organizations. In the case of SPDG, we have partnered with the Parents Place of Maryland and Johns Hopkins University's Center for Technology in Education. These partnerships have helped us develop training resources that can be used with practitioners to increase their knowledge about data-informed decision making and EBP for Tier 1 mathematics instruction.

<sup>2</sup> Maryland is a School-wide Integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT) State. The structures, tools and processes for fully implementing the work of SWIFT are being embraced by participating LSSs and the MSDE. The SWIFT Center focuses on improving the knowledge and skills of classroom educators to implement inclusive school-wide reform; increasing the capacity of schools to implement fully inclusive reform in academic, extracurricular, and school-based settings; and increasing family and community engagement in school-wide reform. The SWIFT Center offers schools, districts, and States the ability to build capacity to scale up and sustain new practices for school-wide inclusive reform in urban, rural, and high-need schools in grades K-8 for students with disabilities.

<sup>3</sup> The Bridges for Systems Change work was designed to reflect the structures and processes of SWIFT and SPDG in partnership with a LSS to provide support for systemic change in conjunction with the MSDE, we have learned a great deal about supporting local school system implementation, data collection and analysis that will inform the SSIP efforts. The design of Phase II, and the collaborative structure between SSIP partner LSSs, facilitated by both general and special education across the SWIFT, SPDG, and Bridges for Systems Change initiatives (each initiative includes family engagement as a critical component) work has built our capacity to ask the right questions and to support local initiatives.

Performing Schools. Currently, Master Plans are reviewed by a state team consisting of general and special educators thereby ensuring that members of the LSS members are part of the review teams for approval of the plans.

- **Race to the Top Sustainability**
  - **Standards and Assessments** (Reading, Math, Science and Reading Proficiency for non-native English speakers)
  - **Data Systems to support instruction**
  - **Great Teachers and Leaders** (Teacher quality, professional development, Safe Schools, and high school graduation)
  - **Turnaround of low performing schools**
  - **Universal Design for Learning (UDL).** All LSSs are required to provide a detailed summary of their progress in implementing curricula that is research-based and designed with UDL principles. Their work addresses instruction, assessment, and professional development Implementation status demonstrated that LSSs were at various levels of implementation, ranging from developing a systemic implementation process, to providing instructional materials, techniques, and strategies, infusing UDL in daily lessons and assessments to help differentiate instruction, to intense professional development for teachers throughout the school year. Some LSSs included reporting training for administrators, and developed partnerships with universities to assist and support the development of curriculum materials, and contracting with the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) to provide support and professional development. Additionally, LSSs provided the designated UDL liaison or UDL committee working closely with teachers and administrators to ensure ongoing and improved processes as they move forward with UDL.
- **Local Priority Flexibility Plan (LPF).** All LSSs have identified an area related to narrowing the gap for students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers, using instructional and intervention practices based on research, and proposing innovative solutions for LPF funding through the DSE/IES.
  - **State Professional Development Grant (SPDG).** This work, in its fourth year, is designed to increase the performance of students with disabilities in grades Pre-K through 6. It is currently being implemented in 2 local school systems with a focus on instructional improvement in math. As a result of this work, MD has developed: (1) the TAP-IT Digital Portfolio which integrates implementation science frameworks into a continuous improvement process, (2) an evidence-based instructional delivery system that integrated UDL, structured cooperative learning, formative assessment

strategies and positive behavior supports into a Team Based Cycle of Instruction (TBCI) which provides effective Tier I instruction for all students but, specifically for students with disabilities, and (3) a strategy to address home/school communication through the creation of a classroom routine where mathematics information is shared with families on a regular basis and provides an opportunity for students to share what they have learned in class. This work includes effective partnerships with the Parents Place of Maryland and the Johns Hopkins University's Center for Technology in Education. These partnerships have helped us develop training resources that can be used with practitioners to increase their knowledge about EBP for Tier 1 mathematics instruction.

- **School-Wide integrated Framework for Transformation (SWIFT).** Maryland is a SWIFT State and uses the SWIFT tools and processes for identifying priorities for transforming schools to be high performing inclusive schools where all students are included in an effective Multi-Tiered System of Support for behavioral and academic performance, and where the organizational structure – including roles and responsibilities of adults – are integrated to enable children with disabilities to be valued and included members of their school community. The SWIFT Center supports capacity building at the state and district level, and implementation for improvement at the school level. Through the SWIFT process, several priorities have been identified within our 16 partner schools; common priorities across school systems include: family engagement, developing a MTSS based on a strong Tier 1 instructional base with Universal Design for Learning principles, advanced Tier (2 and 3) behavior interventions, and high quality inclusive math instruction and interventions.
  
- **The Bridges for Systems Change Grant** is established the Division to serve as a catalyst for supporting an LSS, the Division and their strategic partners in the development of an infrastructure that provides a seamless, coordinated, and comprehensive system of services for Maryland's infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities and their families. This highly competitive grant is awarded to enable local leaders, in collaboration with Division to:
  - Ensure Innovative Leadership
  - Use Active Implementation Science
  - Apply the TAP-IT Data-Informed Decision Making Model
  - Build Capacity for LSS, MSDE, PAs and strategic partners to collaborate in narrowing the gaps
  - Apply Bold Strategies

- Develop a Performance Management System
  - Build Content for Maryland Learning Links
  - Forge Collaborative Partnerships
  - Engage in Strong Family Partnerships
  - Provide Effective Instruction/Intervention
  - Promote Professional Learning of Evidence-Based Practices
  - Develop and Adopt Progressive Policies
  - Support the Application of Technology to Enhance Teaching and Learning
  - Promote and Practice Braiding Funds to Blend Services
- **Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS).** Maryland’s Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Initiative is a collaboration of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Sheppard Pratt Health System, and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Maryland. This partnership, known as PBIS Maryland, is responsible for providing training and technical assistance to the local school systems with the implementation and management of PBIS. Each of the 24 local school systems is a partner in the PBIS Maryland Initiative and provides leadership and coaching to support participating schools within its jurisdiction. In addition, ongoing technical assistance has been consistently provided to Maryland through the National Technical Assistance Center for PBIS.
- **Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS).** In accordance with 34 CFR §300.646, a LSS that is identified as having significant disproportionality based on race and ethnicity with respect to identification of students as having disabilities, placement of these students in particular education settings, and/or disciplinary actions, including suspensions and expulsions, **must** use 15% of their Part B 611 Passthrough and Part B Preschool Passthrough funds for CEIS. A LSS **may** also voluntarily use up to 15% of its IDEA Part B 611 Passthrough and Part B 619 Preschool Passthrough allocation to develop and implement CEIS for students in grades K-12 not identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in the general education environment.
- **Maryland’s ESEA Flexibility Plan**
    - Title 1 Program Improvement and Focus School Grants
    - Title 3 Migrant Education
- **Moving Maryland Forward:** The DSE/IES Strategic Plan. In alignment with the MSDE priorities, the Division leads a seamless integrated system that serves children and



youth with disabilities from birth through 21 and their families. This comprehensive system balances the statutory requirements with equal emphasis on programmatic leadership and innovation to narrow existing gaps. The Division has a bold vision that all students, including students with disabilities, will be ready for school, achieve in school, and be prepared for college, careers, and community living as a result of their participation in Maryland's early intervention and special education programs; and all existing gaps between children with disabilities and that of their nondisabled peers will be narrowed.

*1(c) Identify who will be in charge of implementing the changes to infrastructure, resources needed, expected outcomes, and timelines for completing improvement efforts.*

*Who makes up the team that will identify the infrastructure changes critical to implementation of the plan?*

We have learned from past cross-Divisional efforts and the research of Peter M. Senge and others on systems change that we must engage senior leadership from the onset of any successful innovation. The very nature of Results-Driven Accountability (RDA), the foundation of the SSIP, supports a cross-departmental effort within the MSDE. As shown in Table 7, the SSIP leadership implementation structure will be driven by a **State Executive Leadership Team** comprised of members of the State Superintendent's Executive Team. With bi-annual meetings and regular updates from the **SSIP Core Planning Team**, consisting of Part B and C staff and senior department leadership who will be engaged, informed, and involved in decision-making. In addition, the formation of a **Cross-Departmental Implementation Team**, consisting of staff from the Divisions of Academic Policy and Innovation, Early Childhood Development, Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability, and Student, Family, and School Support Divisions will provide structure so that implementation information is shared across the Divisions at MSDE. The formation of this team structure also enables a collaborative approach to resource allocation. Both the SSIP Core Planning and Cross-Departmental State Implementation Teams will meet regularly to discuss SSIP implementation progress. Finally, essential to accomplishing our SiMR, an **Experts/Ad Hoc Expert Team** (Expert Team) will be formed and will meet on an ad-hoc basis. The Expert Team will consist of special and general education mathematics experts who will secure college, university, and national experts as thought partners and trainers. This team will be charged with identifying trainers for mathematics evidence-based practices, Specially Designed Instruction (SDI), UDL, MTSS, and CRT. They will also be charged with collecting, vetting, and disseminating mathematics resources that support achievement of the SiMR in conjunction with the D-IT to the LSS-IT.

The following graphic (Figure 3) demonstrates the relationship among the Executive Leadership Team, the SSIP Design Team, the Cross-Departmental Implementation Team and the Expert Team their relationship to the implementation teams at the DSE/EIS Divisional, LSS and school levels. It also demonstrates how internal and external stakeholders have ongoing involvement in the process.

### State Systemic Improvement Plan: Maryland Implementation Structure

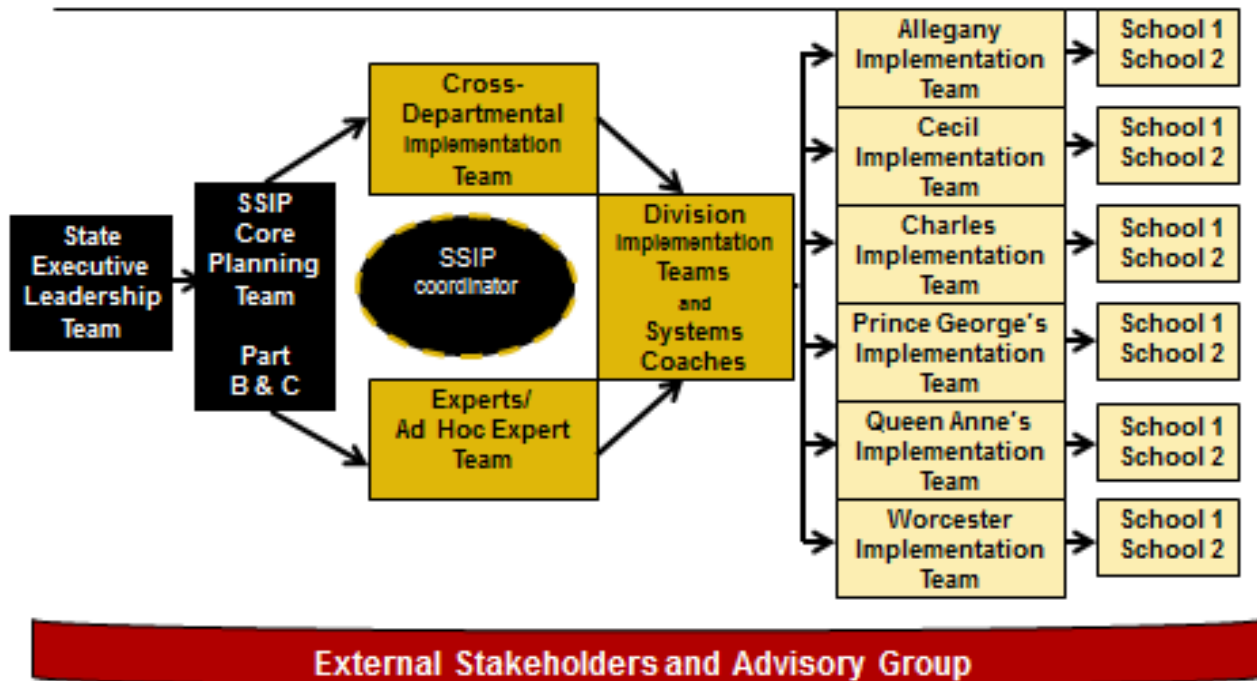


Figure 3: Implementation Structure

The DSE/EIS has a Division Leadership Team (D-LT) who represents the DSE/EIS Division’s Executive Team. While not specifically charged with the implementation of the SSIP, to ensure a direct link to Division leadership, this team will be routinely engaged in the Division SSIP work through two-way communication and discussions around data and the allocation of Division resources. The D-LT consists of the Division’s five Branch Chiefs (*Policy and Accountability, Family Support and Dispute Resolution, Interagency Collaboration, Programmatic Support and Technical Assistance, and Resource Management and Monitoring*). The D-LT lead for SSIP implementation is the Chief for the Performance Support and Technical Assistance Branch, who

reports directly to the Assistant State Superintendent. It was this team that identified the need to form a Division Implementation Team that works collaboratively to link monitoring findings with technical assistance support.

The D-LT in preparation for Phase II of the SSIP, is currently engaged in the following activities: (1) identification of the training needed by Division staff to implement infrastructure changes, e.g., TAP-IT, Implementation Science, and Systems Coaching, (2) formation and selection of Division implementation team members, (3) team assignments to specific LSSs, (4) development of a logistics plan which allocates staff time and other resources to the SSIP LSSs and to LSSs identified in either the Targeted, Focused, or Intensive Differentiated Framework: Tiers of General Supervision and Engagement.

The D-IT consists of staff responsible for compliance and results monitoring, technical assistance provision, and fiscal monitoring and in addition, staff with specific knowledge and expertise in general education mathematics content, assessment, secondary transition, behavior, family engagement, blind and visual impairment, leadership, school improvement, data-based decision making, MTSS, and deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) will be deployed to the implementation teams when a specific need in their area has been identified in a local school system. Each Local School System/Public Agency is assigned a D-IT that will use the systems coaching strategy to increase the capacity of the SSIP locals, as well as other LSSs to use the TAP-IT process to build a policy-to-practice feedback loop using implementation and performance data and the Active Implementation Frameworks to implement, scale-up and sustain the LSS selected EBP that will improve mathematics outcomes for students with disabilities.

The following table identifies the Division’s cross functional teams that were formed as a result of the SSIP process:

*Table 7: DSE/EIS Division Teams*

<b>DSE/EIS Division Teams</b>		
<b>TEAM</b>	<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES</b>
Division Leadership Team (D-LT)	Divisions Branch Chiefs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy and Accountability,</li> <li>• Family Support and Dispute Resolution,</li> <li>• Interagency Collaboration,</li> <li>• Performance Support and Technical Assistance, and</li> <li>• Resource Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infrastructure for Monitoring and Technical Assistance</li> </ul>
Division Implementation Team (D-IT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitors</li> <li>• TA providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systems Coaching</li> <li>• Monitoring</li> </ul>

*What resources will be needed to get to the expected outcomes?*

In planning for Phase II there has been significant effort focused on the alignment of existing resources and initiatives to support LSS achievement of the SIMR. Through the establishment of the SSIP Implementation Structure (See Figure 3) efforts have been made to use the SSIP to organize the work of the Department, Division and Branches to better support local systems as they implement EBPs with fidelity in order to achieve the State's SIMR.

In addition, we have identified resources needed to accomplish this work – we have formed partnerships with expert leaders in implementation science, family partnerships, research-based practices to differentiate support that address the unique needs of local systems, and in the area of Systems Coaching.

*What are the timelines to complete changes to the infrastructure and build capacity within the State to better support the LEA program?*

There are four infrastructure components that the MD SSIP is addressing: governance, data, professional development, and accountability/monitoring. See Action Plan on page XX for a more detailed list of activities and timelines.

- Governance – the MD SSIP has created the SSIP Implementation Structure comprised of team members from across the department, local school systems, and external stakeholders.
- Data – MD has embedded the TAP-IT process into its technical assistance model *Tiers of Engagement*. The Division is using the TAP-IT process with LPF grantees and with two of the six LSSs engaged in SSIP. The four other SSIP LSSs will begin to use TAP-IT in Fall 2016.
- Professional Development – training for the Division Implementation Team and Local School System Implementation Team members selected to be system coaches will be completed by summer 2016. In addition, on March 31<sup>st</sup> an RFP will be released to announce funds for the development of the Parent-Teacher Partnership course. Grantee selection will be completed by during the summer and development of the course in partnership with Parents Place of Maryland will commence. Parents and teachers will be selected from each SSIP school to participate in training by winter 2017 when training will begin.
- Accountability/Monitoring – the Division has formed Division Implementation Teams and they have been assigned to Local School Systems.

1(d) Specify how the State will involve multiple offices within the State education agency (SEA), as well as other State agencies<sup>4</sup> and stakeholders in the improvement of its infrastructure.

*In an effort to better support LEAs, how does the SSIP promote collaboration with the SEA and among other State agencies to improve the State’s infrastructure.*

As described in detail in the previous section and organized in Table 8 below, the SSIP will involve multiple offices through the full implementation of SSIP Implementation Teams.

Table 8: SSIP Implementation Teams

<b>SSIP Implementation Teams</b>		
<b>TEAM</b>	<b>MEMBERS</b>	<b>RESPONSIBILITIES</b>
<b><i>Executive Leadership Team</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Superintendent</li> <li>• Superintendent’s Cabinet Members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-Departmental decision-making</li> </ul>
<b><i>SSIP Core Planning Team</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part B staff</li> <li>• Part C staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SSIP Phase II Plan</li> <li>• SSIP Implementation in collaboration with Cross-Departmental Implementation Team and Expert Team</li> </ul>
<b><i>Cross-Departmental Implementation Team</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Title I</li> <li>• Early Childhood</li> <li>• Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment</li> <li>• Family</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SSIP Implementation in collaboration with the SSIP Core Planning Team and Expert Team</li> <li>• Project Management</li> </ul>
<b><i>Expert Team</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mathematics experts</li> <li>• Special Education experts in MTSS, UDL, CRT, Specially Designed Instruction</li> <li>• National experts in mathematics, and Special Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collecting, vetting, and disseminating mathematics resources and evidence-based practices for use by LSS-IT</li> <li>• Identifying trainers for mathematics EBPs, SDI, MTSS, UDL, CRT</li> </ul>

*In an effort to better support LEAs, how does the SSIP promote collaboration within the SEA and among other State agencies to improve the State’s infrastructure?*

<sup>4</sup> Maryland is a State with a total of twenty-four school districts. There are no regional offices in Maryland as there are in other States.

The SSIP implementation structure proposed in Phase II is designed to engage both Internal and External Stakeholders (see component 2(b) for a more detailed explanation of how stakeholders have been involved). Internal Stakeholders, that is, the State Executive Leadership Team, SSIP Core Planning Team, Cross-Departmental Implementation Team and Expert Team are comprised of personnel from across the department. These individuals have otherwise defined roles and responsibilities but are being invited to participate in SSIP implementation. This engagement will optimistically help to build coherence around the State's technical assistance and professional development infrastructure across the Divisions in MSDE.

*What mechanisms would the State use to involve multiple offices and/or other State agencies in the improvement of the State's infrastructure?*

Through the SSIP Implementation Structure, the Division will invite MSDE staff from across the Department, partners from Institutes of Higher Education, and strategic partners outside the Department to collaborate in the planning and implementation of professional learning related to SSIP implementation. This structure will also provide leadership with opportunities to engage in an ongoing dialogue about ways to integrate general education and special education support systems to positively impact MSDEs infrastructure and ultimately be sanctioned by the incoming State Superintendent of Schools.

*How will stakeholders be involved in the infrastructure development?*

The MSDE has participated in various cross-departmental efforts with varying degrees of success in sustaining and/or scaling up initiatives. We have learned that stakeholder involvement across the hierarchy of the Department is imperative to the success of such efforts. The SSIP infrastructure has been informed by many partners involved in earlier cross-departmental efforts. The design provides each stakeholder group with direct and indirect involvement in the implementation process and continuous communication on the progress of the SSIP. Staff within each team of the SSIP Implementation Infrastructure has been identified to provide a source of knowledge, resources, and skills that can be tapped throughout the implementation of the SSIP. As each phase of implementation is realized, the cross-departmental SSIP implementation representatives will provide direction to any necessary adjustment in response to lessons learned in the SSIP implementation. All stakeholders (internal and external) will be asked to provide information through the SSIP formative evaluation process. In this way, stakeholders will have ongoing involvement in the development of the infrastructure as responses will be used to make any needed adjustments to the technical assistance and professional development being provided to local school systems as they provide support to implement evidence-based practices with fidelity to schools.

## Phase II Component #2: Support for LEA Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices

*2(a) Specify how the State will support LEAs in implementing the evidence-based practices that will result in changes in LEA, school, and provider practices to achieve the SIMR for children with disabilities.*

Maryland chose the following coherent improvement strategies during Phase I of the SSIP:

- Data-informed decision making for continuous improvement – TAP-IT and Implementation Science
- Family engagement and partnership to promote family involvement and student success,
- High quality general education mathematics instruction based on principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- Multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) to include formative assessment with evidence-based mathematics supports for struggling students, and
- Equitable access to the general education curriculum and classroom through Culturally Responsive Interactions (CRI) and Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)

These critical elements for high-quality Tier 1 instruction are essential for students with disabilities to perform successfully. They have not yet been fully implemented with fidelity in classrooms across our State.

Maryland has categorized its EBP coherent improvement strategies for Part B in two ways (1) strategies that directly impact **system practices** around implementation of evidence-based practices, i.e., TAP-IT data-informed decision making and implementation science, and (2) strategies that impact **classroom/school practices**, i.e., MTSS, UDL, Culturally Responsive Teaching, Specially Designed Instruction, mathematics interventions and supports, and family engagement. The SSIP Part B technical assistance focus by the Division's Implementation Teams (D-IT) will be on the improvement strategies that impact system practices around the implementation of EBP at the school and classroom level. The Division's TA strategy used with the six SSIP LSS Implementation Teams (LSS-IT) is Systems Coaching, that is, the Division will provide coaching support to each LSS Implementation Team to build capacity to develop an implementation infrastructure for selection, implementation, sustaining and scaling-up EB classroom/school mathematics practices. In addition, the Division's Systems Coach will broker the training and resources needed for locally selected EBP from the SSIP Expert Team. A protocol for engagement by the State Systems Coaches with the LSS Systems Coaches will enable the process of State to LSS engagement to be consistent and replicable allowing the MSDE to identify effective practices to be used when scaling up the work of the SSIP. Maryland's Systems Coaches understand that it is the EBP in mathematics that will change

outcomes in mathematics for students with disabilities. As such, these coaches will have the expectation that SSIP schools will develop a coherent Tier I instructional delivery system that incorporates UDL, Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT), and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) thereby providing access to the mathematics curriculum for students with disabilities. Simultaneously, through MTSS, the needs of struggling students with disabilities will be identified and addressed by using specially designed mathematics instruction aligned to individual needs.

Systems coaching will enable Maryland to focus on a systemic approach to SSIP implementation by engaging all levels of the education system – State, Local School System, School, and Classroom – in a coherent process (See Figure 2). Furthermore, by building the capacity of the Division and Local School System Implementation Team liaisons to become Systems Coaches, the State will be able to support local school systems not only with the implementation of instructional/behavioral EBP with fidelity but also help them to scale-up and sustain them. Maryland believes if selected members of the Division and Local School System Implementation Team are competent Systems Coaches, the jurisdiction will have the capacity to effectively implement a program, practice, or approach to enhance student outcomes (Metz: SPDG National Conference, 2015). As an active member of the NCIS Mathematics Collaborative, Maryland will have access to nationally identified mathematics practice guides, tools, and resources that will be brokered to LSS-ITs to inform their practice with School-ITs to achieve the SiMR. Maryland has discovered, and consultants have confirmed, that evidence-based practices in mathematics are not abundantly available at this time. They have also identified that there isn't the extensive research about learning difficulties in mathematics in comparison to research on difficulties in learning to read. Hence, research on ways to support mathematics learners who struggle is less so (Tapper, J. *Solving for Why: Understanding, Assessing, and Teaching Students Who Struggle with Mathematics, Grades K-8*: 2012). Consequently, Maryland has focused on implementing a structure (MTSS) that creates instructional supports for students to learn mathematics and UDL, CRT and Specially Designed Instruction all of which improve access to the curriculum.

*Did the State describe the evidence used to select evidence-based practices that will be implemented?*

In Phase I, stakeholders examined trend and disaggregated data to identify problem areas, a measurable result, and the target population. Based on the review of this data the State and its stakeholders concluded that (1) students with disabilities are being included in general education classes at greater rates each year, and (2) mathematics has lower performance and a larger achievement gap for students with disabilities than reading. Thus the MD SiMR for Part



**B is to increase the mathematics proficiency of students with disabilities in grades 3, 4, and 5 in six Local School Systems as measured by state assessments.**

The data analysis, infrastructure analyses and the stakeholder engagement conversations resulted in the identification of coherent strategies that are based on research and, if implemented with fidelity, should result in improvements in student performance.

Following is the research for each of the improvement strategies that will change teacher practices and enable students with disabilities to achieve the SiMR.

**Data-informed Decision Making for Continuous Improvement – TAP-IT, Implementation Science, Formative Assessment**

Over the past decade, educators in Maryland and elsewhere have become interested in and committed to using data-informed decision making (also often referenced as data-based or data-driven decision making). Its use at the state, LSS central office, school, and classroom levels is encouraged. Various data are systematically collected and analyzed, 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 (such as targeting support to low-performing students or schools), evaluating the effectiveness of practices, assessing whether the needs of students or others are being met, reallocating resources, or improving processes to improve outcomes.

The MSDE has an existing process that promotes the synthesis of information and application of judgment to prioritize findings and the relative merits of possible solutions. The TAP-IT process (Team, Analyze, Plan, Implement, and Track) begins with the formation of an implementation TEAM that collects current, relevant data sources. They then ANALYZE the data, including formative, summative, longitudinal summary reports and early warning alert systems that may be in place. The team analyzes the data using an agreed upon protocol to develop a PLAN to improved results for children with disabilities. The team shares current research and research based practices and considers the allocation of resources to determine their effectiveness in achieving improved results for children with disabilities. The plan is then IMPLEMENTED and progress is monitored. Team members continuously TRACK progress through regular meetings.

Successes are shared, plans are revised, and the work is scaled up as appropriate. The MSDE has actively promoted this collaborative data-informed decision making model over the last two years and regularly provides technical assistance and guidance to the LSSs regarding systemic and strategic data use. This will be highlighted in the work of the participating SSIP LSSs.

With a strong technical assistance connection (through systems coaching) from Division to participating LSSs the TAP-IT process will become a routine practice at the local and school levels creating the “practice to policy feedback loop” necessary for successful implementation of evidence-based practices. “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)

The data-informed decision making strategy will be incorporated to support the use of data at the classroom level through formative assessment strategies. Through the SPDG and SWIFT center work, mathematics has emerged as an important focus area. Leveraging the work of these initiatives, along with implementation of UDL – the lack of which was cited as a root cause – provides a powerful improvement strategy. The implementation of high quality math instruction and intervention using UDL will assist in addressing the root causes of “lack of problem solving skills and perseverance,” “curriculum shift (MCCR)” [Maryland College and Career Ready standards], and potentially the “inadequate identification of math learning problems.”

### **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 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.

Engaging families of students who will be in schools participating in the SSIP work will range from providing family-friendly information (on math problem-solving activities, on their child’s performance and progress) and providing training opportunities that will include the

introduction of a Parent Teacher Partnership model and a parent engagement course for teachers and leaders to understand educational decision-making and to solicit the active input from families in the decisions made by the school and school system. This has the dual purpose of connecting what is being learned to daily life and providing meaningful ways for the student and her/his family to engage in the life of the school. The data and infrastructure analyses revealed a concern that parents do not know “today’s math.” By engaging families in the improvement process, there is no intent to teach parents “today’s math” but rather to help families use math and be engaged in their child’s education.

An important component of the Division work as evidenced in the Maryland SPDG is family engagement. Through the 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, SPDG has developed a strategy to support mathematics instruction by providing 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.

### **High quality general education math instruction based on principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to increase student engagement and 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. Each of these principles intends to address 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.

Maryland legislation (Senate Bill 567 and House Bill 59) established a Task Force to Explore the Incorporation of the Principles of UDL into MD Education Systems, which resulted in a comprehensive report of recommendations, “A Route for Every Learner.” The Task Force recommendations resulted in action by the Maryland State Board of Education to publish Maryland Regulations (COMAR 13A.03.06 Universal Design for Learning) to ensure implementation of UDL guidelines and principles by:

- promoting the application of UDL principles to maximize learning opportunities for all students, and
- guiding local school systems in the use of UDL in the development of curriculum, instructional materials, instructional planning and delivery, professional development, and assessment.

Maryland has worked steadily to implement the recommendations of the task force with fidelity. A network of leaders from across the State has formed a UDL network. The MSDE will build upon the UDL network in Maryland and experts who are working closely with the MSDE, LSSs and the SWIFT Center to build teacher and school capacity to employ UDL principles. It will also leverage the knowledge base resulting from the SPDG work which has integrated UDL principles into an instructional delivery system, Team Based Cycle of Instruction (TBCI) developed in partnership with JHU-CTE. This evidence-based instructional delivery system is currently providing access to the mathematics curriculum in SPDG schools. This promising practice has yielded increased mathematics achievement for students with disabilities in SPDG schools after one year of implementation.

### **Multi-tiered system of supports with evidence-based math instruction and interventions tailored address to math deficits**

Implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) in a school requires a significant change in practice, and a need for close collaboration with the Local School System administration. Particularly when it comes to math, screening and progress monitoring tools are limited; evidence-based interventions are scarce and may be expensive.

The 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 Behaviors Support (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. By using data on student performance and progress, the acquisition of targeted skills can be monitored and the need for more intensive instruction or specific interventions for students not “responding” to the universal instruction 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.

Each intervention type (e.g., behavior, reading, math, etc.) requires criteria for identifying when students need more or less intensive interventions. It is important to note that as students move to more intensive levels (tiers) of support, they should not be removed from regular classes or school settings (Sailor, 2008/2009). Interventions can be embedded within the general education instruction and classroom activities, maintaining opportunities for the benefits of inclusion. Copeland and Cosbey (2008/2009) describe four key MTSS principles:

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

The National Center on Intensive Intervention (<http://www.intensiveintervention.org/>) provides a variety of resources and current evidence-based tools and interventions for reading, math, and behavior. As has been seen, math resources are limited. The MSDE intends to leverage the work with the SWIFT Center to access current and evidence-based resources to support its ability to provide Professional Learning and Development and TA for mathematics instruction and intervention.

A MTSS model has evidence of effectiveness in enabling teachers to use screening and progress monitoring tools to identify specific areas in which students are proficient and where they need additional intervention to acquire important skills. The MSDE will work closely with and develop professional learning in MTSS/math that crosses initiatives to target TA for the schools identified as part of the SSIP.

**Equitable access to the general education curriculum and classroom through culturally responsive interactions and Specially Designed Instruction for students with disabilities within the regular classroom**

Research shows a variety of positive short term and long term effects of educating students with disabilities in inclusive classes. In a two-year study of students with learning disabilities, Cole, Waldron, Majd, and Hasazi (2004) found that 41.7% made progress in math in general education classes compared to 34.0% in segregated special education settings, without the presence of nondisabled peers. When comparing progress with their typical peers, 43.3% of students with disabilities made comparable or greater progress in math in inclusive settings versus 35.9% in traditional settings. The National Longitudinal Transition Study examined the outcomes of 11,000 students with a range of disabilities and found that more time spent in a general education classroom was positively correlated with a) fewer absences from school, b) fewer referrals for disruptive behavior, and c) better outcomes after high school in the areas of employment and independent living (Wagner, Newman, Cameto & Levine, 2006).

For students with severe disabilities, academic benefits include: high levels of active engagement (Hunt, Soto, Maier & Doering, 2003; Wallace, Anderson, Bartholomay & Hupp, 2002), improved academic performance (Brinker & Thorpe, 1984; Cole et al., 2004; Downing, Spencer & Cavallaro, 2004; Wolfe & Hall, 2003; Hawkins, 2011; Hunt & Staub et al., 1994; Katz

& Mirenda, 2002; McDonnell, Mathot-Buckner, Thornson & Fister, 2001; Teigland, 2009; Westling & Fox, 2009), access to general curriculum (Carter, Cushing, Clark & Kennedy, 2005) and higher quality individualized education program goals (Hunt, Farron-Davis, Beckstead, Curtis & Goetz, 1994b).

There are also several tools to promote culturally responsive practices, ranging from policy assessments (Kozleski and Sion, 2006) to special education culturally responsive practices assessment (Richards, Artiles, Lingner, and Brown, 2005). The MSDE will promote exploration of current practices and development of specific improvement practices across schools through a professional learning community. Further, the Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education, a partner with the MSDE in promoting high quality inclusive instruction and interventions, will provide assistance to participating LSSs in the delivery of Specially Designed Instruction within general education.

**Systems’ Coaching to support the implementation fidelity of the SSIP EBP**

There is extensive research on the benefits of coaching. A summary of a meta-analysis of the effects of training and coaching on teachers’ implementation (Joyce & Showers, 2002) has shown substantial gains in the use of new skills in the classroom when on-the-job coaching was added to training. While this research specifically looks at teacher implementation of a particular innovation, Joyce & Showers also noted that two other implementation drivers – selection and administrative facilitation – need to be attended to for coaching to be done.

Table 9 provides a summary of a meta-analysis of the effects of training and coaching on teacher implementation (Joyce & Showers, 2001).

*Table 9: The Effects of Training and Coaching on Teacher Implementation*

<b>Effects of Training and Coaching on Teacher Implementation</b>			
	<b>OUTCOMES</b> <b>(% of Participants who Demonstrate Knowledge, Demonstrate new Skills in a Training Setting, and Use new Skills in the Classroom)</b>		
<b>TRAINING COMPONENTS</b>	<b>KNOWLEDGE</b>	<b>SKILL DEMONSTRATION</b>	<b>USE IN THE CLASSROOM</b>
Theory and Discussion	10%	5%	0%
Demonstration in Training	30%	20%	0%
Practice & Feedback in Training	60%	60%	5%
Coaching in Clinical Setting	95%	95%	95%

In addition to providing coaching support to teachers, there are significant challenges related to choosing, implementing, sustaining, and improving evidence-based approaches to academic

instruction and interventions (Blasé, K. A., Fixsen, D.L., Sims, B. J., & Ward, C. S. *Implementation Science: Changing Hearts, Minds, Behavior, and Systems to Improve Educational Outcomes: NIRN*) that need to be addressed. This is why a systems or change coach is needed.

Neufeld and Roper (2003a)<sup>5</sup> distinguish change coaches from content coaches, in that change coaches typically focus on organizational improvement. A system/change coach focuses on developing the capacity of the school district to effectively implement a program, practice, or approach to enhance student outcomes Metz (2015). The National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) has identified the coaching skills that competent Systems Coaches need to acquire. Those skills include foundation skills such as:

- Getting and Giving Information- the ability to observe and describe behavior,
- Connecting People through Rationales – identify systemic and individualized rationales that help communities and individuals “buy into” the change process and recognize diversity of perspectives,
- Developing and Maintaining Relationships – Recognition for Colleagues and Stakeholders - positive, descriptive and sincere recognition for leaders,, staff, families, stakeholders,
- Maximizing Feedback Opportunities – soliciting feedback, accepting and providing positive feedback, accepting and providing constructive feedback, and
- Able to address adaptive challenges.

And four essential functions that system coaches must be competent to address:

- (1) Engagement and Collaboration,
- (2) Team Development,
- (3) Change Facilitation, and
- (4) Discovery and Diagnosis.

*How did the State consider the LEA needs and the best fit for the coherent improvement strategies and EBP?*

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<sup>5</sup> Neufeld, B. & Roper, D. (2003a). Coaching: A strategy for developing instructional capacity – Promises and practicalities. Washington, DC: Aspen institute Program on Education and Providence, RI: Annenberg Institute for School Reform.

The State focuses its technical assistance at the local school system level. It does not provide direct technical assistance support to schools. From our work with central-office level staff, we know that most local school systems need ongoing support to institutionalize the use of Active Implementation Frameworks and while they used student performance data to make decisions, they may not collect data on adult behavior on an ongoing basis. Consequently, when a new mathematics innovation is selected it may conflict with other initiatives, teachers may not understand what it is or have sufficient training and ongoing support, the environment may be inhospitable, and very often there is no ongoing data collection on practitioner implementation. We have learned from our research and experience with other initiatives that a selected EBP needs the ongoing support of an Instructional Coach and district personnel, as well as attention to the other implementation drivers, if it is going to be implemented with fidelity. Consequently, our rationale for adding Systems Coaching as the overarching improvement strategy is recognition that if we do not help system level personnel understand the necessity of institutionalizing the implementation frameworks, it is unlikely that schools will be able to implement the selected EBP (UDL, Family Engagement, MTSS, CRI, and SI) with fidelity. That is why we are focused on building the capacity of Division and local personnel in the four essential functions (engagement and collaboration, team development, change facilitation, and discovery and diagnosis) of a systems coach. Knowledge and skill in these areas will build the competency of Division staff to coach system level staff who in turn will coach school personnel to implement EBPs with fidelity.

As part of the implementation process, i.e., working with the implementation drivers, Local School System Implementation Teams will not only select which EBP to implement but will also select and train an Instructional Coach to support the EBP implementation by practitioners. A selected mathematics EBP needs the ongoing support of an Instructional Coach and local system personnel, if it is going to be implemented with fidelity. System coaches will work with their LSS Implementation Teams to: identify resources for instructional coaching, and develop the selection criteria for EBP and Instructional Coaches. In addition, they will assist with the development of an Instructional Coaches' interview protocol to ensure that schools select the best possible person to fill this role.

Systems' coaching is an overarching improvement strategy to help system level personnel understand how to use implementation frameworks and why they are important to implementation success. As part of the implementation process, i.e., working with the implementation drivers, Local School System Implementation Teams will apply the TAP-IT protocol and tools of Implementation Science, such as the Hexagon Tool, to not only select which mathematics EBP to implement but to select and train an Instructional Coach to support the EBP implementation by practitioners. The MSDE will concentrate efforts on building State capacity to deliver coaching support that expands the LSS capacity to achieve the SiMR. They



will demonstrate the skills to guide the LSS team to provide the local support of implementation of the SSIP coherent improvement strategies including mathematics EBP. LSS Leaders will in turn be focused on the full implementation of the coherent improvement strategies at the school and classroom level.

*How did the State assess the readiness and capacity for implementation of the LEAs, schools, and with personnel/providers?*

Maryland invited its SPDG, SWIFT, and Bridges for Systems Change systems to participate in SSIP because the strategies to be employed in SSIP will build on already existing structures (implementation teams) and practices (attending to implementation drivers, creation of a practice-to-policy feedback loop). Each of the LSSs selected have established implementation teams at the central office level, have a good understanding of most of the Active Implementation Frameworks and are using data to inform their decision making on a regular basis. Data will be collected and analyzed data to determine school readiness and capacity for the implementation of selected EBP.

*What implementation drivers are needed to effect change in LEA, school, and personnel/provider practices?*

As would be expected during Phase 2 of the SSIP, Maryland is working in different stages of implementation simultaneously. At the State and LSS levels we are at the installation stage. However, the SSIP work at the school level is at the exploration stage. Looking at the State and LSS levels, which are at the installation stage of implementation, the competency drivers (selection, training, coaching, and fidelity assessment) will be used to effect changes at the State and LSS levels. The table below describes the Installation Stage Activities and aligns actions with each of the competency drivers. These actions are targeting the implementation of the **system** improvement strategy – Systems Coaching.

*Table 10: State and LSS Activities during Installation Stage*

<b>State and LSS Activities during Installation Stage</b>		
<b>Competency Driver</b>	<b>State/Division Level</b>	<b>LSS Level</b>
<b>Selection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the prerequisite skills and responsibilities for the role of Systems Coach</li> <li>Select monitoring and technical assistance staff from the Divisions Implementation Team to take the role of a Systems Coach.</li> <li>Through an Institute of Higher Education (IHE) grant process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify the prerequisite skills and responsibilities for the role of Systems Coach</li> <li>Select a special education and general education member of the LSS Implementation Team to take the role of a Systems Coach</li> <li>Select Schools</li> <li>Use Hexagon Tool to evaluate new and</li> </ul>

	select a university (or universities) to develop a parent/teacher partnership course.	existing interventions in identified schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin process for Instructional Coach position (funds, existing staff)</li> <li>• Select Instructional Coach or create a plan to provide instructional coaching support</li> </ul>
<b>Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selected State staff will be trained by NIRN/SISEP in the four essential functions of systems coaching and will develop the Useable Intervention document that includes a clear description of the program, clear essential functions that define the program, operational definitions of essential functions and a practical performance assessment e.g., practice profile for systems coaching.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selected LSS staff will be trained by NIRN/SISEP in the four essential functions of systems coaching and will develop the Useable Intervention document that includes a clear description of the program, clear essential functions that define the program, operational definitions of essential functions and a practical performance assessment e.g., practice profile for systems coaching.</li> <li>• Ensure availability of funding streams and human resource strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Create reporting frameworks</li> <li>○ Prepare Organization</li> <li>○ Prepare Staff</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Coaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State staff will receive ongoing support from NIRN/SISEP.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LSS staff will receive ongoing support from the State/Division System Coach</li> </ul>
<b>Fidelity Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of practice profile for Systems Coaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of practice profile for Instructional Coaches.</li> </ul>

Table 11 focuses on the drivers that the LSS will attend to during the exploration stage when they are assessing the potential match between school needs and the EBP requirements and available resources in order to make a decision to proceed or not. These actions are targeting the implementation of LSS selected evidence-based **classroom/school** improvement strategies (MTSS, UDL, Culturally Responsive Interactions, Specially Designed Instruction and Family Engagement).

*Table 11: LSS and School Level Activities during Exploration Stage*

<b>LSS and School Level Activities during Exploration Stage</b>		
<b>Competency Driver</b>	<b>LSS Level</b>	<b>School Level</b>
<b>Selection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate school exploration stage of implementation to select EBP</li> <li>• Select SSIP schools</li> <li>• Select Evidence-based practice based on Hexagon Tool</li> <li>• Assess fit and decide to proceed or not</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools agree to participate in SSIP and to implement selected EBP</li> <li>• Schools sign letter of commitment</li> <li>• School and LSS Implementation teams use data to identify needs</li> <li>• School selects EBP using implementation science tools and processes</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a letter of commitment outlining expectations for selected schools</li> <li>• Select administrators and teachers for the university designed family engagement course</li> <li>• Discuss with LSSs and schools the identification process for identifying parent/teacher participants for the partnership course</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selection of teachers for initial implementation</li> </ul>
<b>Training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of training or selection of training provider for selected EBP</li> <li>• Conducts training for teachers</li> <li>• Conducts training for instructional coaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Selected teachers receive initial training in EBPs in mathematics</li> <li>• Instructional Coaches receive initial training for EBP and coaching skills</li> </ul>
<b>Coaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select Instructional Coaches or identify an instructional coaching plan</li> <li>• Instructional Coaches develop a service delivery plan for ongoing coaching support for teachers</li> <li>• District designs mechanism, e.g. coaches clinic, for ongoing support for Instructional Coaches</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach establishes a relationship with principal and keeps principal informed on implementation progress and any barriers to implementation</li> <li>• Coach implements service delivery plan</li> <li>• Coaches attend coaches training sessions</li> </ul>

*What is the professional development (PD) support for high-fidelity adoption, implementation, and sustainability of selected coherent improvement strategies and EBP?*

**Technical Assistance Model:** Maryland believes its systems coaching strategy will provide the necessary support for high-fidelity adoption, implementation, and sustainability of selected EBP. Maryland plans to work with its SISEP partner to provide Systems Coaching training to selected members of the Division’s Implementation Teams (D-IT) and Cross-Departmental Implementation Team. The Division’s System Coach will provide ongoing support to LSS Implementation Teams (LSS-IT). Training will also be provided to selected members of the LSS Implementation Teams (LSS-IT) in systems coaching. LSS Systems Coaches will develop the capacity of the local school system to effectively implement evidence-based practices with fidelity. Maryland will also provide Systems Coaching training to its Johns Hopkins University-Center for Technology in Education, Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education, Parent’s Place of Maryland and select IHE partners in order to build a community of practice for the D-IT liaisons.

**Professional Learning Opportunities:** There will be three types of learning opportunities for SSIP participants: (1) Professional Learning Opportunities (PLOs) where mathematics strategies

such as Concrete, Representational, Abstract (CRS) Assessment will be introduced and studied to determine if it is a strategy the district wants to consider for implementation, (2) Local School System Implementation Team meetings, at least three times a year, when LSS-IT teams will have the opportunity to assess how well they are using the implementation drivers and share how they have addressed some of the barriers to implementation, and (3) training and instructional coaching for practitioners on the selected evidence-based practice they are being asked to implement.

## Resource Toolbox

**School-wide evidence-based practices.** There is not the level of research about strategies to address learning difficulties in mathematics in comparison to research on difficulties in learning to read. Hence, research on ways to support mathematics learners who struggle is less so (Tapper, 2012). Consequently, Maryland is focusing on building a toolbox of resources (tools, research, descriptions of implementation) for:

- High quality Tier 1 instruction in math based on UDL
- Components of a math MTSS
- Culturally responsive instruction
- Designing standards-based IEPs and specially-designed instruction linked to improving math outcomes.
- Family engagement

**Math evidence-based practices.** MSDE had begun to collect information on the screening and progress monitoring tools used by LSSs and the technically adequate, research-based math interventions that are being used in Maryland and otherwise available for use. In addition, in collaboration with the Mathematics Specialists in the Division of Curriculum, Assessment, and Accountability, MSDE has begun to amass research on “strategies that work” for all students as well as students with disabilities. Our intent is to develop resources for learning and for selecting instructional approaches that are based in research and are appropriate for students based on their specific performance patterns gathered through formative and summative assessment. Resource sites such as those shared by the NCSI math collaborative and National Centers (e.g., the National Center on Intensive Intervention: <http://www.intensiveintervention.org/standards-relevant-instruction-multi-tiered-systems-support-mtss-or-response-intervention>) will be shared; opportunities for teaching LSS staff how to use resources will be designed as needed through the in-state math collaborative (see below).

**Implementation Tools:** In order to have standard protocol or steps to begin the installation process for both school-wide organizational practices and classroom instructional practices, MSDE will identify or adapt tools that are based on the Implementation Science Frameworks. This begins with using data to select the organizational and instructional evidence-based practices, identifying the current status of implementation, and identifying initial steps for implementation. For example the Stages of Implementation Tools (<http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/sites/implementation.fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/AIModules-Activity-4-6-StagesOfImplementationAnalysis.pdf>) will enable teams to identify where they are in implementing a selected evidence-based math intervention; the Implementation Drivers Best Practices Assessment Tool (<http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/sites/implementation.fpg.unc.edu/files/resources/AIModules-Activity-1-3-ImplementationDrivers.pdf>) will help schools determine actions for implementing either a school-wide organizational practice or a specific math intervention. Fidelity tools for specific practices (e.g., MTSS) will be identified or designed based on what is currently available. The SWIFT Center has, for example, developed a practice profile for MTSS that would be applicable for schools and districts that want to begin to install a school wide system of math instruction and intervention. A specific math intervention fidelity tool might be available with a selected program or may be designed based on the features described in research.

*How will the State support the LEA in scaling up EBPs?*

Maryland believes that the adoption of the **Systems Coaching**, that is, an improvement strategy that directly impacts system practices around implementation, will enable the State/Division System Coaches to competently coach the Local School System as they embark on scaling-up activities. As part of their role, systems coaches will lead LSS-IT members in the TAP-IT process (see component 2 (a) for TAP-IT explanation) to select EBP in mathematics specifically aligned to student needs. In turn, the Local School System will also have System Coaches with the capacity to competently coach selected schools within the local to effectively implement EBPs.

*2 (b) Identify steps and specific activities needed to implement the coherent improvement strategies. Include communication strategies, stakeholder involvement; how identified barriers will be addressed and who will be in charge of implementing. Include how the activities will be implemented with fidelity; the resources that will be used to implement them; and timelines for completion.*

*What are the communication strategies the State will use to implement the Plan?*

The goal of communication of the SSIP is to (1) share resources and successful strategies that support implementation beyond the targeted partners, and (2) disseminate the methods and outcomes of SSIP work to keep stakeholders informed and provide opportunities for input. Initial, the following areas for communication related to the SSIP have been identified. In addition, the Cross-Departmental Implementation Team will have an agenda item that focuses on communication in their monthly meetings.

- Dissemination of the SSIP Plan. The SSIP plan will be posted on the MSDE Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services web page <http://marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/Divisions/earlyinterv/index.html> with a link to the SSIP page on Maryland Learning Links our interactive web-based portal for educational stakeholders.
- Statewide Dissemination. Quarterly newsletter.
- Resource Dissemination. Maryland Learning Links (MLL).
- Quarterly Statewide Professional Learning Institute (PLI)
- Quarterly Statewide Meeting of local Chief Academic Officers

Inter and Intra Departmental Communication. The Division assigned coordinator for the SSIP (SSIP coordinator) will be a conduit for two-way communication among key SSIP teams, e.g., the Core Planning Team, the Cross-Departmental Implementation Team and the Divisions' and LSSs Implementation Teams. The SSIP coordinator will provide opportunities for two-way communication about implementation efforts with Maryland stakeholders external to MSDE, e.g., advisory groups. .

*How will stakeholders be involved in implementation and what are their decision-making roles during the planning stage?*

The SSIP implementation structure proposed in Phase II is designed to routinely engage both Internal and External Stakeholders. Internal stakeholders, that is, the State Executive Leadership Team, Core Implementation Team, Cross-Functional State Implementation Team and Expert Team are comprised of personnel from across the department – our internal stakeholders. These individuals have otherwise defined roles and responsibilities and have brought their broad set of skills and experiences to the SSIP planning. Through the SSIP Implementation Structure and defined roles and responsibilities each of the stakeholders will be involved in an ongoing manner in SSIP implementation.

Our external stakeholders (Advisory Groups) provided input during SSIP planning and will have an ongoing role during implementation. All stakeholders (internal and external) will be asked to provide information through the SSIP formative evaluation process. In this way, stakeholders will have ongoing opportunity to assess SSIP implementation progress and provide input on any

needed adjustments to the process. The following describes each of the external stakeholder groups and their role in the SSIP.

## **Engaging Stakeholders in the development of the SSIP**

In order to obtain input that crossed a wide variety of stakeholders during the Phase 2 SSIP planning, MSDE chose to engage different existing stakeholder groups. In each case, following a presentation of the SSIP planning to date, a rich dialogue was held to discuss current practices, answer questions related to SSIP implementation, and most importantly, obtain recommendations for the planning and implementation process. Below is a summary of the input obtained from stakeholder group meetings.

### **Education Advocacy Coalition (EAC) October 20, 2015**

The EAC is a group of special education advocates who represent various disability or issue constituencies. Some are individual advocates, such as special education lawyers; others are representatives of advocacy groups such as the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council, the Learning Disabilities Association of Maryland, or the Parents' Place of MD.

Recommendation from this group included:

- Look at information from Maryland Council of Teachers of Mathematics (<https://www.marylandmath.org/>)
- Develop case examples for evaluation
- Develop a strategy for helping teachers reach students who are really struggling
- Determine a way to calculate if the goals and strategies are reasonable for improving mathematics – look at the intensity, frequency, and ratio.

### **Individualized Education Program (IEP) Users Group October 28, 2015**

The IEP Users Group is comprised of specialized educators for Maryland's LSS who have lead responsibilities for supporting the use of Maryland's online IEP in their district. This group provides regular feedback to MSDE on issues/concerns, recommendations for improvement, and input on the changes being made to the State's online system. This group meets 3 to 4 times per year and acts as an important resource for making Maryland's online IEP system a valuable tool for special education planning. Recommendation from this group included:

- Focus on teachers vs. paraprofessionals as deliverers of instruction for students with disabilities: this will require a look at the role and responsibilities of general and special educators in the classroom, the competencies of special educators to teach mathematics and the competencies of general educators to deliver Specially Designed

Instruction. The role of the paraprofessional should be to carry out the direction of the teachers.

- Make sure special education is represented on committees within the school
- Discuss the definitions of interventions within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) vs. Specially Designed Instruction (as it relates to the MD Student Compass) – we need a consistent message
- Consider professional development of both general and special education teacher substitutes in delivering mathematics instruction and interventions
- We need to be clear on what Specially Designed Instruction in mathematics instruction is – it is different for students who are performing lower than grade level vs. students who have dysgraphia or a specific leaning disability related to learning mathematics.

### **Special Education State Advisory Committee (SESAC) November 16, 2015**

The Maryland Special Education State Advisory Committee (SESAC) is established in accordance with the provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Part B). The mission of the SESAC is to advise and assist the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services in administering, promoting, planning, coordinating, and improving the delivery of special education and related services to assure that all children with disabilities, three through 21 years of age, and their families have access to appropriate education and related services. Maryland's SESAC meets on a monthly basis to learn about updates on current issues and priorities for the State's special education practices, provide input on proposed positions or projects of MSDE, and discuss areas that they'd like MSDE or LSSs to address. Recommendation from this group included:

- Make sure a parent participates on the state and district implementation teams
- Make sure district teams consider what parents need to know to contribute to their implementation team discussions and decisions
- Develop a communication plan for sharing information from the State to the LSSs that is collaborative across special education and general education (district teams need to have both types of educators involved and need to see the State in a collaborative planning team as well)
- The State Implementation Team and support from the State to local districts should include members of the Division of Curriculum, Assessment, & Accountability as well as Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services
- Experts used for professional learning and technical assistance need to have relevant experience teaching students with disabilities, including students with disabilities in general education classes (mathematics, Specially Designed Instruction, other disabilities and the impact on learning), and school-wide systems for using data and developing interventions
- Put out more information to parents than less: this will increase trust



- Address higher education: teacher and administrator leadership preparation; we are still preparing teachers for an old “pull-out” model that is not working

### **Local School System Stakeholders November 24, 2015**

Six (6) LSSs were invited to participate in the SSIP. They were selected based on their current relationship with MSDE in a technical assistance partnership, as well as an expressed desire to address the delivery of mathematics instruction to students with disabilities. These LSSs are part of the SWIFT national Center for Inclusive School Reform, the State Professional Development Grant (SPDG), or the MSDE Bridges grant. They have established district level planning teams, are working in a supportive relationship with targeted or selected schools, and are eager to address instruction to improve mathematics proficiency. All LSSs will need to agree to begin the exploration work to install a mathematics MTSS (if they have not already initiated this work), and engage in the development of district-level “Systems Coaching” to support schools in the improvement process. The MSDE SSIP Core Team met with this group, consisting of LSS chief academic officer or director of curriculum/instruction and the LSS special education director. Recommendation from this group included:

- **Generate a list of expectations for LSSs**
  - E.g., what data would need to be generated? Are we looking at LEA implementation meetings?
  - The state would create a system of supports to help LSSs achieve the target (mathematics) and implement whatever EBPs they select. State would provide training related to systems coaching and how to implement EBPs with fidelity to get results.
- **Bring in State and local mathematics/curriculum professionals to collaborate on this work**
- **Comments:**
  - In SPDG the LSS implementation team meets monthly (1 hour) and gets reports about school implementation, barriers, etc. Three times a year there are “TAP-IT” meetings (1 – 2 hours), currently looking at data to set annual goals, implementation schedules for strategies.
  - Cecil – might use the SWIFT implementation team, using the 2 elementary schools (aligned with targets), and bring on elementary mathematics coordinator.
  - Allegany – will discuss alignment with SWIFT team and include Superintendent in discussion
  - QACPS – may target the 2 SWIFT Elementary Schools.
  - Worcester – aligned with expanding BRIDGES project; may need to narrow the focus to target schools; need to meet with mathematics supervisor as follow up. Also need to target schools

- **The PLI (NOV) – focused on mathematics instruction for struggling learners; looking forward to follow up.**

### **Local School System/Public Agency/Institutes of Higher Education/General Education Partners/Advocacy Community Leaders and Strategic Partners December 9, 2015**

The group of over 200 educational partners was brought together for our Professional Learning Institute and a session was presented on the SSIP Data-Based Decision Making Process, Theory of Action and Logic Model. Discussion was held and participants were encouraged to offer suggestions for the SSIP Part C and Part B Theory of Action and Logic Model.

### **Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services December 16, 2015**

The SSIP Theory of Action and Logic Model were shared across the Division to ensure understanding of the process and SSIP efforts ahead. Questions were fielded and smaller groups have been provided the opportunity to dig deeper into the direction of the work. The Performance Support and Technical Assistance Branch has reviewed and offered revisions/clarifications through their Branch and Section work. Included in their efforts is:

- The connections made to the DSE/EIS *Tiers of Engagement*
- The exploration and eventual acceptance of the Systems Coaching to be included in SSIP
- The clarity of the role of the Division staff in the Division Implementation Teams with other Branch personnel
- The acceptance of the strategies to implement the EBPs with the Local School System Implementation Teams

### **Local School System Stakeholders January 8, 2016**

After the six (6) LSSs had discussions with their district-level colleagues, they met again with the SSIP Core Team met with the group from the November meeting, and with their mathematics district-level supervisors. The MSDE team discussed the further planning and Systems Coaching component of the work, answered questions, and asked for additional input. Recommendation from this group included:

- **Special Ed/Mathematics Representation:** are we bringing together general education and special education from MSDE: YES. We would like to continue this collaborative process and appreciate the idea of a collaborative network.
- Will there be the same school-level implementation team as SPDG now experiences? SPDG is class-focused with input to the district. SWIFT is System-wide/school-wide focus with classroom applications supported by district and school leadership. EBPs used in SPDG can inform SWIFT partners. SWIFT school-wide planning can inform SPDG partners. Scale-up discussions are happening in Charles now.
- Think about: family engagement improvement practices.

- Combine what has been learned by all projects and look at a way to blend current practices.

### **State Mathematics Advisory Group February 10, 2016**

The Division of Curriculum, Assessment and Accountability holds a state-wide mathematics advisory group meeting on a quarterly basis. Key experts and LSS leaders in mathematics instruction are members of this group, including representatives of advocacy groups and institutes of higher education. The purpose of this group is to advise MSDE, share local successes, and provide an opportunity for statewide planning around mathematics instructional practices. Recommendation from this group included:

- MTSS is the goal: having a school-wide system for screening students, using data for decisions, providing small group intensive instruction based on performance and not on disability label is key.
- Special education pull out on mathematics is often disconnected from the core curriculum instruction; homogeneous grouping for mathematics should be based on specific skill needs.
- Mathematics teachers don't always have the diagnostic background they need
- We need more collaboration between mathematics and special education teachers especially in grades 3 – 5; diving into conceptual understanding is procedural and not deep.
- We need to invest in teacher education – this must be a priority or we will always need to train and retrain educators once hired.
- Universal screening (e.g., MAP) is key – needs to be installed in the schools; shift to collaboration of mathematics and special education instruction related to building and implementing IEPs - not around discrete mathematics skills, but more on building proficiency of student engagement in mathematical practices.
- Consider retraining for co-teaching – ***teachers who behave as mathematicians***.
- Check Journal of Learning Disabilities for new fractions article
- Worcester used I-Ready for K-12 and using with Agile Minds and Intensified Algebra – it worked!!!
- Look at K scores to identify students early on; the new Kindergarten assessment predicts children who will struggle in mathematics
- Look at student growth – individual student data – use benchmark data
- This needs to be a school-wide system! MTSS!

### **SPDG Presenting SSIP to Stakeholders February 23, 2016**

The State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) holds quarterly meetings with all stakeholders. The group was provided with a detailed presentation of the SSIP and asked to provide

connections and innovations they would like to see included in the SSIP. The following is their list of connections between the SSIP and current SPDG work:

- Implementation infrastructure
- TAP-IT Protocols and tools (e.g., Digital portfolio, Maryland Online IEP, and Student Compass)
- Equitable Access
- Team Based Cycle of Improvement
- Know the data and various levels of decision making
- Tier 1 mathematics in place
- High quality mathematics practices delivered with fidelity
- Importance of families as partners understanding data
- TAP-IT with School Teams
- Buy in of Parents regarding Co-teaching and instruction models
- Structured coop learning
- Protocols in place
- Parents are informed and understand the various instructional practices
- High quality coaches-consistency and accountability
- Systems coaches in place

*Given the barriers identified in Phase I, how are they being addressed within the plan?*

There were no barriers identified in Phase 1. As the Phase 2 has been developed the capacity of the State to deploy staff to work with the LSSs, who work with the schools, has been a possible barrier and a theme that has significantly influenced our infrastructure design. We believe that the SSIP Implementation Structure, Division Implementation Teams, the inclusion of the Systems Coaches, and the direct link made between the Division Strategic Plan, most notably the *Tiers of Engagement* will reduce the potential for impeding progress toward achievement of the SiMR.

*How will the implementation teams at the district and local level ensure that personnel/providers are trained to implement the coherent improvement strategies and EBPs with fidelity?*

The State of Maryland is focusing on building the capacity of Local School System Implementation Teams in the four essential functions of Systems Coaching. Consequently, the State is recommending that the Local School System Implementation Team (LSS-IT) address the exploration and installation stages of implementation during the first year of SSIP. This will

enable the implementation teams to (1) work with schools to select an evidence-based practice aligned to school needs, (2) ready staff and the organization (3) select Instructional Coaches or a coaching plan to implement the EBPs with fidelity, (4) develop practice profiles for Instructional Coaches (5) select and work with State experts/providers to design training for selected EBP, and (6) provide initial training to coaches and teachers. We will target the 2017-16 school year for initial implementation of selected evidence-based practices at the school level

In relation to the quality of training, the State will provide support to ensure that professional development/training provided by either district personnel or State experts/providers adheres to high quality professional development indicators, e.g., preparation, introduction to content, demonstration, engagement, self-evaluation and content and skill mastery activities (Dunst & Trivette (2012).

*What are the short term and long term activities for each coherent improvement strategy and timelines for completion of those activities?*

Table 12 provides the short and long term activities for each of the improvement strategies and timelines for completion.

Table 12: Action Plan

<b>Action Plan</b>				
<b>STRATEGY #1: Provide leadership to prepare for strategic collaboration and resource management</b>				
<b>Implementation Activity (Logic Model)</b>	<b>Long and Short Term Activities</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>	<b>Timelines</b>
Increased level of State-local communication and collaboration	1.1.1 Division 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	Division Implementation Team	Time and Opportunities for Collaboration	Winter/ Spring 2016

## Action Plan

**STRATEGY #1:** Provide leadership to prepare for strategic collaboration and resource management

Implementation Activity (Logic Model)	Long and Short Term Activities	Responsibility	Resources Needed	Timelines
<p><u>Increased</u> level of communication and collaboration across MSDE</p>	1.1.2	<p>Implementation Team (LSS-IT) working in partnership with Division. The formation of a cross-functional teaming structure at Division focused on providing technical assistance and support to districts. The Division Implementation Team (D-IT) consists of monitors, TA providers, and fiscal staff to provide support to LSS Implementation Teams who will be overseeing implementation of EBP at the school level.</p>	DSE/EIS Branch Chiefs	
	1.1.3	<p>Division develops a new protocol and timeline for technical assistance activities aligned to the Differentiated Framework: Tiers of Engagement (Universal, Targeted, Focused, and Intensive).</p>	Performance Support and Technical Assistance (PSTA) Branch Leadership	
	1.1.4	<p>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.</p>	PSTA Branch Leadership	
	1.1.5	<p>Formation of the Executive Leadership Team.</p>	MSDE Executive Leadership Team DSE/EIS	
	1.1.6	<p>Formation of the Cross-Departmental</p>	Assistant State Superintendent	

## Action Plan

**STRATEGY #1:** Provide leadership to prepare for strategic collaboration and resource management

Implementation Activity (Logic Model)	Long and Short Term Activities	Responsibility	Resources Needed	Timelines
	Implementation Team.			
<p><u>Identify any barriers or challenges to implementation:</u></p> <p>1.1: Staff availability for this work (time)</p>				

## 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 (Logic Model)	Long and Short Term Activities	Responsibility	Resources Needed	Timelines
<p><u>Participate</u> in systems coaching training and provide TA on implementation to LSS and schools.</p> <p><u>Disseminate</u> resources toolbox to support systems coaching, implementation science &amp; TAP-IT.</p> <p><u>Conduct</u> needs assessments/surveys in EBP</p>	<p>2.1 Selected members of Division Implementation Teams (D-IT), LSS Implementation Teams (LSS-IT), and external partners are trained in systems coaching.</p> <p>2.1.1 DSE/EIS develops technical assistance protocol for systems coaching.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>2.1.3 MSDE will provide online tools and resources to support system coaching.</p>	<p>Performance Support and Technical Assistance (PSTA) Branch Leadership, LSS Implementation Teams, Policy and Accountability Branch (Monitoring Team)</p> <p>DSE/EIS Branch Chiefs, PSTA Branch</p>	<p>Time and Opportunities for Collaboration</p>	<p>Spring - Summer 2016</p> <p>Fall 2016</p>

## 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 (Logic Model)	Long and Short Term Activities	Responsibility	Resources Needed	Timelines
<p>with locals.</p> <p>Collaborate with LSS data analysts to use student performance data to identify instructional needs.</p> <p>Provide TA support to use data based on strengths/needs to select EBP priorities.</p> <p>Provide TA support to apply implementation science to install/implement EBPs.</p>		Leadership, Policy and Accountability Branch (Monitoring Team)		
<p><u>Identify any barriers or challenges to implementation:</u></p> <p>2.1: Staff availability for this work (time)</p>				

## Action Plan

**STRATEGY #3:** Provide professional learning opportunities focused on building the capacity of Local School systems to implement evidence-based practices.

Implementation Activity (Logic Model)	Long and Short Term Activities	Responsibility	Resources Needed	Timelines
<p><u>Identify/develop</u> training on EBP i.e., Family Engagement,</p>	<p>3.1 MSDE provides content experts, including IHEs, to develop professional learning training on Family Engagement through parent-</p>	<p>Parents' Place of Maryland, Towson University,</p>		<p>Winter/ Spring 2017</p>





## Action Plan

**STRATEGY #4:** Preparing Division Implementation Teams (D-IT) and Local School Systems Implementation Teams (LSS-IT) to use TAP-IT and Implementation Science for a practice-to-policy feedback loop that informs decision making.

Implementation Activity (Logic Model)	Long and Short Term Activities	Responsibility	Resources Needed	Timelines
<p>Conduct needs assessments/surveys with local programs around TAP-IT</p> <p>Develop professional learning (PL)/training for Division Implementation Teams and LSS Implementation Teams for TAP-IT and Implementation Science frameworks.</p>	<p>3.1 Assess current knowledge of D-IT and LSS-IT members on TAP-IT and Implementation Science frameworks.</p> <p>3.1.2 Develop a training plan to address D-IT and LSS-IT needs in TAP-IT and Implementation Science.</p> <p>3.1.3 Provide training to D-IT and LSS_IT on TAP-IT and Implementation Science.</p>			<p>Winter/ Spring 2016</p>
<p><u>Identify any barriers or challenges to implementation:</u></p>				

## **Phase II Component #3: Evaluation**

**3(a) Specify how the evaluation is aligned to the theory of action and other components of the SSIP and the extent to which it includes short-term and long-term objectives to measure implementation of the SSIP. Specify its impact on achieving measurable improvement in SIMR for children with disabilities.**

The MSDE leadership, in collaboration with an external evaluation team, designed a multi-year evaluation plan identifying clear indicators with short-, medium- and long-term outcomes aligned to the *SSIP Theory of Action* (Figure 1) addressed through the implementation science drivers. The evaluation plan will monitor the implementation process and outcomes of Systems Coaching training and implementation, MTSS infrastructure development, training, coaching, and LSS implementation of evidence-based practices. Together, through formative evaluation aligned with implementation science and guided by data-based implementation, the SSIP will impact the mathematics proficiency of students with disabilities in grades 3-5 in six LSSs, resulting in measurable improvement in the identified SIMR.

### **Inputs and Outputs**

The *SSIP Logic Model* (Attachment 3) includes inputs, implementation activities and outputs, as well as short-, medium- and long-term outcomes aligned with the *SSIP Theory of Action*. The *Evaluation Plan* (Attachment 1) provides outcomes, indicators, evaluation questions and measures aligned with the *Logic Model, Theory of Action* and overarching evaluation questions. Evaluation of inputs and outputs will ensure that the processes and products (i.e., state-level collaboration, Systems Coaching, MTSS and EBPs training and coaching) meet the needs of Local School Systems (LSS) and adhere to implementation science principles. Inputs include state infrastructure, intra- and interagency staff, national and state experts, research/literature on math and other EBPs, local expertise, learning from state initiatives, partnerships, systems coaching, implementation science frameworks, stakeholder involvement, data systems, and braided funding. Outputs include trained state and local systems coaches, needs assessment, a resource toolbox, structured professional development processes and tools, and protocols for implementation fidelity.

### **Short, Medium and Long-Term Outcomes**

The short-term, medium-term and long-term indicators identified in the evaluation of the SSIP encompass short-term outcomes including increased communication and collaboration, as well as increased knowledge and skills necessary to implement Systems Coaching and MTSS; medium-term outcomes including infrastructure and behavior changes which result in implementation fidelity of evidence-based practices, research-based math curriculum across all grades, systems change through collaboration and data-based decision making, and increased engagement of families; and long-term outcomes including the SIMR: Increase in the

mathematics proficiency of students with disabilities in grades 3-5 in six LSSs as measured by state assessment. Annual SIMR data will inform inputs and outputs, identifying both areas of success and continued improvement.

The *Evaluation Plan* displays the alignment of the *Logic Model*, overarching evaluation questions, outcomes, indicators, evaluation questions, and measures. Indicators include:

- DSE/EIS leadership participates on the State Executive Leadership Team.
- SSIP Core Planning Team collaborates with the Cross-Functional Implementation Team to implement SSIP Improvement Strategies.
- SSIP Expert Team in collaboration with external partners develops/conducts practitioner training/products for EBP.
- SSIP Core Planning Team meets with SSIP stakeholders bi-annually to get feedback on SSIP implementation progress.
- MSDE partners with six 6 Local School Systems to support the development of a local school system infrastructure for implementation of EBP within an MTSS framework in 12 schools.
- Training is of high quality and addresses the needs of adult learners.
- MSDE and LSS Systems Coaches demonstrate expertise in essential functions of systems coaching, e.g., implementation science (active implementation frameworks), TAP-IT and innovation fluency in EBP e.g., family engagement strategies, UDL, culturally-responsive instruction, and Specially Designed Instruction.
- MSDE and LSS Systems Coaching is of high quality and addresses the needs of adult learners.
- Participants have knowledge of how to provide high quality, culturally responsive Tier 1 math instruction within a MTSS Framework and how to promote family engagement through parent-teacher partnerships.
- Teachers provide evidence-based math instruction within a MTSS Framework that includes specially-designed instruction based upon a standards-based IEP
- Families of students with disabilities are involved in data-based discussions regarding their child's performance and instructional needs.
- The LSS Implementation Team establishes a routine to complete at least three TAP-IT cycles to track implementation progress by analyzing student performance and teacher implementation data.
- Teachers provide evidence-based math instruction within a MTSS Framework that includes specially designed instruction based upon a standards-based IEP.

- Collaborative teams follow TAP-IT process to use data to inform professional development, modify instruction, design individual student supports, and provide tiered supports.
- Increase in percentage of students with disabilities who achieve grade level benchmarks in mathematics.
- SiMR goal: ***To increase the mathematics proficiency of students with disabilities in grades 3-5 in six LSSs.***

**3(b) Specify how the evaluation includes stakeholders and how information from the evaluation will be disseminated to stakeholders.**

As described in section 1(d), key internal stakeholders consist of the Executive Leadership Team, Expert Team, Core Planning Team, and the Cross-Departmental Implementation Team. Evaluation results will be disseminated to these stakeholders on a regular basis during regularly scheduled meetings. In addition, evaluation results will be shared with external stakeholders including the LSS Implementation Teams and the Special Education State Advisory Committee (SESAC). The SESAC will be an ongoing partner in the evaluation design, implementation, and data-based decision making for ongoing improvement. The SSIP will be an agenda item at each of the General SESAC and Executive SESAC meetings. Ongoing implementation and evaluation data will be provided, and this group will discuss and inform modifications to inputs, outputs, evaluation measures, and training content in order to meet the indicators (identified above) and ensure progress on the SiMR. Finally, the Annual SSIP Evaluation Report will be available on Maryland Learning Links.

The SSIP Logic Model and Evaluation Plan were developed collaboratively by the Birth-21 Core Implementation Team which includes representatives from MSDE comprised of Part B and C staff and two external consultants. Additional input and feedback from stakeholders on the SSIP evaluation will be attained through presentations explaining the evaluation design and implementation progress to all external stakeholder groups involved in the design process. Progress and outcomes will be monitored on an ongoing basis and disseminated through an annual evaluation presentation/report. Data from LSS progress updates, implementation and feedback surveys, and fidelity measures will inform the evaluation of implementation. In addition to implementation progress and areas for improvement, these data will provide feedback into the usefulness, effort, and timeliness of data to inform state-level and local-level decision making. Modifications to the evaluation measures will be a direct result of this feedback.

## **Family Involvement**

Families will inform the implementation and evaluation of the SSIP. Parents are members of the External Stakeholders and Advisory Council and will provide ongoing feedback through that group. Families will also be asked to complete an Exit Ticket at the end of IEP meetings.

Maryland administers an annual *Special Education Parent Involvement Survey* to families of every Preschool or School-Age child who receives special education services. Through this short survey, families will identify their perceptions of the IEP data-based decision making process and the collaborative nature of this process. This feedback will be aggregated, analyzed and used to inform both LSS and MSDE implementation efforts.

### **3(c) Specify the methods that the State will use to collect and analyze data to evaluate implementation and outcomes of the SSIP and the progress toward achieving intended improvements in the SIMR.**

The evaluation will be conducted by MSDE in collaboration with external evaluators, State data systems, MSDE Systems Coaches, and Local Systems/Instructional Coaches. Quantitative and qualitative methods will be utilized to collect and analyze data to evaluate implementation and outcomes of the SSIP and the progress toward achieving intended indicators in the SIMR.

#### **State Level:**

To measure implementation in the state infrastructure, agendas and meeting minutes from the Cross-Departmental Implementation Team and the Expert Team meetings will be analyzed to determine progress in collaboration strategies, alignment efforts, and implementation of the coherent improvement strategies. These agendas and meeting minutes will also be reviewed to determine outcomes of collaborative efforts and the ongoing use of data to inform infrastructure refinement. A document analysis of collaborative products will be used to determine the extent to which MSDE provides protocols, resources and tools that support implementation and sustainability of evidence-based practices. Feedback from Local Systems Coaches, through surveys and progress updates will be used to determine the extent to which the state infrastructure is meeting the needs of the participating six LSS in implementing MTSS and EBPs in math.

To measure knowledge and skills necessary to implement systems coaching, a pre-post knowledge assessment of the essential functions of systems coaching will be analyzed. In addition a document analysis of coaching roles, responsibilities, qualifications, practice profile, Division and Local Implementation Team Progress Updates, and TAP-IT artifacts and fidelity checks will be used to determine the extent to which MSDE has successfully demonstrated expertise in essential functions of systems coaching, implementation science, and TAP-IT (Attachment 1: TAP-IT Fidelity Check). Trained MSDE leaders will observe workshops/training

provided to MSDE and local systems coaches. Through a structured observation protocol, they will document training fidelity and the presence or absence of indicators of high-quality professional development, including opportunities to practice skills, relate the content to the local context, and reflect on learning. Participant knowledge assessments and demonstration of skills will ensure that the training facilitators effectively taught the essential content of the practice(s). State Systems Coaches will log their coaching, including the focus areas and next steps. These coaching logs will be analyzed to determine implementation progress and areas for continued training across local school systems. Feedback from Local Systems Coaches, through monthly progress updates and surveys will be used to determine the extent to which the state infrastructure is meeting the needs of Local Systems Coaches and schools.

**Local-Level:**

The SIMR evaluation will measure improvements in LSS implementation of MTSS, including TAP-IT and stage-based EBP implementation in math. Methods of evaluating the effectiveness of professional learning will include content knowledge measures and observation of training for content fidelity and high-quality professional development indicators. See Attachment 3: *Observation of High-Quality Professional Development Indicators*. The quality of coaching will be evaluated using the indicators of high-quality coaching rubric and a coaching recipient survey.

MTSS in the participating LSS will be evaluated at LSS and classroom levels. Fidelity of implementation of the evidence-based practices UDL, Culturally Responsive Teaching, and Specially Designed Instruction in each LSS will be evaluated using fidelity checks and/or protocols selected or developed by the State and local participants for example See Attachment 4: *Equity, Inclusion, and Opportunity: Addressing Success Gaps*. Data from these measures will provide ongoing feedback to the LSS to continually expand implementation and increase/maintain fidelity. These data will also support MSDE and Local Implementation Teams to monitor progress, evaluate the effectiveness of training and coaching, and customize their focus to meet the needs of teachers and administrators.

Student progress will be measured through universal screening data collected by the schools. Through sustained implementation of evidence-based instructional practices, and collaborative data-based decision making structures, the SIMR will be achieved: Increase in the mathematics proficiency of students with disabilities in grades 3-5 in six LSSs as measured by state assessment.

**3(d) Specify how the State will use the evaluation data to examine the effectiveness of the implementation; the evaluation, assessment of the progress toward achieving intended improvements; and to make modifications to the SSIP as necessary.**

MSDE will incorporate evaluation data from multiple sources to examine the effectiveness of the implementation, progress toward achieving intended improvements, and to make modifications of the SSIP inputs and outputs as necessary. At the State level, the Core Planning Team in collaboration with the Cross-Departmental Implementation Team will be responsible for directing and utilizing ongoing analysis of input, output, and outcomes data. The team will meet monthly to monitor progress and determine implementation strengths and areas for improvement. This team will be directly responsible for initiating modifications that will lead to increased implementation fidelity and student outcomes. Formative and summative evaluation data will be used to determine strengths and areas of continued improvement. The Cross-Departmental Implementation Team will strategize inputs and outputs to address continued or newly-identified areas of improvement. These modifications will be implemented by MSDE to better support LSSs to implement evidence-based practices that improve the instructional practices for students with disabilities. Successes and modifications to training, coaching, and systems alignment will be documented through meeting minutes. As described in section 3(b), stakeholder groups, including the Special Education State Advisory Committee (SESAC) and the LSS Implementation Teams will be ongoing, integral partners in examining the effectiveness of implementation, assessing progress toward achieving intended improvement, and recommending modifications to the SSIP as necessary.