

STATE OF NEW MEXICO



PUBLIC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT



New Mexico's State Systemic Improvement Plan

A collaborative effort amongst the Title I Bureau, Special Education Bureau, Literacy Bureau, Priority Schools Bureau, Parents Reaching Out (PRO), Education for Parents of Indian Children with Special Needs (EPICS), Eastern New Mexico University, REC #6, REC #7, and REC #8.



"Kids First, New Mexico Wins!"

Indicator 17: State Systemic Improvement Plan

Monitoring Priority: General Supervision

The State's SPP/APR includes a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) that meets the requirements set forth for this indicator.

Baseline and Targets

Baseline Data

FFY	2013
Data	27.9%

FFY 2013 – FFY 2018 Targets

FFY	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Target	29.9%	31.9%	33.9%	35.9%	37.9%

Targets: Description of Stakeholder Input

The New Mexico results-focused project began in the fall of 2011 as part of the State's Continuous Improvement Visit (CIV). The 2011 CIV consisted of several days of an on-site compliance review of the requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), by the OSEP. The CIV reviewed the State's system of general supervision system.

At the time of the visit, the U. S. Department of Education announced steps to help close the special education achievement gap by moving away from a one-size-fits-all compliance process to a more balanced monitoring system that reviews how students are educated. This "results-focused monitoring" is in addition to continued efforts to protect student rights through procedural compliance. Because of the philosophical shift in the monitoring of States, the State was required to develop a results plan that focused on improving one or more SPP results indicators. The second portion of the on-site visit consisted of OSEP providing the State, including the broad stakeholder group, technical assistance and support in the review of the State's data and in the development of the results plan. The State selected SPP Indicator 3c, reading proficiency rates (growth rates) of students with disabilities, as the 2011 results plan indicator.

The State's 2011 broad stakeholder group consisted of :

- IDEA Advisory Panel representatives
- Parent Training and Information Centers
- Directors of Special Education
- Parents
- Representatives from the Developmental Disability Council
- Teachers
- Directors of Regional Educational Cooperatives

As part of the results plan development, the Special Education Bureau (SEB) assembled data from multiple sources and presented it to the stakeholder group to discuss improvement and the development of a results-driven project.

The 2011 stakeholder group reviewed the disaggregated data and made several suggestions:

- 1) That the project must support the State's waiver under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), "no

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- 2) That the results-driven project focus on early literacy skills
- 3) That the project should focus on failing schools identified through the State’s new A-F school grading system
- 4) That the project must include communities with significant populations of Native Americans (at least 50% of elementary schools selected, when possible)
- 5) That more data be collected to examine the practices of high achieving schools
- 6) That the project must include parent involvement

As part of the data collection recommended by the 2011 stakeholder group, the Public Education Department contracted with a Regional Education Cooperative to study factors for success in school-wide reading achievement (number 5 above). The study looked at the practices of high performing schools to see if there were commonalities that could be generalized to other schools and districts in the state. The study has been completed and the results analyzed. The results of the study suggest that professional development in reading and support and collaboration with other professionals and specialists are common characteristics in high performing schools. Specifically, the study suggested that the successful practices in high performing (A or B) schools included:

- 1) Use of reading coaches
- 2) Providing teachers with regularly scheduled planning/collaboration time
- 3) Providing professional development on reading curriculum and standards
- 4) Implementation of school-wide reading curriculum with fidelity

Several of the schools included in the study reported that Title I was an effective reading intervention for students. Using the information gathered from the data reviews with stakeholders, as well as from the Regional Education Cooperative’s study, the stakeholder group developed the multi-year results plan. The State’s results-driven project, called New Mexico Real Results (NMRR), was initiated.

The State’s OSEP verification visit in 2011 helped push the project planning into action. This OSEP visit initiated New Mexico’s journey toward the development of the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) or SPP Indicator 17.

The SEB with the support of the Title I Bureau continued with its implementation of the State’s Results plan known as New Mexico Real Results (NMRR). Each year, a data analysis was conducted and process improvements were made to NMRR. The project continued to expand each year. Since the initial discussions with the IDEA Advisory Panel, updates have been given to the panel each spring on the progress of NMRR. The IDEA panel meets in NMRR project schools for some of their meetings to help understand the project and to monitor progress and implementation.

Since the State has experienced success with the NMRR program, it was determined that the SSIP and State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR) would continue to focus on reading growth rates of students with disabilities particularly in school-wide Title I programs. Since the NMRR project was expanding each year, it was logical to strengthen a program demonstrating positive trends in overall school grades and qualitative data suggesting increased teacher morale, while adding additional elements to scale up. This was supported by the State’s IDEA advisory panel and stakeholder group.

Training on the SSIP for IDEA Panel members, Local Education Agency (LEA) special education directors, Regional Education Cooperative directors and stakeholders began in the fall of 2013. Training and support was provided through the Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center and the Utah State University Technical Assistance for Excellence in Special Education (TAESE). Title I, Priority Schools and Literacy Bureau staff were added to the stakeholder group along with State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) staff.

Data for the SSIP were reviewed at the advisory panel meetings in the spring and fall of 2014. The advisory panel met again in December 2014 to discuss how the state’s results-driven project corresponds to the required State Systemic Improvement Plan. During that meeting, the stakeholders reviewed the following data:

- Section 618 data including assessment, discipline and exiting
- ESEA data including cohort graduation rates, proficiency and participation rates in reading and math

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- State Performance Plan (SPP)/Annual Performance Report (APR) indicator data
- NMRR and ASSETS data
- DIBELS Next data for students with and without disabilities

Based upon the review of the data, the Stakeholder group determined to continue with a focus on reading growth rates of students with disabilities. The (SIMR) was developed utilizing the DIBELS Next baseline data. The State's targets were set through FFY 2018.

In January 2015, the proposed SIMR, baseline data and targets were presented to the State's special education directors/coordinators, Charter School Administrators and Regional Education Cooperative Directors for their input. Public comment and feedback was taken through January 20, 2015.

The stakeholder group stressed the importance of supporting current State initiatives. The State's SSIP supports recent educational research and enhances current State initiatives such as:

- Flexibility waiver under ESEA
- Early literacy
- Intervention before retention or inappropriate referral for special education testing
- School improvement under ESEA
- Response to Intervention Framework
- A-F school grading system

The two parent training and information centers, Parents Reaching Out and Education for Parents of Indian Children with Special Needs continue to be deeply involved in the process, not only participating in the stakeholder groups but also contracting with the state to provide services to communities in support of the results-driven (SSIP) project.

Other stakeholders within the Public Education Department, outside of the Special Education Bureau work with the Special Education Bureau in support of the state's results-driven project. The Title I Bureau is largely responsible for the coordination of the SSIP and includes the Priority Schools Bureau, the Literacy Bureau and the Special Education Bureau in the planning and implementation of results-driven accountability. Including these stakeholders in the SSIP planning and implementation has led to unified monitoring visits, the inter-bureau use of monitoring tools, consolidation of resources and the synergistic development of ideas.

Data Analysis

A description of how the State identified and analyzed key data, including data from SPP/APR indicators, 618 data collections, and other available data as applicable, to: (1) select the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities, and (2) identify root causes contributing to low performance. The description must include information about how the data were disaggregated by multiple variables (e.g., LEA, region, race/ethnicity, gender, disability category, placement, etc.). As part of its data analysis, the State should also consider compliance data and whether those data present potential barriers to improvement. In addition, if the State identifies any concerns about the quality of the data, the description must include how the State will address these concerns. Finally, if additional data are needed, the description should include the methods and timelines to collect and analyze the additional data.

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New Mexico (NM) is the fifth largest State in the nation with an area covering over 121,500 miles. However, when it comes to population, New Mexico ranks 36th in the nation with just more than 2 million people with 448,461 living in poverty. During the 2014-2015 school year (SY) New Mexico public schools provide education to 328,871 students in grades K through twelfth grade. The current race and ethnicity breakdown is as follows:

2014-2015 SY State Demographic Data

Demographic	Number of Students	Percent Total
Black	6,818	2%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	4,257	1%
White	82,127	25%
Hispanic/Latino	201,216	61%
American Indian	33,940	10%
Total	328,871	100%
Non-economically Disadvantaged	97,310	30%
Economically Disadvantaged	231,561	70%
Total	328,871	100%
Non English Language Learners	278,841	85%
English Language Learners	50,030	15%
Total	328,871	100%

During the 2013-2014 school year (SY), 42,936 students aged 6 through 21 received special education and related services. The percentages of racial and ethnic breakdown of the students with disabilities are presented in the table below.

IDEA Special Education Data 2013-2014 SY

Race/Ethnicity	Percentage
American Indian	11.01
Asian	0.56
Black	2.32
Hispanic/Latino	61.14
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.07
White	23.48
Two or more races	1.42

New Mexico has a high rate of childhood poverty as evidenced through enrollment in Title I schools. During the 2013-2014 school year, 247,996 students were enrolled in Title I schools in New Mexico. Additional poverty information is discussed below.

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Title I/Economically Disadvantaged Data 2013-2014 SY

Race/Ethnicity	Number of students
American Indian	31,990
Asian	1,840
Black	4,290
Hispanic/Latino	162,011
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	232
White	44,525
Two or more races	3,108

Title I/Economically Disadvantaged Special Services/Programs 2013-2014 SY

Demographic	Number of students
Students with Disabilities (IDEA)	37,088
Limited English Proficiency	50,370
Homeless Students	10,154
Migrant Students	461

There are some disparities or disproportions in the State's data. The majority of the American Indian/Native American and Hispanic populations enrolled in NM public schools are attending a school where Title I services are being provided. In addition, When comparing Title I enrollment (n = 247,996) to Students with Disabilities aged 6-21 (n = 42,936), 86.3% of students with disabilities are enrolled in schools that provide Title I services. At the time of this report, the CSPR data for Title I for the 2014-2015 school year is not available. However, the number of students considered economically disadvantaged increased from the 2013-2014 school year to the 2014-2105 school year.

New Mexico is second in the nation in the percent of children below the federal poverty level. This accounts for 31.2% of children under 18 years of age. According to the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), NM was one of three states that had the highest percentage of low-income students participating in school breakfast compared to the school lunch programs. Because of the high poverty rate in NM, breakfast is required to be served at no cost to the student, in all elementary schools with a free and reduced price lunch rate of 85% or above. Breakfast must be served to students after the school day has begun.

13.2% of households in New Mexico were food insecure on average from 2011 to 2013, meaning that at some point during the year, the households experienced difficulty providing enough food due to a lack of money. New Mexico ranked 16th in the Nation in food insecurity. (Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Household Food Security in the United States in 2013).

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The graphic above represents the distribution of state food insecurity in the United States, the shorter the line, the greater the food insecurity. **New Mexico** ranks 16th in the United States, with the average state food insecurity represented as the blue line.

In preparation for the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) the State analyzed key data from Federal education programs such as Title I and special education, State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report SPP/APR indicators, Section 618 data collections, and other data as applicable including data from the New Mexico Real Results (NMRR) project, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) required results plan from the 2011 Continuous Improvement Visit (CIV), State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) and State initiatives including Reads to Lead and the A-F school grading system. The NMRR data analysis consisted of the review of Kindergarten through third grade DIBELS Next data for all students and students with disabilities. Data from the State's school grading system was reviewed with a particular emphasis on students with disabilities and students considered economically disadvantaged scoring in Quartile One. Title I designations (priority, focus and strategic) were also reviewed.

The 2011 CIV consisted of several days of an on-site compliance review of the requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, by the OSEP. The CIV reviewed the State's general supervision system. At the time of the visit, the U. S. Department of Education announced steps to help close the special education achievement gap by moving away from a one-size-fits-all compliance process to a more balanced monitoring system that reviews how students are educated. This "results-focused monitoring" is in addition to continued efforts to protect student rights through procedural compliance. Because of the philosophical shift in the monitoring of states, the State was required to develop a results plan that focused on improving one or more SPP results indicators. The second portion of the on-site visit consisted of OSEP providing the State, including the broad stakeholder group, technical assistance and support in the review of the State's data and in the development of the results plan. The State selected SPP Indicator 3c, reading proficiency rates (growth rates) of students with disabilities, as the 2011 results plan indicator.

As part of the results plan development, the Special Education Bureau assembled data from multiple sources and presented it to the stakeholder group to discuss improvement and the development of a results-driven project.

The stakeholder group reviewed the disaggregated data and made several suggestions:

- 1) That the project must support the State's waiver under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), "no silos"
- 2) That the results-driven project focus on early literacy skills
- 3) That the project should focus on failing schools identified through the State's new A-F school grading system
- 4) That the project must include communities with significant populations of Native Americans (at least 50% of elementary schools selected, when possible)
- 5) That more data be collected to examine the practices of high achieving schools
- 6) That the project must include parent involvement

As part of the data collection recommended by the 2011 stakeholder group, the Public Education Department contracted with a Regional Education Cooperative to study factors for success in school-wide reading achievement (number 5 above). The study looked at the practices of high performing schools to see if there were commonalities that could be generalized to other schools and districts in the state. The study has been completed and the results analyzed. The results of the study suggest that professional development in reading and support and collaboration with other professionals and specialists are common characteristics in high performing schools. Specifically, the study suggested that the successful practices in high performing (A or B) schools included:

- 1) Use of reading coaches
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- 3) Providing professional development on reading curriculum and standards
- 4) Implementation of school-wide reading curriculum with fidelity

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Explanatory text

Several of the schools included in the study reported that Title I was an effective resource in addressing reading intervention for students. Using the information gathered from the data reviews with stakeholders, as well as from the Regional Education Cooperative's study, the stakeholder group developed the multi-year results plan. The state's results-driven project, called New Mexico Real Results (NMRR), was initiated.

The NMRR program has been successful, based upon feedback from the schools and the positive trend in overall school grades, consequently it was decided to expand the NMRR to support implementation of the SSIP and SIMR, continuing the focus on reading growth rates of students with disabilities particularly in school-wide Title I programs. It was logical to strengthen a program that had proven success while adding additional elements to scale up. This strategy is supported by the State's IDEA advisory panel.

The PED has many coordinated systems geared toward improving student outcomes and closing the achievement and opportunity gaps. The review of the State's data below supports the selection of the SIMR and development of the SSIP. In addition, as evidenced by the narrative below, the State's SSIP supports current educational research, utilizes the framework and strengths of the State's current infrastructure and enhances current State initiatives such as:

- Flexibility waiver under ESEA
- Early literacy
- Intervention before retention or inappropriate referral for special education testing
- School improvement under ESEA
- Response to Intervention Framework
- A-F school grading system

All of the above State initiatives are tracked and monitored at least annually, and there are currently no areas of improvement within or across the systems. Adjustments will be made to the SSIP, as needed, based upon the review of data and information from the State systems.

Section 618 data was reviewed and analyzed including the Assessment Tables, ED Facts – Assessment Data Groups – Reading. During the 2013-14 School Year (SY) 98.71% of students with disabilities participated in the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (SBA) or alternate assessment. Only 16.33% of those participating scored proficient or above in reading. Data further disaggregated in accordance with 34 CFR § 300.160(f) was reviewed. This data provided State, district, and school level data for students with disabilities, including participation and proficiency rates for those students who took the SBA or alternate assessment with or without accommodations. This data can be viewed at <http://ped.state.nm.us/SEB/data/index.html>.

A student's ability to read proficiently by the end of 3rd grade is the top indicator as to whether they will successfully graduate from high school. Students who do not read proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school. Twenty-three percent of below-basic readers fail to finish high school on time, compared to 9 percent of children with basic reading skills and 4 percent of proficient readers. 88% of 19 year-old high school dropouts were not proficient readers in 3rd grade (Hernandez, 2011). The consequences of dropping out of high school are dire. High school dropouts are 4 times more likely to be unemployed and 47 times more likely to be incarcerated (Sum, Andrew, et al., 2009).

Although SPP indicator 3c is a stand-alone indicator and measure, it has a correlation with many other SPP indicators such as indicator 1 (graduation rates), indicator 2 (drop-out rates), indicator 4a and b (suspension/expulsion rates) and indicator 14 (post-school outcomes). Therefore this data was considered when developing the SSIP. All of these indicators have lag reporting because of the data collection requirements and time periods when the data must be collected.

According to the FFY 2013 APR, using 12-13 SY data (Cohort of 2013), 60.1% of students with disabilities (all diploma options) graduated within the cohort compared to 70.3% of all students. Additional cohort data is as follows:

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Demographic	Graduation Percentage
White	77%
African American	68.7%
Hispanic/Latino	67.9%
Asian	86.4%
American Indian	64.3%
Economically Disadvantaged	64.6%
English Language Learners	65.4%
Migrant	52%
Students with disabilities	60.1%

With the exception of students who are White or Asian, all other racial/ethnic group cohort graduation percentages were below the State average. In addition to students with disabilities, students who are considered to be economically disadvantaged, English language learners and migrant cohort graduation rates were below the State average.

According to New Mexico 2012-13 exiting data ED Facts Report of Children with Disabilities (IDEA) Exiting Special Education by Basis of Exit and Age, 24.75% of students with disabilities aged 14-21 who exited special education dropped out. The race and ethnicity of those students exiting special education due to dropping out is as follows:

Demographic	Exiting Drop-out Percentage
White	23.02%
African American	2.13%
Hispanic/Latino	62.96%
Asian	0.15%
American Indian	10.52%

The majority of students enrolled in the public schools report Hispanic/Latino as their race/ethnicity. However, when compared to other racial/ethnic groups in NM, students who are Hispanic/Latino exit special education due to drop out at a higher rate than other racial/ethnic groups. The State's five-year SSIP will have a positive impact on future graduation and drop-out rates.

Nationwide, 68% of students with a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) leave high school with a regular diploma while 19% drop out (NCLD 2014). Drop-outs are five times more likely to have repeated a grade than high school graduates. Students who repeat two grades have an almost 100% chance of dropping out (NCLD 2014).

Results for indicator 14 are a bit more positive with 43.8% of students who left high school were enrolled in higher education one year after leaving high school. 74.9% were enrolled in higher education or employed and a total of 81.1% of the students were enrolled in higher education, post-secondary training or competitively employed.

Although the FFY 2013 APR reported that no school districts had a significant discrepancy in the rates of suspensions and expulsions for students with disabilities (indicator 4a and b), according to the Section 618 discipline data ED Facts Report of Children with Disabilities (IDEA) Subject to Disciplinary Removals, students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) had the majority of removals due to drugs (64.71%), weapons (40%) and serious bodily injury (100%). When students were removed to an Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES) due to the above infractions, overall 59.09% were Hispanic/Latino, 27.27% American Indian and 13.64% White.

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Students with SLD had the majority of out-of-school suspensions (OSS) with 47.94% > 10 days and 55.4% < 10 days, respectively. The table below highlights the breakdown by race and ethnicity.

Race/Ethnicity	OSS > 10 days	OSS < 10 days
Hispanic/Latino	62.17%	64.48%
White	19.10%	18.30%
American Indian	10.11%	11.49%

Suspension rates are disproportionately higher for some groups than others. Although the Hispanic/Latino population is the majority population in New Mexico, students with learning disabilities who are Hispanic/Latino are suspended out of school at a greater rate than their peers of any other race or ethnicity. In addition, 84.64% of the out-of-school suspensions/expulsions greater than 10 days were male and males were also suspended 10 days or less at a greater rate than females totaling 80.74 percent.

According to National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD), one in every two students with SLD faced a school disciplinary action such as suspension or expulsion in 2011. Many individuals with SLD suffer low self-esteem, set low expectations for themselves, struggle with underachievement and underemployment, have few friends and, with greater frequency than nondisabled peers, appear to end up in trouble with the law. Students who struggle to read or do not know how to read have a tendency to have discipline issues within the classroom. It is critical that this group of students receive reading interventions early in their academic career to ensure they are on a path to success and reduce problem behaviors.

The chart below highlights New Mexico's Specific Learning Disability (SLD) population (n = 19,940) according to the ED Facts Report of Children with Disabilities (IDEA) Ages 6 through 21 by Age and Disability (OSEP006).

Racial/Ethnic Group	Number of students with SLD	Percentage of students with SLD
Hispanic/Latino	13,003	65.21%
White	3,747	18.79%
American Indian	2,374	11.90%

Of the 42,936 students with disabilities aged 6-21, SLD is the largest disability population at 46.44% of the total disabled population. The SSIP will focus on improving the reading growth rates for all students with disabilities and at risk students in grades K-3 (in a subset of schools selected to participate in the project.) However, as the majority disability population is SLD it is important for the SSIP to use reading and behavior interventions suited to SLD students.

The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's (NICHD) longitudinal studies indicate that at least 17 to 20% of the US population displays a reading disorder. Nationwide, at least 10 million students, or 1 in 5, will experience significant difficulties in learning to read well enough to read to learn or to read for enjoyment.

According to the National Center for Learning Disabilities (NCLD), the most common types of SLD are those that impact reading, math and written expression. Although the SLD varies from person to person, the most common characteristics include:

- Difficulty with phonemic awareness (the ability to notice, think about and work with individual sounds in words)
- Phonological processing (detecting and discriminating differences in phonemes or speech sounds)
- Difficulties with word decoding, fluency, rate of reading, rhyming, spelling, vocabulary, comprehension and written expression.

NCLD reports that students with disabilities, including those with SLD, are much more likely to be retained than students without disabilities. According to a parent survey, almost 1/3 of students with disabilities have been held back at least once. Retention is linked to increased behavior problems in schools. Therefore it is important to provide interventions in

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the early elementary grades (K-3), including Tier 2 and 3 interventions, progress monitoring, instructional groupings and parental involvement. This framework is supported through New Mexico's three-tiered model of student intervention and the Reads to Lead program. Early identification and intervention are essential in maximizing treatment success in children who are at risk for reading failure (NCLD 1999). The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) studies demonstrate that the intensity and duration of reading interventions must increase exponentially as children get older to achieve the same degree of improvement attainable during kindergarten and first grade, strengthening the case for early intervention.

In FFY 2013, SPP indicator 8 (parent involvement) 84.8% of those in the representative group surveyed reported that "The school facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services for my child(ren)." When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more (SEDL 2002). The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) synthesized studies on parental involvement in the schools. It was determined that special efforts taken by schools to engage families do make a difference. Teacher outreach to parents correlated with strong and consistent gains in student performance in both reading and math. Effective outreach was defined as face-to-face meetings, sending materials home, and keeping in touch about progress. Workshops for parents on helping students at home lead to higher reading and math scores. The State's Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIC) working with parents in the selected sites is essential in meeting the SIMR. The Readers Raise the Roof workshop component of Reads to Lead provides parents with the opportunity to work with their children at home and the efforts are supported by the PTICs.

In a study by Miedel and Reynolds (1999), it was determined that involved parents can monitor their child's progress and intervene when the child is struggling or in trouble at school. Parent intervention can lead to the prevention of retention, placement in special education or both. When parents are involved they may be able to stop the cycle of school failure by intervening early. Of another important note, Miedel and Reynolds (1999) indicated that support from parent centers may provide parents with the skills and desires to remain involved in their child(ren)'s education and to monitor school accomplishments. Parent involvement programs can be positive factor in overcoming risk conditions such as poverty, which lead to low achievement.

Shaver and Walls (1998) studied the effect of parent involvement on Title I students. They determined that students whose parents regularly attended school-based parent workshops showed greater gains in reading and math when compared to those students whose parents were less involved. They concluded that parent involvement, despite the family background, is a dynamic force that influences a student's academic success. Title I programs can increase the student achievement by developing well thought out parent-teacher group activities.

Other SPP indicators, including the compliance indicators (9, 10, 11, 12 and 13) were analyzed to determine whether those data present potential barriers to improvement. Indicators 9 and 10 allow the State to determine if local education agencies (LEAs) have disproportionate representation due to inappropriate identification. In FFY 2013, no LEAs were considered noncompliant with indicators 9 and 10. This indicator allows the State to monitor the LEAs' rates of identification, on an annual basis, and whether or not the identification of students with disabilities is inappropriate. This indicator is loosely correlated, but not considered a barrier. Although the SIMR focuses on students with disabilities already identified and receiving special education services, interventions being provided at the schools will focus on Tier 2 interventions in order to prevent inappropriate referrals for special education evaluations and inappropriate identification. Intervention must be provided for struggling learners prior to retention or special education evaluation. If interventions are provided early (grades K-3) then fewer students will be referred for special education evaluation which could also impact Indicator 11 (evaluations completed within 90 days.) The SSIP could indirectly assist in improving this compliance indicator. The remaining compliance indicators do not present any barrier to the State's implementation of the SSIP.

In New Mexico, 13.9% of all students are identified as students with disabilities; however, 15.1% of Native American students are identified as having learning disabilities. The relatively high percentage of Native American students identified as students with disabilities is indicative of a dearth of high expectations for students in minority communities (Van den Bergh et al., 2010,) as well as a dearth of quality interventions being provided to students in Tier I and Tier II.

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Both of these deficiencies are addressed in the State's plan for improvement.

The racial/ethnic student population which continues to exhibit the lowest levels of academic achievement on the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment is the Native American subpopulation of students. In 2013, 30% of Native American third graders scored in the "Beginning Steps" achievement level for reading, more than six percentage points above the next group. For every grade-level assessed by the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment, the Native American subpopulation of students had the highest percentages in the "Beginning Steps" achievement level for reading of any racial/ethnic subpopulation of students. Native American students also had the smallest percentages of students who were proficient and above in reading for each grade level tested of any racial/ethnic subpopulation of students on the NMSBA in 2013. Statewide demographic data illustrates that Native American populations are concentrated in several regions and districts across the state, particularly the northwest quadrant.

New Mexico's 4th grade readers dropped from 49th to 51st in the nation (The Nation's Report Card, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2013); many of these 4th grade students were socially promoted despite the fact that little more than half of them were reading on grade level the previous year (New Mexico Standards Based Assessment (NMSBA), 2012). Data on reading proficiency in the earliest tested grades is the most concerning, with fourth-grade NAEP reading scores for all New Mexico students at a proficiency of only 24%, and for students with disabilities the proficiency rate is just 4 percent. Additional State NAEP data from the Nation's Report card is as follows:

2013 NAEP Data

Demographic	4 th Grade Percentage Proficient
White	38%
Black	24%
Hispanic/Latino	17%
American Indian	7%
National School Lunch Program Eligible	15%
National School Lunch Program Not Eligible	39%

In 2013, students who are Hispanic/Latino had an average score that was 24 points lower than students who are White. Students eligible for free/reduced priced lunch (Economically Disadvantaged), as an indicator of low family income, had an average score that was 27 points lower than students who were not eligible for free/reduced priced lunch.

Further, third-grade reading scores (the lowest grade tested) had the highest level of "Beginning Steps" achievement (the lowest level of proficiency) for any grade level for students with disabilities on the 2013 New Mexico Standards Based Assessment, the state's summative accountability assessment. Of those third grade students assessed during the 2013-2014 SY, 51.8% of all students scored proficient or above while only 44.8% of those students considered economically disadvantaged and 19% of students with disabilities scored proficient or above.

In selecting elementary schools to participate in NMRR, several data sets were considered, including LEA and school-based demographic data (students with disabilities and Native American students), student growth, overall school grade, Title I status and student achievement in the lowest quartile (students with disabilities and economically disadvantaged).

During the 2014-2015 school year, 39 elementary schools in 23 (of New Mexico's 89) school districts participated in either the NMRR or ASSETS (Results Driven Accountability (RDA)) programs. In 2015-2016, the programs will be combined under the RDA model. Current data on the RDA schools follows:

Prepopulated historical data	Prepopulated data from other sources	Calculated
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Explanatory text

Overall School Grade	Number
B	7
C	9
D	12
F	11

Quartile One Grade	Number
B	5
C	12
D	9
F	13

As part of the A-F grading system the following information is considered when calculating the Quartile 1 (Q1) or student growth of the lowest performing students:

- How well did the school help individual students improve?
- The lowest performing students are those whose prior scores placed them in the bottom quarter (25%) of their school.
- Individual student growth over the past three years is compared to the state benchmark.

Title I school status was considered in selecting schools for the RDA project. One RDA school currently has a priority school designation, three have focus school designations, and nine have strategic school designations. The majority of the schools participating continue to have an overall failing grade (D or F) and only five of the 39 schools have a grade of A or B for student growth in the quartile one grades.

The State does not have concerns about the quality of the data available and reviewed. No additional data is needed at this time; therefore a plan to collect and analyze additional data is not needed.

Root Causes

In examining the data and reviewing research it became clear to the stakeholders that it was important to focus on lower grades. The best predictor of reading achievement at the secondary level is reading achievement at the primary level (Scarborough, 1998). Students who do not read proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to leave school without a diploma than are proficient readers, and 23% of third-grade below-basic readers fail to finish high school on time, compared to just 4% of proficient readers (Hernandez, 2011.) Further, as third-grade achievement in New Mexico exhibited the highest percentages of any grade level in the lowest level of achievement, Beginning Steps, it was clear that to improve outcomes at every grade level it was critical to focus on early intervention. A root cause for low graduation rates and low reading achievement at the high school level is low reading achievement at the elementary level.

Another root cause of low reading achievement in New Mexico is poverty. New Mexico has the second highest childhood poverty level in the nation. Further, the State's Hispanic student subpopulation, which is over represented in suspensions and expulsions (particularly among SLD students) is also an overrepresented subpopulation in Title I schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Poverty is linked to lower reading achievement. Poverty is also linked to behavior problems, which further exacerbate low reading achievement levels (Eamon, 2002). A 2002 study by Mary Keegan Eamon found that poverty affected lower reading achievement through less cognitively stimulating and emotionally supportive home environments for students and indirectly through associated behavior problems. However, the background effects from difficult family situations can be mediated by supports with home literacy, home language and early vocabulary (Leseman & De Jong, 2011.)

Another root cause of low reading achievement for New Mexico students are low teacher and administrator expectations. A meta-analysis of teacher expectations for students of varying racial backgrounds found that expectations for students of

Prepopulated historical data	Prepopulated data from other sources	Calculated
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Explanatory text

Asian or European descent were more positive than for other racial groups. The language used by teachers varied depending on the ethnic group being addressed (Tenenbaum, Ruck, & Martin, 2007.) A 2010 study corroborated the findings of the meta-analysis, indicating that teachers have lower expectations for minority students (van den Bergh et al., 2010.) Further, the study found that students respond to lower expectations, by exhibiting lower performance. In New Mexico, 73.9% of students identify as other than white.

An additional root cause is that teachers and administrators in New Mexico have limited knowledge of how to effectively implement reading interventions. Teacher knowledge of reading fluency is a significant predictor of reading achievement throughout the early elementary grades (Lanea et al., 2009). Most New Mexico schools and school districts are small and rural. New Mexico is the fifth largest state by land mass, but the 36th by population, making it the 5th lowest state in population density at 6.6 square miles per person. Teachers and administrators have little access to quality professional development opportunities due to remote locations and limited budgets based on small student enrollments.

It is apparent from the research and all of the various data sources reviewed that a focus on reading in grades K-3 will have a long-term impact on a student's future success in life, college and career. According to the research reviewed, interventions should occur early in the students' educational careers when they are learning to read as opposed to reading to learn. Students with disabilities and those students considered economically disadvantaged must be the focus of the overall interventions and improvement strategies.

The initial SIMR developed by the stakeholder team was to improve reading in grades Kindergarten through three. Over time, and in collaboration with Stakeholders, the SIMR was refined. The IDEA Advisory Panel eventually set the target for the SIMR to, "By federal fiscal year 2018, 37.9% of students with disabilities in Results Driven Accountability schools will score benchmark on the End of Year DIBELS-Next Composite."

In summary the SSIP must:

- Align with State initiatives (school grading, early reading, response to intervention) and Flexibility Waiver under ESEA
- Support, grow and enhance the work of the 2011 Results Plan
- Focus on early literacy (grades K-3)
- Utilize the response to intervention framework by implementing Tier 2 and 3 interventions
- Support early intervention before retention or inappropriate referral for special education services
- Improve reading growth rates of students with disabilities, students considered at risk and economically disadvantaged leading to
 - Improved overall school grades
 - Improve Q1 grade
 - Decreased suspension and expulsion rates and classroom disruptions
 - Increased graduation rates and decreased drop-out rates in the future
 - Decreased inappropriate referrals for special education
- Address the needs of New Mexico rural districts and elementary schools with high Native American populations (at least 50% of schools selected, when possible)
- Include parent involvement
- Support Title I schools and those students considered economically disadvantaged
- Address the root causes of low reading achievement in New Mexico

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Explanatory text

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Analysis of State Infrastructure to Support Improvement and Build Capacity

A description of how the State analyzed the capacity of its current infrastructure to support improvement and build capacity in LEAs to implement, scale up, and sustain the use of evidence-based practices to improve results for children with disabilities. State systems that make up its infrastructure include, at a minimum: governance, fiscal, quality standards, professional development, data, technical assistance, and accountability/monitoring. The description must include current strengths of the systems, the extent the systems are coordinated, and areas for improvement of functioning within and across the systems. The State must also identify current State-level improvement plans and initiatives, including special and general education improvement plans and initiatives, and describe the extent that these initiatives are aligned, and how they are, or could be, integrated with, the SSIP. Finally, the State should identify representatives (e.g., offices, agencies, positions, individuals, and other stakeholders) that were involved in developing Phase I of the SSIP and that will be involved in developing and implementing Phase II of the SSIP.

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Staff from the PED's Federal Programs Division received training on the SSIP from the Utah State University Technical Assistance for Excellence in Special Education (TAESE). After the training, a team of personnel began to analyze the capacity of the State's current infrastructure to support improvement and build capacity in LEAs to implement, scale up and sustain the use of evidence-based practices to improve results for students with disabilities.

New Mexico was one of the first states to complete and submit a results plan to OSEP as part of the 2011 CIV. Since the New Mexico Real Results (NMRR) Plan, has now been in effect for multiple years and experienced success, it has been decided to bolster the NMRR Plan while making improvements to the program and scaling up with the SSIP.

The State's waiver under ESEA was the genesis for the SSIP under the Results Driven Accountability model. The original NMRR plan supported the State's waiver under ESEA, the A-F school grading system and over time supported the State's Early Literacy program, Reads to Lead. Supporting the State's waiver, school grading system and reading initiative through the SSIP will improve results of students with disabilities and at risk students. The waiver requires the monitoring of individual student growth and school growth in the areas of reading and math. Individual student growth is tracked over three years, while the school growth model looks at school improvement over the past three years.

Under the waiver, when calculating growth rates, the ESEA subgroups are considered in the calculation of school grades. However, using the traditional race/ethnic, language, disability and/or economic status does not fully identify schools with improvements needs. By identifying the student scores in lowest quartile (Q1) in each school, the PED can consider how large the performance gap is for the lowest performing students and how this gap is changing over time, irrespective of student classification. This process supports identification of schools with the greatest need and supports identification of the greatest needs within a school based on actual performance. Moreover, every school has a bottom quartile and by adding extra weight to the lowest scoring students' growth in school grade calculations, incentive is provided for continuous improvement and the closing of educational gaps.

School grade results are disaggregated by the traditional No child Left Behind (NCLB) subgroups and utilized in identifying interventions for Priority, Focus and Strategic Schools' designations. Using the bottom quartile is consistent with moving away from subsets of students for a school's lack of success. This change allowed for students who were not previously included in Adequate Yearly Progress calculation due to a small "N" size to be included and accounted for in Title I schools. When this change occurred due to the waiver's implementation, an additional 20,400 students' (English Language Learners/Free and Reduced Price Lunch/Students with Disabilities) growth rates were accounted for in the schools' lowest quartile growth.

The waiver also addressed specific interventions for various school designations such as Priority, Focus and Strategic. These interventions must be student focused and align to the needs of the students. For example, if within a Focus School it is found that Native American students are struggling more than other subgroups of students, the school will be required to implement an intervention program that addresses the unique needs of that student group. Or, if within a Focus School, it is found that students with disabilities are not making progress, the school would be required to select a turn-around principle that will improve progress rates of students with disabilities. The full explanation of New Mexico's A-F School Grading Accountability System can be viewed at <http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/PrioSchoolsDocs/NM%20System%20of%20Support%20Priority%20Schools%20Bureau%20014-2015.pdf>.

The waiver strengthened New Mexico's Accountability System by addressing individual student growth rates and school growth rates over time. The waiver holds schools accountable for student subpopulations receiving Title I services and students with disabilities who may not have been accounted for under the old system. The waiver provides a consistent approach for working with struggling schools. The State's system includes: differentiated technical assistance, opportunities for professional development, annual program budget reviews, support in data-driven decision making, resources for best practices and evidence-based programs, and a number of tools to assist schools and districts in analyzing and determining their strengths and opportunities for improvement.

The collaborative components of the Results Driven Accountability model along with the efforts recently taken by the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education and Office of Special Education Programs identifying opportunities to

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leverage federal funds to best support improved outcomes for all students together with the State's waiver provided the opportunity to implement an SSIP through the coordination of multiple PED bureaus and programs. Although the SSIP will be implemented by the PED's Title I Bureau, it will receive support from the Special Education, Priority Schools and Literacy Bureaus. This cross-bureau implementation and plan will serve as a model of integration for local education agencies in New Mexico.

It was determined by the internal and external stakeholder groups that the SSIP should work within the structure of the waiver and support recent federal guidance on improving outcomes for students through collaborative efforts. The SSIP supports New Mexico's waiver and enhances the State's efforts in improving the reading growth rates of students with disabilities.

In 2011, the State developed its strategic plan for education, "Kids First, New Mexico Wins!" The strategic plan provides a road map for educational reform in New Mexico, including specific goals, data validation and public performance measures. The creation of the Strategic Plan analyzed the capacity of the State's current infrastructure to support improvement and build capacity in the LEAs.

The Strategic Plan includes five strategic levers needed for reform:

1. Smarter Return on Investment
2. Real Accountability, Real Results
3. Ready for Success Initiative
4. Rewarding Effective Educators and Leaders
5. Effective Options for Parents

The full plan with detailed measures can be viewed at <http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/PEDDocs/2012NMPEDStrategicPlan.pdf>

Strategic Lever 1: Smarter Return on New Mexico's Investment

The NMPED's strategic goals increase transparency in school spending, foster a partnership between the NMPED and local school districts in aligning district and charter school budgets to proven student success strategies. The following innovative goals will continue to propel New Mexico towards this strategy:

1. Maximize the utilization of state and federal dollars for education
2. Increase percentage of dollars to the classroom
3. Maximize targeted investments for education reform
4. Improve budget review and oversight of D and F schools to ensure resources are moved away from ineffective programs and to programs that are research-based and proven to increase student achievement

Strategic Lever 2: Real Accountability. Real Results.

The NMPED's transparent school-grading system allows parents, teachers, students, and the community to understand the quality of education in our classrooms, creating a culture of higher expectations and greater achievement. The keys to improving our education system are recognizing excellence and progress, while addressing failures. The *Real Accountability. Real Results.* initiative incentivizes accountability and effectiveness, replaces failure with success, and ensures our system of evaluating students is meaningful and informative. Goals include:

1. Maintain the school grading system
2. Implementation of federal waiver
3. Increase A and B schools and decrease D and F schools
4. Improve data submission and review process by districts for the completion of A-F grades
5. Create monetary and/or flexibility incentives for schools and districts
6. Increase parent and community involvement
7. Implement effective turnaround strategies for low performing schools and champion proven strategies in higher-performing schools
8. Continue to implement CCSS

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9. Transition to CCSS assessments
10. Develop additional End-of-Course exams for use in the Alternative Demonstration of Competency and redesigned educator evaluation system

Strategic Lever 3: Ready for Success Initiative

To prepare students to succeed throughout their academic careers, the NMPED is committed to placing a command-focus on literacy. This focus includes vertical alignment and integration of the core content, and prioritizing research-based strategies for reading interventions. This will ultimately lead to college success and career readiness. Goals include:

1. Increase the percentage of students who score Proficient or Advanced on the SBA
2. Increase graduation rates
3. Increase the percentage of students in grades K-3 demonstrating growth in reading proficiently
4. Reduce the percentage of students retained in third grade due to literacy level
5. Increase literacy resources available to teachers, administrators, parents and education stakeholders through a literacy website
6. Increase the number of students prepared for college and career

Strategic Lever 4: Rewarding Effective Educators and Leaders

To ensure all students have access to great teachers and school leaders, the NMPED is committed to implementing an evaluation system that prioritizes student academic gains while recruiting, retaining, rewarding, and incentivizing effective teachers and leaders. Goals include:

1. Implement the teacher evaluation system
2. Create an educational leadership pipeline
3. Work with Higher Education to address teacher preparation program effectiveness
4. Align teacher and school leader competencies with the CCSS
5. Create performance standards aligned to the teacher evaluation system
6. Establish teacher preparation program approval criteria

Strategic Lever 5: Effective Options for Parents

Parents in New Mexico want multiple educational opportunities for their children, including effective charter schools that are held accountable to high standards. In addition, the NMPED is increasing robust online learning opportunities to reach out to all areas of New Mexico. Goals include:

1. Increase number of high performing charter schools by improving academic, financial and operational quality as measured by the charter school accountability performance frameworks
2. Improve charter authorizer performance by providing high-quality, nationally-recognized technical assistance on charter school accountability

In February 2012, New Mexico was granted a waiver (flexibility request) under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The waiver addressed two particular components of “Kids First, New Mexico Wins”: 1) Real Accountability, Real Results and 2) Rewarding Effective Teachers and School Leaders.

Real Accountability, Real Results focuses on increasing the number of A and B schools while decreasing the number of D and F schools, implementation of effective turnaround strategies for low performing schools and the implementation of Common Core State Standards. Rewarding Effective Teachers and School Leaders ensures all students have access to great teachers and school leaders through an evaluation system that prioritizes student academic gains while recruiting, retaining, rewarding and incentivizing effective teachers and leaders.

At the time the waiver was being developed, the broad stakeholder group was developing the results plan as required by the 2011 OSEP CIV, utilizing the Strategic Plan. The stakeholder group reviewed the disaggregated data provided by the State and made several suggestions for the results plan:

1. That the project must support the State’s waiver under ESEA, “no silos” (Strategic Lever 2)
2. That the results-driven project focus on early literacy skills (Strategic Lever 3)

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3. That the project should focus on failing schools identified through the State's new school grading system (Strategic Lever 2)
4. That the project include communities with significant populations of Native Americans (Strategic Lever 2 and 3)
5. That more data be collected to examine the practices of high achieving schools (Strategic Lever 2)
6. That the project must include parent involvement (Strategic Lever 2)

The results plan, with a focus on literacy (reading) was approved and implementation began during the 2012-2013 school year. Selection of the schools supported the waiver, strategic plan and utilized the following criteria:

- Overall school grade of D or F (Strategic Lever 2)
- D or F in Q1 (Strategic Lever 2)
- High number of students with disabilities scoring in Q1 (Strategic Lever 2)
- School-wide Title I program
- 50% of school sites had high Native American population (when such sites are available)

Although NMRR was supporting components of the waiver and strategic plan with a focus on literacy and parent involvement, the NMRR needed to become involved in and support the State's reading initiative, Reads to Lead. NMRR assists and supports those schools struggling to improve their overall school grade and Q1.

New Mexico's Early Learning Initiative

Third grade is an important pivot point in a child's education, the time when students shift from learning to read and begin reading to learn. Interventions for struggling readers after third grade are seldom as effective as those in the early years. Children who acquire a firm foundation in literacy in grades K–3 are not only prepared for future academic success, but will possess the life-long gift of reading. Approximately half of New Mexico's third grade students are proficient in reading.

New Mexico's State funded early reading initiative, New Mexico Reads to Lead (Strategic Lever 3), provides an aligned research-based approach for districts and schools to ensure that children can read on grade level by the end of third grade—giving them essential skills for future career and college success. Reads to Lead provides the following expectations and supports as we prepare our children to become leaders in literacy:

1. Increase quality of reading instruction
2. Provide a screening assessment for use in planning data-driven instruction
3. Provide quality professional development for administrators, reading coaches, and teachers
4. Ensure that districts/charter schools have a comprehensive plan for addressing literacy instruction
5. Reach out to parents and families with free resources in English and Spanish to support children's reading at home

The New Mexico Reads to Lead initiative funds a reading K–3 Formative Assessment System provided to districts and charter schools at no cost. It also provides regional and district reading coaches, supports for intervention, and professional development for parents, teachers, reading coaches, and administrators. Districts and charter schools applying for Reads to Lead funds develop a kindergarten through grade three comprehensive reading plan. The comprehensive reading plan details how the district or charter school will ensure that:

1. Leadership at the district/charter and school level are guiding and supporting the initiative
2. Data analysis drives all decision-making
3. Professional development is targeted to individual teacher needs as determined by analysis of student performance data
4. Measurable student achievement goals are established and clearly described
5. Appropriate evidence-based instructional materials and strategies are used to address specific student needs

Reads to Lead was developed in 2012 to increase student achievement in grades K–3 by providing regional and district reading coaches, supports for intervention, and professional development for parents, teachers, reading coaches, and

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administrators. New Mexico has demonstrated the investment in Reads to Lead through increases in annual appropriations. The Reads to Lead funding history is provided in the chart below:

Fiscal Year	Legislative Appropriation
2012-2013	\$8.5 million
2013-2014	\$11.5 million
2014-2015	\$14.464 million

Since the implementation of Reads to Lead in 2012, approximately 6,000 educator, administrator, and reading coach participants have received professional development to assist struggling readers. In addition, 5,500 family members have participated in Readers Raise the Roof, a family professional development opportunity where families learn about ways to help support their child with reading at home and create a family reading plan.

Reads to Lead training has been provided on the following topics:

- Differentiated instruction
- Coaching
- Foundations of reading instruction
- Intervention strategies
- Foundations of writing instruction
- Common Core State Standards
- Literacy centers
- Data analysis
- Strategies for families to support reading at home with children

In surveys conducted after Reads to Lead professional development activities 49% of respondents indicate a high-level of knowledge of the provided content due to the training.

Reads to Lead District and Charter School Participation

School Year	Districts	Charter Schools
2012-2013	13	1
2013-2014	84	24
2014-2015	87	33

PED provides DIBELS-Next at no cost to districts and charter schools participating in Reads to Lead as a literacy formative assessment measure for students in grades K–3. Use of this universal screening and progress monitoring assesment provides consistent data for all districts and charter schools participating in Reads to Lead. One-minute benchmark measures are administered three times a year with ongoing progress monitoring measures administered to students scoring below benchmark. DIBELS-Next data provides important information to teachers to drive instruction that meets students’ needs.

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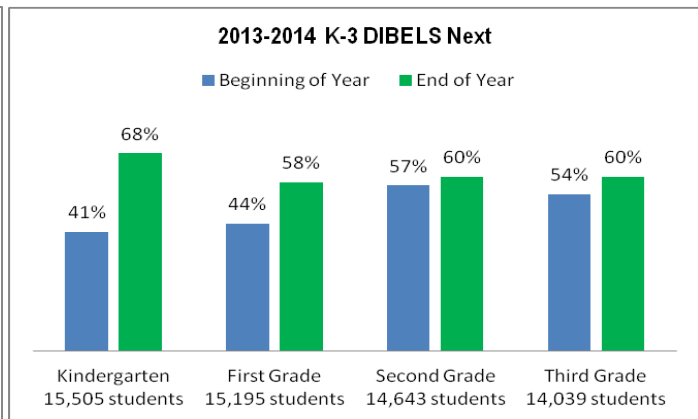
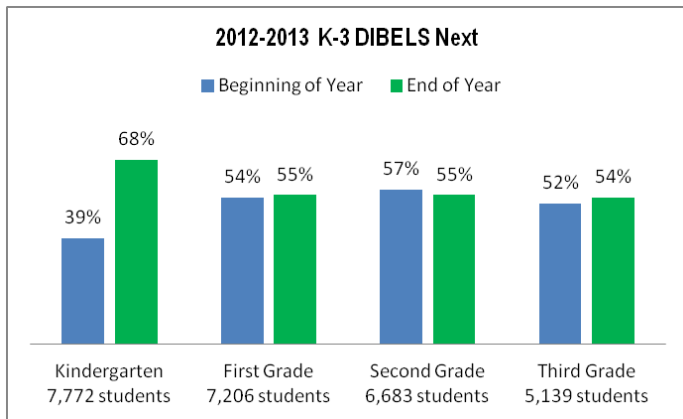
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K–3 DIBELS-Next Participation

	2012–2013	2013–2014	2014–2015
Districts/Charters	87	117	122
Number of Schools	260	345	443
Number of Students	26,800	59,382	100,303

K–3 DIBELS-Next State Data Percentage of Students Scoring at Benchmark



2012–2013 DIBELS-Next Data (Total of 26,800 K–3 students)

- Increased percentage of students scoring at benchmark from beginning to end of year:
 - Kindergarten: 29%
 - 1st grade: 1%
 - 2nd grade: -2%
 - 3rd grade: 2%

2013–2014 DIBELS-Next Data (Total of 59,382 K–3 students)

- Increased percentage of students scoring at benchmark from beginning to end of year:
 - Kindergarten: 27%
 - 1st grade: 14%
 - 2nd grade: 3%
 - 3rd grade: 6%

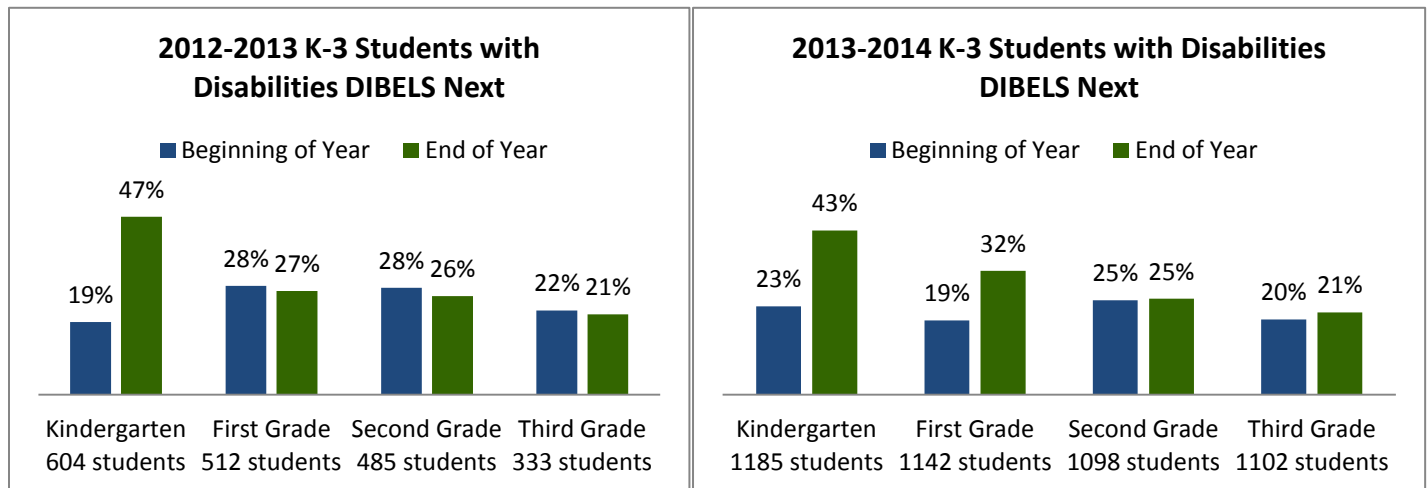
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DIBELS-Next data for students with disabilities from 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years are highlighted below.



Although the fewer students with disabilities scored at benchmark when compared to all students, the growth of students with disabilities was essentially at the same rate as all students. Both groups of students had the greatest gains in Kindergarten.

Standards Based Assessment Data

- In 2013, districts that participated in Reads to Lead increased the percentage of students proficient in reading by 7.8 percentage points, with some districts experiencing double-digit growth. Further, the program increased the percent of English language learners proficient in reading by 7.7 percentage points that year.
- In 2014, the 87 districts that participated in Reads to Lead demonstrated an average of 42.9% of third grade students scoring proficient and above as compared to the two non-participating districts, with an average of 58%.

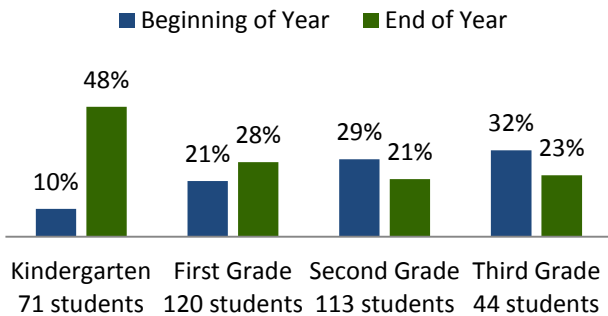
During the 2013-2014 school year the NMRR project began supporting the Reads to Lead (RtL) reading initiative that included the Readers Raise the Roof parent literacy program. PED staff (Title I and special education) and contractors (reading coaches, data experts and special educators) worked with the eight selected school sites on ways to support RtL and how to improve reading growth rates of students with disabilities and those students receiving Tier 2 interventions under the State's Response to Intervention Framework. PED and contractor staff reviewed and analyzed DIBELS-Next data. Professional development and support were provided to school staff on the use of DIBELS data for progress monitoring, student interventions and the development of Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals. During the 2014-2015 school year, the NMRR project is supporting 15 school sites (eight from 13-14 and seven from 14-15) using the RtL model and data components.

During the 2014-15 school year, 87 out of 89 New Mexico school districts were participating in RtL and utilizing the DIBELS Next data. This includes all of the NMRR and Achieving Student Success with Effective Tiered Supports (ASSETS) school sites. The graphs below illustrate the DIBELS-Next data in the Results Driven Accountability (NMRR and ASSETS) schools.

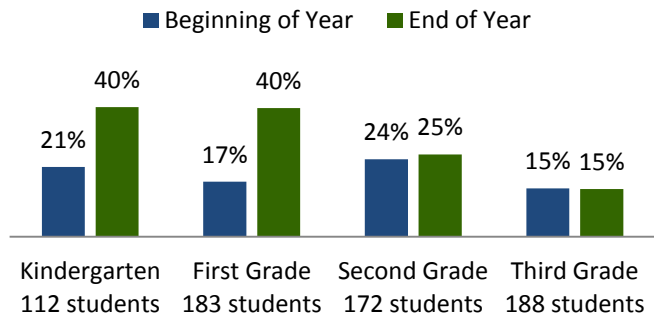
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2012-2013 K-3 Students with Disabilities DIBELS Next RDA Schools



2013-2014 K-3 Students with Disabilities DIBELS Next RDA Schools



The RDA schools DIBELS Next data for students with disabilities was compared to the Statewide data for students with disabilities. During the 2012-2013 school year, students with disabilities in the RDA schools had greater gains in Kindergarten and first grade. All students, students with disabilities and students with disabilities in RDA schools all experienced a decrease or very little growth in grades 2 and 3.

During the 2013-2014 school year, students with disabilities in first grade in the RDA schools grew at a greater rate (+10 percent) when compared to students with disabilities Statewide. The growth rates in Kindergarten, second and third grade were essentially the same.

In 2012-2013, 2013-2014 and 2014- 2015 school years \$1.5 million State directed activity funds under 34 CFR § 300.704 (b)(4)(xi) were earmarked for NMRR schools. Those funds are to be used “to provide technical assistance to schools and LEAs, and direct services, including supplemental educational services as defined in section 1116e of the ESEA to children with disabilities, in schools or LEAs identified for improvement under section 1116 of the ESEA on the sole basis of the assessment results disaggregated subgroup of children with disabilities, including professional development to special and regular education teachers, who teach children with disabilities, based on scientifically based research to improve educational instruction, in order to improve academic achievement to meet or exceed the objectives established by the State under section 1111(b)(2)(G) of the ESEA.” These discretionary funds went directly to schools to support school improvement activities. Additional discretionary funds were set aside for the PTICs and the REC’s supporting NMRR. Each NMRR school receives a site visit at the beginning of the school year. Site visit activities include:

- Completion of an abbreviated version of the New Mexico Instructional Audit (NMIA) for special education and Tier 2, at risk, learners.
- Classroom observations utilizing the State’s teacher walkthrough form.
- Review of DIBELS data and any other applicable short cycle assessment data.
- Interviews with the principal, regular and special education teachers and site leadership team using the NMIA interview forms updated to address special education and Tier 2 at risk learners.
- Review of the school’s Educational Plan for Student Success (school improvement plan).

The NMIA is required for any school with the designation of priority, focus or strategic. The monitoring tools associated with the NMIA were developed by the PED’s Priority School’s Bureau (PSB) and are required as part of the State’s waiver and intervention system. The teacher walkthrough form and interview questions/forms were also developed by the PSB and are used as part of the NMIA. The utilization of standardized forms assists the staff with consistent application of tools for school improvement. As the schools are already familiar with the forms this avoids miscommunication and misunderstanding. When the Title I designations of schools change or if turn-around principles must be applied, there are running records of data and interventions.

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The NMRR program is more comprehensive than RtL. It provides additional interventions and monitoring as it's focus is on multiple aspects of the Strategic Plan and ESEA Waiver. The NMRR emphasizes improving reading growth rates while supporting overall school improvement. Data collection includes:

- Improving the school's overall grade (Strategic Lever 2)
- Decreasing the number of students with disabilities and students who are economically disadvantaged scoring in Q1 and improving that grade (Strategic Lever 2)
- Increasing the percentage of students in grades K-3 demonstrating growth in reading proficiency (Strategic Lever 3)
- Reducing the number of students retained in third grade due to literacy (Strategic Lever 3)
- Increasing parent and community involvement (Strategic Lever 2)

Before spending funds, schools must develop a plan to address concerns identified through the NMIA, EPSS, site visits, observations and interviews. Proposed activities must be evidence-based and tied to improving reading growth rates of students with disabilities or Tier 2 at risk learners, must include a timeline for implementation and must include specific funding amounts for each activity. The plan must be approved by PED staff prior to spending funds and must be submitted along with the budget adjustment request. PED staff monitors the plan's implementation through interim on-site visits, document submission, review of student-level data and an end of year visit. Expenditures are monitored through the Request for Reimbursement process in the State's Operating Budget Management System (OBMS). Expenditures and accompanying documentation are reviewed for compliance with the IDEA and OMB-A-87. Expenditures must tie back to the plan to be approved for payment.

In October 2012, the State was awarded a State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) entitled Achieving Student Success with Effective Tiered Supports (ASSETS). The purpose of the grant is to support New Mexico's Strategic Plan and ESEA waiver in the following areas:

- Improving school grades
- Increasing the percentage of students who score proficient or advanced on the Standards Based Assessment
- Increasing the percentage of students in grades K-3 demonstrating growth in reading and math proficiency
- Implementation of the teacher evaluation system

ASSETS implementation began in the 2013-2014 school year and supported schools with an overall grade of C, D or F with a high percentage of students with disabilities scoring in the lowest 25% (Quartile 1.) Supports for struggling students are provided through Tier 1 - 3 interventions in accordance with the State's Three-Tiered Model of Student Intervention Framework. Data driven targeted professional development is provided to teachers to support instruction as determined by student data, professional development surveys, the Systems Level Assessment and teacher walkthroughs.

The SPDG has its own set of criteria for implementation, expenditures and reporting and will be adhered to as written and approved by OSEP. However major aspects of the SPDG do support the SSIP and SIMR and will be utilized to assist the State with the scaling-up process and sustainability of the efforts to improve reading growth rates of students with disabilities and those students considered at risk (Tier 2 interventions) for failure or inappropriate referral for special education services.

The SPDG required the State to create a leadership team and advisory council to provide governance over the implementation of the grant. Leadership team members include the Federal Programs Division director, the Title I director, a representative from the Special Education Bureau, the external evaluator, representatives from Regional Education Cooperatives #6 and #7 and the SPDG project director. The advisory council includes the leadership team and the Special Education Director, the Literacy Bureau chief, the Priority Schools Bureau chief, representatives from both PTICs, the NMRR coordinator, the dean of ENMU's College of Education, and a representative from Mathematically Connected Communities.

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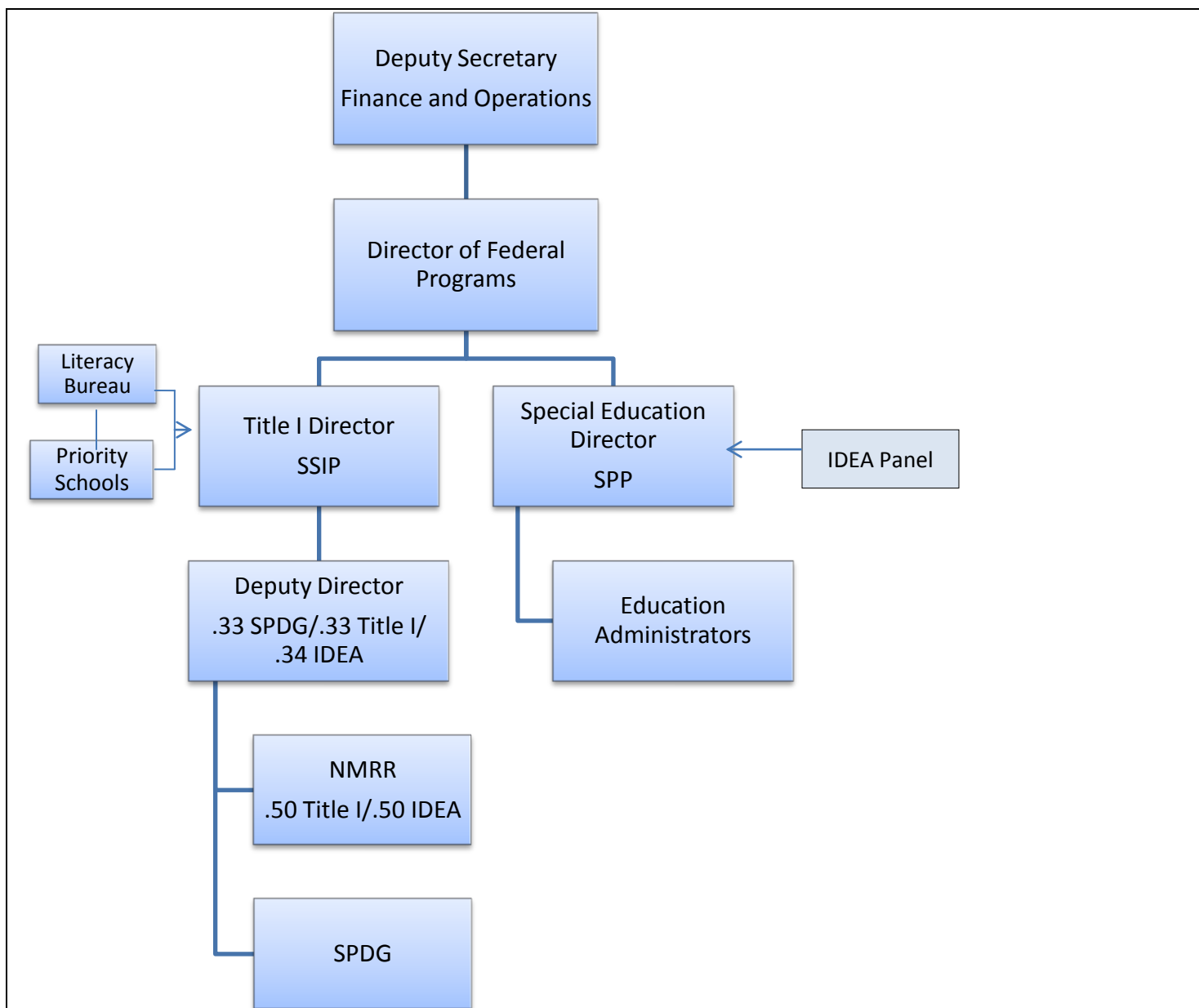
The parental involvement component of the SSIP (NMRR and ASSETS) is supported and implemented by the State's two PTICs, Parents Reaching Out (PRO) and the Education for Parents of Indian Children with Special Needs (EPICS). Depending on the demographics of the schools, either PRO or EPICS are assigned to work with the schools. Working together, a parent involvement plan that includes training for parents is developed and the PTICs are responsible for its implementation. Many sites have adopted and implemented the parent training component of Reads to Lead, Readers Raise the Roof, and summer reading programs at the schools or community facilities.

The State's IDEA advisory panel has adopted two out of three goals and improvement activities to support the work of the SSIP (NMRR and ASSETS). One goal focuses on improving reading growth rates of students with disabilities and the other supports increasing parental involvement. The IDEA panel requires an annual report out on the SSIP and schedules at least one meeting annually at an RDA site. The meeting includes a school tour and presentations by school staff and parents.

The SSIP is a collaborative effort being implemented by the PED's Federal Programs Division (Title I and Special Education Bureaus) with support from the PED's Literacy and Priority School's Bureaus. An 1.0 IDEA funded FTE is provided to the literacy bureau to provide early childhood education support and Reads to Lead support for students with disabilities. The current governance structure is as follows:

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The SSIP is not intended to take the place of the PSB or supersede the work that is required under the School Improvement Framework. Instead, the SSIP provides a tiered intervention approach in working with struggling schools. The SSIP focuses on improving reading growth rates of students with disabilities and students considered at risk. The SSIP is housed in the Title I Bureau because of the State's ESEA waiver's focus on school improvement, emphasis on reading growth rates, and because 86.3% of students with disabilities are enrolled in Title I schools. The State's "no silos" approach intends to achieve this through supporting the State's early literacy model utilizing a common measure (DIBELS-Next) that allows the tracking and monitoring of student progress over time.

During the 2015-2016 school year, the State will be scaling up and providing additional funding, support, technical assistance and professional development in 25 additional sites for a total of 64 schools from 34 out of 89 school districts.

In addition to the current infrastructure, the following components will be added:

- Additional IDEA B 1.0 FTE to increase the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) to

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improve reading growth rates, create positive school environments and reduce the number of disciplinary concerns that reduce the amount of time on task

- In-kind support and monitoring of RDA Title I sites by Title I staff
- The combination of NMRR and ASSETS into RDA
- An increase from \$1.5 million to \$2 million in RDA school funds for professional development, materials and staff such as reading coaches Mini-grants for the implementation of PBIS
- Title I/Special Education Principals Pursuing Excellence “lite” program that focuses on students with disabilities and at risk students (additional information about PPE is below)
- Use of Reads to Lead Reading Coaches as part of RDA implementation (RDA coaches State funded – IDEA B stipends will be provided when implementing RDA focusing on students with disabilities and those at risk for inappropriate referral for special education)
- The combination of components of RDA into the Title I parent involvement plan

The goal of Principals Pursuing Excellence (PPE) is to leverage the expertise of local leaders to support and empower Mentee principals, as they work urgently to dramatically improve student achievement in their schools.

- PPE is aimed at building leadership capacity in New Mexico’s schools.
- PPE is multilayered professional development and mentorship for school and district leaders.
- PPE develops and supports the competencies a leader must demonstrate in order to be transformational.

According to data collected by the PED, PPE participants report that instruction in their schools is now more driven by assessment data than in the past, with regular data analysis meetings commonly used to identify problems and next steps

- Teachers in schools with a participating administrator when surveyed about the PPE program have shown support as well, with 60% saying that school leaders met more often with teachers one-on-one to give feedback on instruction and 65% saying that students were more likely to know the end goal, how they did, and what actions they are taking to improve.
- 53% of participating PPE schools increased their letter grade by 1-3 grades, which is more than double the rate of change across New Mexico.

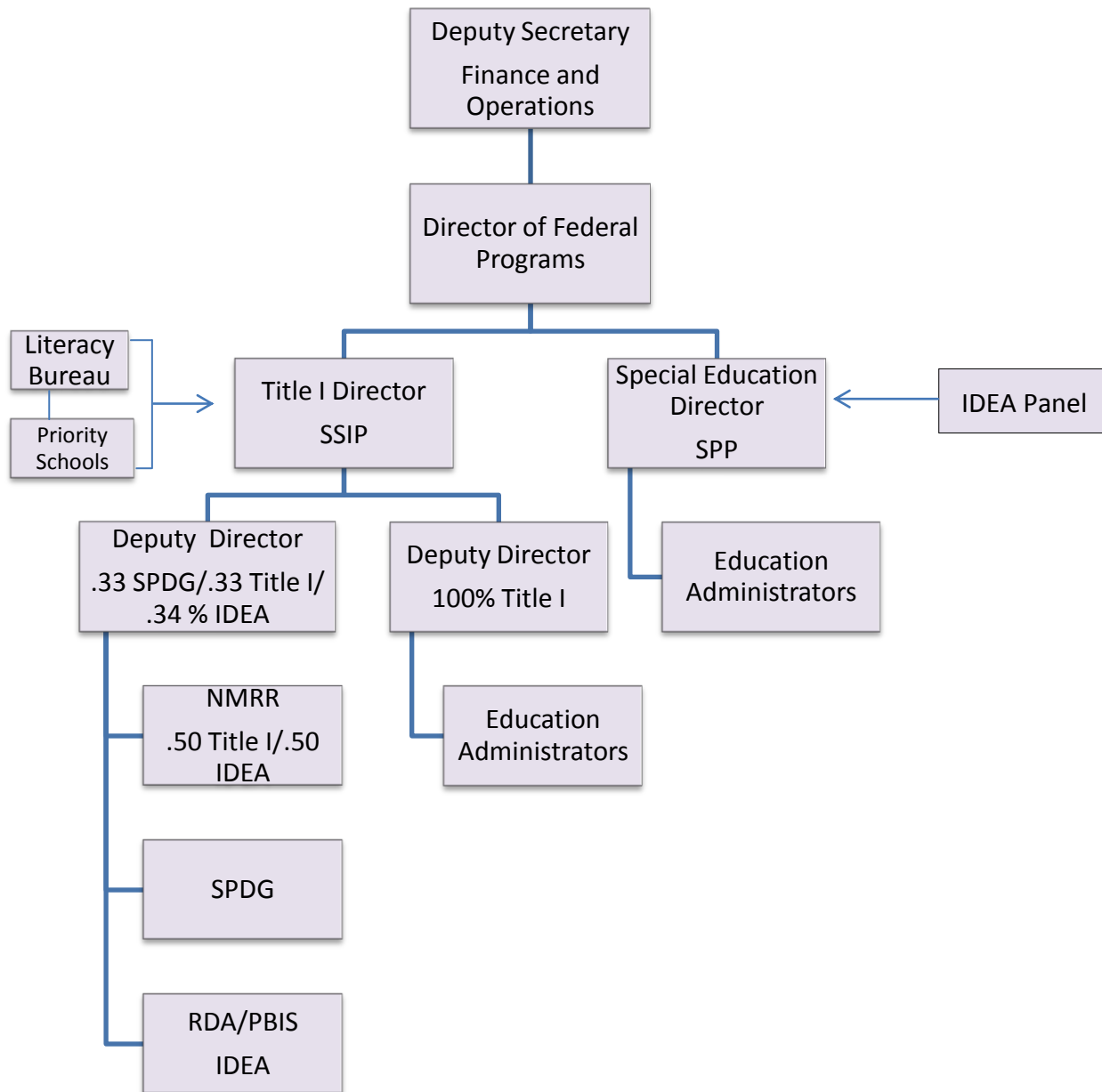
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The 2015-2016 RDA governance structure will be as follows:



Phase I of New Mexico's SSIP was developed by the following representatives:

- IDEA Panel members in accordance with 34 CFR § 300.168
- Stakeholder group as described in the Stakeholder Input Section
- PED Deputy Secretary for Finance and Operations
- PED Deputy Secretary for Policy
- PED Director of Federal Programs
- PED Title I Director
- PED Special Education Director
- PED Title I Deputy Director
- PED Priority Schools Bureau Director
- PED Literacy Bureau Director

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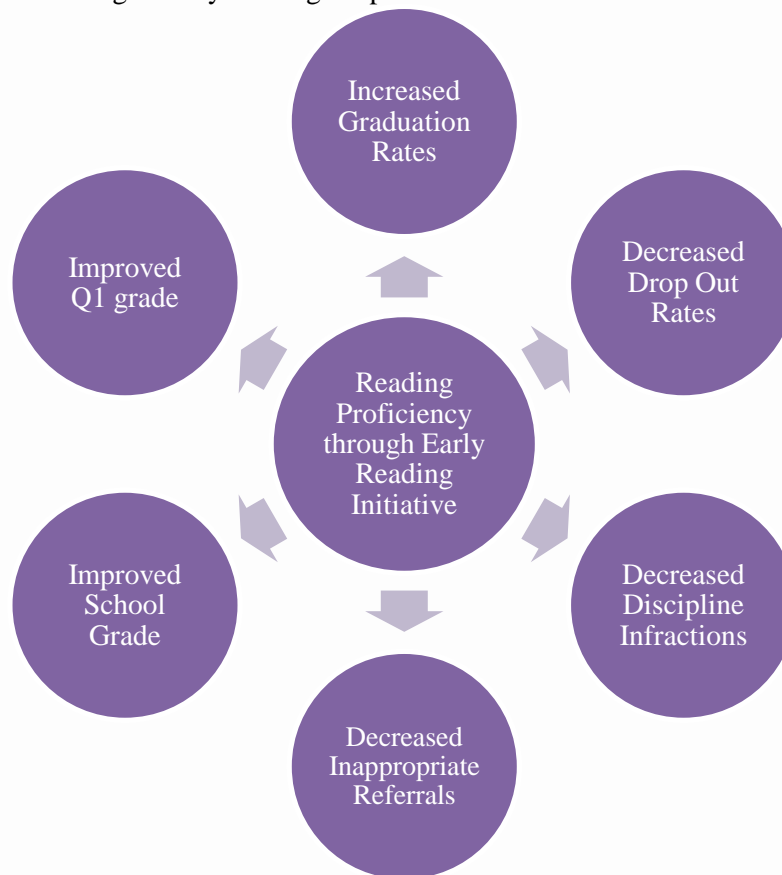
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- NMRR Program Manager
- SPDG Project Director
- Regional Education Cooperatives #6, #7 and #8
- LEA special education directors and coordinators
- Parents Reaching Out
- Education for Parents of Indian Children with Special Needs

These individuals or people in their positions will be involved in developing and implementing Phase II of the SSIP.

In conclusion, it is important to note that a student's ability to read proficiently is at the center of New Mexico's SSIP. Improving reading growth rates of students with disabilities is a coordinated effort including:

- Evidence-based school improvement strategies including turn-around principles, when applicable
- Adoption of an early literacy program to support Tier 2 and 3 reading interventions including progress monitoring
- Consistent use of a Formative Assessment System
- Support for teachers from reading coaches
- Implementation of the State's Response to Intervention Framework
- Data informed decision making
- Targeted technical assistance
- Professional Development for regular and special education school personnel
- Support and professional development for school leaders with a focus on principals
- Funds to target and support efforts
- Parental involvement including literacy training for parents



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State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities

A statement of the result(s) the State intends to achieve through the implementation of the SSIP.

Through the implementation of the State Systemic Improvement Plan, New Mexico intends to achieve the following:

By federal fiscal year (FFY) 2018, 37.9% of students with disabilities in Results Driven Accountability schools will score benchmark on the End of Year DIBELS-Next Composite.

Baseline data from 2013 indicate that 27.9% of students with disabilities in Results Driven Accountability (RDA) schools scored benchmark on the EoY DIBELS-Next Composite. Reaching the 2018 goal of 37.9% represents a 36% increase in achievement from the baseline data.

A description of the result(s) the State intends to achieve through the implementation of the SSIP. The State-identified result(s) must be aligned to an SPP/APR indicator or a component of an SPP/APR indicator. The State-identified result(s) must be clearly based on the Data and State Infrastructure Analyses and must be a child-level outcome in contrast to a process outcome. The State may select a single result (e.g., increasing the graduation rate for children with disabilities) or a cluster of related results (e.g., increasing the graduation rate and decreasing the dropout rate for children with disabilities).

The State has a SIMR

New Mexico's State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR) is:

By federal fiscal year (FFY) 2018, 37.9% of students with disabilities in Results Driven Accountability schools will score benchmark on the End of Year DIBELS-Next Composite.

Baseline data and targets are measurable and rigorous

Baseline data from 2013 indicate that 27.9% of students with disabilities in Results Driven Accountability (RDA) schools scored benchmark on the End of Year DIBELS-Next Composite. Reaching the 2018 goal of 37.9% represents a 36% increase in achievement from the baseline data.

FFY 2013 – FFY 2018 Targets

FFY	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Target	29.9	31.9	33.9	35.9	37.9

In December 2014 the New Mexico IDEA Advisory Panel reviewed baseline DIBELS-Next data and set the State's targets through FFY 2018. In January 2015, the LEA directors of special education, regional education cooperatives and charter school leaders met to provide input on the SIMR and associated coherent improvement strategies. The group expressed overwhelmingly that the 36% increase in DIBELS-Next composite level was an ambitious (rigorous) goal. Many also expressed that the SIMR was unattainable, but a vocal minority found the 36% increase to be either appropriate or not rigorous enough. RDA staff believe the SIMR is both rigorous and attainable and if they must err, choose to err on the side of being overly ambitious with the understanding that the target can be adjusted in the future, if needed, based upon student data and in communication with the OSEP.

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Through a systematic process the State selected the SIMR based on data and infrastructure analyses

The SIMR was formed based on data and research. In New Mexico, fourth-grade NAEP reading scores for all students demonstrate proficiency of only 24 percent. For students with disabilities the proficiency rate is just four percent. Math scores for students with disabilities were nearly 300% higher than reading scores. Further, third-grade reading scores (the lowest grade tested) had the highest level of “Beginning Steps” achievement (the lowest level of proficiency) for any grade level for students with disabilities on the 2013 New Mexico Standards Based Assessment, the state’s summative accountability assessment.

The SIMR was also developed based on the State’s infrastructure analysis. The SIMR addresses the state’s infrastructure strengths through consolidation of the goals of three similar Public Education Department (PED) projects, the New Mexico Real Results (NMRR) Plan, Achieving Student Success with Effective Tiered Supports (ASSETS), and New Mexico Reads to Lead (RtL.) All three projects support the State’s waiver under ESEA and the State’s Strategic Plan for Education, “Kids First, New Mexico Wins!” The goal of the NMRR Plan centers on the improvement of reading for all students, but particularly those scoring in the lowest quartile in elementary school. The NMRR Plan is supported through IDEA B state directed activity funds, and NMRR work began with schools in the 2012-2013 school year. The ASSETS project is the State’s State Personnel Development Grant project focused on Response to Intervention. ASSETS goals are to improve the outcomes of all students, but particularly those scoring in the lowest quartile in elementary school in behavior, math, and reading achievement. The Literacy Bureau’s New Mexico Reads to Lead initiative provides funds to support reading in grades Kindergarten through three to increase the percentage of students demonstrating growth in reading, and to reduce the percentage of students retained in third grade due to literacy. These three projects have developed infrastructure for provision of the professional development needed to implement evidence-based reading interventions and improved student outcomes in reading. Consequently, the SIMR is based on early elementary reading achievement.

In considering the SIMR it was clear to stakeholders that the Public Education Department’s (PED’s) infrastructure lacked the capacity to provide all of the necessary professional development and related services to all elementary schools in the State. The NMRR Plan is providing services to 9 districts in the northwest quadrant of the state and ASSETS is providing services to 12 districts in the southeast. Together the projects are currently working in nearly a quarter of the State’s LEAs; however, the PED lacks the infrastructure to support a State-wide implementation, therefore, the SIMR is focused on a subset of districts that will grow over five years to include nearly half of all the State’s districts.

Through a systematic process the State selected the SIMR with involvement from multiple internal and external stakeholders

The SIMR project was begun (and continues) as a cross-bureau results-based project housed in the Title I Bureau, funded through the Special Education Bureau, and supported by the Priority Schools and Literacy Bureaus.

A stakeholder group met in 2011 to review the State’s achievement data and to begin forming a results-based project. The stakeholder group was comprised of:

- IDEA Advisory Panel representatives
- Parent Training and Information Centers
- Directors of Special Education
- Parents

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- Representatives for the Developmental Disability Council
- Teachers
- Directors of Regional Educational Cooperatives

It became clear to the stakeholders upon reviewing data and research that it was important to focus improvement efforts on reading achievement in the lower grades. The best predictor of reading achievement at the secondary level is reading achievement at the primary level (Scarborough, 1998). Students who do not read proficiently by third grade are four times more likely to leave school without a diploma than are proficient readers, and 23% of third-grade below-basic readers fail to finish high school on time, compared to just 4% of proficient readers (Hernandez, 2011.) Further, beginning in the second grade and continuing through higher math, reading becomes increasingly important to math achievement. Increases in reading proficiency are likely to support increases in math proficiency.

As the efforts of the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) are intended to affect early reading achievement, an assessment was needed to measure reading achievement in grades Kindergarten through three. The stakeholder group chose not to use the state accountability assessment (the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment) or SPP Indicator 3c (reading proficiency/growth rates) for the SIMR, as the earliest grade-level assessed by the PARCC assessment is third grade. However, the stakeholder group selected a student-centered measure that will have a future impact on the SPP Indicator 3c.

The DIBELS-Next assessment measures reading achievement for the early grades and is universally available across the state (for grades K-3) through strategic lever three of the State's "Strategic Plan 2012: Kids First, New Mexico Wins!" and the "New Mexico Reads to Lead!" initiative. The DIBELS-Next assessment is comprised of seven different assessments, which vary over different assessment periods and different grade-levels, depending on developmental appropriateness. The battery of assessments for any given assessment period varies both in number and in types of assessments. The achievement levels measured by the DIBELS-Next are benchmark, below benchmark and well-below benchmark. The scores needed to reach benchmark differ across assessment periods and grade levels.

The DIBELS-Next composite assessment is a composite score calculated from all of the assessments taken during an assessment period. The DIBELS-Next composite achievement level is the only aspect of the DIBELS-Next assessment that remains consistent across grades K-3, though the assessments used to calculate the composite score change across assessment periods and grades as do the scores needed to achieve benchmark. The internal stakeholders in the Literacy Bureau provide the DIBELS-Next Assessment to the LEAs and the Literacy Bureau cooperated with the Title I and Special Education Bureaus in considering appropriate options for the SIMR assessment. Similarly, the regional education cooperatives (RECs - an external stakeholder group) were central in choosing the DIBELS-Next assessment as the measure used for the SIMR. Once the DIBELS-Next assessment was selected, the literacy bureau provided training to RDA staff on the components of DIBELS-Next to inform how the assessment might best measure growth in early elementary students with disabilities. The RECs then provided ideas for how the State could use DIBELS-Next assessment data longitudinally to support the SIMR.

The New Mexico IDEA Advisory Panel met in December 2014 to discuss the State Systemic Improvement Plan, to review baseline DIBELS-Next data, and to set the state's targets through FFY 2018. Additionally, the LEA directors of special education met in Albuquerque in January of 2015 to provide input on the SIMR and associated coherent improvement strategies.

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The Parent Training and Information Centers (PTICS) have also been central to the development of the SIMR, as members of the stakeholder group who developed the State’s results-driven project and as partners with the State on developing plans for the implementation of the SIMR at school sites. In addition to the community work done by the state’s two PTICs, Education for Parents of Indian Children with Special Needs (EPICS) and Parents Reaching Out (PRO), the State presented information on the SSIP to the community at both of the PTICs’ conferences in 2014. Presentations on the SIMR are again scheduled for both conferences in the spring of 2015.

The SIMR will have an impact on improving results for children with disabilities within the State

New Mexico’s SIMR focuses on improving results for at risk students and students with disabilities in a subset of LEAs, those participating in Results Driven Accountability. The RDA project is the backbone of the SSIP, providing professional development, coaching, technical assistance and resources directly to select elementary schools to improve reading achievement for students. The project currently has schools in 21 of the State’s 89 districts, nearly a quarter of all districts. For the 2015-2016 school year, the project intends to add 13 districts, with 2016-2017 school year the project intends to add four more, in 2017-2018 an additional four districts, bringing the total to 42 districts, 47% of the total. In districts with multiple elementary schools, the project looks to recruit at least two schools (if there are two qualifying schools) such that the schools can work together and support one another in improvement efforts and can support district-wide improvement. Providing professional development and other RDA services in 47% of districts across each quadrant of the State in support of school improvement efforts, there will be a State-wide shift in educational practices. Improving the reading proficiency rate for students in RDA schools will improve State-wide results.

The SIMR is a child-level outcome aligned to APR indicators

New Mexico’s SIMR is a child-level outcome (not a process outcome) as its focus is on student achievement data. The SIMR is aligned to Indicator Three, student assessment. Though not explicit in the SIMR, the state’s plan also addresses Indicator Nine, disproportionate representation, through the State’s plan to focus its efforts on elementary schools in communities with significant Native American populations (this focus arose from the stakeholder input provided in the 2011 stakeholder meeting, and from data indicating that Native American students in New Mexico suffer the lowest achievement of any racial subpopulation on the New Mexico Standards Based Assessment.) Native American students are more likely to be identified as having a learning disability. In New Mexico, 13.9% of all students are identified as students with disabilities; however, 15.1% of Native American students are identified as having learning disabilities. The work of the SIMR is meant to provide early reading interventions to students in tier I and tier II, and thereby reduce the number of students referred for tier III (special education) interventions.

The SIMR is aligned with current agency initiatives or priorities

The SIMR is aligned with current agency initiatives and priorities. The Public Education Department’s “Strategic Plan 2012: Kids first New Mexico wins!”

(<http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/PEDDocs/2012NMPEDStrategicPlan.pdf>) outlines the Secretary of Education, Hanna Skandera’s, five strategic levers to support improved educational outcomes for students. The SIMR is a central aspect of lever two, “Real Accountability. Real Results.” and lever three, “Ready for Success Initiative.” The New Mexico Real Results Plan is the results-based project between the Special Education and Title I Bureaus that grew from the 2011 stakeholders meeting and is the basis for the SIMR. The New Mexico Real Results Plan is a central part of the work being done for the State’s strategic lever two.

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The Governor’s “New Mexico Reads to Lead!” program is central to strategic lever three, “Ready for Success Initiative.” The SIMR and the “New Mexico Reads to Lead!” initiative are synergistic. The “New Mexico Reads to Lead!” initiative is an early literacy initiative, and it provides DIBELS-Next, an assessment of early literacy, to districts Statewide for free. “New Mexico Reads to Lead!” also provides millions of dollars to districts to support the development of early literacy. Some of those funds support the SIMR, through the provision of literacy coaches and professional development. Goals for strategic lever three include, “Increase the percentage of students in grades K–3 demonstrating growth in reading proficiency,” and, “Reduce the percentage of students retained in third grade due to literacy level,” both of which are supported by the efforts of the SIMR.

References:

Hernandez, D.J. (2011). Double Jeopardy: How third-grade reading skills and poverty influence high school graduation. Baltimore, MD: The Annie E. Casey Foundation. <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-DoubleJeopardy-2012-Full.pdf> (12/29/2014).

Scarborough, H. S. (1998). Predicting the Future Achievement of Second Graders with Reading Disabilities: Contributions of Phonemic Awareness, Verbal Memory, Rapid Naming, and IQ. *Annals of Dyslexia*, 48(1), pp 115-136.

Selection of Coherent Improvement Strategies

An explanation of how the improvement strategies were selected, and why they are sound, logical and aligned, and will lead to a measurable improvement in the State-identified result(s). The improvement strategies should include the strategies, identified through the Data and State Infrastructure Analyses, that are needed to improve the State infrastructure and to support LEA implementation of evidence-based practices to improve the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities. The State must describe how implementation of the improvement strategies will address identified root causes for low performance and ultimately build LEA capacity to achieve the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities.

How the CIS were developed with internal and external stakeholders engagement

After selecting the SIMR, and in collaboration with stakeholders, including parent training and information centers, regional education cooperatives, LEA special education directors, Charter School leaders, the IDEA advisory panel and four bureaus within the Public Education Department, coherent improvement strategies (CIS) were developed and refined to address each of the root causes of low reading achievement.

Initial discussion about CIS began in 2011 with the OSEP CIV and the development of the New Mexico Real Results (NMRR) Plan. A large stakeholder group was involved in the initial stages and included:

- IDEA Advisory Panel representatives
- Parent Training and Information Centers
- Directors of Special Education
- Parents
- Representatives for the Developmental Disability Council
- Teachers
- Directors of Regional Educational Cooperatives

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At the request of the 2011 large stakeholder group, another stakeholder, a Regional Education Cooperative (REC), was contracted to study the successful practices of successful schools. REC #4 found that professional development in reading, and support and collaboration with other professionals and specialists are common characteristics in high performing schools. Specifically, the research suggested that the successful practices in successful schools include:

1. Using reading coaches
2. Providing teachers with regularly scheduled planning/collaboration time
3. Providing professional development on reading curriculum and standards
4. Implementation of school-wide reading curriculum with fidelity

The report by REC #4 was provided to The New Mexico IDEA Advisory Panel and became the basis for the NMRR Plan. As the SSIP developed from the NMRR Plan, the IDEA Advisory Panel met several more times to inform and provide feedback on the SIMR and on the CISs. Additional details are provided in the Description of Stakeholder Input section.

The two parent training and information centers, Parents Reaching Out (PRO) and Education for Parents of Indian Children with Special Needs (EPICS) continue to be deeply involved in developing and implementing the CIS. They not only participate in stakeholder groups, but also contract with the State to provide summer reading programs for families, as well as school staff and parent trainings in support of the results-driven (SSIP) project.

Two current PED projects, Achieving Student Success with Effective Tiered Supports (ASSETS) and the NMRR Plan are being merged to support the SSIP. ASSETS and the NMRR Plan will become the Results Driven Accountability (RDA) program. The Title I Bureau of the PED is combining the ASSETS work, supported by the State's State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) with the resources devoted to the IDEA B state directed activities' NMRR work to meet both the individual program needs of those projects while leveraging federal funding to support the CIS to maximum benefit. NMRR is focused on increasing reading achievement (reading growth rates) in early elementary students, while the ASSETS project looks to increase reading and math achievement (and reduce gaps) while reducing behavior distractions. To achieve these goals, both projects provide professional development and coaching. The CISs are a consolidation of the strategies used by both ASSETS and NMRR.

Considering feedback both from the NMRR Plan and ASSETS, the CIS were developed jointly by the Title I and special education bureaus in a series of meetings that occurred throughout 2014 and into early 2015. The CIS were refined by input from the Literacy and Priority Schools Bureaus. The Literacy Bureau, providing expertise on reading strategies and the use of the DIBELS assessment, helped refine the coaching model and provided resources to support coaching in RDA schools, while the Priority Schools Bureau provided a model for school administrator trainings and RDA leadership initiatives, as well as material for book studies on the work of Paul Bambrick-Santoyo. Including these stakeholders in the SSIP planning and implementation has led to unified monitoring visits, the inter-bureau use of monitoring tools, consolidation of resources and the synergistic development of improvement strategies.

The CIS were presented to the IDEA Advisory Panel and accepted by the panel in their December 2014 meeting. Further, at the Special Education Bureau's January 2015 Special Education Directors meeting (LEA special education directors, regional education cooperatives and charter school leaders) the CIS were presented to the directors in small groups to elicit input on the CIS. There was overwhelming agreement within and among the groups that professional development is the best way to address the root causes of low reading achievement. Further feedback from the directors that could be incorporated into the CIS included suggestions around the requirements of coaches to be knowledgeable in reading and data analysis, the encouragement of more reading in the schools and the encouragement of communication and collaboration among teachers at a school site (17% of the feedback was related to communication and collaboration among teachers.)

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CIS alignment with the State’s strategic plan for improvement and current initiatives

The CISs are aligned with current agency initiatives and priorities outlined in The Public Education Department’s “Strategic Plan 2012: Kids First, New Mexico Wins!”

(<http://ped.state.nm.us/ped/PEDDocs/2012NMPEDStrategicPlan.pdf>) In the plan, Secretary of Education, Hanna Skandera, provides five strategic levers to support improved educational outcomes for students. The CIS aligns with lever two, “Real Accountability. Real Results.” and lever three, “Ready for Success Initiative.” The New Mexico Real Results Plan is a central part of the work being done for the State’s strategic lever two. The Governor’s “New Mexico Reads to Lead!” program is central to strategic lever three, “Ready for Success Initiative.” The “New Mexico Reads to Lead!” initiative is an early literacy initiative that provides literacy coaches and professional development to support the CIS.

The CIS are aligned with the work of multiple projects and bureaus. In addition to the work of the Special Education and Title I Bureaus in ASSETS and NMRR, the CIS align with the work of the PED’s Literacy Bureau and Priority Schools Bureau. The CIS are aligned with the literacy bureau’s New Mexico Reads to Lead initiative, which provides coaching, professional development and the DIBELS-Next assessment to districts across the state. The CIS are also aligned with the Priority Schools Bureau’s Principals Pursuing Excellence program, which provides professional development and mentoring to administrators across the state.

The CIS

The CIS were developed to address the root causes of low reading achievement of students with disabilities in New Mexico, while considering the State’s data and infrastructure. The root causes of low reading achievement in New Mexico include low reading achievement of early elementary students with disabilities, poverty, low teacher and administrator expectations for students, and a lack of quality professional development opportunities across the large and rural state. The CIS flow from the data and infrastructure analysis in myriad ways including that they specifically address the root causes of low reading achievement, that there is a focus on Native American communities, that they developed from the best practices report from REC #4, that they continue the work of two current projects, ASSETS and NMRR, that they support the State’s strategic plan for education, “Kids First, New Mexico Wins!” and that they capitalize on the Literacy Bureau’s New Mexico Reads to Lead resources and the resources of the Principal’s Pursuing Excellence project from the Priority Schools Bureau.

Root Cause Number One and CIS

The best predictor of reading achievement at the secondary level is reading achievement at the primary level (Scarborough, 1998). Further, a greater percentage of the youngest New Mexico students test in the lowest level of achievement than do older students. To improve reading achievement for New Mexico students with disabilities improvement efforts will focus on elementary schools. Further, the State’s RDA project is focused on early elementary, students in kindergarten through grade three. Kindergarten through third-grade Students are still learning how to read and are students who are outside of the State’s standardized assessment grades (except for grade three.) Research indicates that it is crucial to provide quality reading instruction in the early elementary grades because there are broad negative impacts on cognitive development for students who experience early reading failure (Torgensen, 2000.) Students who experience early reading failure without intense intervention tend not to catch up to their peers. “Children who fail to grow in literacy-related skills exhibit deficits rather than developmental lags in these skills and, therefore, deserve early intervention,” (Foorman, Francis, Shaywitz, Shaywitz, Fletcher, & Blachman, 1997.) The CIS to address low reading achievement in New Mexico is to provide ongoing, job-embedded professional development to support early elementary teachers in the provision of quality reading interventions. This CIS is critical to inducing more positive outcomes for students with disabilities who struggle early with reading. Though student achievement in reading is substantially temporally stable from early elementary through secondary school for students with reading disabilities, receiving appropriate reading interventions is a stronger predictor of achievement in secondary school than is elementary achievement (Scarborough, 1998.) Effective professional development is needed to support broad implementation of evidence-based reading interventions to improve reading achievement. For the professional development to bring meaningful change, it must be ongoing. Professional development of fewer than 14 hours has been seen to have no negligible effect on student achievement or teacher behavior (Yoon,

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Duncan, Wen-Yu Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007).

Multiple professional development experiences have been and will be provided to RDA schools to support teachers' implementation of quality reading interventions. Regional trainings with Dr. Howard Knoff support school-wide implementation of intervention strategies and the student assistance team (SAT) process in ASSETS schools. After his initial two-day training to explain the processes and best practices in January 2014, Knoff has provided two additional one day trainings to dig further into the Response to Intervention (RtI) process, to address implementation concerns, to continue the momentum of the RtI/SAT movement in ASSETS schools, and to induct new personnel. Knoff is scheduled to return to the state in April 2015 to help ASSETS schools create sustainability plans, such that the schools' work with implementation drivers, procedures, and intervention strategies deployed for RDA continues. Professional development for all RDA schools in the areas of intervention strategies and school-wide SAT procedures will continue throughout the five-year SSIP as providing quality interventions has one of the highest effect sizes (1.07) in John Hattie's (2012) meta-analysis of the effect of instructional strategies.

Dr. Vickie Gibson provided regional professional development for RDA schools on differentiating instruction and on the current research on cognitive development to support differentiating instruction. Differentiation, through small group instruction, provides better opportunities for daily formative evaluation (effect size .90) and classroom discussion (effect size .82,) which exhibit some of the highest effect sizes in Hattie's (2012) meta-analysis. RDA schools will be provided with regional follow-up trainings on differentiated instruction and other evidence-based strategies for quality reading instruction throughout the five-year SSIP.

Coaching is provided in RDA schools to support the implementation of strategies learned in professional development. Truesdale (2003) found that teachers who only attend a workshop are much less likely to implement a new practice than are teachers who attend a workshop and then are coached through implementation. In Truesdale's study, those without coaching quickly lost interest in the learned skill and did not continue to use it. RDA schools will all be provided two days of onsite coaching per month, one day of coaching with a reading specialist and one day with a math specialist. Though the SIMR does not address math achievement, to support the RDA schools (and students) holistically the RDA program is also providing support in math instruction. Offsite coaching will take place for an hour each week as coaches support lesson planning, review data and data analysis processes, or participate in PLCs through video conferencing, email, or telephone.

RDA schools have been and will be provided additional funds to support the professional development initiatives of SSIP. For the 2014/2015 school year, RDA schools were awarded up to \$81,000 to support site-specific professional development and other school improvement strategies. Some schools contracted with Knoff or Gibson to augment the impacts of the regional trainings by providing additional time, coaching and expertise, to assist in changing teacher practices to support increases in student achievement. For the 2015-16 school year, RDA school budgets will be supplemented with \$20,000 to support school improvement activities.

The professional development and coaching support on differentiated instruction and response to intervention, as well as site specific professional development to address the individual needs of schools, will ameliorate the effect of root cause number one: low reading achievement in the early elementary grades. Research demonstrates that receiving appropriate reading interventions is a stronger predictor of achievement in secondary school than is elementary achievement (Scarborough, 1998.)

Root Cause Number Two and CIS

Root cause number two of low reading achievement in New Mexico's early elementary grades is poverty. New Mexico has the second highest childhood poverty level in the nation. Poverty is linked to lower reading achievement and to behavior problems, which exacerbate low reading achievement levels (Eamon, 2002.) A 2002 study by Mary Keegan Eamon found that poverty affected lower reading achievement through less cognitively stimulating and emotionally

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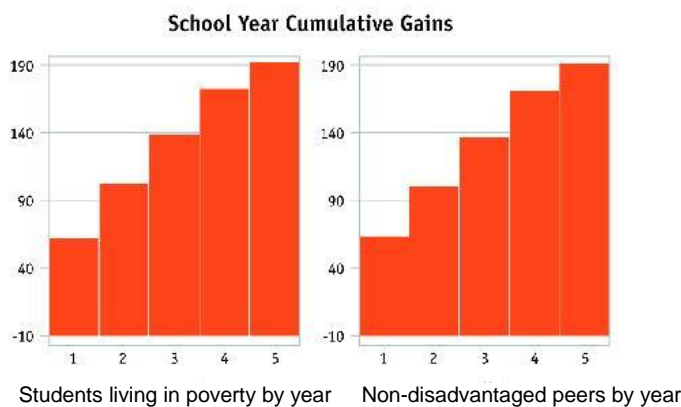
supportive home environments for students and indirectly through associated behavior problems. However, the background effects from difficult family situations can be mediated by supports with home literacy, home language and early vocabulary (Leseman & De Jong, 2011.)

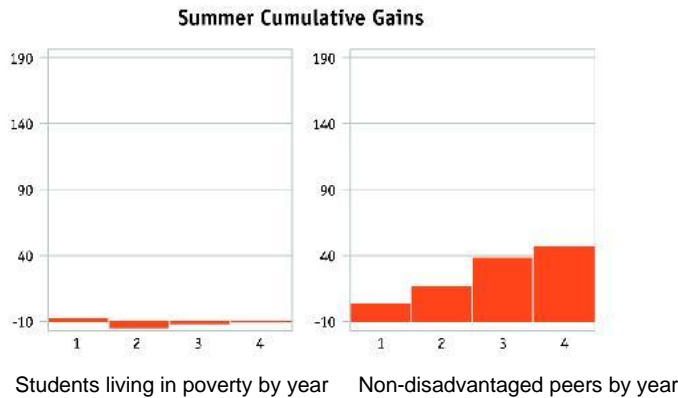
The CIS to support home literacy, home language, and early vocabulary in RDA schools are to provide trainings to parents encouraging language-rich interaction among family members as well as supporting intervention strategies from school in the home. Further, summer *family* reading programs will be provided in communities with RDA schools to not only provide language-rich interaction among family members, but to also curb the academic backsliding that students living in poverty experience more than others.

Research by Lonigan and Whitehurst (1998) showed that early childhood language interventions are most successful when parents are trained to provide the intervention at home. Schools providing interventions in isolation are not as successful.

Parent training and information centers (PTICs) specialize in working with families and are partners with the RDA project in providing training to parents on how to support their students' academic achievement at home. Two New Mexico PTICs (Parents Reaching Out (PRO) and Education for Parents of Indian Children with Special Needs (EPICS)) are providing trainings on how to support reading interventions at home to parents in RDA schools. The PTICs are specialists in working with parents, and can sometimes attract parents to trainings who may not otherwise avail themselves to a training provided by the school. This is particularly true in areas of poverty and in predominantly Native American communities where there is distrust of the education system.

Students living in poverty must overcome difficult home environments, particularly during the summer when school is not in session and most of their time is spent at home. Hattie (2012) found that summer break from school has a negative effect size of .02 overall; however, the backsliding for students living in poverty is much more significant, particularly in the area of reading. Alexander, Entwisle, and Olson (2007) found that disadvantaged youth make achievement gains in reading similar to their non-disadvantaged peers during the school year; but during the summer, disadvantaged youth fall significantly behind in reading, such that by the end of fifth grade, disadvantaged youth are nearly three grade equivalents behind their peers. Two-thirds of the ninth-grade reading achievement gap can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities during the elementary school years, while nearly one-third of the gap is present when children enter school.





"The graphs above show cumulative gains on California Achievement Test in reading over elementary school years and summers. Sample consists of Baltimore Public School students who entered first grade in 1982. Test 'scale scores' are California Achievement Test scores calibrated to measure growth over a student's 12-year career (Alexander, Entwisle, & Olson, 2007)"

The CIS to overcome root cause number two, poverty, is parent training to support reading interventions at home and summer reading programs to ameliorate the backsliding of students living in poverty during the summer months.

Root Cause Number Three and CIS

Low teacher and administrator expectations for students is a root cause of low student achievement in the area of reading in New Mexico. A 2010 study indicated that teachers have lower expectations for minority students (van den Bergh et al., 2010.) Further, the study found that students respond to lower expectations by exhibiting lower performance. In New Mexico, 73.9% of students identify as other than white. Changing school and classroom culture to engender an atmosphere of trust, respect, and a growth mindset will support academic growth.

School culture starts with the attitude of the administration, and little positive change in a school will happen without the support of the principal. Principals, in particular, are key to enacting change or frustrating it (Fullan, 1991.) RDA school principals will participate in a leadership academy with multiple events across each year focusing on the work of Paul Bambrick Santoyo including the power of data driven instruction, school culture and the growth mindset. The principals will develop and implement 90-day plans for school improvement and they will be encouraged and monitored on plan implementation during each 90-day cycle. Principals will receive \$2,000 stipends for their school improvement efforts. The leadership academy model is aligned with the New Mexico Priority Schools Bureau's Principals Pursuing Excellence program, which has been shown to positively affect student achievement and school grades (in the New Mexico school grading system.)

RDA school selection includes a demographic bias for schools with significant Native American student populations. The Native American subpopulation's achievement data is the lowest of any racial or ethnic subpopulation in the state. Native American students have exhibited historically low academic achievement in New Mexico and educators working in these schools may benefit most from professional development opportunities in the area of growth mindset. The growth mindset, formalized by Carol Dweck, is a schema in which the ability of effort and practice to affect successful outcomes is more important than innate talent or cognitive abilities. Separate studies by Joshua Aronson (2002) and Catherine Good (2003) have shown that teaching students a growth mindset increases motivation, while raising grades and achievement.

Beginning in the summer of 2015, RDA schools will be offered the opportunity to participate in full-faculty three-day trainings to support relationship building in classrooms and schools. The Flippen Group's Capturing Kids Hearts training supports the growth mindset, social contracts and relationship building to increase attendance, pro-social skills, academic achievement, and both student and teacher satisfaction (as evidenced in research supported by the Flippen Group.) The trainings will initially be offered to one school per RDA district as it is an intensive training designed to reach 80 percent or more of faculty at a school in order to be most effective. Further, the trainings are capped at 60 participants to allow for the modeling of skills needed for relationship building. As RDA work continues more schools will be offered the

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opportunity to participate in the Capturing Kids Hearts trainings, and school administrators will be encouraged to visit schools with high implementation of the Capturing Kids Hearts processes.

The CIS to address root cause number three, low teacher and administrator expectations for students, is to support the growth mindset and positive school and classroom cultures through a leadership academy for RDA school principals and through faculty-wide professional development at the school level addressing classroom culture.

Root Cause Number Four and CIS

The small and rural nature of most New Mexico school districts limits access to professional development opportunities due to remote locations and limited school budgets (based on small student enrollments.) The lack of quality professional development opportunities for many New Mexico school districts is a root cause for low reading achievement. Quality professional development is important to the development of teacher knowledge and skills. Teacher knowledge of reading fluency is a significant predictor of reading achievement throughout the early elementary grades (Lanea et al., 2009). For professional development to be effective at changing teacher practice and student outcomes the professional development must be intensive and ongoing with reinforcement throughout the school year (Yoon, Duncan, Wen-Yu Lee, Scarloss, & Shapley, 2007.) These are just the sort of professional development experiences that are expensive and outside the reach of many New Mexico school districts.

The CIS to address the lack of professional development opportunities in New Mexico is to provide regional and local ongoing, job-embedded professional development to support early elementary teachers in the provision of quality reading interventions. Professional development to address Response to Intervention (RtI) strategies, school structures to support Student Assistance Team (SAT) processes, evidence-based strategies for teaching reading, classroom and school culture, the growth mindset, and transformative leadership will be provided regionally in at least four sites across the state. Much of the professional development that is provided by the public education department (PED) has traditionally been provided at one or two sites across the state in the largest metropolitan sites, Albuquerque and Las Cruces. One of the greatest expenses associated with professional development in New Mexico is participant travel and lodging. Further, for much of the state centralized professional development requires participants to be absent from school for additional travel days, increasing the disruption to school function. Regional professional development reduces the overall cost of the activities both in dollars and in disruption, allowing for greater participation and more meaningful change in school practices.

Local professional development activities are provided, and will continue to be provided, to RDA schools. Coaching is provided in RDA schools to support the implementation of evidence-based teaching strategies learned through regional professional development activities. Coaching is an important component in implementing new strategies as it has been shown that teachers who attend a workshop and then are coached through implementation are much more likely to change their teaching behaviors (Truesdale, 2003.) RDA schools are also provided additional funds to support local professional development activities. For fiscal year 2016, RDA school budgets will be supplemented with \$20,000 to support implementation of improvement strategies. Schools use these funds to seek follow-up professional development, and to purchase equipment or materials needed for the implementation of improvement strategies.

The PED also supplies books associated with professional development activities prior to the events. Additionally, on-line book studies are offered to increase the number of interactions with the professional development content and to extend the time spent on the professional development. This extension of the professional development activity makes it more likely that it will positively affect teaching behaviors and lead to increased student achievement.

The PED also partners with Eastern New Mexico University (ENMU) to provide online graduate-level coursework that corresponds with RDA professional development and supports implementation of intervention strategies in math and reading. The classes are provided on asynchronous schedules such that teachers can participate as they have time and from where ever they may be. RDA funds provided to schools may be used to reimburse teachers for their coursework.

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Implementation CIS

Coherent improvement strategies for implementation are required to strategically implement the CIS needed for ameliorating the root causes of low reading achievement listed above. Monitoring and providing feedback to RDA schools is an implementation CIS. To support implementation, all RDA schools will be visited twice a year by a Title I Bureau personnel along with a team of contractors to monitor progress, honor successes and recognize areas for improvement. These visitations are currently happening in the NMRR schools and require a full school day. The visits align with the Priority Schools Bureau's protocols for instructional audits. The Priority Schools Bureau's classroom walkthrough form is used to look for strategy implementation in classrooms, IEPs are reviewed for compliance and best practices, the principal and leadership team are interviewed, and the PED team provides the school with a report of its recommendations. Title I Bureau personnel call each RDA school a minimum of once every 90 days to check with the principals on the implementation of the 90-day plans, to ask the principals where the schools have seen progress, and to find out if there are barriers to implementation that PED staff can support the principals in overcoming.

Another way to support schools through monitoring and feedback from the PED is the best practices event held annually for RDA schools. The event is an opportunity for schools to showcase the progress they have made in implementation and in achievement. It is an opportunity for administrators to make connections with other administrators in similar schools, to build camaraderie, to share the best practices that have led to success, to demonstrate the value the PED and districts place on data and the transformative RDA work, as well as to celebrate the schools' successes. This event takes place in the late spring.

Implementation Framework

The implementation framework for the CIS was developed to support the deployment of the SSIP. The implementation framework is critical to achieving the systemic change planned for in the SSIP as well as sustaining that change over time. The framework's mission is to bring the State's vision of "Reading growth rates for all at risk students and students with disabilities will improve and reading gaps will narrow," to reality.

The framework includes four phases of implementation: exploration, planning, deployment and refinement.

An outline of the framework is provided below:

Exploration	Planning	Deployment	Refinement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Assess stakeholder needs and requirementsAnalyze dataDevelop SIMRRecognize root causes (force-field analysis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Collaborate (RECs, bureaus, schools, stakeholders)Consider implementation driversDevelop CIS and align with state priorities and initiativesMarshal resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Implement CIS (provide professional development)Engage implementation driversGather implementation data and stakeholder feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Monitor fidelityManage changeScale upInitiate improvement cyclesDevelop sustainability plans

Implementation and Scale Up

The CISs are currently provided through four bureaus of the PED, through three regional education cooperatives and through their subcontractors. There are currently 39 RDA schools located in two quadrants of the state, the southeast and northwest. For the 2015-16 school year 25 more RDA schools will be added in the southwest and northeast quadrants of the state. In both the 2016-17 and 2017-2018 school years eight additional schools will be added; bringing to 80 the total number of RDA schools. The PED supports nine regional education cooperatives and as scale up continues, at least two more educational cooperatives will be contracted to support the provision of professional development and technical

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assistance. The regional education cooperatives have local contacts to assist in the work of RDA, which will cut travel time and provide local knowledge of school districts, personnel, venues for professional development, etc... More subcontractors will also be necessary to provide professional development. RDA staff and RECs are currently in negotiations with an additional three national presenters for the 2015-16 school year. RDA staff are also in scale-up discussions with the subcontractor Mathematically Connected Communities (MC²) which provides both math and reading specialists to support the coaching needs of RDA schools.

Within the Title I Bureau of the PED there are currently two employees, of the nine in the bureau, who directly support the work of SSIP in the schools. To support an increased number of schools and to make the work of SSIP systemic to the bureau for the 2015-16 school year, eight of the Title I employees will directly support the SSIP work in Title I schools. An additional employee will also be hired in the Title I bureau to support the additional RDA work. RDA will become an integral part of the work of the Title I Bureau, which will build capacity in the PED system.

The budget for RDA is increasing as well, with the proposed budget for RDA work in the 2015-16 school year being nearly \$4 million, which represents an increase of \$500,000 from the previous year. The proposed budget has been approved by the Deputy Secretary of Education. The federal programs division of the PED, of which both the title I and special education bureaus are a part, is committed to providing the necessary resources to make significant State-wide improvements in early elementary reading achievement through RDA.

CIS Across Systems and at Multiple Levels

Implementing the CIS requires areas of need to be addressed within and across systems and at multiple levels, building capacity at the State, LEAs and schools to improve early elementary reading achievement. At the state level, PED bureaus are collaborating to build their capacity to provide quality professional development to LEAs and schools. The Special Education and Title I Bureaus collaborate, sharing goals and resources to increase their capacities. The bureaus jointly fund multiple staff positions to ensure collaboration on the shared goal of decreasing the achievement gap for students scoring in the lowest quartile. An IDEA B funded position has been added to the Literacy Bureau to support early learning and literacy of students with disabilities. Further, the Special Education and Title I Bureaus cooperate with the Literacy and Priority Schools Bureaus, relying on their expertise in the areas of early elementary reading instruction and transformative leadership trainings respectively. Cooperation with the Literacy and Priority schools bureaus increases capacity at the state level through cross training and through a decrease in the duplication of efforts. Further, these connections can be used to leverage relationships between LEAs and PED staff.

LEAs and schools are a critical component of the RDA process and they are active participants. When a school is identified as a candidate for participation in RDA work, the school and district jointly complete a Request for Information (RfI.) The RfI includes a description of the school/LEA infrastructure that will be used to support implementation of RDA strategies within the schools and districts. The description helps identify areas of needs at the district and school level that can be addressed through professional development and through the funds provided to the schools to support the RDA work. Further, for a school to participate in RDA work, districts must sign assurances indicating that the district will support the RDA work.

The CISs are implemented directly at the school level to address specific school needs evident in the schools' New Mexico Instructional Audit reports and reflected in the schools' Educational Plans for Student Success. However, to build capacity and increase district support for the intervention strategies presented through RDA professional development, district contacts are included on all formal communications and are invited to all professional development activities. Schools provide feedback on implementation to Title I Bureau staff such that school need and district trends can be assessed, barriers at the school and LEA level can be addressed, and capacity within and across systems can be increased.

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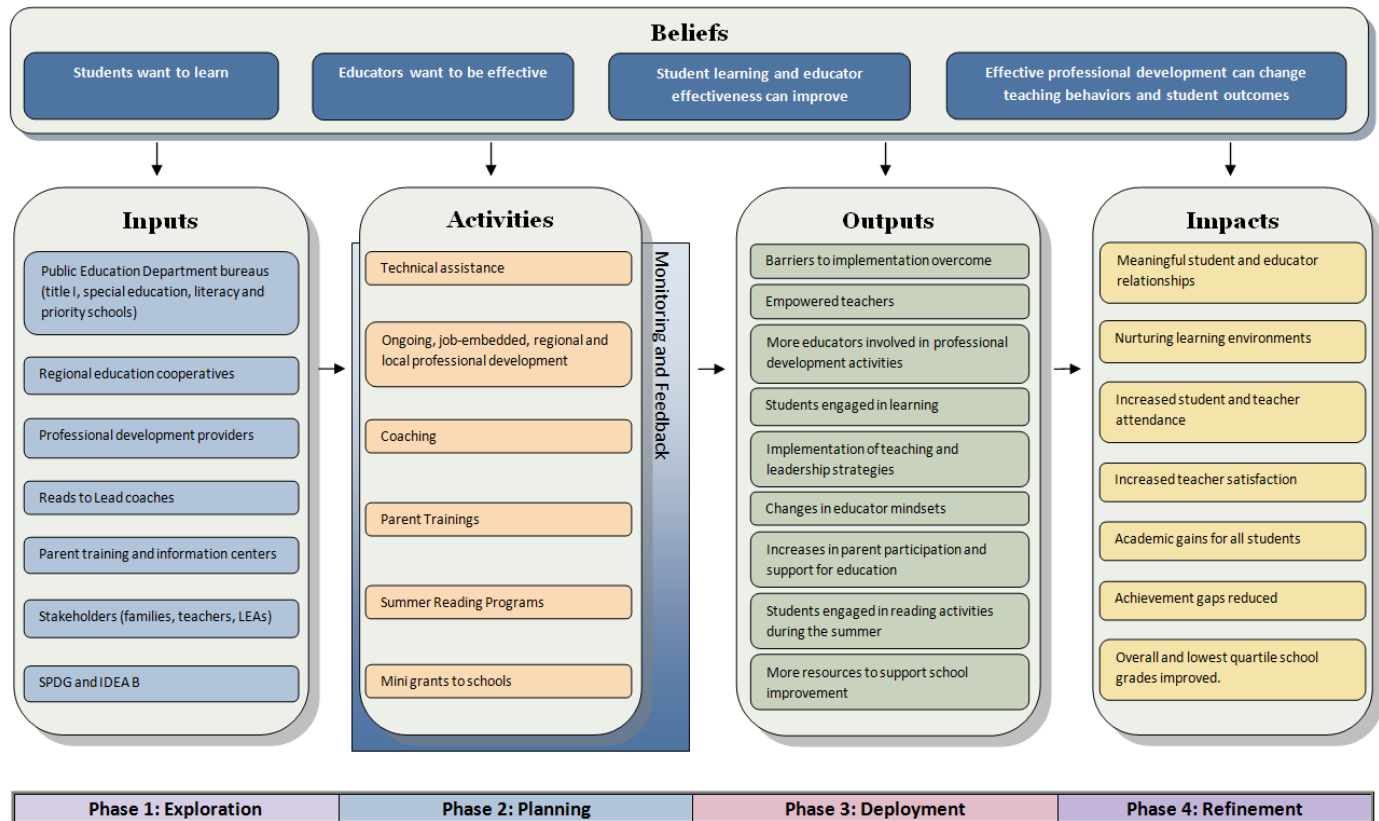
Theory of Action

A graphic illustration that shows the rationale of how implementing the coherent set of improvement strategies selected will increase the State's capacity to lead meaningful change in LEAs, and achieve improvement in the State-identified Measurable Result(s) for Children with Disabilities.



Theory of Action

Vision: Reading growth rates for at risk students and students with disabilities will improve and reading gaps will narrow.



Optional Description

The New Mexico SSIP theory of action was developed to consider how to realize the stakeholder group's vision of "Reading growth rates for [New Mexico's] at risk students and students with disabilities will improve and reading gaps will narrow."

The core beliefs which underlie the theory of action and the coherent improvement strategies (CIS) are that

- 1) Students want to learn
- 2) Educators want to be effective
- 3) Student learning and educator effectiveness can improve
- 4) Effective professional development can change teaching behaviors and student outcomes

These core beliefs align with the growth mindset that learning is not a function of innate ability or talent, and that the

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learning system can improve. Students want to learn and educators do want to be effective. Students enter the school building wanting to learn and teachers believe that they are effective. However, too often too little learning is occurring in schools. The learning system can improve. Ongoing and job-embedded professional development has the capacity to alter teaching behaviors, improve classroom culture and increase the use of evidence-based reading intervention strategies. Meaningful student-educator relationships and the use of evidence-based reading intervention strategies will engender improved student learning outcomes.

External stakeholders including regional education cooperatives, LEA special education directors, charter school leaders, and the IDEA Advisory Panel reviewed relevant State data and provided recommendations for the SIMR and CIS based on the impacts the stakeholders wanted to see in the State's schools. These recommendations provided the framework for the State's theory of action. A cross-bureau internal stakeholder team developed the theory of action from the recommendations provided by the external stakeholders. The team also considered the "inputs" or resources available to achieve the vision, including a variety of leaders, stakeholders and funds. The cross-bureau stakeholder group then developed a number of assumptions, in the form of "If – then" statements to consider how actions taken by the inputs will affect the various systems involved. The statements follow:

If the Public Education Department (PED) provides technical assistance to the schools and LEAs involved with Results Driven Accountability (RDA) then barriers to implementing evidence-based reading interventions are overcome. Further, as teachers overcome barriers they are empowered to lead their classrooms and are encouraged to make positive changes in the classroom.

If the PED, regional education cooperatives (RECs) and other professional development providers provide ongoing, job embedded, regional and local professional development to RDA schools and LEAs on ways to improve school and classroom culture, how to implement response to intervention (RtI) strategies, and how to effectively lead a school transformation, then more educators will participate in professional development and will change their teaching behaviors. Those educators will exhibit the growth mindset, will use data-driven decision making, will be effective educational leaders, will develop effective school-wide RtI strategies, and will use effective reading interventions. These positive educator behaviors will impact learners through the development of meaningful relationships between students and educators, and the establishment of nurturing learning environments with effective reading interventions, which will support increased teacher satisfaction, increased student engagement, increased attendance of both teachers and students as well as increased academic achievement for all students, especially those most in need of a meaningful relationship with an adult or in need of effective reading interventions. Supporting the at risk students will lead to gap reduction. As overall attendance and achievement improve, the schools' overall grades and grades in the lowest quartile will improve as well.

If the RECs, professional development providers and Reads to Lead coaches provide coaching services to teachers in RDA classrooms, then the percentage of teachers who implement and continue using the evidence-based strategies learned during professional development activities will increase. Through modeling and the provision of feedback the coaches will help teachers refine their use of the new strategies and thereby increase the likelihood that the strategies will be successful. Teachers are likely to continue using strategies that they have found to be successful. When teachers feel more successful and supported in their work, they have higher satisfaction levels and better attendance. Students learn more from teachers who are enthusiastic and who are implementing evidence-based reading interventions.

If parent training and information centers (PTICs) reach out to RDA communities and provide multiple non-threatening trainings to parents on ways to support reading intervention at home and if the PTICs provide resources for parents to use with their students, then parent participation in the students' education will increase. Parents will provide more reading activities for their students at home and provide more text-rich home environments which will lead to reductions in the reading gaps that widen during the summer months. Reductions in the reading gap will lead to improvement in the schools' lowest quartile grades and overall school grades.

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If parent training and information centers (PTICs) provide family oriented summer reading programs in RDA communities, then students are engaged in reading activities over the summer and parent participation in the students' education will increase. Students will spend more time reading and interacting with adults and text over the summer months. Parents who participate are also likely to provide more reading activities for their students at home. This will lead to reductions in the reading gaps that widen during the summer months. Reductions in the reading gap will lead to improvement in the schools' lowest quartile grades and overall school grades.

If mini grants to schools are made, then schools will have more resources available to support school improvement. The funds may be used to purchase additional, site-specific professional development or coaching, or they may be used for materials to support professional development, such as additional books for the book studies provided by the PED. The mini grants will increase the fidelity of implementation of new strategies as schools will have the resources available to purchase the equipment or supplies necessary for implementation. Increased implementation fidelity increases the likelihood that the strategies will be successful, and teachers are more likely to continue using strategies they have found to be successful. Students learn more from teachers who are implementing evidence-based reading interventions.

If the PED and RECs monitor and provide feedback to RDA schools, districts and the State's IDEA Advisory Panel on the implementation of new strategies, then the fidelity with which the strategies are implemented will increase. Monitoring implementation increases the likelihood that implementation will occur, and feedback on implementation increases the efficacy of strategies. Increased implementation fidelity will lead to educators experiencing more success with new strategies and thereby also increasing the likelihood that educators will continue using the strategies. Students learn more from educators who are implementing evidence-based reading interventions.

The "If – then" statements above are portrayed in the theory of action's graphic as the inputs, activities, outputs and impacts, where the inputs are available resources, activities are the CIS, outputs are the direct results of implementing the CIS, and impacts are the long-term effects that the outputs will have on the related systems.

The theory of action and the implementation framework are related. The implementation framework is referred to in the graphic with the four phases of implementation listed: exploration, planning, deployment and refinement. Though there is not a direct correlation between the inputs, activities, outputs and impacts and the four phases of implementation, both do represent somewhat linear progressions through the SSIP. Further, the reference to the implementation framework is included in the graphic as implementation fidelity is key to ensuring project success.

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