



**Delaware Department of Education (DDOE)
Exceptional Children Resources (ECR) Work Group**

**Indicator 17: State Systemic Improvement Plan
Phase III Report**

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A. Summary of Phase III

A.1: Theory of action or logic model for the SSIP, including the SiMR

The Delaware (DE) State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR) is to increase the literacy proficiency of students with disabilities in K-3rd grade, as measured by a decrease in the percentage of 3rd grade students with disabilities scoring below proficiency on Delaware's statewide assessment. To accomplish this goal, the DE SSIP Theory of Action developed in Phase 1 (see Appendix A) focused on four strands: school leadership, Common Core, transparent data, and supports for struggling schools. Eight improvement strategies were identified to address the four strands.

- Use of Implementation Science principles
- Use of diagnostic & assessment tools to guide learning
- Infusing cultural competency into all activities
- Insuring high expectations for all students
- Infusing family involvement in all activities
- Support for struggling schools
- Quality professional learning systems
- Transparent data systems

During Phase II, eight logic models were developed to determine the inputs, outputs, and outcomes expected for each of the eight improvement strategies. A project-level logic model was then developed to eliminate redundancy across improvement strategies and to prioritize outcomes to address in Phase III (see Appendix B) Data collection tools have been developed to assess the impact of the DE SSIP on those intended outcomes.

A.2: The coherent improvement strategies or principle activities employed during the year, including infrastructure improvement strategies

Eight improvement strategies were identified and planned for as part of the DE SSIP Phase II process. Each were implemented during Phase III, to various degrees. Most of the SSIP focus during the first year of Phase III has been on establishing the Delaware Early Literacy Initiative. Efforts have included the careful selection of participating schools and the American Institutes of Research (AIR) as our professional learning provider (through a competitive bid process), a deliberate training plan, supported by monthly Building Implementation Team meetings, ongoing coaching and the use of data to inform implementation. The professional learning system is based on implementation science, addresses cultural competence, and infuses high expectations for all students into all professional learning. Professional learning activities have been aligned with the Learning Forward Professional Development Standards and Guskey's five levels of professional development evaluation. The components of the Literacy Initiative included the development of Building Implementation Teams, an MTSS needs assessment that guided the creation of action plans, a three-day Early Literacy Institute, coaching, and parent engagement.

The DE SSIP has worked with the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development, Title I, Assessment and Office of Early Learning, and personnel within our branch to develop stronger collaboration with the School Improvement group – who support priority and focus schools. We have aligned the work of the SSIP Core Team and Advisory Council with the Delaware RTI Coalition to create a Delaware MTSS Core Team and an MTSS Advisory Council. Two other significant infrastructure improvements include the alignment of the DE RTI Coalition and the

collaborative work to develop the DE 2017 SPDG proposal. The SPDG will provide the resources necessary to fully implement DE's SSIP Phase II plan, which aligns with the work of the RTI Coalition. Representatives from the RTI Coalition are now part of the MTSS Core Team and MTSS Advisory Council.

Cohort I of the Delaware Early Literacy Initiative includes three schools. An early project success was related to the use of diagnostic & assessment tools to guide learning. One school identified a need in the area of using progress monitoring data as a tool to inform instruction. Early coaching in that area has helped the school establish a system to collect and use progress monitoring data to strengthen Tier I instruction as well as provide tiered interventions for struggling students.

Family involvement activities are still in the planning stage, with Family Literacy Nights planned for late March 2017. Little work has occurred to date on the eighth improvement activity, transparent data systems. The DDOE is developing a State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) proposal to obtain the resources necessary to deepen and expand the reach of the professional learning to address more systematic and infrastructure needs.

A.3: The specific evidence-based practices that have been implemented to date

Implementation Teams

Implementation teams are important drivers of change at the school level and lead the implementation and development of evidence-based practices (Fixen et al., 2008). Each school site developed an implementation team composed of key school and district staff, including both special education and general education teachers, reading specialists, and building administrators. Other key stakeholders at individual school sites also are included on the implementation teams, such as an English learner (EL) teacher, school psychologist, and special education coordinator. The teams lead the work of implementing evidence-based practices at each school site and are in charge of problem solving, ensuring alignment of strategies, and enhancing communication at the school site.

At one school site, school implementation team meetings were held in December, January, and February. These meetings focused on the initial stages of implementing progress monitoring at that school site, and included such topics as choosing a progress monitoring tool, training staff in the use of progress monitoring, and adapting K-3 schedules to include time for multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) or response to intervention (RTI) efforts. As part of these meetings, several teachers were selected to pilot the new RTI framework. Due to a coaching staff change, no school implementation team meetings were conducted in January or February at the other two school sites. Monthly school implementation team meetings will resume in April with the new coach.

Following the needs assessment at each school, an action plan meeting was conducted with the implementation team at each school site in November 2016. The teams used data from the needs assessments that had been conducted in October as a starting point for a discussion about how AIR coaching could best support the language and literacy progress of K-3 students. Based on the needs assessment data and this discussion, implementation teams identified three priority areas relating to language and literacy development in Grades K-3, and agreed upon goals that would address

these priority areas. AIR coaches completed an action plan template, which reflects these goals and includes additional details about how the goals are to be accomplished.

Professional Learning Workshops

Early literacy workshops for K–3 teachers have been informed by evidence-based professional learning practices and principles of adult learning (agendas for each Institute are in Appendix C). Research demonstrates that effective workshops for teachers include a focus on implementing evidence-based instructional practices, integrate active learning, and provide teachers with opportunities to adapt practices for their own classroom (Guskey & Yoon, 2009, p. 496). AIR developed and led two sets of early literacy professional learning workshops, or institutes, during the fall of 2016. A third workshop has been planned for March 2017. Part 1 of the Literacy Institutes was held September 27–29, 2016, and focused on essential elements of MTSS, evidence-based language and literacy instruction, and promotion of a language-rich environment. Participants engaged in discussions and activities related to assessment and instruction in MTSS, the building blocks of literacy, and support of struggling learners in core literacy instruction. Participants connected their learning and teaching practice through goal-setting activities and lesson plan analysis during the workshop.

Part 2 of the Literacy Institutes was held October 17–20, 2016, and addressed culturally and linguistically responsive teaching, interventions for struggling and at-risk learners, and strategies for intensifying intervention. This training included culturally responsive instruction in MTSS, the use of data in intervention planning, and strategies for intensifying intervention for struggling students. Participants engaged in several small-group activities designed to promote discussion and engagement with the topics.

Part 3 of the workshops will emphasize assessment and data-based decision making and evidence-based reading instruction. Final training topics were identified by the AIR staff and the DE SSIP Project Director, based on input from school staff. All participants will attend a session on data-based decision making, as coaching and needs assessments have revealed this to be an area of need for all three schools. During this session, participants will reflect on their own use of assessment and consider new strategies for using assessment to inform instructional decision making. Following this session, participants will be able to choose to attend two of three breakout sessions on phonics, reading comprehension, and vocabulary. These sessions introduce a variety of high-leverage strategies for struggling readers and English Language Learners (ELL), build knowledge of key early reading principles, and demonstrate alignment with the Common Core State Standards.

Focus on Evidence-Based Reading Instruction in Professional learning Activities

The synthesis of research provided by the National Reading Panel (2000), National Literacy Panel (2006), and various What Works Clearinghouse practice guides (i.e., Baker et al., 2014; Gersten et al., 2006) indicate the importance of explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, reading fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. Additionally, the findings of the National Early Reading Panel (2008) highlight the benefit of interactive literacy activities and oral language skills. Professional learning activities have been aligned with this research base, and

several evidence-based instructional strategies have been incorporated into professional learning activities thus far.

Day 1 of the Literacy Institutes provided an overview of five components of reading (i.e., phonological awareness, phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, and fluency) identified by the National Reading Panel (2000). Participants were introduced to research-based strategies for teaching each of these five components of reading within a balanced literacy program. Additionally, participants engaged in learning activities related to promoting the oral language skills of students with a particular emphasis on academic language. Day 2 of the workshop included a focus on robust vocabulary instruction as a means of supporting the language and reading skills of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Participants engaged in learning culturally and linguistically responsive teaching practices, including methods for integrating their students' cultural background into their instruction. Day 3 of the workshop will include an emphasis on systematic phonics instruction; evidence-based reading comprehension strategies such as prediction, questioning, and summarizing strategies; and strategies for vocabulary and academic language instruction. Research-based instructional practices to support ELs and culturally responsive practices were embedded throughout the institute activities.

Response to Intervention and the Use of Diagnostic and Progress Monitoring Tools for Literacy

Evidence suggests that teachers' use of student data to inform instruction promotes improved learning outcomes for students, including those with disabilities (Al Otaiba & Fuchs, 2006). RTI is a framework for integrating assessment and instruction within an MTSS by promoting the use of student data for instructional decision making. Specifically, screening tools identify students most at risk for poor learning outcomes and progress monitoring data guide instructional decisions such as intervention adaptations and movement between tiers. Professional learning activities, including the Literacy Institutes and coaching, have focused on implementing RTI with fidelity (i.e., implementing the processes, procedures, and interventions as intended). During Day 1 of the Literacy Institutes, participants engaged in learning related to the core components of RTI and were introduced to the data-based individualization (DBI) process. Day 2 of the Literacy Institutes included a focus on using data to intensify interventions for students who do not respond to standard protocol interventions. Participants were introduced to a variety of strategies and practices for adapting interventions for struggling students. In order to support the use of data by school-based teams, participants learned about several data team meeting tools from the National Center on Intensive Intervention. Day 3 of the Literacy Institutes also will include a focus on the use of assessment to inform instructional decision making. Participants will gain experience in reviewing screening and progress-monitoring data through case studies and guided practice with student data. Additionally, participants will engage in problem solving by using data to plan instructional strategies and adaptations for individual students.

In addition to the Literacy Institutes, coaching activities at one school have focused on implementing RTI. In particular, because progress monitoring was not occurring at this school, the coach has worked with the implementation team to select a progress monitoring tool and develop a plan for training teachers in using the tool. Further, the coach has worked with the implementation

team to develop guidance documents for RTI implementation, including a system for collecting and organizing student data and worked with the team to adjust the school schedule to accommodate time for intervention.

Evidence-Based Professional Learning Practices

Professional learning activities have been informed by evidence-based practices for professional learning and adult learning principles. At the Literacy Institutes, participants had opportunities to reflect on evidence-based instructional practices and consider ways that these practices could be adapted to fit their particular classroom context. Participants engaged in active learning through discussions, goal setting, and lesson plan analysis. Additionally, participants analyzed student data, both from case studies and their own students, and considered how to make adaptations to interventions.

A.4: Brief overview of the year's evaluation activities, measures, and outcomes

Below is a brief overview of the year's evaluation activities, measures, and outcomes below, with more detail provided in Section B.

Evaluation Coordination

Three evaluation meetings were held between August 2016 and February 2017 with Garrett Consulting, LLC (GC), AIR, and DDOE staff (August 16-18 and December 20, 2016, and February 16, 2017). The purpose of these meetings were to review the status of the SSIP evaluation plan, draft data collection instruments, and to prepare for the Phase III report submission.

Training Evaluation & Fidelity Materials

To assess the impact of SSIP training, training evaluation surveys were developed that included pre/post items to assess impact on participants' knowledge of the training content, as well as items to measure how well participants' learning styles were addressed. Qualitative data gathered further insight into how well the training occurred and needed changes for Day 2 of the Early Literacy Institute. These data are displayed in section B.1(a) on page 7. Full evaluation reports and corresponding InfoGraphics were developed and disseminated to key stakeholders. Copies of the two Infographics are in Appendix D.

As part of Day 1 and Day 2 of the Early Learning Institute, the two AIR trainers were observed by Dr. Jill Pentimonti of AIR to assess the degree to which the training was implemented with fidelity. The training fidelity instrument is included in Appendix E. The results of the observations were reviewed with the Institute trainers and shared with the DE SSIP Coordinator and external evaluator.

Coaching Evaluation & Fidelity Materials

AIR staff and the DE SSIP external evaluator are in the process of developing a coaching fidelity form and process. Coaching will also be evaluated through bi-annual participant feedback surveys. Preliminary qualitative coaching data from one school is available in Appendix F.

Fidelity of Intervention

AIR staff are initially evaluating fidelity of intervention through the percent of action plan activities completed with fidelity. After the initial MTSS needs assessment, each school developed an action plan to guide the professional learning over the course of the year. Data will be available at the end of this school year. A fidelity tool to assess RTI and evidence-based literacy instruction will be developed for use with the next cohort of schools.

Teacher/Administrator Impact Data

To assess the impact of the professional learning on teachers, administrators, and families, baseline surveys have been developed or are still under development. The teacher baseline survey was administered in January 2017 at the one school that has participated in the most professional learning. The results of the baseline teacher survey are in Appendix G. The family impact survey has been developed and will be administered at upcoming Family Literacy nights over the next few months. AIR staff are working with school personnel to determine alternative means to disseminate the survey. The administrator impact data collection tool is still under development.

Student Data

Third grade reading results from the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) are used to measure DE'S SIMR. Data from the first two years of SBAC administration in Delaware, 2014-15 and 2015-16, serve as baseline data. SBAC data for the first year of implementation, 2016-17, will be available in fall 2017.

At the time of this report, no screening or progress monitoring data are available to report. However, in one participating school, progress monitoring had not been used consistently. Initial coaching activities have supported teachers' initial use of progress monitoring to guide instruction.

A.5: Highlights of changes to implementation and improvement strategies

Throughout the process of planning the Literacy Institutes and coaching activities, feedback from the three schools has allowed the professional learning activities to be tailored to schools' specific needs. For example, based on participant feedback from the second Literacy Institute, the format of the third Literacy Institute is changing to allow participants to choose two out of three topical sessions to attend. School leadership has provided input regarding the topics for each Literacy Institute. Additionally, due to concerns from two of the participating schools about the match with the AIR coach, a new coach has been selected and will begin coaching in April 2017.

B. Progress in Implementing the SSIP

1. Description of the State's SSIP implementation progress

- a. Description of extent to which the State has carried out its planned activities with fidelity—what has been accomplished, what milestones have been met, and whether the intended timeline has been followed.

School Selection

Three schools were selected to participate in the Delaware Early Literacy Initiative, one charter school and two elementary schools from the same district. They completed a Memorandum of Agreement that explained the responsibilities and expectations for DDOE and school personnel. Kick-off meetings (August 16 – 18, 2016) were held with personnel from the DDOE, AIR, the external evaluator, and the three participating schools. Topics included the review of the professional learning to be provided and the corresponding evaluation activities.

Training Institutes

Two sets of three, one day institutes on were facilitated by staff from the American Institutes of Research (AIR) on September 26-28, and October 17, 19, and 20, 2016 (the agendas are in Appendix C). The topic was Multi-tiered Systems of Supports for Literacy and Language and Literacy Instruction in Core Instruction.” Participants could choose which day they attended to minimize the burden on the schools having multiple teachers out of the building at one time. As a result, there were participants from each school at each training. Participants included administrators, district curriculum coordinators, literacy coaches, and teachers.

Three sets of training data were collected to assess the impact of the two institutes. First, participants were given a pre-test prior to the institute beginning, then were asked the same questions again as part of the evaluation survey administered at the end of each day at both institutes. These pre/post assessment was developed by AIR staff and reviewed by the external evaluator. They were also asked a series of questions designed to determine how well their learning needs were addressed and how satisfied they were with the institutes.

As shown in Charts 1 and 2 on the next page, on average, Day 1 participants answered half of the questions correctly prior to the institute, increasing to 68% correct at the end of the first day. Day 2 participants scored slightly lower (42%) at pre-test, but increased to 65% correct at the end of the Day 2 institute. An item analysis was produced so that coaching visits could address the topics that most participants struggled with.

Chart 1: Day 1: Percentage of Correct Items on Pre/Post Knowledge Assessment

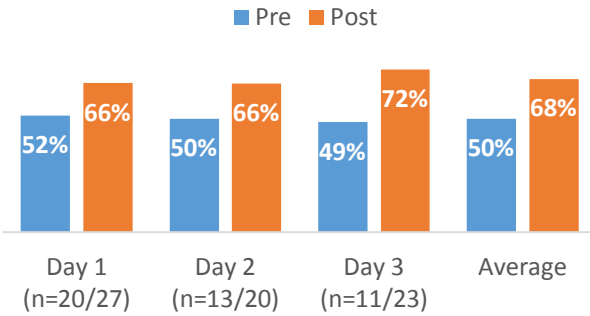
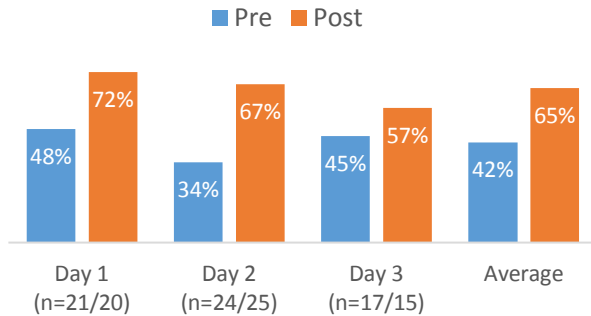


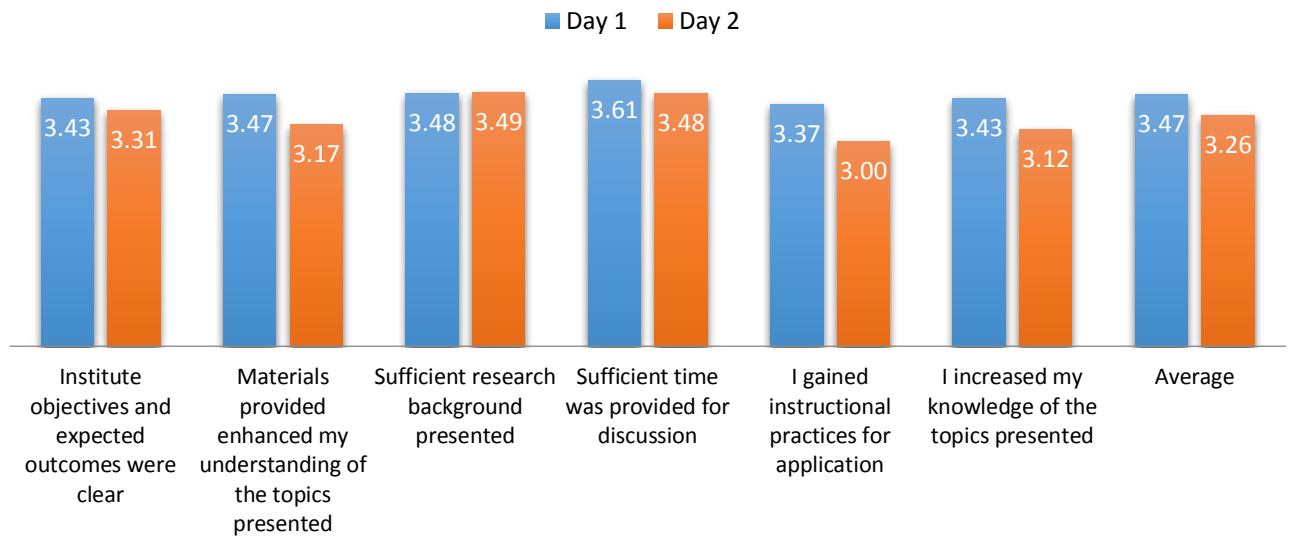
Chart 2: Day 2: Percentage of Correct Items on Pre/Post Knowledge Assessment



Institute participants were asked to rate the degree to which the institute addressed their individual learning styles, specifically if they perceived: increased knowledge of the topics presented, gained instructional practices for application, there was sufficient time for discussion, that there was sufficient research background presented, the materials enhanced their understanding of the topics, and if the objectives and expected outcomes were clear. Chart 3 provides a summary of the adult learning needs data for both days of the institutes. On average, Day 1 participants were more likely to agree that their adult learning needs were met.

Chart 3: Adult Learning Needs

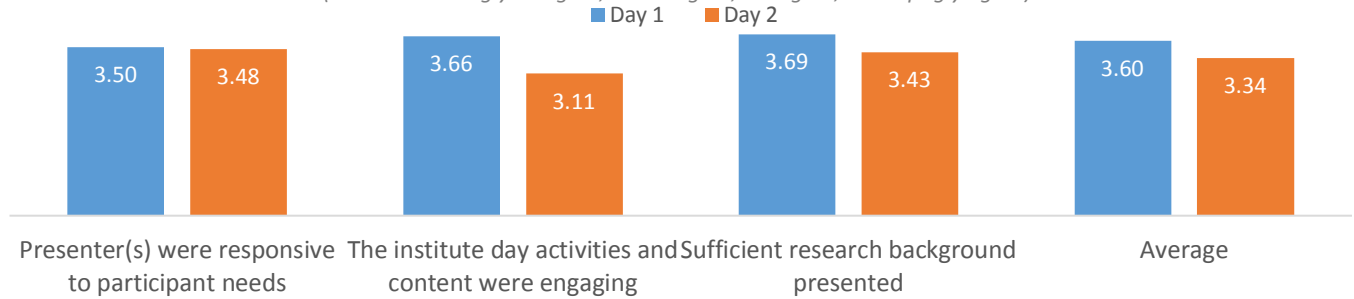
(Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree)



Last, institute participants were asked to rate the degree to which the presenters were responsive to their needs, the degree to which the activities and content were engaging, and whether sufficient research was presented (see Chart 4 on the next page). Overall, participants from both sets of training agreed that these outcomes were met, although there were slightly higher levels of satisfaction for the first set of trainings. The DE SSIP Project Coordinator and AIR staff reviewed each set of institute data to inform the next institute.

Chart 4: Satisfaction Data

(Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree)



Needs Assessment

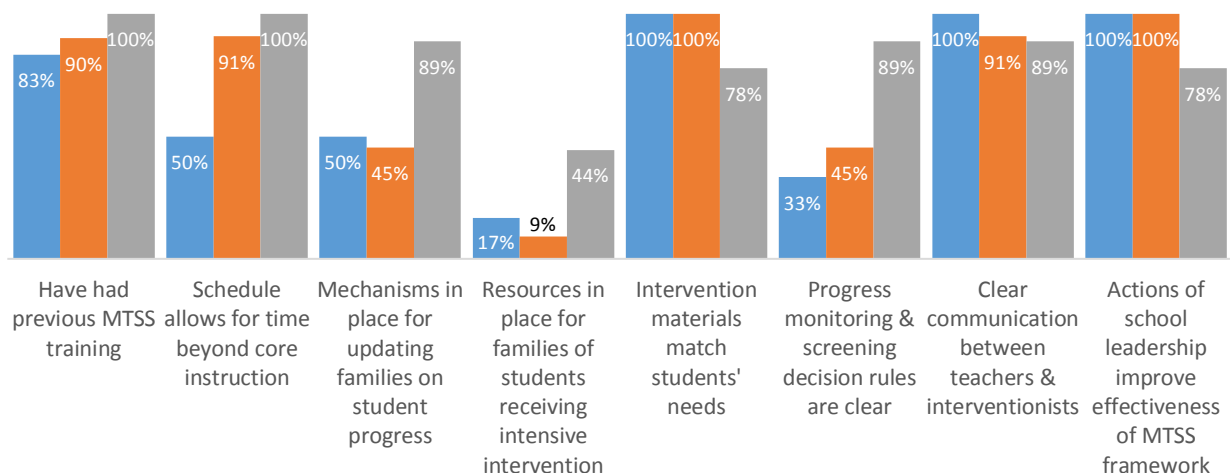
In September and October 2016, a needs assessment meeting was held with implementation teams at each school to discuss each school’s current practices regarding multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), early literacy, and intensive intervention in reading. Additionally, school staff were sent a survey that asked about MTSS, reading instruction, and reading intervention. The results of the needs assessment are displayed in Chart 5.

Based on responses from the survey, the items below were identified as potential areas of support for job-embedded coaching and/or future institutes. Each school was interested in professional learning supporting reading resources for families of students who are struggling readers. Two schools needed support related to progress monitoring and screening decision rules.

- Resources for families of students receiving intensive reading intervention (3 schools)
- Progress monitoring and screening decision rules (2 schools)
- Available materials for intervention
- Communication between core teachers and interventionists

Chart 5: Needs Assessment Data (October 2016)

■ School A (n=6) ■ School B (n=11) ■ School C (n=9)



Action Plans

The results of the survey were also used to develop a corresponding action plan. The data were reviewed during action planning meetings with each school's implementation team in November, 2016. Based on the needs assessment data and this discussion, implementation teams identified three priority areas relating to language and literacy development in grades K – 3, and agreed upon goals that would address these priority areas. AIR coaches completed an action plan template, which reflected these goals and included additional details about how the goals are to be accomplished. The goals from the action plan for each school are listed in Table 1. It is possible that the action plans for the two elementary schools from the same district may change due to the involvement of a new AIR coach beginning in April, 2017. The Building Implementation Team and new AIR coach will review the action plan and revise as part of Cohort I's year two planning.

Table 1: School Action Plan Goals

School A
Goal 1: Identify progress monitoring tools that will monitor instruction in areas identified by the Strategic Teaching and Evaluation of Progress (STEP) diagnostic tool.
Goal 2: Develop a school-wide understanding and guidance for systematizing tiered instruction in addition to guided reading instruction.
School B
Goal 1: Improve Progress Monitoring of Reading Comprehension at the Instructional Level.
School C
Goal 1: Improve Communication with Families in Order to Support Reading at Home.
Goal 2: Improve Vocabulary Instruction in Grades K – 3.
Goal 3: Improve Comprehension Instruction with a Focus on Progress Monitoring in Grades 2 – 3.

Coaching

Based on the action plan goals developed in November 2016, subsequent coaching visits were planned and implemented. Table 2 (on the next page) lists the date of each face-to-face coaching visit and the primary activities conducted. The face-to-face meetings were supplemented by ongoing phone and e-mail communication. Due to concerns in the district with two elementary schools about the match with the AIR coach, those schools only had one face-to-face coaching visit. As stated previously, coaching visits at those schools will resume in April 2017.

Table 2: Coaching Visits and Activities

Date of Coaching Visit	Coaching Activities
School A	
December 12, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met with all K – 3 teachers in PLC/grade level meetings; provided overview of progress monitoring, action plan, and conducted a question and answer session. • Met with school implementation team.
January 17, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met with all K – 3 teachers in PLC/grade level meetings in order to discuss areas of concern related to reading instruction; discussed as a whole group, generated strategies, and shared successes. • Met with school implementation team.
February 15, 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The implementation team further developed the RTI student folders for the piloting teachers. The AIR coach will make the proposed changes to the materials and add to the running list of items for the guidance document. The implementation team also laid out general guidelines to support the piloting teachers. The AIR coach and the SIT met with the three teachers who will pilot the RTI intervention blocks to discuss processes, procedures and scheduling. The teachers provided additional input on the folder templates. • Progress monitoring update: Student data is currently being uploaded into AIMSweb, and they are trying to scheduling a full day of training for the staff. Start date is TBD. The family engagement night is confirmed for April 5, and the May on-site coaching date has been changed to Tuesday, May 9.
School B	
December 13, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modeled read-aloud with explicit vocabulary instruction for K – 3 teachers; met with individual teachers to debrief and discuss vocabulary instruction.
School C	
December 12, 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modeled read-aloud with explicit vocabulary instruction for grade level teams; met with grade level teams to debrief and discuss vocabulary instruction.

Materials used in these coaching visits are bulleted below. The draft documents are included in Appendices H - M.

- Intervention Guidance Document
- RTI Intervention and Progress Monitoring Guidance Document
- RTI Student Folder (screening data summary, progress monitoring goal, AIMSweb measures)
- Parent and Teacher Communication Log
- Student Weekly RTI Intervention Implementation Log
- Weekly RTI Intervention Implementation Group Log

2.1(b): Intended outputs accomplished as a result of the implementation activities

SSIP Core Team Meetings

Three SSIP Core Team meetings have been held during this reporting period (September 15 and December 15, 2016, February 15, 2017). Core Team membership includes DDOE staff (including Title I, Assessment, Curriculum/Instruction/Professional Learning, Early Learning), LEA and charter representatives, Part C, families and members of family organizations, and other community members. Core Team meetings focused on reviewing the preliminary SSIP activities

underway and providing insight into the alignment of the SSIP with the DE RTI Coalition and the DE State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG). The SSIP Core team expanded in February 2017 to include representation from the DE RTI Coalition. These stakeholder groups will combine their efforts and serve as the Multi-Tiered System of Academic Supports Core Team. A list of Core Team members is in Appendix N. A summary of the most recent Core Team meeting evaluation data is included in Appendix O.

SSIP Advisory Council Meetings

Two SSIP Advisory Council meetings were held during the initial implementation of SSIP Phase III activities (September 16, 2016 and February 16, 2017). The first meeting focused on the review of Phase III implementation activities. Christine Pilgrim from OSEP also met virtually with the Advisory Council and provided feedback on the DE SSIP Phase II plan. The February 2017 meeting provided the opportunity for input into SSIP alignment efforts with the DE RTI Coalition and the DE SPDG. The DE SSIP Advisory Council also expanded to include representation from the DE RTI Coalition in February 2017. A list of Core Team members is in Appendix P. A summary of the most recent Advisory Council meeting evaluation data is included in Appendix Q.

Professional Learning Outputs

As discussed in detail in B.1(a), starting on page 7, two sets of one-day trainings were provided to teachers and administrators at the three participating schools. The third day of training is scheduled for the end of March, 2017. Also discussed in B.1(a), there were a total of five face-to-face coaching visits between the initiation of the professional learning in September 2016 and February 28, 2017, the end of this reporting period. At one school site, several guidance documents and resources are being developed that support the implementation of a schoolwide RTI system. The school implementation team, piloting teachers, and coach are collaborating to develop school guidance for RTI processes and procedures, including progress monitoring, parent communication expectations, and data collection. The coach met with the group of teachers who are piloting RTI at this school and reviewed these resources. The piloting teachers, school implementation team, and coach will continue to adapt and update the materials throughout the intervention pilot. Additionally, the coach worked with the implementation team to develop a schedule that adds time for a targeted Tier 2 intervention block.

Evaluation Outputs

Training evaluation reports and corresponding one page InfoGraphics were developed and shared for the first two sets of training. A baseline teacher survey was developed collaboratively between AIR staff and the external evaluator, based on outcomes identified in the SSIP Phase III plan. The survey was tested in one of the three schools, but not until approximately three months after the first training. A family survey was developed in a similar manner to the teacher survey and will be administered prior to the initiation of family literacy events.

2.2: Stakeholder involvement in SSIP implementation

2.2(a): How have stakeholders been informed of the ongoing SSIP implementation?

2.2(b): How stakeholders have had a voice and been involved in decision-making regarding the ongoing SSIP implementation?

As addressed in section 2.1(b), on page 12, the SSIP Core Team and Advisory Council were the primary stakeholders with an ongoing voice and input into SSIP implementation. The Core Team met three times and the Advisory Council met twice during Phase III implementation. Each meeting included informational presentations on SSIP status, as well as time for Core Team and Advisory Council members to work in small groups to provide input and guidance into SSIP activities. Members from each group were also key members of the team that developed the Delaware Early Literacy Initiative application and served on the committee that selected the vendor. Core Team and Advisory Council members were also influential in developing the DE SSIP communication protocols.

SSIP updates are communicated across the DDOE, through various avenues. DDOE SSIP staff meet with LEA Special Education Directors in each county. An SSIP update is included in these meetings. Similarly, DDOE SSIP staff attend the monthly Teaching & Learning Cadre composed of general education curriculum directors and provide SSIP updates. Communication with the DE RTI Coalition has led to alignment of their activities with the DE SSIP, so that Coalition members aren't just informed but also have a voice in guiding SSIP implementation.

Family stakeholders include representation from the DE Parent Information and Training (PTI) Center, Delaware PTA, and the Governor's Advisory Council on Exceptional Citizens (GACEC). Representatives from these groups are part the DE SSIP Core Team and Advisory Council. SSIP updates are also provided directly to the GACEC.

Participating schools also had an active voice in project implementation. As discussed previously, the two schools from the same district did not feel the assigned AIR coach met their schools' needs. The district curriculum director worked closely with the DE SSIP Coordinator and AIR leadership to identify a coach that better met their needs. Participant feedback on the training evaluation forms was used to better design subsequent trainings. One participating principal is on the SSIP Advisory Council.

C. Data on Implementation and Outcomes

C.1. How DE has monitored and measured outputs to assess the effectiveness of the implementation plan.

C.1(a): How evaluation measures align with the theory of action

During Phase II, DE SSIP stakeholders spent most of the year developing a logic model that aligned with the Theory of Action developed in Phase I, and a corresponding evaluation plan to collect, analyze, and report on the outcomes identified in the SSIP logic model. The evaluation plan was further refined during Phase III as the data collection instruments began to be developed.

C.1(b): Data sources for each key measure

The DE SSIP evaluation plan is included in Appendix R. It displays the type of data collected, the instrument used to gather the data, person responsible, and timelines. Further detail is provided in the DE SSIP Phase II plan which provided data sources for every outcome identified in the DE SSIP logic model. The evaluation plan is a more specific list of data sources, eliminating the redundancy in outcomes and data collection tools found across the eight DE SSIP improvement strategies.

C.1(c): Description of baseline data for key measures

The first year of Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) data were collected in 2014-15 and reported in the DE SSIP Phase II plan. On page 19, we report on the 2015-16 SBAC data, which also serves a baseline measure. SBAC data reflecting the first year of implementation in 2016-17 will be available in fall 2017.

During the first cohort, we were not able to capture a true baseline measure for collecting teacher and administrator outcomes. A pilot teacher survey baseline assessment was developed and tested with the one school that has made the most progress to date. This survey will also be used annually to assess the ongoing impact of the Delaware Early Literacy Initiative professional learning. It is now ready to be used as new schools begin the Delaware Early Literacy Initiative implementation at the end of the current school year.

A baseline family survey has been developed and will be administered in spring 2017. It will be administered at the beginning of family literacy nights at the three participating schools. AIR and the external evaluator will work with the school implementation teams to determine the best method for reaching out to families that did not attend the literacy nights.

C.1(d): Data collection procedures and associated timelines

The DE SSIP evaluation plan is included in Appendix R. It displays the type of data collected, the instrument used to gather the data, person responsible, and timelines.

C.1(e): [If applicable] Sampling procedures

Not Applicable

C.1(f): [If appropriate] Planned data comparisons

Not Applicable

C.1(g): How data management and data analysis procedures allow for assessment of progress toward achieving intended improvements

At this stage of implementation, few data are available for analysis and decision-making. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation data were collected after each training and were used to inform subsequent training. A baseline teacher survey was developed and administered to teachers at one participating school. While most of the items addressed teachers' current level of understanding and skills related to early literacy instruction, two items asked about the impact of the professional learning provided during the first four months of the Delaware Early Literacy Initiative. That information was shared with AIR staff to inform ongoing professional learning.

C.2: How DE has demonstrated progress and made modifications to the SSIP.

C.2(a): How the State has reviewed key data that provide evidence regarding progress toward achieving intended improvements to infrastructure and the SiMR.

C.2(c): How data support changes that have been made to implementation and improvement strategies.

C.2(e): How data support planned modifications to intended outcomes (including the SIMR)—rationale or justification for the changes or how data support that the SSIP is on the right path

As mentioned previously, at this stage of implementation, there are few data available. Training evaluation data were reviewed in planning for subsequent training. The baseline teacher survey data collected at the one school provided qualitative data that suggested teachers were benefiting from the professional learning provided to date. Qualitative input from the curriculum director in the district with two participating schools indicated that the current coach was not a good match for the schools. Through some difficult conversations, in collaboration with staff from the DDOE, AIR, and the impacted district, a new coach was interviewed and hired in March 2017.

C.2(b): Evidence of change to baseline data for key measures

Not applicable yet

C.2(d): How data are informing next steps in the SSIP implementation

Quantitative and particularly qualitative data have been used throughout Phase III to inform next steps. Qualitative data gathered from the August kick-off meetings with AIR, the external evaluator, and participating schools provided guidance into the first two trainings. Training evaluation data provided direction for subsequent trainings. AIR collected needs assessment data from each school to inform the coaching to be facilitated at each school.

Staff from the DDOE and AIR speak weekly to plan for upcoming professional learning activities, using any data available to guide the discussions. Similarly, DDOE and participating school administrators communicate on a regular basis to plan for next steps. These feedback loops have allowed for implementation strategies to be reviewed and revised as need.

C.3. Stakeholder involvement in the SSIP evaluation

C.3(a): How stakeholders have been informed of the ongoing evaluation of the SSIP

C.3(b): How stakeholders have had a voice and been involved in decision-making regarding the ongoing evaluation of the SSIP

Similar to the information provided in section 2.2, on page 12, the SSIP Core Team and Advisory Council were the primary stakeholders with an ongoing voice and input into SSIP evaluation. The Core Team met three times and the Advisory Council met twice during Phase III implementation. Each meeting included informational presentations on SSIP status, as well as time for Core Team and Advisory Council members to work in small groups to provide input and guidance into SSIP improvement and evaluation activities. These stakeholders have also provided input into how to align the DE SSIP with the DE SPDG. As part of these discussions, they have provided feedback related to intended outcomes, data collection processes, and reporting.

Other stakeholders that are part of the evaluation communication plan include DDOE staff, participating schools, LEA Special Education Directors, the DE Teaching & learning Cadre composed of general education curriculum directors, the DE RTI Coalition, Part C, the DE PTI, and the GACEC. They have received at a minimum, one-page evaluation InfoGraphics for the two trainings conducted in fall 2016.

D. Data Quality Issues

D1. Data limitations that affected reports of progress in implementing the SSIP and achieving the SIMR due to quality of the evaluation data

D.1(a): Concern or limitations related to the quality or quantity of the data used to report progress or results

It is early in the implementation cycle, so few data are available at this time. There were two areas where we can improve the quality and quantity of data collected. A needs assessment was conducted by AIR in November 2016 which was limited by a low response rate. The teacher baseline survey was administered after the professional learning has already begun, and only at one school. This survey had a 74% response rate.

D.1(b): Implications for assessing progress or results

These data limitations should not significantly impact the ability to assess progress. There are other data sources that will inform progress. For instance, at one school, there was no formal progress monitoring used at the time of the needs assessment. As fidelity data are collected, that will be a more reliable source of progress than teacher perception data.

D.1(c): Plans for improving data quality

With the work conducted in fall 2016 to develop evaluation instruments while implementation was under way, we are in position to better administer these evaluation tools with the upcoming spring cohort of schools. Conversations are underway to combine the needs assessment and baseline teacher survey into a single data collection process. These data would be gathered prior to the first day of training.

E. Progress toward Achieving Intended Improvements

E.1. Assessment of progress toward achieving intended improvements

E.1(a): Infrastructure changes that support SSIP initiatives, including how system changes support achievement of the SiMR, sustainability, and scale-up

The DE SSIP continue to work with the Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development, Title I, Assessment and Office of Early Learning, personnel within our branch, while working towards greater collaboration with the school improvement group, reaching out to priority and focus schools. We have aligned the work of the SSIP Core Team and Advisory Council with the Delaware RTI Coalition to create a Delaware MTSS Core Team and an MTSS Advisory Council. Two significant accomplishments of the DE SSIP during this reporting period has been the alignment with the DE RTI Coalition and the collaborative work in developing the DE 2017 SPDG proposal. The SPDG will provide the resources necessary to fully implement DE's Phase II plan, which aligns with the work of the RTI Coalition. Representatives from the RTI Coalition have been added to the MTSS Core Team and MTSS Advisory Council to gain their valuable input.

E.1(b): Evidence that SSIP's evidence-based practices are being carried out with fidelity and having the desired effects

To assess the degree to which training is implemented with fidelity, the two AIR trainers were observed by Dr. Jill Pentimonti of AIR. The training fidelity instrument is included in Appendix __. The results of the observations were reviewed with the Institute trainers and shared with the DE SSIP Coordinator and external evaluator. A coaching fidelity tool is in the process of development. At the end of the school-year, participants will be surveyed to gather feedback on their perceptions of the impact of SSIP activities on intended outcomes.

The AIR coach at one school has used a coaching event summary tool to capture the fidelity of coaching at that school site. This self-assessment tool measures the coaches' impact in the areas of alliance building and implementation support and is used to document evidence in each category. The professional learning activities have impacted the implementation of progress monitoring at the school sites. As mentioned above, one school has begun the process of implementing progress monitoring with a pilot group of teachers. At another school site, progress monitoring was occurring at the students' grade level rather than at their instructional level. Following the second day of the Literacy Institute, this school made plans to begin progress monitoring at the students' instructional level in order to provide more targeted intervention for students.

E.1(c): Outcomes regarding progress toward short-term and long-term objectives that are necessary steps toward achieving the SIMR

At the time of this report, our only quantitative data sources to assess project outcomes are training evaluation data, needs assessment data, and a sample of baseline teacher survey discussed earlier in this report. Qualitative data have highlighted coaching challenges in two schools that were addressed promptly. While little progress towards project outcomes has occurred in those schools, the infrastructure has been addressed to support professional learning efforts. Qualitative data from the third school shows initial use of progress monitoring strategies to inform student learning.

A sample of the qualitative data from that school’s baseline teacher survey suggests there has been initial impact on teachers’ instructional practices.

- “The DE Early Literacy Initiative provided valuable information, strategies, resources and support which has helped to enhance my instruction.”
- “It has helped me to look at my instruction and think about what more I can do to teach my students who are struggling.”
- “The Delaware Early Literacy Initiative has helped us to gain a better understanding of MTSS/RtI and we have worked hard to ensure all the big pieces are in place. The Delaware Early Literacy Initiative has provided a review of background literacy knowledge for teachers and staff which helps in moving forward with instruction.”
- “I’ve started focusing on the empty spaces of time (classroom transitions for example) and using them to fit as much academics as possible.”
- “Opened my eyes to including more vocabulary instruction throughout the day.”

E.1(d): Measurable improvements in the SIMR in relation to targets

Third grade reading results from the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) are used to measure DE’S SIMR. Table 3 lists the year of assessment, actual data for 2014-15 and 2015-16, target data for subsequent years, and the expected change from baseline. The 2014-15 and 2015-16 data are baseline, as the initiative began in fall 2016.

Table 3: Percent of 3rd Grade Students with IEPs Scoring below Proficiency on State Assessment

FFY	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Assessment Administration	Spring 2015	Spring 2016	Spring 2017	Spring 2018	Spring 2019
Targets	74.69% (Baseline)	74.69%	73.69%	71.69%	69.69%
Data	74.69% (Baseline)	75.30%			
Decrease from Baseline	Decrease from the Baseline	Same	-1.0	-3.0	-5.0

F. Plans for Next Year

F.1: Additional activities to be implemented next year, with timeline

Professional learning strategies, including training and coaching, supported by evaluation activities will continue through the 2017-18 school year for the three Cohort I schools with the intended outcome of building the instructional capacity of school personnel.

Recruiting efforts for Cohort II have been ongoing. The DDOE SSIP Project Director has met with potential LEAs and is also reaching out within the DDOE to discuss potential partnerships with priority schools which is also a priority for Delaware's new governor and Secretary of Education. In addition, the three remaining schools of the Cohort I district with two schools will be joining Cohort 2.

The Multi-Tiered System of Academic Supports Core Team and Advisory Council will continue meeting to inform the SSIP and provide feedback regarding implementation of the Delaware Early Literacy Initiative. The DE SSIP has been fully aligned with the Delaware's 2017 SPDG proposal, to enhance SSIP implementation.

F.2: Planned evaluation activities including data collection, measures, and expected outcomes

We will continue to follow our Phase III evaluation plan, based on the logic models developed in Phase II. A large focus of this reporting period has been on instrument development, which caused a delay in baseline survey administrations. Instruments and processes are in place to gather year-end data from participating teachers and administrators. At the same time, we are in a position to gather true baseline data on new schools beginning implementation at the end of the current school year.

F.3: Anticipated barriers and steps to address those barriers

As the DDOE continues recruiting efforts for Cohort II, funding to support scaling up is a great concern. The DDOE is accessing multiple avenues to support scaling up the Delaware Early Literacy Initiative including discussions across the Department and applying for a SPDG. The DDOE looks forward to OSEP's favorable consideration of Delaware's SPDG proposal and continuing the great work of the SSIP.

At one LEA, we found that teacher buy-in was a barrier. During our second year, we will collect MTSS needs assessment data and teacher perception data prior to designing training and coaching activities to better meet teachers' needs. We have also kept in close contact with the participating LEA and school personnel to ensure we are meeting their needs.

F.4: The State describes any needs for additional support and/or technical assistance

Throughout Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III, the DDOE has partnered with OSEP technical assistance providers including Mid-South Regional Resource Center, IDEA Data Center, and the National Center for Systemic Improvement. This technical assistance has greatly contributed to the success of Delaware's SSIP. The DDOE is grateful for this support and looks forward to continuing these partnerships through years 2 and 3 of Phase III.