New York State Systemic Improvement Plan Indicator 17

Overview

New York's State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) has been designed to increase the percentage of students with disabilities performing at proficiency levels 2 or above on the grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA) State assessments.

Annually, there are approximately 163,000[1] students with disabilities who participate in the regular grades 3-8 State assessment in ELA and another 18,000 who participate in the New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA). There are currently 698 school districts in New York State (NYS), including the five Big Cities of New York, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Yonkers. In addition to the Big 5 school districts, as of the date of this report, 29 school districts have been identified as focus districts and are among the lowest performing 10 percent of districts in the State for their results for students with disabilities. Many others are identified as local assistance plan districts based on the results of the subgroup of students with disabilities.

The SSIP improvement strategies, which were selected in consideration of the data and the State's infrastructure, are designed to:

(1) narrow the gap in literacy achievement of students with disabilities by the time they turn age 6;
(2) improve instructional practices for students with disabilities in the lowest performing schools; and
(3) improve the individual evaluation and identification process for students suspected of having learning disabilities as well as the individualized education program (IEP) development and implementation and provision of specially designed instruction to students with learning disabilities statewide.

In addition to stakeholder engagement as described below, the selection of the student results area, targets for improvement and improvement strategies included discussions with other Offices within the New York State Education Department (NYSED), including but not limited to Information Reporting Services, Office of Accountability, Office of Early Learning, Office of Curriculum and Assessment and Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages.

[1] In 2012-13, there were 163,205 students with disabilities who participate in the ELA grades 3-8 regular State assessment

Section I: Stakeholder Engagement

This section describes the process by which the State engaged stakeholders who are affected by the data systems to provide them an opportunity to give input about the data and decision-making to develop the SSIP.

During the 2013-14 school year, the State provided information and received input at two meetings of the Commissioner's Advisory Panel (CAP) for Special Education on the federal requirements for the SSIP. CAP, which is New York's Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) State Advisory Panel, includes broad stakeholder representation (see http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/cap/), with the majority of the members being individuals with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities. The State has annually engaged CAP in discussions on the results of the Annual Performance Report (APR) and sought feedback from them on data to be analyzed for the SSIP as well as their direction, in broad consideration of the State's infrastructure, to determine the targeted focus area for the State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR).

The State participated in the Northeast Regional Resource Center (NERRC) SSIP meeting, which included dedicated time for state teams to work on their SSIP planning. The NYS team included a representative from one of the State's special education parent centers, as well as two staff from NYSED's Office of Special Education, to review and discuss actions to develop the SSIP.

In October 2015, the State provided a comprehensive data presentation to approximately 400 individuals, including NYSED staff from its monitoring and policy units and representatives from each of its State technical assistance centers, including:

- State-funded Special Education Parent Centers and the federal Parent Training and Information Centers from New York;
- Early Childhood Direction Centers;
- Response to Intervention (RtI) State Technical Assistance Center and RtI Regional Professional Development Teams;
- Technical Assistance Center on Disproportionality;
- Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Centers (RSE-TASC), including Special Education School Improvement Specialists, Behavior Specialists, Transition Specialists, Bilingual Special Education Specialists, Nondistrict Program Specialists[2], and Regional Special Education Trainers.
- Transition Services Professional Development Center;
- Center for Autism and Related Disorders; and
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Technical Assistance Center.

[2] Nondistrict programs include schools providing education to students with disabilities, other than public school districts or BOCES, such as approved private schools, Special Act School Districts, State Supported and State Operated Schools.

At the February 2015 CAP meeting, the State again discussed the proposed SiMR, scope of the improvement plan (statewide or targeted to particular districts), targets, improvement activities and theory of action and received feedback and recommendations. Additional stakeholder feedback was received on the selected SiMR and improvement activities from Coordinators of the Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Centers.

Highlights of specific stakeholder feedback, which informed development of the SSIP, are embedded in the sections below.

Section II: Data Analysis

This section describes how the State identified and analyzed key data, including data from SPP/APR indicators, 618 data collections, and other data as applicable to determine the State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR) and the root causes contributing to low performance.

The State compiled data reports and conducted a data analysis, using data from the SPP/APR, 618 data collections and other data as described in this section and in the section on Infrastructure Analysis, for purposes of sharing and discussion with stakeholders to develop to select the SiMR and corresponding infrastructure analysis and improvement activities. Data analyzed included the following:

Classification rates, statewide and disaggregated based on the type of school district[3], English language learners, disability categories, and race/ethnicity.

Graduation rates, including the percentage of students who graduated from high school with a regular high school diploma[4] compared to the percentage of the cohort who dropped out of school, transferred to general equivalency diploma programs, were still enrolled and who exited school with an individualized education program (IEP) diploma[5].

Graduation rates were further examined based on the percentage of students who graduated with a regular high school diploma after four, five and six years using the graduation cohorts from 2005 to 2009. This data was further disaggregated to determine the percent of students who left with a local diploma, Regents diploma or a Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation.

[3] Type of district means Need/Resource Capacity and performance status under the State's ESEA Accountability System

[4] Local, Regents Diploma and Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation

[5] An IEP diploma, which is no longer available after 2013, is not a regular high school diploma reported for accountability purposes.

- Graduation rates were also disaggregated by Need/Resource Capacity[6] of school districts.
- Graduation rates for students with disabilities were compared by current completion requirements and calculated college and career readiness[7] for all students and compared to other groups (all students; American Indian; Asian/Pacific Islander; Black; White; and English language learners).

Participation and Performance in the High School English Language Arts Assessment: Data was reviewed showing, over time[8], the numbers of students with disabilities who participated in the Regents examination in English and the numbers who achieved a score of 55-100 and 65-100.

Drop Out Data, statewide and by disability category.

Preschool Outcomes in the percentage of preschool children functioning within age expectations by the time they turn six years of age or exited the preschool special education program.

English language arts assessment results, grades 3-8, for all students and for all students with disabilities; gap analysis of the percentage of all students who achieved proficiency levels in 2011-12 (prior to Common Core assessments) and 2012-13 (first year of Common Core Learning Standards aligned ELA assessments in grades 3-8), and ELA results for students with disabilities disaggregated as follows:

- need/resource capacity;
- type of school districts – (i.e., Big 5 school districts[9]; 29 of the State's lowest performing school districts identified by the State as needing assistance to improve results for students with disabilities; and all other school districts in the rest of the State);
- disability category statewide and by type of school district;
- race/ethnicity and by type of school district;
- disability category and by type of school district; and
- least restrictive environment (LRE) placement, statewide, by disability category, by race ethnicity and by ELA results for students in general education classes 80 percent or more of the school day; 40 to 79 percent or more of the school day; or less than 40 percent of the school day.

The State's data analysis also considered **qualitative data** as follows:

- In the 29 lowest performing districts[10] in the State for students with disabilities, data on the quality of instruction was considered in the root cause analysis.

[6] New York City; Large City; Urban-Suburban; Rural; Average Need; Low Need

[7] Students graduating with at least a score of 75 on Regents English and 80 on a Math Regents, which correlates with success in first-year college courses, were identified as being college and career ready.

[8] From 1997 to 2013

[9] Buffalo, New York City, Syracuse, Rochester and Yonkers

[10] Excluding the Big 5

Specifically, data was collected and analyzed on instances of observed research-based instruction provided to students with disabilities in the following areas:
  - Supportive and accessible classroom environments;
  - Explicit Teaching;
  - Specially Designed Instruction; and
  - Supports for English language learners.

- In these same 29 school districts, the RSE-TASC Quality Improvement Planning Process[11] documents were reviewed to ascertain the most frequently identified priority needs and focus for improvement for the subgroup of students with disabilities. These data were reviewed to further inform root cause analysis.

QUANTITATIVE DATA RESULTS

Note: *Quantitative data analyzed for purposes of developing the SSIP included the most recent data available at that time and may not be the same as data presented for other indicators in the Annual Performance Report.*

Data Accuracy
The State's system of data collection ensures high quality data that is valid and reliable. District data used for this analysis was submitted by local school district officials. School superintendents were provided with an opportunity to review and correct summary reports based upon this data.

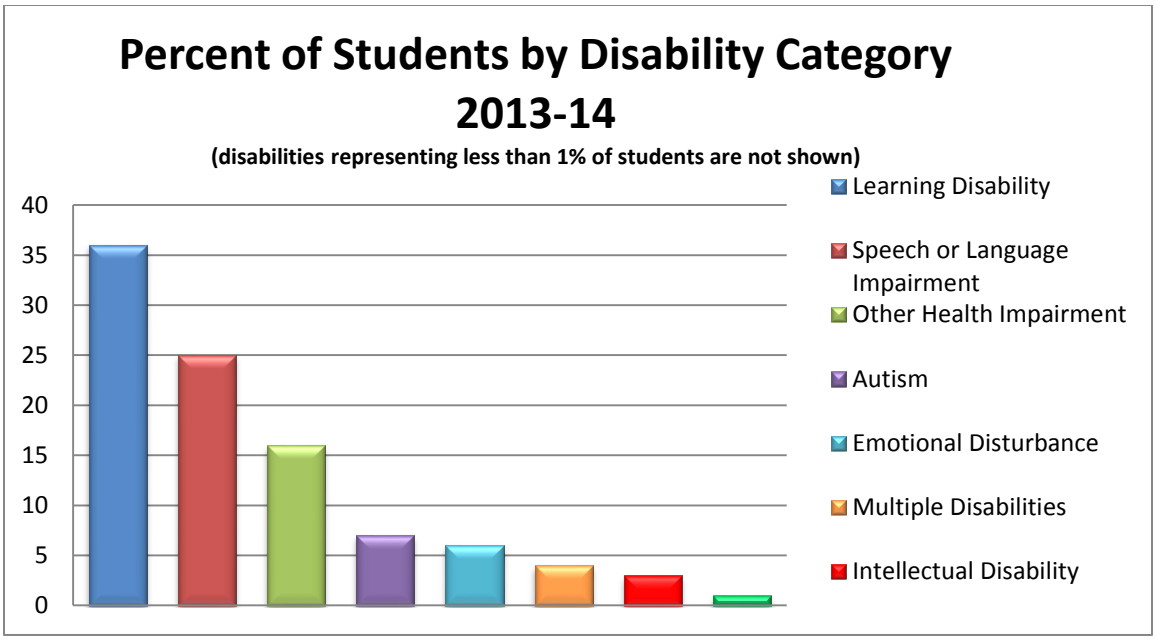
Classification Rates and Types of Disabilities

In New York State, there are 2,457,691 students, ages 6-21, of whom 385,763 are students with disabilities. The classification rate is 13.9 percent statewide. However, the classification rates of individual school districts vary. In the Big 5 school districts, classification rates vary from 13.9 to 19.3 percent. In other school districts identified based on poor results for the subgroup of students with disabilities, classification rates range from 8.2 percent to 17.6 percent, with 14 of the 29 districts with classification rates higher than the statewide average. The statewide classification rate for students with disabilities who are English language learners is 18.8 percent, compared to the statewide average of 13.9 percent for all students.

Classification rates by disability category are shown in the bar chart below:
- 36 percent are identified as having learning disabilities (LD);
- 25 percent are identified as having speech and language impairments (SLI);
- 16 percent are identified as having other health impairments (OHI);

[11] Quality Improvement Planning process includes working with a school district team to better understand their data, conducting an analysis of need, selection of priorities, articulation of measurable short-term and long-term goals, planning of activities to accomplish those goals, and formulating methods of measuring the progress in terms of positive changes to practices within the district/school and student achievement. This problem-solving process will be presented as a cycle that is continuous with data guiding decision-making at every step of the process.

- 7 percent with autism (AU);
- 6 percent with emotional disturbance (ED); and
- the remaining 10 percent are classified in one of the other disability categories[12].



The following chart shows the data analysis by race/ethnicity for disability categories.

Race/Ethnicity	% of All Students	% of All Disabilities	% of Students with LD	% of Students with SLI	% of Students with ED	% of Students with ID
White	48.6%	45.0%	42.8%	33.9%	33.9%	35.0%
Black/African American	18.7%	22.5%	24.0%	21.0%	30.0%	30.0%
Hispanic/Latino	23.0%	27.2%	28.7%	38.1%	28.5%	28.5%
Other	9.7%	5.3%	0.5%	7.0%	7.6%	0.5%

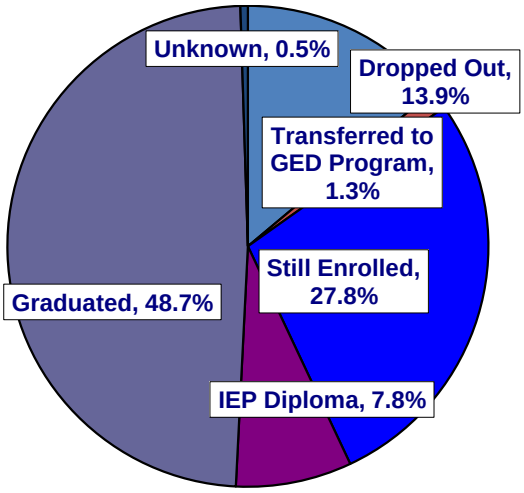
Key data findings from this analysis show that, <u>compared to all students</u>:

- Black and African American and Hispanic/Latino students are overrepresented in special education, while White students and other racial groups are somewhat underrepresented in the group of students with disabilities;
- By disability category, Black students are significantly overrepresented in the category of ED and ID, with over representation also noted for LD and SLI; and
- Hispanic/Latino students are significantly overrepresented in the category of SLI, with overrepresentation also in the categories of LD, ED and ID.

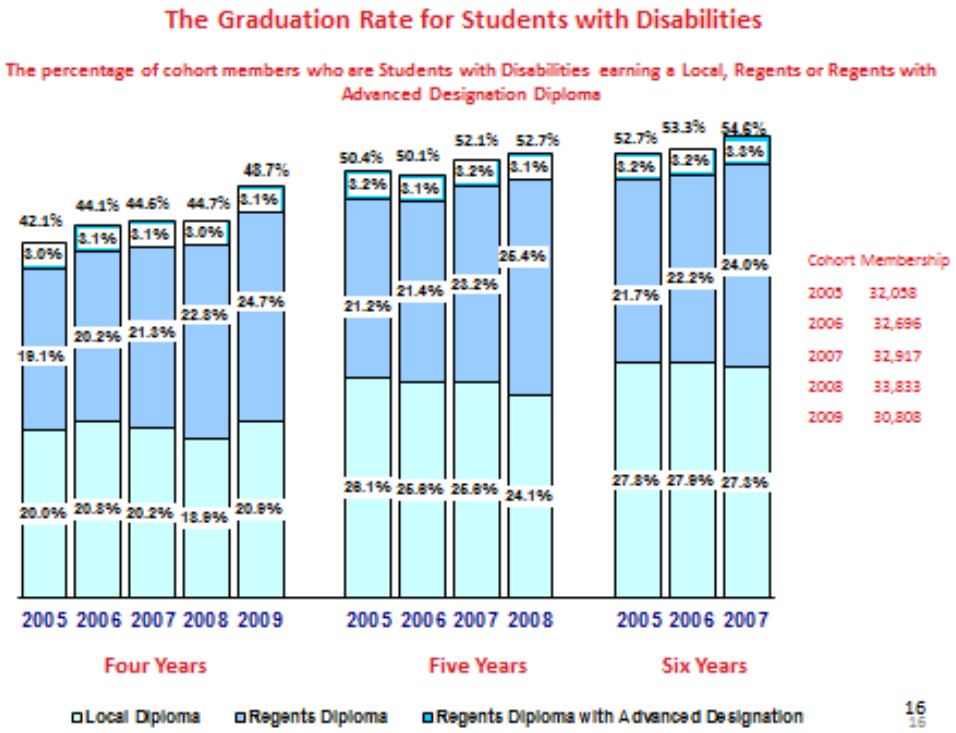
[12] Intellectual disabilities; multiple disabilities; hearing impairment; visual impairment; orthopedic impairment; deafness, traumatic brain injury and deaf-blindness.

Graduation Rates

The following chart displays statewide data for students with disabilities who entered grade 9 in 2009 four years later as of June 2013.

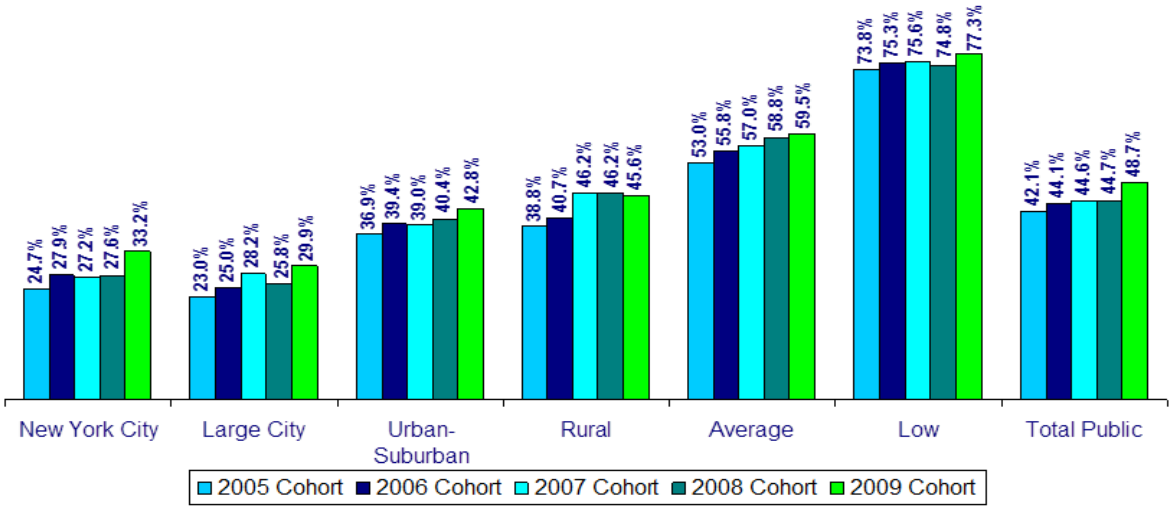


As the table shows, 48.7 percent of students with disabilities graduated with a regular high school diploma. This data was further disaggregated to analyze how graduation rates are affected when students remain in school for five or six years and to consider the types of diplomas earned by students with disabilities.



As the two preceding tables show, the graduation rate for students with disabilities is improving each year, and the graduation rate statewide for the 2007 cohort increases to 54.6 percent when these students remained in school for five or six years. Even so, approximately 50 percent of students with disabilities who graduate with a regular high school diploma exit school with a local diploma.

Graduation rates were further disaggregated by Need/Resource Capacity. This data shows great variation on graduation rates. Low need districts report graduation rates of more than 77 percent, with the lowest graduation rates reported by the Big 5 school districts.



New York State has adopted Common Core Learning Standards to prepare students to be "College and Career Ready[13]". The following data was analyzed to determine how students with disabilities are achieving toward this goal in relation to all students and other subgroups.

[13] "College and Career Ready" means a student graduated with at least a score of 75 on the Regents English and 80 on a Math Regents, which correlates with success in first-year college courses.

JUNE 2013 Graduation Rates

Graduation under Current Requirements
(*Completion*)

	% Graduating
All Students	74.9
American Indian	62.2
Asian/Pacific Islander	80.6
Black	59.7
Hispanic	59.2
White	86.5
English Language Learners	31.4
Students with Disabilities	**48.7**

Calculated College and Career Ready*
(*Readiness*)

	% Graduating
All Students	37.2
American Indian	21.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	57.2
Black	14.2
Hispanic	18.0
White	50.4
English Language Learners	5.9
Students with Disabilities	**5.4**

*Students graduating with at least a score of 75 on Regents English and 80 on a Math Regents, which correlates with success in first-year college courses.

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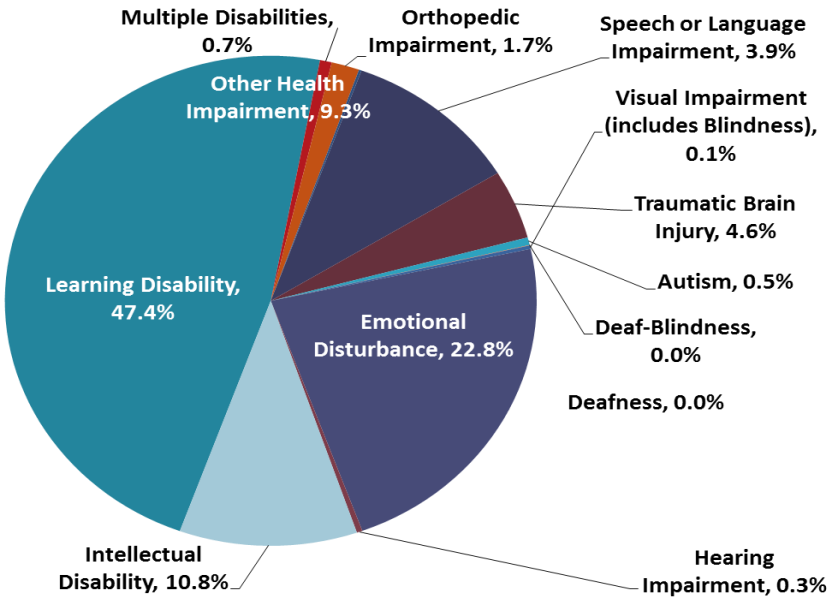
Drop Out Rate

Data analysis of the State's dropout rate for students with disabilities shows that 13.9 percent of all students with disabilities dropped out of school (2009 cohort after four years). The following chart displays this data by disability category showing that:

- While students with learning disabilities represent 36 percent of all students, they account for 47.4 percent of students with disabilities who drop out of school.
- While students with emotional disabilities represent just 6 percent of students with disabilities, they represent 23 percent of all students with disabilities who drop out of school.

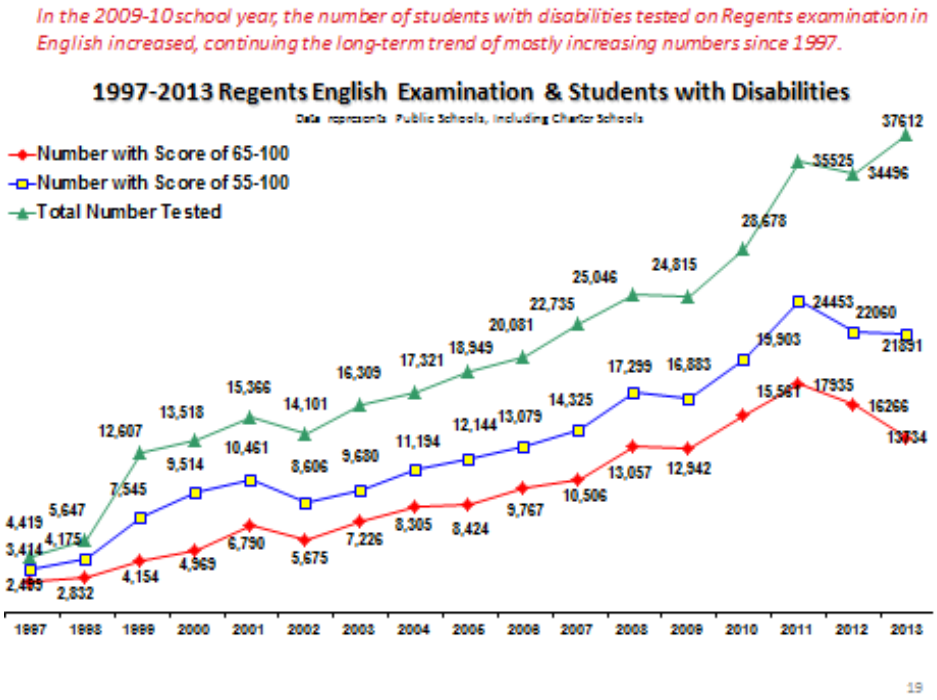


Preschool Outcomes

The gap in achievement starts early. Data on outcomes for preschool students with disabilities shows that just 55.9 percent were rated as functioning within age expectations in the area of acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy) by the time they turned 6 years of age or exited preschool special education services.

Performance on the High School ELA Assessment

Data analysis included a review, over time, of the numbers of students who are taking the high school ELA assessment and passing with a proficient score. The following data shows that there has been a steady and significant increase each year in the numbers of students with disabilities participating in the high school ELA - from 4,419 in 1997 to 37,612 in 2013. Correspondingly, the numbers of students passing this assessment has also steadily increased – from 3,414 in 1997 to 21,981 in 2013 (in 2011, 24,453 students achieved a score of 55-100).



Grades 3-8 ELA Results

Because of the State's technical assistance and professional development infrastructure, stakeholders supported a focus on ELA results and further analysis in this

area. Data analysis in this area included ELA proficiency results[14] for all students as compared to students with disabilities and the gap analysis. ELA results for students with disabilities were disaggregated by Need/Resource Capacity school districts; disability categories; race/ethnicity; LRE placements; and among different types of school districts[15].

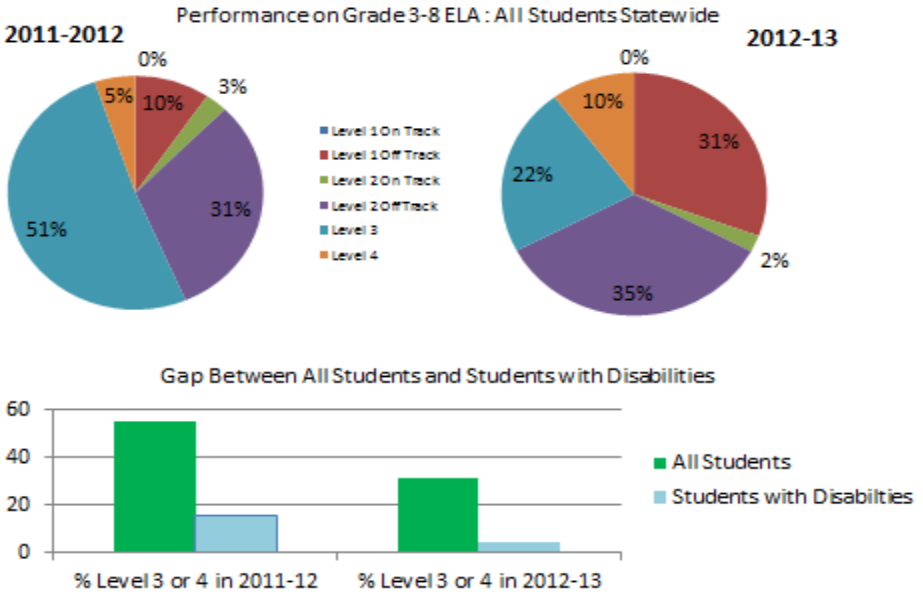
The following chart compares the proficiency results for all students on the 3-8 ELA assessment in 2011-12 (prior to Common Core assessments) compared to such results in 2012-13 (first year of the Common Core assessments)[16]. In 2012-13, 31 percent of all students scored at a level 3 or 4 (proficient), while 66 percent scored at levels 1 or 2. Statewide, in 2012-13, only 5 percent of students with disabilities scored at proficient levels (3 or 4). The gap in achievement between students with and without disabilities was 26 percentage points in 2012-13 and, as the bar graph displays, the gap in achievement between the groups from 2011-12 and 2012-13 has narrowed.

[14] Regulatory definitions of student performance:

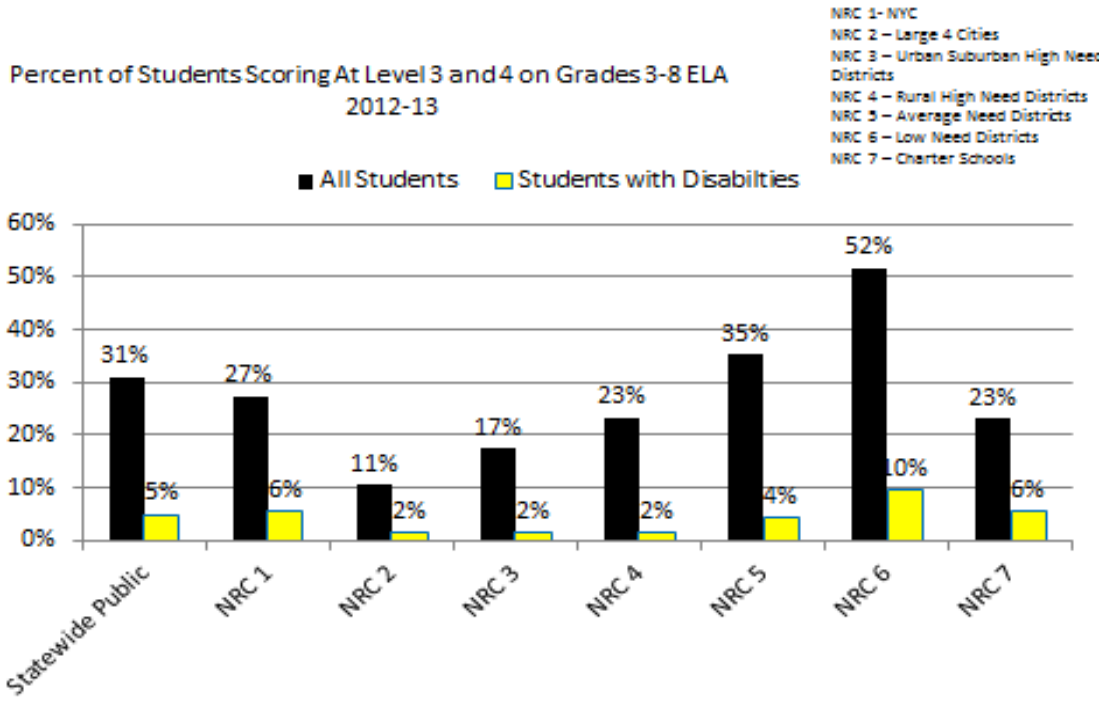
- Well Below Proficient (Not Proficient on Common Core Expectations) is defined as the performance of a student who scores Level 1 on State assessments in grades 3-8 English language arts, grades 3-8 mathematics; grades 4 and 8 science or scores Level 1 on a State alternate assessment; or scores less than a 65 on the Regents Comprehensive Examination in English or a Regents mathematics examination; or fails to take the Regents Comprehensive Examination in English or a Regents mathematics examination; or receives a failing score on a State-approved alternative examination for those Regents examinations.
- Below Proficient (On track to meet Regents Graduation Requirements) is defined as the performance of a student who scores Level 2 on the State assessments in grades 3-8 English language arts, grades 3-8 mathematics; grades 4 and 8 science; or scores Level 2 on a State alternate assessment; or scores between 65 and 74 on the Regents Comprehensive Examination in English or a Regents mathematics examination.
- Proficient (Meets Common Core Course Expectations) is defined as the performance of a student who scores Level 3 on State assessments in grades 3-8 English language arts, grades 3-8 mathematics; grades 4 and 8 science; or scores Level 3 on a State alternative assessment; or scores between 75 and 89 on the Regents Comprehensive Examination in English or between 80 and 89 on a Regents examination in mathematics; or passes a State-approved alternative to those Regents examinations;
- Excels in Standards (Exceeds Common Core Course Expectations) means the performance of a student who scores Level 4 on State assessments in grades 3-8 English language arts; grades 3-8 mathematics, grade 4 and 8 science or scores Level 4 on a State alternate assessment; or scores 90 or higher on the Regents Comprehensive Examination in English or a Regents mathematics examination.

[15] All districts, Big 5, lowest performing school districts and rest of State districts.

[16] In 2012-13, New York State administered new assessments for grades 3-8 ELA and mathematics, aligned for the first time to the Common Core Learning Standards adopted by the State Board of Regents in 2010. These new assessments more accurately reflect students' progress towards college and career readiness, but also resulted in significantly fewer students deemed proficient on the more rigorous standards. As a result, 2012-13 will serve as a new baseline of student performance for setting Annual Measureable Objectives (AMOs) for grades 3-8 ELA and mathematics.

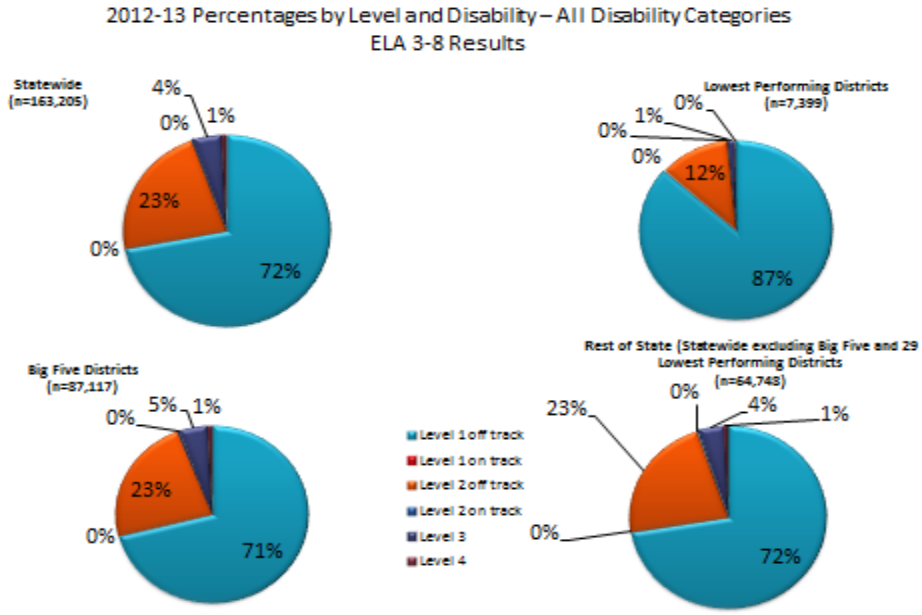


When the grades 3-8 2012-13 ELA results for students with disabilities are **disaggregated by Need/Resource Capacity**, we see significant variation in results:



The following data results only include students with disabilities who took the regular ELA assessment, with or without accommodations, and do not include the alternate assessment ELA results.

The grades 3-8 ELA results for students with disabilities were compared statewide with the results in the Big 5, lowest performing and rest of State school districts.



Five percent of all students with disabilities scored at proficient levels on the grades 3-8 ELA 2012-13 State assessment and 81 percent scored at level 1 – off track[17] to proficiency. Data results for students with disabilities, disaggregated by race/ethnicity, shows achievement discrepancies based on race/ethnicity:

Race	% at Proficient Levels	% Level 2 off track to proficiency	% Level 1 off track to proficiency
White	7%	27%	65%
Black/African Amer.	2%	17%	81%
Hispanic/Latino	3%	21%	76%

The grades 3-8 ELA statewide results, disaggregated by disability category as displayed in the following table, show that students with learning disabilities are the lowest performing subgroup of students with disabilities on this assessment with only 2 percent proficient, followed by students with speech and language impairments (5 percent proficient) and students with emotional disturbance (6 percent proficient). The highest

[17] On track to proficiency means that if the student continues to show growth at the same rate, the student will be proficient within three years or grade eight, whichever is earlier.

performing disability category was students with visual impairments (19 percent proficient).

Disability Category	% at Proficient Levels	% Level 2 off track to proficiency	% Level 1 off track to proficiency
Learning Disabilities (LD)	2%	19%	79%
Speech and Language Impairment (SLI)	5%	23%	72%
Emotional Disturbance (ED)	6%	22%	71%
Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)	6%	15%	79%
Other Health Impairment (OHI)	9%	27%	63%
Visual Impairment (VI)	19%	32%	48%

Least restrictive environment data

For students with disabilities, ages 6-21, statewide data shows that:

- 57.5 percent are served inside regular classrooms 80 percent or more of the school day;
- 14.7 percent are served inside regular classrooms for between 40 and 79 percent of the school day;
- 21.3 percent are served inside regular classrooms for less than 40 percent of the school day; and
- 6.5 percent are served in separate schools, residential placements or homebound or hospital placements.

The following table displays **LRE placements by disability category:**

Disability Category	80% or more	40-79%	Less than 40%	Separate setting
LD	69.6%	13.4%	13.3%	0.9%
SLI	86%	7.8%	1.9%	1.2%
ED	27%	9.9%	37.4%	22.2%
OHI	65.4%	13.1%	15.5%	2.3%

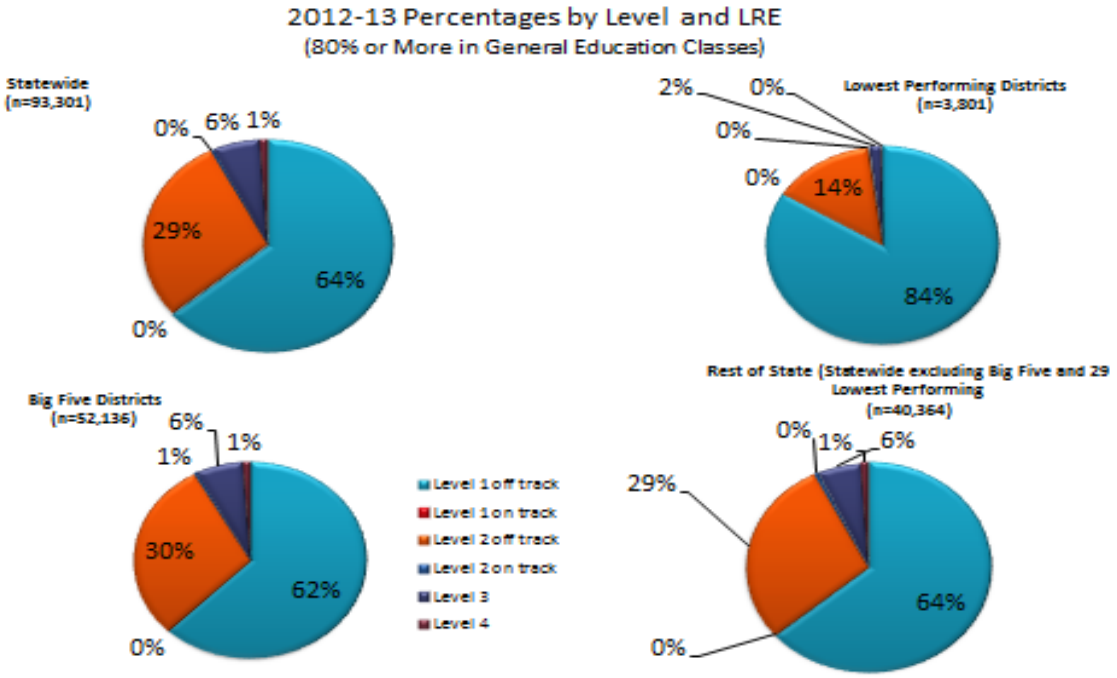
While students with learning disabilities and students with speech and language impairments spend the majority of the school day in regular education classes, the results for these students on the grades 3-8 assessments were the lowest among the various disability categories (2 percent and 5 percent respectively).

LRE data, further disaggregated by race/ethnicity, shows statewide overrepresentation of Black students in the percent of students spending less than 80

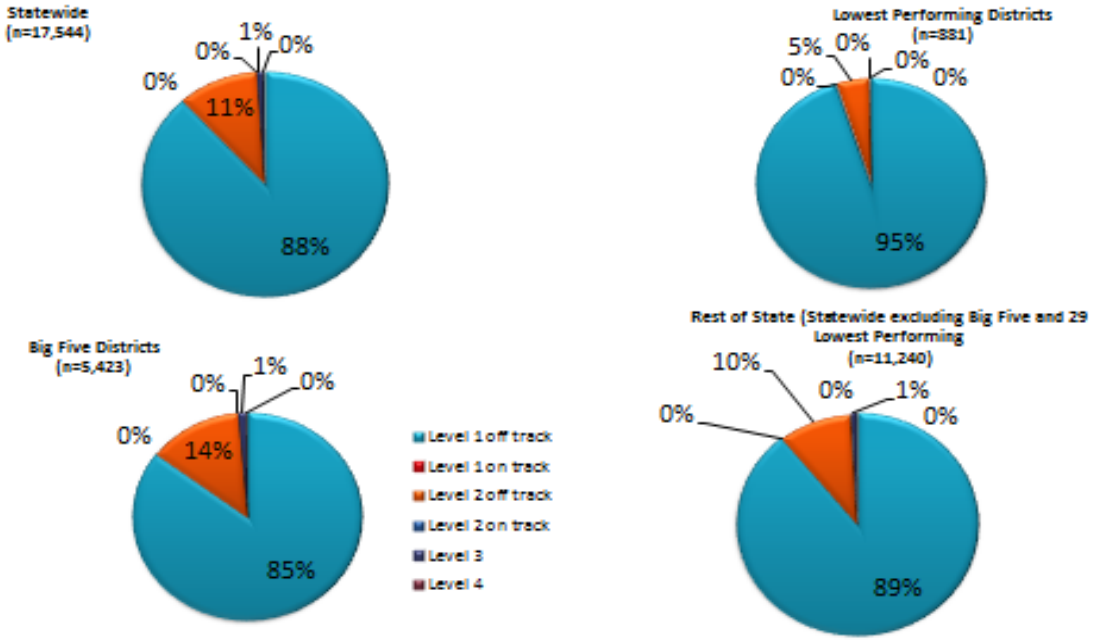
percent of the school day in general education classrooms and placements in separate settings:

Race	80% or more	40-79%	Less than 40%	Separate setting
White	55.1%	14.7%	14.6%	5.1%
Black/African Amer.	52.6%	27%	10.1%	8.2%
Hispanic/Latino	59.2%	25.5%	8.5%	5.8%

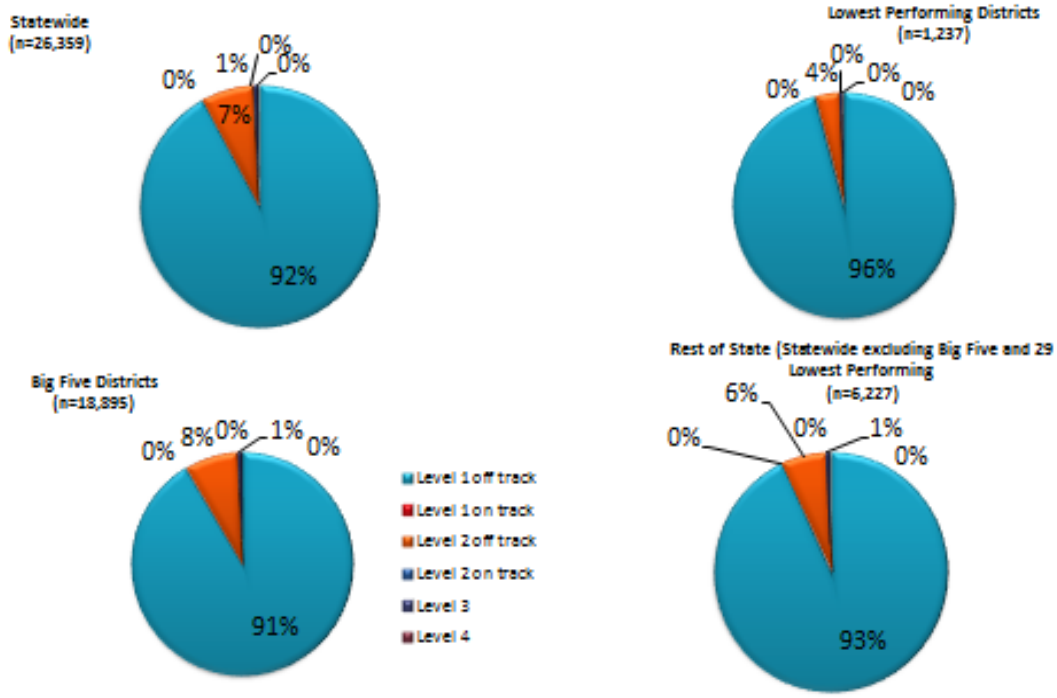
Grades 3-8 ELA results were **disaggregated by LRE placement** and examined by type of school district (all districts; Big 5; lowest performing 29; rest of State). The results, displayed graphically in the following pie charts, show that the less time students spend in the general education classes, the poorer their results on the 3-8 ELA Assessment.



2012-13 Percentages by Level and LRE
(40% - 79% or More in General Education Classes)



2012-13 Percentages by Level and LRE
(40% or Less in General Education Classes)



QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative data to inform root cause analysis related to the SiMR (performance on grades 3-8 ELA assessments) was examined using data that was obtained from a school improvement assessment tool, known as the Instructional Walk-Thru Tool[18] developed by the State's RSE-TASC network. This tool is designed to be used for purposes of data collection across a school or organization, and is not used as an assessment tool for an individual teacher. There are three sections of the walk-through tool:

a. Supportive and Accessible Environment
b. Functions and Elements of Explicit Instruction; and
c. Specially Designed Instruction

Special Education School Improvement Specialists – trained in the use of the tool to ensure validity of observations and reliability of data – conduct observations in a cross section of classroom and support settings across the continuum of services. A sufficient number of general and special education classrooms and resource room settings are selected to ensure that the observations include a representative sample of the school as a whole.

For purposes of this data analysis, data results from 29 low performing school districts were reviewed. This data represents observations made in 695 classrooms, including general education classes, special education classes and resource rooms. Results from these observations showed:

In the area of supportive and accessible classrooms, low levels of observed instruction were noted in the following areas:

- Acknowledgment of appropriate behaviors;
- Posted clear positive behavioral expectations;
- Positive statements that student will be successful;
- Connections to students' interests and goals; and
- Environments that reflect cultural and linguistic diversity.

In the area of explicit teaching, low levels of observed instruction were noted in the following areas:

- Explicit review and introduction of lessons;
- Active teaching;
- Fading of prompts;
- Use of formative assessments of understanding;
- Lesson closure;
- Student engagement;
- Correction procedures – feedback;
- Higher order questions; and
- Data for progress monitoring.

[18] http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/spp/Walkthroughtool-LAPSelfReview.pdf

In the area of specially designed instruction, low levels of observed instruction were noted in the following areas:

- Materials in alternative formats;
- Explicit instruction and accommodations to address behavior;
- Explicit instruction of organizational strategies; and
- Students using organizational accommodations or materials.

In the area of supporting students with disabilities who are English language learners, the following were observed at low levels:

- Use of bilingual glossaries, English as a Second Language (ESL) materials;
- Students using these materials independently or with guidance;
- Language comprehension supports; and
- Wait time to process information given in English.

In addition to this data, the Quality Improvement Process plans developed by the teams in each of these low performing schools showed the following most frequently identified concerns from the data cited:

1. Limited use of specially designed instruction
2. Low levels of progress monitoring
3. Low student engagement
4. Few students monitoring or accurately completing work
5. Limited instruction in reading comprehension strategies
6. Students not responding to higher order questions

The most frequently identified areas of priority needs and focus for improvement included:

1. Data driven decision making
2. Elements of explicit instruction
3. Specially designed instruction
4. Literacy
5. Engagement
6. Higher order questioning and teaching student higher order thinking skills

COMPLIANCE DATA ANALYSIS

For purposes of this data analysis, IDEA compliance data identified by the Office of Special Education during monitoring reviews and State complaint investigations during the 2013-14 school year were reviewed relating to IEP development and implementation. In the area of IEP development, data from 317 findings of noncompliance were reviewed; in the area of IEP implementation, 254 findings of noncompliance were reviewed. Based on this analysis, the most frequently cited types of noncompliance findings relating to IEP development included (in order of frequency):

1. Measurable annual goals
2. Recommended services
3. Transition

4. Indication of how the student's disability affects involvement and progress in general education curriculum
5. Participation in regular education environment
6. Present levels of performance
7. Testing accommodations
8. Consideration of special factors

The most frequently cited types of noncompliance findings relating to IEP implementation included (in order of frequency):

1. Failure to share IEP and inform teachers
2. Delay in implementation
3. Failure to make a good faith effort to implement the IEP
4. Failure to implement
5. Failure to refer students back to Committee on Special Education (CSE) when they are not making progress

Provision of appropriate instruction for students with disabilities to access, participate and progress in the general education curriculum and the participation and performance of these students on State assessments rely, in great part, on the development and implementation of high quality IEPs that provide instructionally relevant information to teachers and related service providers and that are developed in consideration of the State standards. This information is relevant to the proposed improvement activities in the SSIP because high rates of noncompliance with these requirements were frequently cited in the school districts with the poorest results for students with disabilities.

STAKEHOLDER COMMENT ON DATA ANALYSIS

Following a presentation on the above data, stakeholders discussed the data amongst themselves and provided written feedback on the following questions.

1. Was this the right data for us to examine?
2. What other data should we analyze?
3. What conclusions would you draw from the data?
4. How could we use this data over time to engage in continuous improvement?
5. What other comments do you have with regard to data analysis?

The following summarizes key points raised by stakeholders regarding the data analysis:

- Most felt this was the **right data** to be examined and sufficient for purposes of developing the SSIP.
- Requests for **additional data** included, but were not limited to:
  - socio-economic status in relation to classification rates, disability categories and achievement;
  - declassification rates;
  - qualitative and quantitative data on academic intervention services;
  - data from schools with high percentages of students with disabilities showing achievement on ELA assessments, low drop out and high graduation rates;

- trend data on students moving from self-contained to inclusion;
- regression analysis of all of these factors to determine correlation clusters;
- results by types of OHI (e.g., attention deficit disorder) and LD (e.g., dyslexia);
- ELA Regents results; more preschool data;
- LRE data disaggregated by types of programs (e.g., co-teaching; consultant teacher; resource room);
- suspension data;
- parent involvement data;
- perceptual and attitudinal data of teachers and administrators;
- universal screening data for reading in preschool to 3rd grade; more qualitative data;
- student perceptual data;
- more disaggregated data on English language learners with disabilities;
- teachers' perceptions of students' abilities;
- assessment data for students in separate schools;
- more root cause data;
- class size and relationship to results;
- item analysis of 3-8 assessment results;
- preschool data by race/ethnicity; compare walk-thru data and results from Diagnostic Tool for School District Effectiveness (DTSDE)[19] for low performing schools/districts and Big 5 school districts;
- when/from what settings are students dropping out of school;
- attendance data; and
- growth performance on assessments.

Where possible and appropriate, the State will provide further data analysis as requested by stakeholders as we analyze progress toward the target. However, much of this data, while it may be available at the school district level, is not available at the State level. To inform improvement activities, the State will review 'what works' by reviewing growth performance on ELA assessments and analyzing data from schools with high percentages of students with disabilities showing achievement on ELA assessments, low drop out and high graduation rates.

- Statements about "**major conclusions" drawn** from the data and how data could be used for **continuous improvement** included, but were not limited to:
  - literacy is critical and needs to have greater focus and resources;
  - correlation of data does not mean causality;
  - LRE placements make a difference in student outcomes;
  - need to focus on improving results for students with learning disabilities;
  - while progress is being made each year, there continue to be major disproportionality concerns;
  - need to be careful drawing conclusions from ELA results in a time of transition to the Common Core Learning Standards;
  - focus continues to be required on IEP development and implementation;

[19] See page 26

- focus needs to be on quality specially designed instruction, not the type of special education programs and services students receive;
- need to focus on instruction in inclusion settings where most students with disabilities are;
- need to look specifically at students with learning disabilities and students with emotional disabilities and students who are Black and Hispanic/Latino;
- all teachers need better pre-service preparation to address the needs of students with disabilities;
- as expectations increase, so do results for students with disabilities;
- students with disabilities are not having their needs met in their general education and special classes;
- quality student-focused instruction is essential;
- the gap starts early - we need to do more at the preschool level;
- assessment data is not informing targeted instruction;
- our focus needs to be on the lowest performing districts – others are making progress on their own;
- we need to have more impact on instruction;
- focus improvement on pre-service teacher preparation; and
- increase focus on RtI and PBIS implementation in our schools.

As a result of a review of stakeholder feedback on their major conclusions drawn from the data, the State determined that it was necessary to expand its scope of improvement work in order to reach the SiMR targets. Therefore, as explained in Section V of this report, the State will focus on (1) improving results for preschool students to close the achievement gap in the area of literacy by the time students are first assessed in grade 3 on the ELA State assessment; (2) addressing root cause findings that, in our lowest performing schools, high quality evidence-based instruction for students with disabilities was observed at low levels; and (3) addressing findings that students with learning disabilities are the lowest performing group of students with disabilities on the 3-8 ELA assessments of all disability groups in the State.

Summary of Data Analysis to Inform Infrastructure Analysis

How data analysis informed selection of the student outcome area and components for infrastructure analysis.

- Performance on grades 3-8 assessments for all students is low in these first years of transition to Common Core Learning Standards; however, performance is improving. While 31 percent of all students performed at proficient levels, only nine percent of students with disabilities performed at that level, and most students with disabilities performed a level 1. To improve any of the other performance indicators (e.g., reduce drop out, increase graduation rates, improve post-school outcomes), it is necessary to improve ELA results in grades 3-8 to ensure that students with disabilities are prepared for high school instruction and assessments. When students start behind in achievement, they stay behind. “Reading difficulties present serious and potentially lifelong challenges. Children who do not read well are more

likely to be retained a grade in school, drop out of high school, become teen parents, or enter the juvenile justice system. Thus, preventing reading difficulties early in children's school careers has potential long-term benefits to the individual as well as society"[20].

- It matters where a student goes to school (i.e., need/resource capacity), with lowest achievement and graduation rates found in the Big 5 districts, urban/suburban high need districts and rural high need districts. The majority of the State's resources for technical assistance and support are directed to the lowest performing school districts. However, improving results solely in the lowest performing school districts, including the Big 5, will not be enough to impact on grades 3-8 proficiency rates for students with disabilities (see Tables on page 44) .

- Learning disabilities are the most common disability among students with disabilities, and most students with learning disabilities have challenges in literacy and reading skills. Even though the majority of these students have normal intellectual abilities, 71 percent of students with learning disabilities performed at level 1 on the regular grades 3-8 State ELA assessments (i.e., excluding NYSAA results). Of all disability groups, they are the lowest performing group on this assessment. While students with learning disabilities represent 36 percent of all students with disabilities in the State, they represent 47 percent of students who drop out of school. In order to improve ELA results, we need to ensure that we focus on the subgroup of students with learning disabilities. (see Tables on page 45)

- Race/ethnicity affects classification, placement and achievement. Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students are over identified for special education. Black/African American students have higher rates of classification of emotional disturbance, and Hispanic/Latino students have higher classification rates as speech and language impaired. The majority of students with learning disabilities are Black/African American or Latino/Hispanic students (53 percent); 43 percent are White. LRE data shows disproportionate rates of more restrictive placements of Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students. We need to continue to support appropriate identification of students as students with disabilities and ensure culturally relevant academic and behavioral supports through the State's technical assistance work (e.g., Response to Intervention, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports and disproportionality in identification, classification, placement and disciplinary actions by race/ethnicity).

- The gap starts early, with only 56 percent of students who received preschool special education rated as having knowledge and skills in early language, communication and literacy comparable to their nondisabled peers by the time they reach Kindergarten. The preschool years are extremely important for children's social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and language and literacy development.

[20] The Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Report - Improving Reading Outcomes for Students with or at Risk for Reading Disabilities: A Synthesis of the Contributions from the Institute of Education Sciences Research Centers FEBRUARY 2014; University of California, Riverside NCSER 2014, page viii.

Children's development can be affected by high-quality preschool experiences that can improve later academic and social competence (Barnett, 1995; Morrow, 2004; Neuman & Dickinson, 2001).[21]

- We also know that fewer than half of all preschool students with disabilities receiving special education services receive the majority of those services in a regular early childhood program. Research shows that, in addition to improved socio-emotional and behavioral outcomes, children with severe disabilities in inclusive settings perform at higher levels on assessments of their language development than children in segregated settings and that preschoolers with less severe disabilities made similar gains across both inclusive and segregated settings.[22]

- Qualitative data on instructional practices in the State's lowest performing school districts shows that students with disabilities often do not receive explicit and specially designed instruction, specialized literacy instruction and progress monitoring. IEP development and implementation compliance data show IEPs continue to be developed that lack appropriate measurable annual goals and other IEP components; and there are a high number of findings of failure to implement IEPs. To improve ELA results, school personnel must develop and implement standards-based IEPs and ensure that teachers provide research and evidence-based explicit and specially designed instruction to students.

Section III: Infrastructure to Support Improvement and Build Capacity

This section describes the capacity of the current State system to support improvement and build capacity in local educational agencies (LEAs) to implement, scale up, and sustain evidence-based practices to improve results for children and youth with disabilities.

Broad analysis of the overall system that identifies strengths and weaknesses of the system

Following is a broad analysis of the State system components: governance, fiscal, quality standards, professional development, data, technical assistance, and accountability.

[21] Barnett,W.S. (2001). Preschool education for economically disadvantaged children: Effects on reading achievement and related outcomes. In S.B. Neuman & D.K. Dickinson (Eds.), *Handbook of early literacy research* (pp. 421–443). New York: Guilford Press.

[22] Rafferty, Y., Piscitelli, V., & Boettcher, C. (2003). The impact of inclusion on language development and social competence among preschoolers with disabilities. Exceptional Children, 69, 467–479 as cited in "Fact Sheet of Research on Preschool Inclusion" by Erin E. Barton & Barbara J. Smith, June 2014

GOVERNANCE

The Board of Regents is responsible for the general supervision of all educational activities within the State, presiding over The University of the State of New York (USNY) and the New York State Education Department. The Board is comprised of 17 members elected by the State Legislature for 5-year terms: 1 from each of the State's 13 judicial districts, and 4 members who serve at large.

The University of the State of New York is the nation's most comprehensive and unified educational system. It consists of all elementary, secondary, and postsecondary educational institutions, libraries, museums, public broadcasting, records and archives, professions, Adult Career and Continuing Education Services, and such other institutions, organizations, and agencies as may be admitted to The University. The concept of The University of the State of New York is a broad term encompassing all the institutions, both public and private, offering education in the State.

Organizational Structure

The following Offices within NYSED report to the Executive Deputy Commissioner, who reports to the Commissioner of Education:

- Curriculum, Assessment and Educational Technology
- P-12 Education
- Higher Education
- Cultural Education
- The Professions
- Adult Career and Continuing Education Services
- Performance Management and Management Services
- Chief Financial Offices

NYSED's Organizational Chart can be viewed at http://www.nysed.gov/about/orgchart. The interconnected system of educational services which is USNY includes the following institutions:

- Directory of Public and Non-Public Schools and Administrators in New York State
- Colleges and University Campuses in New York State
- Proprietary College and University Campuses in New York State
- State Archives
- New York State Library
- Public Radio Stations
- Public Television Stations
- Libraries and Library Systems in New York State
- New York State Museum
- School for the Blind
- School for the Deaf
- NYSED Program Offices

In addition, District Superintendents of the State's Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) serve a unique role in the governance structure in the State. District Superintendents, by State statutes, carry out administrative and supervisory activities with school districts; (2) serve as the executive officer of the BOCES; and (3) perform duties which are assigned by the Commissioner of Education. These three roles combine to require a range of leadership skills for District Superintendents. These include:

- Performing executive and judicial functions as specified by statute and/or the Commissioner regarding assigned territory and/or the districts within the geographic area.
- Consulting with Boards of Education and Chief School Officers of districts within their geographic areas.
- Advocating for the positions of school districts to the Commissioner and other State agencies.
- Coordinating and acting as liaison between the public educational community and other regional-based agencies in the area, so that common plans and operations mesh and that the educational program managers of the area can most effectively avail themselves of resources within the region.
- Communicating, serving as the link in a two-way communications network between the Commissioner and local district officials to speed the flow of information, assist in the clarification and resolution of issues, collect, and maintain data and carry out other communicative functions as may become appropriate.

The relationship among NYSED, BOCES, and local districts requires District Superintendents to be facilitators of educational concepts to meet the new or unique needs of each supervisory district. District Superintendents use their statutory powers, assigned duties, leadership abilities, and intermediate level resources to help local districts realize needed programs and services. District Superintendents also hold the contracts for nine of the 10 Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Centers (RSE-TASC), which provide technical assistance to school districts in literacy, behavioral supports and specially-designed instruction. RSE-TASCs will serve a leading role in SSIP improvement activities.

Advisory Panels and Groups

NYSED's infrastructure includes its advisory groups, including but not limited to:

- Commisioner's Advisory Panel for Special Education
- Youth Advisory Panel[23]

  Related to infrastructure analysis, this panel advised the NYSED Office of Special Education that students with disabilities need to be held to the same expectations as other students; however, more emphasis and resources need to be directed to ensure students with disabilities receive the assistive technology necessary to ensure access, participation and progress in the general education

[23] See http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/youthpanel/home.html

curriculum and that teachers need to do more to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities in the Common Core Learning Standards.
- School and District Accountability Think Tank[24]
- Regents Task Force on Teacher Leader Effectiveness
- Title I Committee of Practitioners
- New York State Bilingual and English as a Second Language Committee of Practitioners

Governance Analysis and Relationship to the SSIP: The interconnected system of educational systems across NYSED; the structure of our policy-making board with a designated P-12 Committee; and the position of the Office of Special Education under the same Deputy Commissioner as Curriculum and Instruction, Student Support Services, Early Learning, English Language Learners and ESEA Accountability serves to facilitate cross-Department collaborative work to promote improved ELA results for the subgroup of students with disabilities. The structure of the various stakeholder groups and advisory panels, most of which include representatives of special education, provide opportunities for engagement with stakeholders on issues impacting ELA results for students with disabilities. In addition, District Superintendents in their regional and State leadership roles, as well as contractors for the RSE-TASC, are important governance components to improve ELA results for students with disabilities.

FISCAL

The analysis of the State's fiscal infrastructure analysis focused on its use of federal Title grants to implement, scale up and sustain evidence-based practices to improve results for NYS' students, including students with disabilities.

Through the State's ESEA Waiver, NYSED is more effectively deploying and monitoring federal and State resources[25] to amplify and concentrate resources in our schools and districts that need it the most. Human and fiscal resources at the State and local levels are leveraged in this system to focus effort on building capacity in our schools and districts that need it most. Starting in the 2011-12 school year, NYSED has streamlined how it administers grant programs, looking for efficiencies in how monies can complement each other and amplify intent to make a greater impact in classrooms (e.g., NYSED "amplified" federal Charter School Program grant funds with State Improvement Grant (SIG) funds for the launch of new schools; and shifted grant awards from allocation to competitive awards based on criteria aligned with conditions for school and district effectiveness and the Regents Reform agenda).

The State uses both compliance and results data to identify school districts under its IDEA accountability system pursuant to section 616 of IDEA. Therefore, IDEA funds may be redirected by the State when school districts are determined as "Needing

[24] For a description of these groups, see http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/documents/nyrequest2.pdf
[25] Page 154 http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/documents/nyrequest2.pdf

Assistance" or "Needing Intervention" based on results for the subgroup of students with disabilities.

Fiscal Analysis and Relationship to the SSIP: Because the State has aligned its IDEA and ESEA accountability systems, (see page 35), there are increased opportunities to leverage fiscal resources to focus targeted improvement work in the State's lowest performing school districts to improve ELA results for students with disabilities.

QUALITY STANDARDS

To accelerate all students' progress toward college- and career-readiness, the New York State Board of Regents initiated a reform agenda in December 2009 that continues to shape dramatic changes in regulation, policy, and Department actions. The Regents Reform Agenda is grounded in four core strategies consistent with the State's initiatives to improve results for students with disabilities:

- Implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards and aligned assessments in all NYS schools;
- Building instructional data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practice;
- Promotion of effective teachers and leaders through the implementation of a multiple measures evaluation tool that incorporates student growth as a significant measure and is aligned with strong supports and professional development; and
- Turning around the lowest performing schools.

The State has regulation and policy relating to research and evidence-based instructional standards, including but not limited to:

- Common Core Learning Standards
  http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/commoncore/home.html
- Social Emotional Development and Learning
  http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/sedl/
- Program standards for behavioral interventions
  http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/lawsregs/sect20022.htm
- Response-to-Intervention (RtI) (establishing the standards for such programs and requiring all elementary schools to have RtI programs in place in grades K-4)
  http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/RTI/guidance/cover.htm

Supports for Implementing College- and Career-Ready Standards

NYSED is dedicated to providing educators the tools, resources, guidance, and training necessary to ensure that students graduate college and career ready. Specifically, the State has organized its efforts into three initiatives: 1) Common Core Learning Standards, 2) School-Based Inquiry (or Data-Driven Instruction), and 3) Teacher/Leader Effectiveness to drive school-based reforms across districts and public charter schools in New York State.

New York State's Common Core curriculum in ELA and Literacy (grades P-2), and curriculum modules in ELA and Literacy (grades 3-12) and in mathematics (grades P-12) have built-in scaffolding for students with disabilities. This scaffolding demonstrates how teachers can provide rigorous grade-level instruction to students with disabilities, and techniques to provide additional supports to students with different learning needs, so that they can access the same content as their nondisabled peers in ELA and mathematics classes. When students have access to the same content with appropriate scaffolding and special education supports, outcomes improve.

Early Learning

"Providing high-quality early childhood education to all American children from birth to age three has the potential to close the achievement gap between high- and low-income students at ages three and five . . . It would also likely cut the achievement gap in half for children at age eight."[26] Research shows that early intervention is the most cost-effective approach to closing the achievement gap.[27] Examining the infrastruture to support quality standards and programs for preschool students, therefore, is directly linked to improving ELA results for students with disabilites.

NYSED has established standards for early learning, including but not limited to:

- PreKindergarten Foundation for the Common Core http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/common_core_standards/pdfdocs/nyslsprek.pdf
- Quality Stars http://www.qualitystarsny.org/
- Universal PreK programs http://www.p12.nysed.gov/upk/documents/Self-AssessmentForm.pdf

Quality Standards for Evidence-Based Practices in Special Education

The Office of Special Education has also identified "Quality Indicator Review and Resource Guides" for key areas impacting results for students with disabilities: **Literacy, Behavioral Supports and Interventions; and Special Education Instructional Practices**. These Quality Indicators, which can be found at http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/techassist/QIcover.htm, provide a structure for technical assistance providers and for schools to assess and improve their use of research-based instructional practices for students with disabilities. The Guides are intended to be used to support a quality improvement process that includes:

[26] Greg J. Duncan and Aaron J. Sojourner. http://thinkprogress.org/economy/2014/01/03/3117971/early-childhood-education-achievement-gap/

[27] http://www.ascd.org/publications/newsletters/policy-priorities/apr06/num45/toc.aspx

- assessing the quality of a school district's instructional programs and practices in the areas of literacy, behavioral supports and interventions; and special education instructional practices;
- determining priority need areas; and
- prescribing and planning activities to change practices and improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

Explicit and Specially Designed Instruction Walk-Through Tool[28]

This tool is designed to be a data collection tool across a school or organization. The State uses this tool in the review of low performing schools to provide data on the extent school districts/schools are providing research and evidence-based instruction to students with disabilities to ensure access, participation and progress of students with disabilities in the general education curriculum. The tool is also available to all school principals in their roles as building-level instructional leaders. The Tool identifies evidence-based instructional practices in the areas of:

- Supportive and Accessible Classroom Environments, including classroom management, positive classroom climate, and physical organization of the learning environment
- Explicit instruction, including access to the curriculum, review and introduction of the lesson, active teaching, guided practice, independent practice and lesson closure
- Explicit instruction elements, including student engagement, explicit corrective feedback, instructional match and pacing
- Specially Designed Instruction: Direct Instruction of Targeted Skills, Accommodations, Re-Teaching

In addition to resources available through the Office of Special Education, NYSED's Office of Curriculum and Instruction posts numerous research-based instructional resources for school administrators and teachers to support **high quality early and adolescent literacy instruction-** http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/literacy/resources.html.

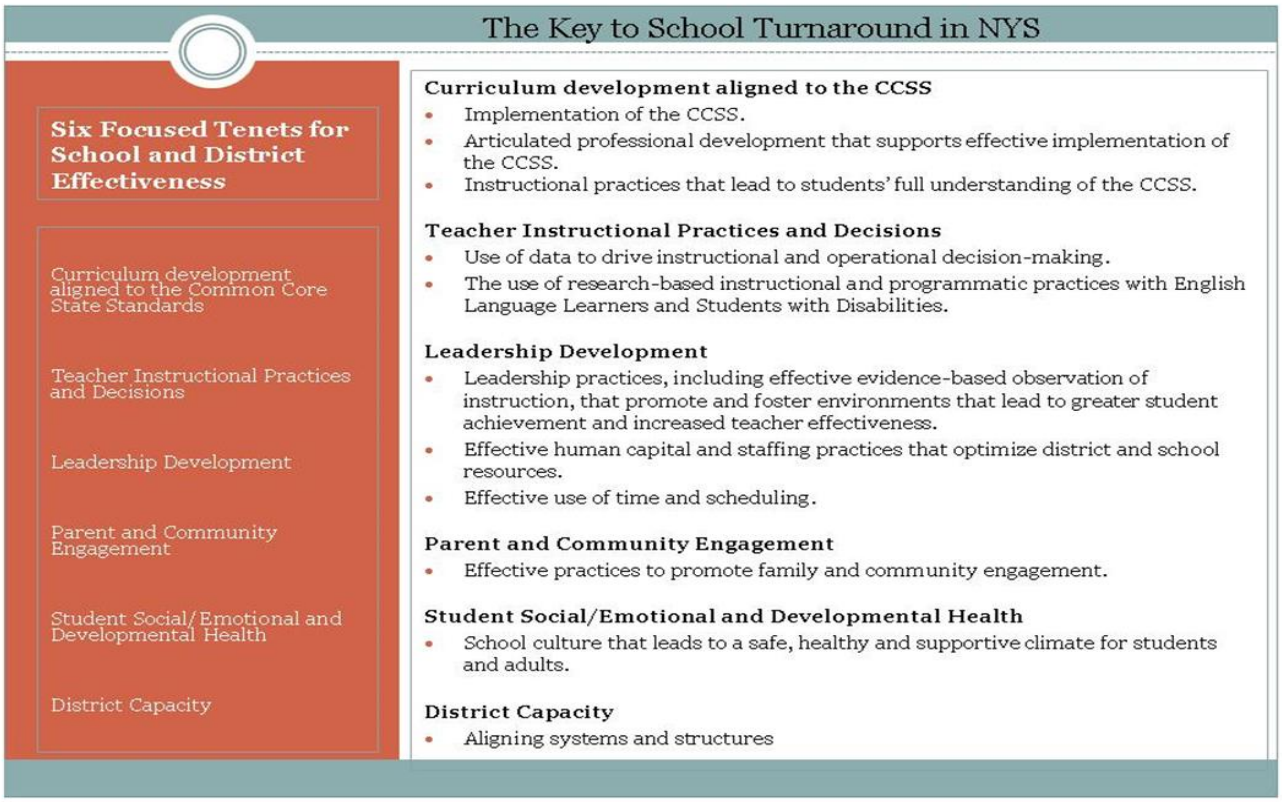
Diagnostic Tool for School District Effectiveness (DTSDE)[29]

NYSED created a common and robust school and district review process. This process compares a school's/district's practices to the optimal conditions of learning, as defined by the DTSDE rubric. The process of conducting the reviews focuses on collecting and assessing low-inference data, (data based on what is actually observed and heard, absent of added meaning, assumptions, conclusions and beliefs) to evaluate school and district practices based on six tenets. The six tenets are:

[28] http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/spp/Walkthroughtool-LAPSelfReview.pdf
[29] http://www.p12.nysed.gov/accountability/diagnostic-tool-institute/home.html

Tenet 1: District Leadership and Capacity
Tenet 2: School Leader Practices and Decisions
Tenet 3: Curriculum Development and Support
Tenet 4: Teacher Practices and Decisions
Tenet 5: Student Social and Emotional Developmental Health
Tenet 6: Family and Community Engagement

Through the DTSDE reviews, school districts are rated as Developing, Emerging, Effective or Highly Effictive in the following research-based standard areas.



The DTSDE promotes research-based findings on the systemic supports and instructional practices that must be in place for all students. This tool, combined with the Explicit and Specially Designed Instruction Walk-Thru Tool described above, provide important evaluation components to guide schools toward improvement activities that are most likely to result in improved student outcomes. These two quality standards "tools" are related to the SSIP in that they inform development of school improvement plans in the State's lowest performing school districts.

Office of Higher Education - Teacher Preparation

All teachers are teachers of students with disabilities. To improve instructional practices and ELA results, the State must consider the quality of both in-service professional development and pre-service preparation.

NYS' teacher preparation programs include additional preparation in special education pedagogy to better prepare general education teachers to teach in an inclusive classroom and to collaborate with their special education colleagues to meet the needs of students with disabilities in their classrooms.

The State's "Educating All Students (EAS) Test," required for teacher certification, includes items to assess general education teachers' knowledge of:

- Diverse Student Populations
- English language learners
- Students with Disabilities and Other Special Learning Needs
- Teacher Responsibilities
- School-Home Relationships

The performance expectations in the EAS test for all teachers are listed below:

- demonstrates an understanding of types of disabilities and other special learning needs and the implications for teaching and learning associated with these differences;
- applies knowledge of how to select, modify, and implement curricula, assessments, materials, technology, and equipment to meet the individualized needs of students with disabilities and other special learning needs;
- demonstrates an understanding of the importance of and strategies for consulting and collaborating with specialists who can assist in the identification of appropriate resources, technology (including assistive technology), and instruction to meet the individualized needs of students with disabilities and other special learning needs;
- applies knowledge of federal and State laws, policies, and regulations (e.g., IDEA, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and ethical considerations (e.g., confidentiality rights and responsibilities of stakeholders) related to the education of students with disabilities;
- identifies teacher responsibilities and requirements in working with students with disabilities and other special learning needs, including providing increasingly intensive supports and interventions through RtI and PBIS to support struggling learners and ensure appropriate referrals for special education, requesting referrals of students who are suspected of having disabilities, participating on the CSE, and developing and implementing IEPs;
- applies knowledge of strategies for effectively integrating recommendations from IEPs into instructional activities and daily routines; and
- demonstrates knowledge of basic service delivery models for students with disabilities and other special learning needs and of strategies and resources (e.g., special education staff, specialized support staff) for supporting instruction in integrated settings.

Quality Standards Analysis and Relationship to the SSIP: The State has a solid foundation of quality standards for effective school systems and instruction for all students, as well as those specifically targeted for students with disabilities. These

standards serve as the foundation for expectations on the evidence-based systems and instruction that must be in place to improve ELA results for students with disabilities.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Ten Regional Special Education Technical Assistance Support Centers (RSE-TASC) are funded through IDEA discretionary funds. RSE-TASCs are staffed with teams of highly trained special education specialists, which include Special Education School Improvement Specialists located in each BOCES region and within the Big 5 school districts, Behavior Specialists, Regional Special Education Trainers, Nondistrict Program Specialists, Bilingual Special Education Specialists and Transition Specialists. Beginning in 2015, Community Employment Specialists-Vocational Rehabilitation (CES-VR), funded by the Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES), will be added to the RSE-TASC.

RSE-TASC specialists provide regional training and embedded professional development to school personnel on research-based instructional strategies, particularly in the areas of literacy, behavior, and specially designed instruction and IEP development to support students with disabilities in participating and progressing in the curriculum to meet the Common Core Learning Standards. CES-VR specialists will promote access for students with disabilities to employment and vocational rehabilitation services.

The State provides ongoing professional development to the RSE-TASC specialists on research-based instructional practices for students with disabilities. RSE-TASC school improvement specialists participate in the reviews of low performing schools identified based on results for students with disabilities and use research-based tools to guide instructional improvements. Through a regional planning process, which includes participation from RSE-TASC representatives, supervisors from NYSED's Special Education Quality Assurance Offices and District Superintendents, the resources of each RSE-TASC are deployed.

The State provides a comprehensive array of other professional development and technical assistance resources. These include:

- Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) - IDEA requires school districts to provide accessible versions of instructional materials to students who are blind or otherwise unable to use printed materials.

- Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) provides evidence-based training and support to families and professionals, and through ongoing research, contributes knowledge to the field of autism spectrum disorders.

- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Technical Assistance Center provides high quality training, technical assistance and support to the

New York State RSE-TASC Behavioral Specialists and other Office of Special Education providers.

- Intensive Teacher Institute in Bilingual Special Education (ITI-BSE) was created to assist with the shortage of certified bilingual and English as a second language (ESL) special education teachers, bilingual teachers of the speech and hearing handicapped, and bilingual pupil personnel professionals. This State-funded program provides tuition assistance for 15 credits of specialized coursework and facilitates the certification process for these professionals who are currently working in NYS public schools or approved preschools.

- New York City Preschool Bilingual/ESL Technical Assistance Center - The purpose of the Bilingual/ESL Preschool TAC is to increase the capacity of section 4410 preschools located in New York City to serve preschool students with disabilities with limited English proficiency.

- Speech-Language and Bilingual Speech-Language Personnel Development Technical Assistance Center (SLPD-TAC) provides online coursework and other supports needed to obtain initial or professional certification in teaching students with speech and language disabilities and licensure in Speech-Language Pathology for individuals who are committed to work in New York City Public Schools.

- Technical Assistance Center on Disproportionality (TACD) at New York University - TACD's work includes building the capacity of regions and districts in understanding the root cause and systemically addressing the disproportionate assignment of various subgroups in special education to develop, implement, and assess a process of providing comprehensive technical assistance and professional development trainings to NYS school districts that are addressing issues of disproportionality by race/ethnicity.

- Early Childhood Direction Centers (ECDCs) provide information about programs and services for young children, ages birth through five, who have physical, mental, or emotional disabilities and help families obtain services for their children.

- Impartial Hearing Officers - NYSED and Special Education Solutions, L.L.C., have partnered to provide the training and resources needed to serve as a Special Education Impartial Hearing Officer.

- Mediation Services for Special Education - The New York State Dispute Resolution Association (NYSDRA), under a contract with the Office of Special Education, provides special education mediation for parents and school districts throughout NYS.

- Special Education Parent Centers – 14 Special Education Parent Centers provide parents of children with disabilities with information, resources, and strategies to communicate effectively and work collaboratively with schools and stakeholders to advocate and actively participate in their children's education program.

- Response to Intervention (RtI) Technical Assistance Center supports capacity-building efforts of NYS schools to RtI; provides indirect technical assistance and professional development to NYS schools on RtI-related topics.

- Response to Intervention Personnel Development Project includes four regional professional development teams supporting the implementation of RtI in approximately 500 schools across the State through the life of the project.

- Transition Services Professional Development Support Center provides a web-based resource for transition services and planning for all school districts.

- Intensive Teacher Institute for Teachers of the Blind and Visually Impaired (ITI-TVI) is designed to provide tuition assistance to students and teachers interested in becoming TVIs, to address the shortage across the State, and who are willing to serve as TVIs in NYS for two years following completion of the program.

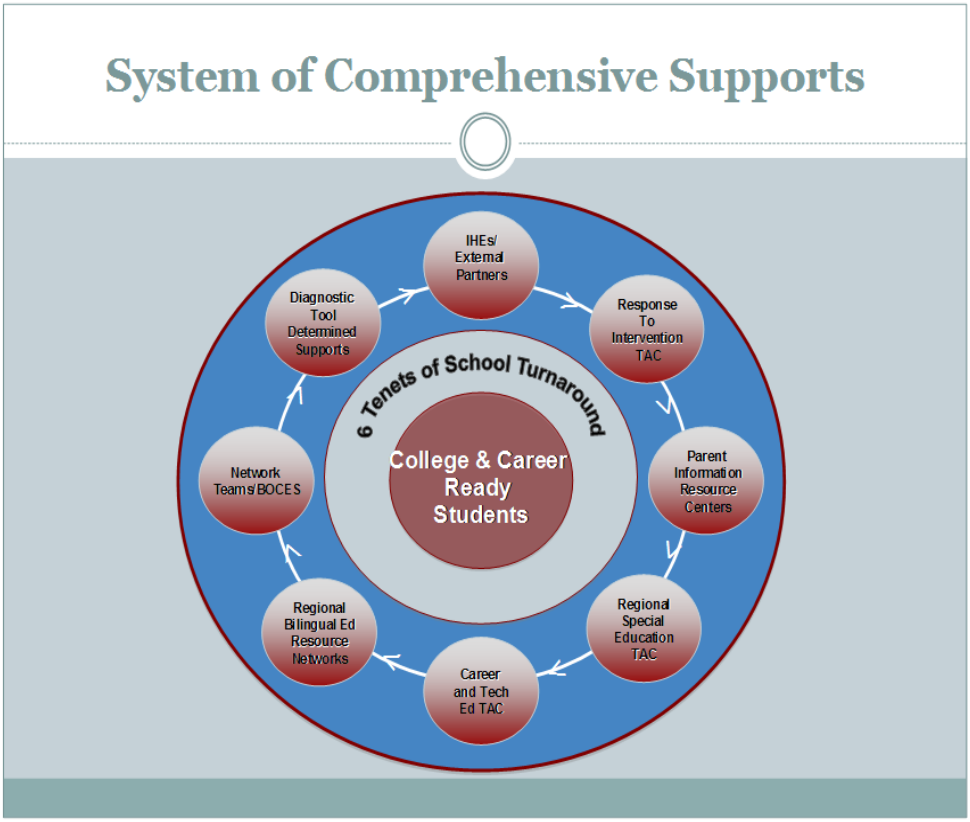
In addition to State IDEA-funded technical assistance centers, the State created a Network Team structure to assist districts and schools to implement the Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) with fidelity in all classrooms across the State. Network Teams and Network Team Equivalents are New York State's vehicle for implementing the reforms associated with Race to the Top and the Regents Reform Agenda. They are 3-15-person teams located around New York State (about 800 individuals total), who work in close partnership with districts and schools to build the capacity of New York educators, including special educators and administrators, around three school-based initiatives: CCLS, Data Driven Instruction, and Teacher–Leader Effectiveness. Network Teams:

- assist schools in implementing the CCLS and aligning instruction to the new standards and curricula;
- provide schools with support in adopting or adapting Pre-K – Grade 2 ELA curriculum and grades 3-12 curriculum modules in ELA and grades Pre-K – 12 curriculum modules in mathematics;
- support schools in implementing the State's comprehensive assessment program and adapting to more rigorous performance-based assessments;
- support school-based inquiry teams to analyze student performance data (both quantitative and qualitative) and make adjustments to instructional practices;
- support schools and districts in the implementation of evidence-based observations and the Annual Professional Performance Review; and

- support reviews of persistently lowest-achieving schools; and facilitate professional development to support the implementation of the turnaround plan[30].

The following graphic displays the array of professional development supports NYSED has put in place to support student achievement in the CCLS.

The following graphic depicts the interconnectiveness of the many State systems of comprehensive support to improve instruction and outcomes, as described in the SSIP. The 6 Tenets of Schol Turnaround are the quality standards established in the DTSDE described above and the inner circle "College and Career Ready Standards" show the purpose to improve students progress to meet the high learning standards that NYS has set for all students.



Professional Development Analysis and Relationship to the SSIP: The State's technical assistance resources, while designed to address a broad array of areas and stakeholders, are focused in their work to improve three outcome areas: literacy, behavioral supports and specially designed instruction. Professional development is high quality and delivered by individuals highly trained in effective, research- and evidence-based practices. This strong infrastructure component

[30] http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2012Meetings/March2012/TurnaroundPresentation.pdf

positions the State well to improve grades 3-8 ELA results for students with disabilities.

DATA

The Office of Information and Reporting Services (IRS) is responsible for the collection and reporting of enrollment, assessment, school violence, State and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability, career and technical education, graduation rate, post-graduation plans, teacher certification, and school staff data for school districts, public schools, charter schools, and nonpublic schools in New York State. This Office provides services that include:

- Data Collection - providing information, forms, instructions and other helpful tools to schools and districts to assist them to gather the data for each program they provide. Schools and districts then submit the data to NYSED.
- Data Reporting - providing data, reports and other information that reflect the data submitted by schools and districts. Data and reports are provided to policy makers, parents, and others interested in the status of schools in NYS.
- NCLB and Accountability - school and district accountability. Districts, public schools, and charter schools are held accountable for the performance of their students according to federal NCLB Act and IDEA. IRS collects and reports the data required under these.

NYSED's Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS), the Student Information Repository System (SIRS), is managed by IRS. SIRS provides a single source of standardized individual student records for analysis at the local, regional, and State levels to improve student performance and to meet State and federal reporting and accountability requirements. Data in the Repository is available only to users with a legitimate educational interest. LEAs must use this system to report certain data to NYSED. LEAs are administrative bodies governing over a school setting, and include public school districts, charter schools, nonpublic schools, BOCES, the New York State School for the Deaf and New York State School for the Blind. Certain State agencies (e.g., Office of Children and Family Services, Department of Corrections, Office for People With Developmental Disabilities, Office of Mental Health) and approved private schools that provide educational services to court-placed students pursuant to Article 81 may also serve as an LEA and must report data using SIRS. Nonpublic schools that participate in State assessments in elementary/middle-level ELA, mathematics, science, or secondary level Regents exams must report required data using SIRS. Detailed information on SIRS can be found at http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/sirs/home.html.

Special education data is collected through SIRS and made available to specific personnel through the "PD" Data System. Special Education Verification Reports in the PD System allow the data to be viewed, verified, and certified. The PD Data System is managed by IRS. Additional information can be found at http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sedcar/data.htm#sirs. NYSED also has strong relationships with the State's Regional Information Centers (RICs). RICs provide information and

support to school districts on data collection and reporting. See http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/nystart/tips.html#contax.

In order to support data-driven instruction, NYSED provides early releases of State assessment instructional reports. The latest instructional reports released were for the 2014 Grades 3-8 ELA and Mathematics Testing Program. These reports can be accessed via the RICs and/or Level 1 data centers. These secure reports allow authorized school personnel to view, for each question that contributed to a student's score, whether the student answered the question correctly and the Common Core Learning Standard measured by the question. The reports allow for raw score performance comparisons at the student, classroom, school, district, and regional levels. This allows districts to use assessments as tools that can help improve instruction through the identification of student strengths and areas in need of additional support. For additional information, please see http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/ei/2014/earlyreleaseinstructionalreports.pdf.

Data Infrastructure Analysis and Relationship to SSIP: NYSED has a high quality data reporting system that collects assessment information that can be used at the school district and school levels to inform root causes for low performance as well as allows the data to be used to improve instruction to improve results on grades 3-8 ELA assessment.

The quality of data collected and reported on preschool outcomes is important to consider in the development of the SSIP because we will gauge interim improvements toward the targets in part based on outcome data related to early communication and literacy skills. NYS collects raw data through SIRS on the score each child receives on the Child Outcomes Summary Form at entry and again at exit from preschool special education programs or services. Having data at the individual student level and the ability to track children longitudinally until they no longer attend school in NYS provides the State greater capacity for data analysis to determine the extent that these improvement activities are impacting grades 3-8 ELA results.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Office of Accountability

The Office of Accountability (OA) oversees the compliance for schools and LEAs in New York State of certain federal Title areas and works to close the achievement gap by identifying[31] and supporting schools and LEAs that are low performing, as well as those

[31] Under the ESEA Waiver accountability continuum, we start identifying schools at the highest level. These schools are identified as Reward Schools (RS), a very rigorous designation based on their very high performance and progress. Those that are not RS, but are performing at a high and satisfactory standard, will be identified as Good Standing. Additionally, schools, not identified as Focus or Priority, become Local Assistance Plan Schools (LAPS) if they have larger gaps of achievement between accountability groups, have failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for three consecutive years with the same subgroup and measure, or are located in a non-Focus District but are among the lowest performing in the State for one or more subgroups and continue to not show progress. These three types of schools will be identified annually, with the current designation being based

interested in replicating the best practices of the State's high performing and high progressing schools and districts. The Office implements New York's Accountability System under the approved ESEA Flexibility Waiver, by supporting schools and LEAs that are Priority and/or Focus through the assignment of Integrated Intervention Teams (IIT), which review organizational structures and educational practices and make recommendations for district and school improvements.

Focus Districts are required to develop a comprehensive plan, using the findings from the DTSDE review, and to address the performance of subgroups on the accountability measures for which the district has been identified in those schools that have been designated as Focus Schools. Beginning in the 2012-13 school year, the plan must be based upon the recommendations contained in the IIT's findings, using the DTSDE.

An IIT is assigned to each Focus District. The role of the IIT is to assess district and identified schools using the DTSDE, and publish findings that inform the development of a District Comprehensive Improvement Plan, a School Improvement Grant application, or a Comprehensive Education Plan based on the Turnaround Principles. The team consists of NYSED staff, district staff, external educational experts, and content and/or subgroup specialists. For each Focus District identified based on the results of students with disabilities, the State assigns a Special Education School Improvement Specialist (SESIS) from the RSE-TASC to participate as the subgroup specialist. The role of the SESIS is to ensure root cause identification for students with disabilities and to provide follow up technical assistance to the district to implement the improvement plan as it relates to literacy, specially designed instruction and positive behavioral interventions and supports.

Office of Special Education

The Office of Special Education oversees the special education accountability system under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in addition to its functions related to general supervision of all schools serving students with disabilities, improvement initiatives and policy development. The Office of Special Education participates in the ESEA State Accountability Workgroup and in the development of the ESEA Flexibility Waiver.

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on 2011-12 results. The next part of our accountability continuum are Focus Districts, which are those that either have 1+ Priority Schools or are districts that are among the lowest performing in the State for a particular subgroup and have not demonstrated progress. Focus Districts must identify a certain number of Focus Schools. Finally, Priority Schools are the persistently lowest achieving in State, identified in one of three ways. Under the waiver, Focus Schools/Focus Districts/Priority Schools are essentially identified once at the beginning of the waiver period, and we will not identify additionally during the period. There will be opportunity for schools and districts to move off of this identification during the period.

IDEA and ESEA Aligned Accountability Systems

Since 2010, the State has aligned its IDEA and ESEA Accountability Systems to the maximum extent feasible. This aligned accountability system includes the following key components:

- Criteria for the identification of school districts as needing assistance, intervention or substantial intervention in consideration of performance data for students with disabilities in addition to IDEA compliance data. See http://www.p12.nysed.gov/specialed/spp/nysdeterminations/2014-determinationcriteria.htm.
- Participation by State-assigned SESIS from the RSE-TASC in the DTSDE review process when the results for students with disabilities were a factor in the determination under ESEA that the district is a focus district. The role of the SESIS is to ensure the IIT and school-led teams identify factors impacting results for students with disabilities to inform their comprehensive plan for improvement.
- Where resources permit, SESIS remain with the district to provide professional development and technical assistance to assist the district with root cause factors relating to literacy instruction, behavioral supports and specially designed instruction.

Accountability Infrastructure Analysis and Relationship to the SSIP: NYSED's aligned ESEA and IDEA accountability systems provide the State with the opportunity to not only bring special education expertise to the root cause analysis phase of the State's review of low performing schools. In addition, by assigning RSE-TASC Special Education School Improvement Specialists to the low performing schools for 2-3 years subsequent to the review, SESIS provide schools and districts with embedded professional development and support to implement the districts' comprehensive school improvement plans consistent with evidence-based practices, utilizing the core components of implementation science[32].

MONITORING:

Six regional Special Education Quality Assurance (SEQA) Offices monitor the State's public and nonpublic programs serving students with disabilities for compliance and quality. Monitoring includes data reviews, self-reviews, desk audits, on-site reviews, investigation of State complaints and ensuring implementation of impartial hearing decisions. (The State's fiscal offices conduct audits and fiscal monitoring of IDEA funds.) Programmatic reviews of local educational agencies with IEP development responsibilities often include the following review activities:

- **Educational Benefit Activity,** which is a process of examining the characteristics of students' IEPs over a three-year period, to determine whether the design of the IEP was reasonably calculated for the students to receive educational benefit.

[32] Karen Blase and Dean Fixsen **Core Intervention Components: Identifying and Operationalizing What Makes Programs Work** http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/category/resource-type/articles-books-and-reports

- **IEP Analysis Activity** to ascertain the extent to which students' IEPs provide quality information to assist the teachers and other special education providers in designing instruction to support the student in learning grade-level academic standards or alternate standards, if appropriate.

- **CSE Observation** to assess how the Committee's decision-making process may affect positive student outcomes and the program's provision of access to and participation in the general education curriculum for students with disabilities.

Monitoring Infrastructure Analysis and Relationship to the SSIP: Provision of appropriate instruction for students with disabilities to access, participate and progress in the general education curriculum, and performance of these students on State assessments rely, in great part, on the development and implementation of high quality IEPs that provide instructionally relevant information to teachers and related service providers and are developed in consideration of the State standards. This monitoring review process described above provides the State the opportunity to review IEP development and implementation to guide schools to develop high quality IEPs that are reasonably calculated to provide educational benefit to students.

FOCUSED INFRASTRUCTURE ANALYSIS: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Once the focus for improvement (SiMR) was identified, the State further analyzed its infrastructure, from the perspectives of strengths and weaknesses and in consideration of the interconnectedness with the data, to determine how the current State system could be further leveraged to support the improvement strategies outlined in the SSIP and the changes needed in the system to support the improvement strategies outlined in the SSIP. In consultation with stakeholders, the following are identified strengths and relevant areas for improvement.

Strengths of our Current Infrastructure to Support the SiMR

- Standards in research-based evidence practices and tools to guide review and improvement
- Aligned ESEA and IDEA accountability systems
- Regulations and statewide and regional technical assistance supports for RtI and PBIS – tiered systems of academic and behavioral supports
- High quality professional development on a range of topics in special education with specialists (e.g., Behavior Specialists, Special Education School Improvement Specialists with expertise in research-based practices, particularly in the areas of literacy, behavior and specially designed instruction)
- Sufficient numbers and array of professional development and technical assistance personnel statewide, including a Technical Assistance Center on Disproportionality
- Technical assistance centers that work directly with school personnel providing embedded district, school and teacher supports

- Strong statewide standards and State curriculum with scaffolds for struggling learners
- Early Learning State Standards and the State's commitment to expansion of high quality preschools for all (Universal PreK)
- State monitoring system that incorporates quality reviews of IEP development and implementation

Infrastructure Areas Needing Strengthening

- Teacher preparation mandates. Areas noted: explicit instruction, cultural competence, positive behavioral supports
- Availability of targeted professional development and technical assistance to improve identification and instruction for students with learning disabilities
- Availability of resources and technical assistance relating to assistive technology devices and services
- Need more interconnectedness of improvement networks on a regional basis
- Resources for professional development for high quality preschool programs
- Resources to support nondistrict schools (e.g., approved private schools)
- Interconnectedness of our professional development resources (e.g., PBIS and RtI)
- Leveraging of fiscal resources

Summary of Infrastructure Analysis Leading to Selection of a State-identified Measureable Result

New York has been building the infrastructure necessary to further improve student achievement in the areas of standards and assessments, data systems, great teachers and leaders, and turning around our struggling schools through its Race to the Top and Reform agendas. The selection of the SiMR was made in consideration of the Department's priorities and dedication of improvement activities to improve the college and career readiness of all students. Implementation of the NYS P-12 CCLS began in all schools in 2011-12 and will be phased in over a number of years beginning in grades K-8. CCLS are backmapped from the skills and knowledge students need to succeed in college and careers, grade-by-grade all the way back to kindergarten.

Through our aligned ESEA and IDEA accountability determinations for school districts, the State is in an opportune position to leverage the school-wide reforms necessary in low performing schools to address the needs of the subgroup of students with disaiblties. The State has established policy and guidance in key areas to support research and evidence-based practices (e.g., response to intervention; positive behavioral supports; Quality Indicator Review and Resource Guides; instructional walk-through tools, lesson planning tools; IEP benefit analysis) and has targeted professional development and technical assistance resources both on a State and regional level to assist districts to scale up evidence-based systemic practices and instruction.

Research is clear that literacy instruction must be developed in the early years. NYS' current statewide focus on expansion of universal prekindergarten programs; its resources dedicated to Recognition and Response programs and high quality behavior supports for preschool programs; and its current LRE preschool regional meeting initiative present opportunities for us to increase the percentage of preschool children attending high quality regular early childhood programs where they are more likely to have access to instruction to build the foundation for learning the CCLS. The Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core sets expectations for pre-K instruction in four domain areas, including standards relating to ELA and literacy that prepare students for success in school and lay the foundation for college and career readiness.

Section IV. State-identified Measurable Result

This section identifies the statement of result(s) the State intends to achieve through implementation of the SSIP. The State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR), selected with stakeholder input, was identified based on a review of State data and capacity of infrastructure and is aligned with State priorities and initiatives to reduce duplication, leverage resources and maximize results. Lastly this SiMR is based on high expectations for student outcomes.

In collaboration with stakeholders, the State selected a SiMR to improve students with disabilities' results on grades 3-8 ELA State assessments. Research is clear that literacy skills are a key component of building college and career readiness. The ability to read at grade level in third grade is highly predictive of a student's likelihood to perform well throughout school and graduate from high school. For this reason, and for the reasons articulated in the other sections of this report, the SSIP will focus on this fundamental skill improvement area.

SiMR:

Increasing the percent of students with disabilities who score at proficiency levels 2 and above on the grades 3-8 ELA assessments (regular assessment with accommodations, regular assessment without accommodations and the New York State Alternate Assessment).

Baseline data:

Based on 2013-14 data, **31 percent** of students with disabilities performed at levels 2 and above on the grades 3-8 ELA regular assessment with accommodations, regular assessment without accommodations and the New York State Alternate Assessment.

Further disaggregation of the baseline data:

The baseline data has been further disaggregated by grade and type of district to assist the State, moving forward, to assess progress toward the statewide target and to identify which components of the SSIP improvement activities need to be reviewed and, as appropriate, revised to address performance.

2013-14 Grade 3-8 English Language Arts (including NYSAA results)
Percent of Students with Disabilities at Proficiency Levels by Grade:
Lowest Performing Districts + Big 4, NYC and Statewide

Grade	Percent Scoring at Proficiency Level 2 or Above						
	Lowest Performing Districts + Big 4		New York City		Rest of State		Statewide*
	As % of State	As % of Lowest Performing/Big 4	As % of State	As % of NYC	As % of State	As % of Rest of State	
3	2%	16%	15%	32%	12%	27%	28%
4	2%	19%	16%	37%	15%	33%	33%
5	1%	14%	13%	31%	13%	26%	27%
6	2%	21%	15%	38%	19%	37%	36%
7	1%	14%	12%	32%	14%	27%	28%
8	2%	20%	14%	38%	20%	40%	36%
Total	2%	17%	14%	35%	16%	31%	31%

Grade	Percent Scoring at Level 3 or Above						
	Lowest Performing Districts + Big 4		New York City		Rest of State		Statewide*
	As % of State	As % of Lowest Performing/Big 4	As % of State	As % of NYC	As % of State	As % of Rest of State	
3	1%	7%	4%	10%	5%	10%	10%
4	1%	7%	4%	10%	5%	10%	10%
5	1%	7%	4%	9%	4%	8%	8%
6	1%	6%	3%	7%	4%	8%	8%
7	1%	6%	3%	8%	4%	8%	8%
8	1%	6%	3%	9%	5%	10%	9%
Total	1%	6%	4%	9%	5%	9%	9%

* All students in State with valid test scores on New York State Testing Program and New York State Alternate Assessment exams.

As the tables below show, when this data is further disaggregated to focus on the subgroup of students with learning disabilities (who represent more than a third of all students with disaiblities), we find that only 24 percent of students with learning disabilities are performing at levels 2 or above on the grades 3-8 ELA assessment. The data below will be used as disaggregated baseline data to assist the State to track its progress in improving results for this subgroup of students with disabilities.

2013-14
Grade 3-8 English Language Arts (including NYSAA results)
Percent of Students with Learning Disabilities at Proficiency Levels by Grade:
Lowest Performing Districts + Big 4, NYC and Statewide*

Grade	Percent Scoring at Proficiency Level 2 or Above						
	Lowest Performing Districts + Big 4		New York City		Rest of State		Statewide
	As % of State	As % of Lowest Performing/Big 4	As % of State	As % of NYC	As % of State	As % of Rest of State	
3	0.50%	6%	12%	23%	6%	14%	18%
4	0.77%	9%	13%	28%	10%	23%	24%
5	0.49%	6%	11%	26%	8%	17%	20%
6	1.14%	13%	13%	33%	15%	30%	29%
7	0.62%	7%	11%	26%	10%	19%	21%
8	1.42%	15%	13%	33%	15%	29%	30%
Total	0.85%	10%	12%	28%	11%	23%	24%

Grade	Percent Scoring at Level 3 or Above						
	Lowest Performing Districts + Big 4		New York City		Rest of State		Statewide
	As % of State	As % of Lowest Performing/Big 4	As % of State	As % of NYC	As % of State	As % of Rest of State	
3	0.08%	1%	2%	4%	1%	3%	3%
4	0.08%	1%	2%	5%	1%	3%	4%
5	0.14%	2%	2%	4%	1%	2%	3%
6	0.09%	1%	1%	3%	1%	2%	3%
7	0.11%	1%	2%	4%	1%	2%	3%
8	0.15%	2%	2%	4%	2%	4%	4%
Total	0.11%	1%	2%	4%	1%	3%	3%

* Students with valid test scores on New York State Testing Program and New York State Alternate Assessment exams.

Targets:

Grade 3 - 8 English Language Arts (including NYSAA[33] results) Percentage of Students with Disabilities at Proficiency Levels	
Year	**% scoring at or above Level 2**
2014-15	35%
2015-16	38%
2016-17	45%
2017-18	48%
2018-19	51%

The State discussed with and received feedback from stakeholders on the proposed SiMR targets. With the transition of NYS to CCLS, proficiency rates for all students, including students with disabilities, is low. As the data analysis reflected, most students with disabilities performed at level 1 "not on track to proficiency" on the ELA assessment. Baseline data from 2013-14 shows that 31 percent of students with disabilities achieved at levels 2 or above.

The State has set rigorous, yet achievable, targets to measure the performance of students with disabilities at levels 2 and above. These targets project a 20 percentage point improvement over the five years of the SSIP.

Section V. Coherent Improvement Activities

This section identies the improvement strategies that the State has selected, based on the data and infrastructure analyses and in consideration of stakeholder input, to improve results toward the SiMR.

The State discussed and received stakeholder feedback on proposed improvement activities. Stakeholders suggested the State consider recommendations that include, but are not limited to:

- Require teachers to provide explicit instruction to students with disabilities;
- Prepare teachers to teach reading to students with disabilities;
- Strengthen policy and professional development on literacy and pre-literacy skill development;
- Strengthen teacher and leader skills in areas relating to standards-based IEPs; specially designed instruction; reading; multi-tiered systems of support (e.g., RtI and PBIS); and lesson planning to meet needs of students with disabilities;
- Promote increased use of assistive technology;
- Use redirection of IDEA funds more often as an enforcement action to ensure school districts use evidence-based practices; and
- Provide 'focused network team work' in identified districts.

[33] New York State Alternate Assessment

The planned improvement strategies were selected in consideration of the data on root-causes discussed above and the analysis of the State's infrastructure and are designed to:

1. Increase the percentage of preschool students with disabilities who reach a level comparable to same-age peers in the area of acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy) by the time they turn age 6;
2. Improve instructional practices for students with disabilities in the lowest performing schools; and
3. Improve the individual evaluation and identification process for students suspected of having learning disabilities, as well as the IEP development and implementation and provision of specially designed instruction to students with learning disabilities statewide.

The following table displays how proposed improvement activities will lead to achievement of the SiMR. Improvement activities will be further developed in Phase II of the SSIP.

Cascading Strategies Table

Population	Intervention Strategies	Intervention Outcomes
Preschool students with disabilities	• Are provided instruction in early literacy • Receive special education services in supportive regular early childhood settings • Receive tiered systems of instruction and behavioral supports	• Improvements in early literacy skills to close the achievement gap by the time they enter Kindergarten
School-age students with disabilities	• Are provided evidence-based, explicit and specially designed instruction • Have appropriately developed and implemented standards-based IEPs • Are provided scaffolds in instruction toward the ELA CCLS • Received multi-tiered systems of support (RtI and PBIS)	• Receive appropriate supports and services early in their school years to address reading difficulties resulting in improved literacy skills

Population	Intervention Strategies	Intervention Outcomes
Educators	• Receive pre-service and in-service professional development and coaching to provide evidence-based instructional supports and strategies with students with disabilities	• Skillfully implemented standards-based IEPs using evidence-based instruction • Data-based progress monitoring of students with disabilities
Preschools, Schools and Districts	• Preschools provide instruction in the Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core	• More preschool students with disabilities will enter Kindergarten functioning at a level comparable to same-aged peers in the area of literacy skills
	• Schools and districts engage in systemic analysis and planning, in consultation with special education specialists, to identify root causes for poor results for students with disabilities	• District Comprehensive Improvement Plans will include targeted improvement activities to address findings relating to the subgroup of students with disabilities.
	• Schools and districts commit resources over time to engage with fidelity in school improvement, using implementation science, in order to scale up evidence-based instructional practices	• Improvements in engaging literacy instruction, improved behavioral practices and supported curriculum instruction for students with disabilities will be evident.
	• Implement multi-tiered systems of support	• Systems of data-based progress monitoring with early and appropriate supports provided to struggling learners.

Population	Intervention Strategies	Intervention Outcomes
State	• In collaboration with the Office of Early Learning, strengthen State policy on preschool special education instruction and behavioral supports	• Preschools will increasingly provide appropriate pre-literacy and literacy instruction and provide positive socio-emotional supports
	• Working in collaboration with the ESEA accountability office, direct its technical assistance resources to lowest performing schools, using regional planning to ensure differentiated supports based on data	• School improvement plans will be developed that include systemic improvements for the subgroup of students with disabilities
	• Provide technical assistance resources to improve identification and instruction for students with learning disabilities	• Professional development and technical resources provided to districts/schools and educators

These strategies are further explained below:

To close the achievement gap in the area of literacy by the time students are first assessed in third grade on the ELA State assessment:

Evidence-based practices to support the SiMR: early literacy practices; instruction in the Prekindergarden Foundation for the Common Core; use of multi-tiered systems of supports (Recognition and Response; PBIS) at the preschool level; inclusion of preschool students in regular early childhood programs.

Programs, strategies, practices to address systemic issues to support the SiMR: establish standards of instruction for preschool students with disabilities; provide professional development and technical assistance resources for preschool providers;

Planned improvement activities:

1. Provide regional training and webinars for preschool providers on systems of Recognition and Response at the preschool level.

2. Provide regional training and targeted professional development to preschool providers by behavior specialists with expertise in preschool education to improve behavioral supports for preschool students with disabilities.

3. Conduct regional forums on preschool least restrictive environment placements, with action plans developed in each region with the highest rates of separate school placements to ensure that students with disabilities, statewide, have equitable access to regular early childhood programs.

4. Develop policy on instruction in Prekindergarten Standards Toward the Common Core in approved preschool programs for students with disabilities.

5. In collaboration with the Office of Early Learning, support inclusion of students with disabilities in its expansion of Universal PreKindergarten Programs.

To address root cause findings that, in our lowest performing schools, high quality evidenced-based instruction for students with disabilities was observed at low levels:

Evidence-based practices to support the SiMR: Supportive and accessible classroom physical organization of the learning environment; explicit instruction; specially designed instruction; positive classroom climate; multi-tiered systems of support (such as RtI and PBIS); standards-based IEPs.

Programs, strategies, practices to address systemic issues to support the SiMR: provide special education expertise to participate in root cause analysis and improvement activities in low performing school districts and schools; provide coaching and professional development on multi-tiered systems of support (e.g., RtI, PBIS) to preschool and school-age program.

Planned improvement activities:

1. In collaboration with the ESEA Office of Accountability, assign Special Education School Improvement Specialists (SESIS) and other specialists (e.g., behavior specialists, bilingual specialists, etc.), as appropriate, from the State's technical assistance centers to participate in the DTSDE Accountability Reviews when districts and schools are identified for low performance for the subgroup of students with disabilities.

2. In addition to the DTSDE, use the findings from RSE-TASC instructional walk-through data for evidence-based practices for students with disabilities to inform the focus of systemic change.

3. Assign SESIS to provide up to three years of professional development and technical assistance to low performing districts in the areas of literacy, behavior and specially designed instruction.

4. Assign behavior specialists and representatives from TAC-D to school districts where data indicates a need for improved behavioral practices to scale up high quality systems of positive behavioral interventions and supports.

To address findings that students with learning disabilities are the lowest performing on the 3-8 ELA assessments of all disability groups in the State:

Evidence-based practices to support the SiMR: Multi-tiered systems of support (e.g., RtI and PBIS); culturally relevant instruction; use of assistive technology; standards-based IEPs; understanding of language differences and language disabilities; intentional co-planning between general education teachers and special education teachers; use of appropriate scaffolds for students with disabilities in CCLS instruction.

Programs, strategies, practices to address systemic issues: Develop a resource for statewide information and professional development on learning disabilities; update guidance and enhance technical assistance on appropriate use of assitive technology; publish supplemental curriculum guides on scaffolds for students with disabilities.

Planned improvement activities:

1. Provide Statewide webinars and regional training and technical assistance to approximately 500 schools to support them in scaling up high quality RtI programs, with targeted information sessions for parents in these schools, to promote early and appropriate identification of students with learning disabilities.

2. Conduct a State Forum and disseminate information on best practices in the education of students with learning disabilities.

3. Establish a State technical assistance center to provide ongoing professional development to improve instructional practices for students with learning disabilities.

4. Promote greater access to assistive technology for students with disabilties through policy and technical assistance resource centers.

5. Provide guidance to school districts and schools on appropriate scaffolds for CCLS instruction for students with disabilities.

Section VI. Theory of Action

This section provides a narrative and graphic description of the State's Theory of Action to improve results in the SiMR: Students with disabilities will achieve the Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs), as identified in the State's ESEA Waiver, for grades 3-8 English Language Arts.

The State's theory of action for turning around low-performing schools as articulated in New York's ESEA flexibility waiver is as follows:

- If New York creates a conceptual framework that articulates what are the optimal conditions for learning in schools and districts; and
- If New York creates a tool that can be used by NYSED and districts to assess the degree to which these optimal conditions for learning are present in schools and districts; and
- If districts and schools use this tool to develop high quality comprehensive plans; and
- If districts and schools organize themselves and their resources to implement these plans effectively; and
- If districts and schools engage in a continuous practice of self-assessment and adjustment of these plans,
- Then educational outcomes in these schools and districts will improve.

To enhance the ESEA flexibility waiver theory of action to specifically target improved results for students with disabilities, the SSIP theory of action is as follows:

- If more preschool students with disabilities receive special education services in regular early childhood programs where the Prekindergarten Standards Toward the Common Core are taught; and
- If more preschool providers, including regular early childhood programs, provide appropriate behavioral supports for preschool students with disabilities; and
- If preschool providers implement high quality Recognition and Response programs to provide early intervening services to preschool students as needed; and
- If whole school reforms in the tenet areas of the DTSDE are accomplished for all students in low performing schools; and
- If the State assigns specialists to the State's lowest performing school districts to engage in the DTSDE process and to provide embedded professional development to these schools to implement the quality comprehensive plan in the areas of literacy, behavior and specially designed instruction using research-based tools impacting results for students with disabilities; and
- If schools establish systems of PBIS and/or RtI; and
- If teachers use explicit and specially designed instruction for students with disabilities; and
- If IEPs are developed and implemented to address the unique needs of students with learning disabilities and provide them with appropriate assistive technology devices and service,

- **Then the mid-term outcomes as follows will be achieved:**
  - By the time preschool students with disabilities turn 6 years of age or exit preschool special education, significantly more students will be functioning within age expectations in the area of acquisition and use of knowledge and skills (including early language/communication and early literacy); and
  - Significantly more students with disabilities, particularly in the lowest performing school districts, will show improvement in their ELA assessment results to demonstrate they are on track to proficiency.

- **Then the State-identified measurable result will be achieved:**
  - Statewide, the percent of students with disabilities achieving at levels 2 and above on the grades 3-8 English language arts will increase.

1) If the State …

- Provides technical assistance to preschool providers to improve behavioral supports and literacy instruction to promote LRE opportunities in each region of the State; and
- Strengthen policies on preschool literacy instruction and behavioral supports; and
- Assigns Special Education specialists to the DTSDE reviews; and identifies the root instructional causes for the poor performance of students with disabilities in these schools; and provides ongoing professional development to these schools in the areas of literacy, behavior and/or specially designed instruction; and
- Provides scaffolding resources and technical assistance on the Common Core Learning Standards specifically for students with disabilities; and
- Funds a statewide technical assistance center on learning disabilities and assistive technology; and
- Provides statewide technical assistance to scale up systems of RtI and PBIS in schools…

2) Then school districts and schools will …

- Use positive behavioral supports and interventions in regular early childhood programs and preschool special classes
- Use research-based explicit and specially designed instruction
- Provide appropriate scaffolds in their instruction of students with disabilities
- Develop and implement IEPs to address unique needs of students with various types of learning disabilities
- Provide appropriate assistive technology to students with disabilities
- Use data on students with disabilities to inform school improvement

3) In order for teachers to …

- Support more preschool students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment and in regular early childhood settings
- Ensure preschool students with disabilities receive instruction in early literacy instruction and in the Prekindergarten Standards for the Common Core
- Support students with disabilities to access, participate and progress in the Common Core State Standards
- Provide targeted levels of early intervening services to students in the areas of reading and positive behavioral supports
- Use data to inform instruction

4) So that we can realize these MID-TERM OUTCOMES…

- Close the gap in literacy by the time preschool children with disabilities turn age 6; and
- Ensure more students with disabilities in all schools, including the lowest performing schools, are on track to proficiency.

…that produces this LONG-TERM OUTCOME:

By 2018-19, at least 51 percent of students with disabilities will achieve levels 2 or above on the grades 3-8 ELA assessment