

State of Oklahoma

Part B SSIP Narrative: Phase III Year One

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Oklahoma State Department of Education, Special Education Services



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Introduction

Starting in FFY 2013, the US Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) required all state education agencies to develop a state systemic improvement plan (SSIP) as part of OSEP's updated state performance plan and annual performance report (SPP/APR) process. Each state had to analyze infrastructure and performance weaknesses in Phase I (FFY 2013), create the improvement plan in Phase II (FFY 2014), and implement the plan in Phase III (through FFY 2018).

In Phases I and II of Oklahoma's Part B SSIP process, stakeholders chose to focus targeted attention on third grade reading assessment scores as its State-identified Measureable Result (SIMR). In response to OSEP recommendations, Phase II stakeholder discussions produced a refined SIMR that targeted Tulsa County:

By FFY 2018, Oklahoma will see improved early literacy performance in specific districts in Tulsa County among students with disabilities taking the 3rd grade annual reading assessment. The passing rate (proficiency or above) in Tulsa County will increase from 23 percent in FFY 2014 to at least 30 percent in FFY 2018. Participating districts will also realize statistically significant improvement in the rate of growth toward proficiency among these students.

To achieve this SIMR, Oklahoma adopted six improvement strategies to implement in Phase III. The first two strategies focus on state-wide infrastructure improvements. The next four are interventions in Tulsa County that target challenges discovered during the Phase I analysis. The six strategies are:

System-focused Infrastructure

1. Develop data tracking mechanism for children exiting SoonerStart and entering an LEA;
2. Implement new monitoring procedures to incorporate performance measures;

Site-specific Support (Evidence-based Practices)

3. Improve parents' engagement in students' use of accommodations & AT for instruction and assessment;
4. Improve IEP Teams' and Administrators' knowledge of accommodations & AT for instruction and assessment;
5. Provide access to early literacy resources for families with 3-5 year olds at intervention sites; and
6. Provide targeted professional development to LEA personnel in evidence-based practices in early literacy.

Theory of Action

As stated in the Phase II document, each selected improvement strategy is intended to increase the capacity of state and local personnel *and* parents to provide timely services and supports to students with disabilities. As described by the SSIP Part B Theory of Action (Appendix A), increasing core capacity may make personnel more likely to positively influence student outcomes, including third grade reading assessment scores. To support fidelity of implementation, the original Phase I Theory of Action has been updated to reflect the six strategies selected in Phase II. These strategies fall into four core areas of improvement as identified on the Theory of Action: effective data sharing, meaningful district accountability, topical targeted assistance, and practical training. If the strategies are implemented with fidelity, we contend that specific intermediate outcomes will be realized, leading to improvements in the SIMR. Table 1 lists each strategy and the rational for its SIMR impact.

Table 1: The SIMR Improvement Strategies

| Core Area of Improvement | Improvement Strategies | Rationale for Impact on SIMR |
|---|---|--|
| <i>Effective data sharing</i> | <p>Strategy 1 Develop data tracking mechanism for children exiting SoonerStart and entering an LEA</p> | <p>LEAs will be ready for students transitioning to their districts within their data system. Delays in document sharing will be eliminated. This means LEAs will be able to provide timely interventions for children at risk for reading failure at a very early age. This will prevent students from falling behind in reading and enable them to maintain grade level reading benchmarks as measured by the 3rd grade assessment.</p> |
| <i>Meaningful district accountability</i> | <p>Strategy 2 Implement new monitoring procedures to incorporate performance measures</p> | <p>Including academic performance measures in a differentiated monitoring system will focus LEAs on academic achievement as well as compliance. LEAs will receive TA to improve the academic performance of students with disabilities as well as to maintain high levels of compliance.</p> |
| <i>Topical targeted assistance</i> | <p>Strategy 3 Improve parents’ engagement in students’ use of accommodations & AT for instruction and assessment</p> <p>Strategy 4 Improve IEP Teams’ and Administrators’ knowledge of accommodations & AT for instruction and assessment</p> | <p>Accommodations are provided to minimize the effects of a disability so that a student can have access to content and demonstrate that knowledge on assessments. AT devices provide additional support for a student within the construct (skills), context (environment, materials), and activities of instruction and assessment. If parents and teachers are well informed about accommodations and AT, students will receive the supports they need to access content and demonstrate their learning on assessments.</p> |
| <i>Practical training</i> | <p>Strategy 5 Provide access to early literacy resources for families with 3-5 year olds at intervention sites</p> <p>Strategy 6 Provide targeted professional development to LEA personnel in evidence-based practices in early literacy.</p> | <p>When parents engage in daily literacy activities such as reading aloud with their children, their children show significantly improved cognitive growth, preparing them for substantial literacy gains as they move from grade to grade.</p> <p>Teachers who are knowledgeable in evidence-based reading practices in early grades provide a solid foundation for student achievement in reading. This foundation will help students transition from learning to read to reading to learn as they advance through the grades.</p> |

Section One: Summary of Year One of Phase III

The SIMR did not improve between FFY 2014 and 2015 (the 0.03 year-to-year difference is not statistically significant), staying essentially constant at approximately 22.8 percent. In FFY 2014, 1107 students took a third grade reading assessment (general or alternate) in Tulsa County and reported scores. Of these, 252 were rated as proficient or above, equaling a proficiency rate of 22.76 percent. In FFY 2015, 1237 students took a third grade reading assessment (general or alternate) in Tulsa County and reported scores. Of these, 282 were rated proficient or above, equaling 22.79 percent. The FFY 2015 proficiency rate did not meet target (see Table 2).

| Table 2 | FFY 2013 | FFY 2014 | FFY 2015 | FFY 2016 | FFY 2017 | FFY 2018 |
|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Target | | 54.00% | 24.0% | 26.0% | 28.0% | 30.0% |
| Actual Rate | 37.76% | 22.76% | 22.79% | | | |

Among the fourteen public school districts in the county, only one demonstrated statistically significant change between FFY 2014 and 2015, although this change was negative: Broken Arrow's passing rate declined from 26.5 percent to 17.7 percent. All other districts' rates were statistically the same from one year to the next. No district showed significant improvement in the rate of growth toward proficiency among students with IEPs.

Stakeholder Involvement

Oklahoma's IDEA Part B Advisory Panel has served as the formal stakeholder group to which the leadership team reports on a quarterly basis. The Panel advised the Phase I analysis and the Phase II design of the SSIP. The Panel consists of 50 representatives of various groups, many of whom have deep interest in the outcomes produced by the SSIP, including families, students, disability advocacy organizations, professional organizations, service providers, higher education, and districts. It includes representatives from the Tulsa area. Although Panel members have individually provided helpful feedback on strategic implementation, overall, the Panel has delegated decision-making authority to the SSIP leadership team and lead facilitator. They have demonstrated little interest in providing on-going, active engagement in the implementation process.

Each strategy's leadership team has reached out to groups and networks of individuals who were likely to be interested in the outcomes of each strategy to gather a set of stakeholders. These stakeholders advise on strategic implementation and provide guidance and feedback. Some of these individuals are members of the Part B Advisory Panel, while others are the participants in the activities themselves. These stakeholders are described in the synopses of the strategies in the next section.

Improvement Strategies Implemented

The Oklahoma SSIP team has made progress on the implementation of each improvement strategy. Strategy one is completed, and each of the others has met or is on track to meet significant milestones in the next year. The SSIP team is confident that the state is on target for meeting its strategic implementation goals.

In year one, the leadership team faced several challenges during implementation that compelled modifications to timelines, leadership and approach. The most challenging obstacles have involved a lack of interest and participation by target populations in Tulsa County. The specific challenges for each strategy are documented in Section Two of this report, although they are summarized here along with the resulting modifications.

Highlights of Modifications to the SSIP

The majority of changes to implementation involve adjustments to timelines; each strategy has at least one component that was delayed for one reason or another. Three strategies have seen major modifications resulting from a need for new leadership or a lack of participation of target populations. Modifications have been proposed and accepted within each strategy’s leadership team in review of setbacks during implementation. They have also been reported to key stakeholders.

Table 3 summarizes the details. Briefly, the strategies have been altered in the following ways:

1. The timeline of implementation for strategy one was delayed two months because of poor communication from a key vendor. However, it was fully implemented by the end of January 2017.
2. The lead for strategy two was changed mid-way due to lack of implementation and a change in focus and goals. It is back on track, but the implementation timeline has been delayed by several months. Additional components have also been adopted to address broader RBA needs, including the development of a performance risk analysis to guide monitoring.
3. Strategy three’s timelines for parent training have been delayed by several months due to weak parent response to training opportunities. The leadership team is revamping its approach to recruiting families to participate in accommodations and AT training opportunities.
4. The portion of strategy four that is related to accommodations training has been implemented very smoothly. The AT training team has had more difficulty recruiting educators to participate. Recruitment methods have been revised, and more outreach is now occurring. The timeline for implementation has also been extended to accommodate the expanded outreach.
5. The lead for strategy five was changed mid-way due to a change in personnel. The timeline for implementation was delayed for several months and the initial goals are now more limited due to stakeholder feedback. However, activities are planned in the upcoming months at one site, expanding to others in the fall.
6. The leadership team initially had a very difficult time recruiting districts to participate in strategy six. A district volunteered to participate in December, and training started in February 2017. Originally, the goal was to have several educators from different districts. Now, only one district is participating, but with a full cohort of elementary school educators.

Table 3: Summary of Implementation and Modifications

| Strategy | Initial Deadline | Delay | Modifications |
|----------|-------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| One | December 2, 2016 | Two months | |
| Two | Spring 2017 | Six months | Components & leadership |
| Three | Begin Fall 2016 | Nine months | Components & outreach methods |
| Four | Begin Fall 2016 | | Outreach methods |
| Five | Begin Fall 2016 | Six months | Components, leadership & participants |
| Six | Begin Spring 2017 | | Participants |

Evaluation Overview

Process evaluations are being conducted on each strategy to monitor fidelity in implementation. For the SSIP, the process evaluations involve periodic reviews of timeliness of activities, implementation goals and struggles, documentation of meetings and discussions, survey results, and so forth.

The process evaluations have identified weaknesses in implementation and have provided insight into needed improvements for each strategy and lessons to be learned for future initiatives. A few of these lessons are: a) strong leadership is critical for ensuring timely implementation, b) outreach to families can be difficult and plans must clearly target populations of potential interest, and c) goals may change over time as new knowledge is gained.

Specific outcome evaluation methods have been adopted for each improvement strategy, as shown in the Phase II evaluation plan (included here as Appendix B). During this first year, one main approach has been used to assess progress toward short-term objectives: participant surveys (pre and post training) that measure changes in attitudes, learning and behavior. In addition to the assessment information related to outcome achievement, we have received helpful feedback from these surveys about how to improve implementation. All data collected are described in the evaluation sections for the strategies that utilized surveys: numbers four, five and six.

Section Two: Strategy Descriptions

This section of the Phase III Part B SSIP Report presents the progress for each implementation strategy, including the activities in year one and the challenges faced, evaluation details, and plans for year two. Each strategy description also presents evidence supporting fidelity to implementation or reasons for modification.

STRATEGY ONE: Unique Identification from Part C to Part B

Phase II stakeholders determined that a critical infrastructure improvement would be the development of a mechanism to create a unique identifier that stays with children from initial eligibility for the EIS program through graduation from high school. The intent was that “This unique identification mechanism will create a direct alignment between the two programs and data systems, opening access to historical information about special education referrals, eligibility and services and enabling long-term tracking of child services and outcomes” (Part B Phase II SSIP Narrative, page 5).

The unique identifier is one already used by Part B—called the Student Testing Number (STN)—so is easy to implement on the Part B side. Once a child has an STN, it becomes part of their permanent record and is never rescinded or changed. For many years now, STNs have been automatically generated daily for all new children added to the state’s student longitudinal data system, called the WAVE. Previously, even if a child was receiving services through the state’s EIS program, they did not receive an STN until enrolled in a district.

Now, children receive an STN the day they are deemed eligible for services in SoonerStart, the state’s early intervention program. This ensures that the entire history of EI services is known to district special education personnel when children enroll (if parents provide consent), whether or not they transition directly from the EIS program. Because the systems were not connected prior to 2017, many times children would enter a district and district personnel would not ever know the child had been evaluated and served by SoonerStart.

Expected Outcomes

This strategy focused on an infrastructure improvement that initially necessitated only a process evaluation. In the short term, this project was slated to achieve two critical objectives:

1. Every child will automatically be assigned a “state testing number” (STN) when they are entered into EdPlan-SoonerStart starting December 1, 2016; and
2. Children who enroll in a public school after SoonerStart participation will maintain the STN provided them prior to LEA enrollment by spring, 2017.

The first objective was achieved at the end of January, 2017. Every child receiving services in the EIS program now has an STN which will stay with them when they move to a district, whether or not they are eligible for Part B services. The second objective is in the process of being achieved. As children exit the EIS program and enter districts for services and/or general education programs, they keep their unique numbers. We will monitor this by comparing SoonerStart enrollment to district enrollment to ensure that students do not lose the STN given to them.

As mentioned in Phase II, we foresee that the implementation of this strategy will also lead to performance improvements related to the evaluation of children entering districts who were previously served in SoonerStart and the subsequent development of IEPs. In particular, we want to assess whether “IEP team members are able to read and review early childhood IFSPs and do so on a regular basis.” Anecdotally, district personnel have not read IFSPs because they had not had consistent access to them. We are in the process of more carefully defining these additional outcomes and evaluation methodology in consultation with both Part C and Part B stakeholders.

Activities in Year One

The project consisted of creating a mechanism that shares child information between the new SoonerStart data system the state's SLDS (the WAVE), and the STN generation process mechanism. Each of these components is managed by separate vendors, and require on-going contracts for sustainable implementation. The contracts are funded through Part B. Personnel from SoonerStart, the SEA Part B program office and the agency's SLDS office were all involved in designing and implementing the mechanism. Both program and data stakeholders were represented in the discussions.

This strategy was fully implemented in late January, 2017. The original target deadline was December 1, 2016, when the new EIS data system was launched. However, because of technical issues, the deadline was pushed back to late January. At this time, the process for assigning STNs has both automated and manual components. First, a representative from vendor one downloads a file of children's demographic information from the EIS data system, sending it as a protected file to vendor two, who processes it and forwards it to the third vendor, who then send it through the automated STN generation process. (The process checks that the child is unique in the data system based on a weighted formula of demographic information. If unique, a new STN is assigned. If not, the child's information is sent back to the site for verification.) The updated file is then sent back to the first and second vendors to update both the WAVE and EdPlan. All records without STN assignments will receive them. The entire process currently occurs on a daily basis, though the frequency will decrease as fewer new children need STNs.

The leadership team created and provided written guidance to SoonerStart personnel and district representatives on the impact of the STN assignment process. Since this is the first time children who are 3 years old may enter public school districts with STNs, we want to reduce any confusion district personnel may have. Additionally, the project business analyst is documenting every step in the process because it relies so heavily on manual vendor actions.

Implementation Challenges

Delays in implementation were the result of two problems, both related to vendor performance. First, there were delays in communication among vendors and the OSDE about timely delivery of interim outputs such as data files. Second, critical file-sharing did not occur as defined in the original project design, and files did not meet required formats. One vendor in particular delayed supplying files in the required format and frequently changed its own formatting needs without prior consultation. This resulted in several critical delays that also resulted in cost-overruns that forced OSDE-SES to increase the contract monies.

Evaluation: Lessons Learned

Through a process evaluation that considered whether the project was proceeding as planned, the leadership team learned that this project initially lacked frequent and consistent communication between the three vendors and the project leadership team. Only late in the project's implementation did the business analyst assigned by the IT office provide regular status updates and timeline progress. This helped the team manage the delays better. The leadership team learned that checking in with vendors and the business analyst more frequently and methodically can help to prevent delays in technical projects. Data files of various kinds and quality did not get shared in a timely way despite vendor promises. Because the files were not also shared with the leadership team, the delay was not known until it was too late to avoid it. Once the team lead took a more assertive approach to monitoring vendor outputs, communication was smoother on all sides and tasks were accomplished.

Activities in Year Two

This project will continue to be monitored by the leadership team in year two to ensure that the process continues as designed and to assess whether it can be streamlined. So far, STNS are being assigned appropriately to children when they are determined eligible for SoonerStart services. Additional instructional materials, including webinars, will be provided to district personnel, as needed or requested. This would include materials about transitioning between SoonerStart and the districts. We will also begin assessing whether IEP team members are able to read and review early childhood IFSPs and do so on a regular basis. We will continue to update both Part C and Part B stakeholders on the project's progress.

STRATEGY TWO: Monitoring for Performance

The goal for strategy two is to hold districts accountable for improving student outcomes through determinations and designations. Oklahoma's Special Education Services division began developing a results-based accountability determination model for LEAs in the fall of 2015. Previously, LEA Determinations only included compliance indicators. The revised LEA Determination incorporated performance measures selected from the Part B SPP Indicators. This revised model, which measured districts on their achievement of compliance as well as their performance vis à vis students, was slated to be fully implemented by fall 2017. It was intended to coincide with changes to monitoring practices and procedures to incorporate performance reviews into LEA designations, all of which were part of the SSIP improvement strategy two.

However, after reflection and conversations with Oklahoma stakeholders and colleagues in the RBA Cross-State Learning Collaborative (RBA CSLC), and as a result of changes in Oklahoma's SES leadership, the leadership team has decided to revise its approach to the components of this strategy. Rather than focusing on monitoring at the start, we are refining the current general supervision system entirely to incorporate RBA elements. The SEA will use several revised processes, including the creation of a risk analysis that highlights district-level areas of improvement linked to outcomes. The original leadership, goals and timeline for this strategy have been updated. See Appendix C for a revised logic model that accounts for these modifications.

Essentially, OSDE-SES is revising its LEA Determination to incorporate both compliance and performance indicators. The revised determination will guide the selection of factors included in a risk assessment measuring a district's risk to not "meet requirements" on the determination. The risk assessment then will be used as a tool to assist OSDE-SES and districts in defining areas for improvement.

Expected Outcomes

The original vision for this strategy is the same. The intent is that LEAs improve performance in response to monitoring interventions and guidance. The leadership team has defined new measurable short-term objectives (list items one to three) and medium-term outcomes (list items four and five):

1. District leadership participate in training on updated general supervision system and are responsive to piloted model;
2. LEA staff recognize relationship between risk and performance, the tiered monitoring system, and the intervention options; and
3. Districts utilize support materials to address risk factors & indicator improvement.
4. Performance deficiencies are habitually addressed in determination and monitoring processes; and
5. Districts review and update practices in response to the modified general supervision system.

The evaluation plan to measure the achievement of these outcomes is also being redeveloped. For outcome one, district behavior will be observed through event counts. Attitude and knowledge outcomes (two and three) will be evaluated through district self-reporting via surveys prior to and after any training events. Outcomes four and five will be evaluated through monitoring processes and personnel as well as district improvement in key areas.

Activities in Year One

With OSDE-SES leadership changed in late spring 2016, the management structure for this strategy was modified. The division no longer has an executive director for Compliance, Data and Finance (CDF); instead, these functions are directly supervised by the Executive Director of Special Education Services. The new lead for this strategy has been working with the RBA CSLC, SES personnel, IDEA B Advisory Panel representatives, other local stakeholders, and TA support centers to revise this strategy's implementation and evaluation.

The change in leadership for the division and for this strategy caused some delays in implementation, although the delays allowed the leadership team to revisit and recraft its understanding of RBA fundamentals and recraft its approach before the end of year one. Starting in December 2016, SES personnel began discussions for a new LEA Determination matrix and associated risk analysis that align with RBA principles. The first step was to propose a new set of LEA Determination indicators related to both compliance and performance. Some of the indicators are newly calculated in Oklahoma, and will require careful operationalization and data collection. All are related to SPP/APR Indicators, though measured in more nuanced ways.

The next step was to select and define the first draft set of factors that are linked to lower risk for failing to meet indicator targets on the Determination. The factors initially selected for review are primarily "input" factors over which districts may or may not have control. For example, districts are not responsible for the local homelessness rate, although it may affect the drop-out rate in the district. After the initial set of factors was selected, SES personnel investigated data definitions and sources. We also studied whether each factor had a research basis for being linked to one or more of the proposed Determination indicators.

This investigation led to several findings. Some factors were determined to be duplicative or to have a weak link to the indicators, so have been dropped from the draft model. We also determined that seven of the possible factors would require collecting new data through more difficult channels such as district surveys, and their inclusion will depend on the SES division's capacity to collect this data. Furthermore, several factors could be defined in various ways, and will require precise operationalization. The draft model was further revised in January 2017 as a result of this inquiry, prior to being shared with stakeholders.

To ensure that the determination and the risk analysis are beneficial and meaningful to districts as well as to the SEA, the draft has been and will continue to be shared with district representatives and other stakeholders through early summer 2017. The draft was first shared with various district representatives in February. They offered multiple suggestions for revising the draft that the RBA leadership team will consider. The draft model was also taken to the IDEA Part B Advisory Panel for review and feedback in early March, 2017. Their input has led to additional discussions with other stakeholders and advisors, including several of the education faculty at the University of Oklahoma who are represented on the Panel.

To date, district representatives and other stakeholders have voiced their support for the revision to the GSS to include a risk analysis. A frequent question asked throughout the LEA Determination process has been, "How can I improve my indicator scores?" The risk analysis provides this direct feedback to districts by incorporating factors that are linked to indicator outcomes.

Proposed Model

The draft risk analysis model seeks to assess a district's risk of not meeting requirements on the annual district determination. It is a tool for the SEA and districts to use to assess their capacity to meet the determination targets, and will guide technical assistance and professional development. The focus is on district inputs: what are districts doing to strengthen and sustain student and district achievement related to the indicators on the determination?

Determinations will incorporate two sets of federal/state indicators: compliance and performance. Indicators will be weighted. Each determination indicator will be precisely defined related to targets (e.g., how much change in graduation rate should be rewarded?). Some determination indicators are newly adopted as LEA performance measures in Oklahoma, and will require a careful definition before being implemented.

The components of this model are still open to revision, and it is highly likely that the current list of risk factors will be shortened. The first rounds of brainstorming and stakeholder consultation produced the following sets of determination indicators and related risk factors:

Compliance measures

1. Indicator 11: Target achievement of the percent of children evaluated within 45-day timeline.
2. Indicator 12: Change in the timely completion of transition from SoonerStart to LEAs.
3. Timely and accurate reporting on:
 - a. End of year report
 - b. Child count report
4. Longstanding non-compliance on one or more of these indicators.

Performance measures

1. Indicator 1: Change in graduation rate.
2. Indicator 2: Change in dropout rate.
3. Indicator 4a: Change in long-term suspension and expulsion.
4. Indicators 7a-7c: Change in percent of preschool children with IEP showing improvement in ECO areas.
5. Post-secondary goals: quality of goals defined for transition and post-secondary outcomes.
6. Identified student weaknesses: percent of goals that refer back to a student weakness.

Risk factors

1. Ratio of special education personnel to all students
2. Percent of students with IEPs in total enrollment
3. SoonerStart site in local county
4. Percent difference from state mean in primary disability categories (indexed)
5. Percent of students with IEPs in out-of-district placements
6. Percent of all students eligible free/reduced lunch program
7. Percent of students with IEPs in foster care
8. Willingness to report/participate in OSDE-SES improvement activities
9. Frequency of participation in OSDE-SES training activities
10. Number of amendments to most recent budget
11. MOE Status
12. Previous year's Determination rating
13. Presence of Pre-K4 general education program
14. Percent of kindergartners who attended pre-K
15. Presence of AT team in district
16. Percent of students with IEPs who have AT described in their IEPs
17. District homelessness rate

18. Presence of secondary completion programs
19. Alternative education options
20. Presence of “prevention” and student support teams
21. District youth pregnancy rate
22. District LEP/EL/ELL rate
23. Percent of students on IEPs living in local residential facilities
24. Presence of supportive secondary transition elements, e.g., transition team
25. Presence of behavior supports/programs

Various stakeholders from districts and interested organizations have already suggested ways to improve this set of indicators and risk factors. The following list describes some of the recommended changes:

1. Move the indicator of ‘the quality of post-secondary goals’ from performance to compliance;
2. Add ‘change in assessment scores’ between 3rd and 8th grades (reading and math), child-level;
3. Move ‘presence of programs for transition’ from a risk factor to a performance factor;
4. Ensure the indicator 7 scores (ECOs for preschool) take into account SLP kids, who may skew the data one way or another;
5. Clarify the cohort to be used for indicator 1 (graduation);
6. Add kids “recovered” from drop-out as a risk factor (later, when data is available);
7. Add a measure of significant disproportionality in settings or identification to the determination; and
8. Add a research-based input for significant disproportionality as a risk factor.

Implementation Challenges and Lessons Learned

The primary challenge was a delay in implementation through leadership’s inactivity. The original team lead did not take the initiative to lead the process. Strong leadership is critical for reforming the district monitoring system to include results-based accountability elements. Although it took several months to begin implementing this strategy, once the new lead was firmly established, action came quickly. An outcome evaluation has not been started.

Activities in Year Two

While the risk factor set is being finalized, the monitoring team will begin devising updated procedures that incorporate performance management and improvement. It may be that districts are monitored on performance alongside compliance, or the tiered intervention process may be the method through which performance weaknesses are addressed. This will be determined with input from stakeholders, particularly the IDEA Part B Advisory Panel and interested districts. We intend to have the entire plan ready for “pilot” implementation by the start of the 2017-2018 school year. The first year, the current determination method and the new version will be implemented concurrently to allow districts time to adjust to the new requirements and expectations. They will not be held to the new standards the first year.

Once the model is approved and disseminated, OSDE-SES will establish a “risk reduction” team to assist LEAS with improving their risk factors, when possible. Written guidance and training materials will also be produced to assist districts. We will begin the evaluation process prior to this to ensure a baseline exists.

STRATEGY THREE: Accommodations & Assistive Technology for Parents

Strategies three and four take a two-pronged approach to educating IEP team members (including parents) and other teachers about accommodations and assistive technology (AT). Strategy three focuses on the knowledge needs of parents and caregivers, while strategy four focuses on educators. As will be discussed in the next section, strategy four's implementation has been fairly smooth compared to strategy three's.

Expected Outcomes

The vision for strategy three is that parents are able to advocate for their students in the need for and use of AT and accommodations in assessment and daily instruction. This will be measured as a separate outcome for this strategy, asking whether more parents advocate for their students' specific needs for AT and accommodations in daily instruction and assessments. The original short term objectives for this strategy are:

1. All relevant parents/caregivers receive written guidance on the benefits and use of accommodations and AT;
2. Parents are instructed on navigating the ABLE Tech website, including features highlighting the selection of AT by function and purpose;
3. Parents are aware of and knowledgeable about available options for AT and accommodations for both assessment and daily instruction; and
4. Parents comprehend the variation across accommodations' function and selection, particularly for assessments.

Two of the medium-term outcomes were defined to be identical to those of strategy four:

5. Variation in allowed accommodations provided for assessments will increase; and
6. AT consideration and use among school-age students will increase, as documented in IEPs.

The remainder of the discussion for this strategy distinguishes between the activities implemented for accommodations and those for assistive technology, since the two topics were separated in training.

Activities in Year One: Accommodations

A single leadership team was established for both strategies three and four since the goals are the same, despite the different target populations. This team consists of SES personnel, representatives of ABLE Tech (Oklahoma's assistive technology center), and representatives of the Oklahoma Parents Center (OPC, Oklahoma's parent training and information center). We have met at least monthly as a leadership team since April 2016. Collectively, we devised a plan to jointly implement these strategies.

The team took an approach to the accommodations training that emphasized having both educators and parents at the same training. We believed this would provide opportunities for parents and educators to talk together about students' needs, breaking down barriers. The team planned a three-part series for the accommodations training, to include both educators and parents. The content of the full series of training sessions is described under Strategy Four.

The first session was held in November 2016 at five sites across Tulsa County, and the second was held in February 2017 at the same five sites. (The third is scheduled for May.) Each session was three hours in length and was hosted by a local district: Bixby, Sand Springs, Tulsa, Broken Arrow, and Owasso. Participants only needed to attend each session once. The OPC co-hosted these trainings, and assisted with snacks and participation prizes.

To notify parents of the training during the three weeks prior to the training, the OPC used its standard methods of outreach to families when they organize a training session. They advertised the opportunity with their parent contacts in Tulsa County via email, Facebook, and their website, and they sent flyers to districts to share with families directly. Unfortunately, of the 260 participants, only five were parents or caregivers. We were not able to generate the interest we hoped to get. Our initial goal was 200 parents and caregivers to join about the same number of educators. We established this number of participants as our target through a statistical estimation of group comparison data requirements.

Implementation Challenges: Accommodations

The leadership team for this strategy was excited during the planning stage to develop a training that would bring together parents and educators to talk together about accommodations. As will be shown in the next section, the implementation went very well with regard to educators. We met our participation goal for educators but fell far short for parents. The lack of participation has led us to completely revise our training plan for parents.

Evaluation: Accommodations

Because parents did not attend the planned accommodations training sessions, an outcomes evaluation has not been completed for the activities with regard to parents. We suspect that a combination of late outreach and the day-time schedule of the training minimized parent interest. Unfortunately, we cannot survey the non-attendants to determine why they did not attend.

However, the process evaluation resulted in helpful information about moving forward. We recognize that the outreach methods may not have been sufficient for reaching parents who need and/or want to learn the topic. We also recognize that three-hour training sessions during the day are not necessarily convenient for parents and caregivers. To address these, we are expanding outreach and revising the training approach and content.

Activities in Year One: Assistive Technology

Implementation on this component of strategy three has been delayed for nine months. The leadership team tasked the OPC to design and organize the training for parents on assistive technology (AT), with the assistance of SES and ABLE Tech. Unfortunately, OPC has had difficulty scheduling any trainings in the first year, for various reasons presented below. Despite this, the OPC has begun to develop content appropriate to the goals of the project, including information for parents on advocating for an appropriate discussion of needs in the IEP for supports like AT. ABLE Tech has provided materials to talk about AT at an introductory level, for parents who may be unfamiliar with the topic.

Implementation Challenges: Assistive Technology

There are several reasons for the delay in implementation, including other projects taking precedence and some concerns with finding locations and participants. This component was not discussed in as much detail during early leadership team discussions while the accommodations training was planned. With the implementation of the accommodation training, the team now has time to focus on this component. As we have begun working to train parents in AT, we have encountered minor delays with scheduling locations. Some districts have been reluctant to support parent training on this topic (for various anecdotal reasons), leading us to reach out to alternative locations and sponsors such as disability advocacy organizations, early childhood centers, and libraries.

Evaluation: Assistive Technology

Because the parent/caregiver AT training sessions have not yet been held, an outcomes evaluation has not been completed for this component. With respect to a process evaluation, we have found

that this component did not receive the same level of leadership attention as other strategies and components did during the planning process. As a result, its implementation was delayed. With more time and resources, implementation is now on track for 2017.

Activities for Year Two: Accommodations and Assistive Technology

The leadership team has drafted plans to fully implement this strategy in 2017. To address attendance concerns, we are planning evening training sessions in districts and other locations at times convenient to parents, in consultation and with the support of local organizations who may serve as hosts. Such organizations may include local disability advocacy and/or service groups, libraries, school sites and early childhood centers.

High-quality implementation will depend on new approaches to reach out to parents in Tulsa County who are likely to be interested in the training. We are already augmenting outreach to include new handouts/flyers to give to service professionals, district and site administrators, and parents to advertise the training opportunities.

We are also crafting a message that focuses on the benefits of increased parent knowledge of special factors for districts and service professionals. To share this message, we will work with the state-wide and Tulsa-area administrative and professional organizations who have shown support for OPC work in the past, including disability advocacy groups. Two districts have already voiced tentative willingness to support the training for their parents. We are currently in discussions with Tulsa special education leadership.

Training sessions will be shorter and the content will be more targeted to parents. We currently expect to provide five identical training sessions across Tulsa County in the spring, summer and fall of 2017, with the goal of having at least fifty participants in the target population. The target number of participants has been reduced initially to make the goal more attainable. We intend to engage the same locations for both the accommodations and AT parent training to deepen local parent understanding of special factors topics. In this process, we will reach out first to sites whose educators attended the AT training. These educators are more likely to support a parent training, knowing the benefits of working with parents who know and understand the topics as they do.

Content is already being developed for both the accommodations and AT parent training sessions that focuses on the nature of these school supports and how to advocate for a student's needs during the IEP process. Each session will be evaluated for the knowledge gained by participants, and parents will be asked whether they would like to participate in follow-up surveys and discussions about their long-term use of the information.

STRATEGY FOUR: Accommodations and Assistive Technology for Educators

As mentioned in the previous section, strategies three and four take a two-pronged approach to educating IEP team members (including parents) and other teachers about accommodations and assistive technology (AT). Strategy four focuses on the knowledge needs of educators, both special education and general education. Strategy four's implementation has been fairly smooth, particularly with regard to the topic of accommodations.

Expected Outcomes

Strategy four's vision is that IEP team members and administrators understand the need for and use of AT and accommodations in assessment and daily instruction. The original short-term objectives for this strategy are:

1. All relevant personnel receive written guidance on the benefits and use of accommodations and AT;
2. Personnel are instructed on navigating the ABLE Tech website, including features highlighting the selection of AT by function and purpose;

3. Personnel are aware of and knowledgeable about available options for AT and accommodations for both assessment and daily instruction; and
4. Personnel comprehend the variation across accommodations' function and selection, particularly for assessments.

The medium-term outcomes were defined to be identical to those of strategy three:

5. Variation in allowed accommodations provided for assessments will increase; and
6. AT consideration and use among school-age students will increase, as documented in IEPs.

The remainder of the discussion for this strategy distinguishes between the activities implemented for accommodations and those for assistive technology, since the two topics were separated in training.

Activities in Year One: Accommodations

A single leadership team was established for both strategies three and four since the goals are the same, despite the different target populations. This team consists of SES personnel, representatives of ABLE Tech and the Oklahoma Parent Center. We have met at least monthly as a leadership team since April 2016. Collectively, we devised a plan to jointly implement these strategies.

The team took an approach to the accommodations training that emphasized having both educators and parents at the same training. We believed this would provide opportunities for parents and educators to talk together about students' needs, breaking down barriers. The team planned a three-part series for the accommodations training, to include both educators and parents. The first round was held in November 2016 at five sites across Tulsa County, and the second was held in February 2017 at the same five sites. We also scheduled a "make-up" session for those who could not attend during the first round for educators in Liberty Mounds Public Schools in January 2017, just prior to the second. Each session was 3 hours in length. Participants only needed to attend each session once (during each round of training), though it was provided at five sites.

The sessions were planned with district assistance and were held at district locations (Bixby, Broken Arrow, Owasso, Sand Springs, and Tulsa sponsored the training). The OPC co-hosted these trainings, and assisted with snacks and participation prizes. Educators from each district were invited or selected by the local special education director. Importantly, both general and special educators were invited to participate and did. About half of all participants were general education teachers. Participation was much higher than expected at the first training, with 285 educators (again, only five parents or caregivers attended). The second training saw a substantial drop in attendance (about 100 fewer), even though it was a required component of the overall project. We anticipate a small level of additional attrition at the third training.

The first round of training introduced many basic topics with the working assumption that at least half of the participants would have limited knowledge of them: the SSIP, special education in general (including IDEA and the legal basis for service provision), least restrictive environment and the link to accommodations, accommodations and types, and modifications. The format included lecture and participant activities. Attendees were also expected to complete a self-assessment of the quality of their practice with regard to accommodations in between the first and second rounds of training. The second round covered these topics at an intermediate level, delving into detail about considering accommodations, applying them in the classroom (including how to create implementation plans), evaluating their usage, and how universal design can assist with behavior management in the classroom.

Implementation Challenges: Accommodations

Initially, the primary challenge was finding districts to sponsor the training events, though several signed on very quickly. Tulsa Public Schools was the last to agree to host. Although it is the largest district in the county, it had the fewest participants relative to its teacher population because of the delay in scheduling. Notably, every district in Tulsa County sent educators to the first training session in November. Implementation went smoothly, with all training events scheduled by early fall 2016 through May 2017. The drop in attendance at the second session was an expected challenge, though we tried to mitigate the attrition by offering incentives to complete all three sessions.

Evaluation: Accommodations

Objective one is relevant to the accommodations training component of this strategy. All district personnel who attended training sessions were given written guidance on accommodations. Each participant was provided a binder of information that included a copy of the presentation slides along with additional addendums such as the full list of accommodations in the online IEP system. Each session added more material to this binder, producing a comprehensive set of documentation on the topic for educators to use.

Objectives three and four for this component are being measured through a pre and post survey methodology. All participants in each training session are asked to complete a pre-training survey which asks about their prior training history, their job positions, and their years of experience in the position. It also asked a set of questions to assess their pre-training level of knowledge about accommodations. An index variable was created to develop a semi-continuous measure of accommodations knowledge. Participants were then asked the same questions at the end of the training to assess how much they learned as a result of the training. These questions were a mix of self-assessments to rate their own knowledge and topical quiz-like questions.

Each pre and post survey was linked to allow for individual-level measurement. In the post-training survey, participants were also asked to evaluate the training itself and provide feedback to be used in future sessions. Thus far, four surveys have been administered: pre and post for the first training in November 2016, and pre and post for the training in February 2017. The surveys from each training have been linked, to measure learning and knowledge retention over time as well as behavioral changes that have resulted from participation in each training.

Outcomes five and six are being measured in future years of the project, with baseline information currently being gathered from the online IEP data system.

First Training Session Survey Results

Participants at the first training represented all fourteen districts in Tulsa County. Broken Arrow had the highest attendance with a count of 42 participants. Keystone—one of the smallest districts in the county—had the fewest, with two participants. Three individuals came from districts outside the county or non-district organizations (such as Head Start). Among all participants, 39 percent were general educators, 37 percent were special educators, and 10 percent were administrators. The remainder were service providers, reading specialists, or held other positions.

According to the survey results, the vast majority (84 percent) taught elementary school children, as expected. Just over half of respondents who shared the number of years they have held their current position (51 percent) have been in their position for five years or less. Another 32 percent have been in their position for six to 15 years. All others—seventeen percent—have been in the same position for up to 35 years. The mean for all participants was 8.8 years. Interestingly, years in position is not associated with participation in prior training on accommodations.

Of the 242 respondents who shared their training history, 51 percent said they had not had any training on accommodations in the past two years. Ten percent said they had participated in three or more other trainings (in-person or online) on the topic of accommodations, while the remainder said

they participated in one or two other trainings. Special educators were significantly more likely (several measures of association were significant to 0.000) to have attended an accommodations training prior to this one, as compared to general educators.

To gauge the amount and quality of knowledge gained as a result of the training, a knowledge index variable was created. It consists of several questions about core accommodations content discussed in the training. Some questions are self-assessments, asking respondents to rate their own knowledge of a topic, while others are quiz-like questions that ask them to identify a correct answer. The total possible score on the knowledge index for the first training was nine.

Prior to the first training, the mean and median of the knowledge score were 5.0. The standard deviation was 1.7. Individuals with more prior accommodations training and who were trained as special educators had significantly higher pre-training knowledge scores (significance of 0.000). The number of prior trainings had a meaningful effect on knowledge scores even controlling for one's position in special education: for each additional type of training, prior knowledge increased by 0.36 (those with three trainings instead of zero had 1.4 points higher score on average). Controlling for the number of prior trainings, SPED educators had 1.6 points higher knowledge scores than general educators, on average. Interestingly, the years in one's position has no effect on either the pre or post measure of accommodations knowledge, nor does the district in which one works.

Of the 260 participants who responded to the pre-survey, 27 did not complete the post-survey. After the training, the mean knowledge score was 6.7 and the median was 7.0. The standard deviation dropped to 1.5. Importantly, the difference in means between the pre and post training mean knowledge scores was significant. On average, participants gained 1.7 points on the accommodations' knowledge score as a result of the training. The number of prior trainings was no longer significantly related to knowledge scores, although being a special educator was: they had 1.1 higher scores than general educators, on average. Because the pre and post surveys were linked, we were able to measure individual knowledge gained. The minimum knowledge gained for any participant was negative one point, and the maximum gained was 6 points out of 9.

General educators exhibited more knowledge gained on average, and the difference in means between the general and special educator groups was significant. On average, general educators gained 2.1 points in knowledge while special educators gained 1.4 points.

In terms of feedback, training quality was measured as an index variable, with a total possible score of thirteen indicating that the participant believed the first training session was very high quality (including factors such as whether it was a good use of their time, their likelihood to share the information with colleagues, the frequency with which they would be likely to use the information, and the relevance of the information to their work). Of the 200 participants who answered the quality questions, the mean score was 10.3 and the median was 11. The standard deviation was 2.7, and the range was one to thirteen. General educators perceived the first session to be of slightly lower quality than did special educators, and the difference was significant. This was very surprising since special educators were more likely to know more about the topic beforehand. The difference between the groups' mean ratings of training quality was 1.1 points.

Second Training Session

Thirteen of the districts in Tulsa County were represented at the second accommodations training in February 2017. Attendance was again split almost evenly between special educators and general educators. Approximately thirty percent fewer educators attended compared to the first session, for a total of 181. To learn why, we will be contacting individuals who did not attend. We suspect that the registration process for the second training was partly to blame, although not the only reason. District leadership who authorized participation for all educators have been notified of non-participation. Table 4 shows the counts of participants by district at each training. Smaller districts were much more likely to have the full cohort attend the second training.

When asked about the frequency with which they have applied the knowledge gained from the first training, 40 percent said “about weekly” and another 28 percent said “about every other week.” Nine percent (15 respondents) said they had “not at all” used the knowledge gained, though in a follow-up question, twelve of them said that it had been helpful in one or more situations when assisting students or working with colleagues. Fifty-seven percent of respondents said the content has been useful for assisting students in one or two types of situations, while the remainder said it was useful in three to five situations. The situations from which they could choose were:

- a. In a regular education classroom;
- b. In a special education classroom;
- c. During the creation of an IEP;
- d. When meeting with or talking to parents; or
- e. When meeting or talking to colleagues.

Respondents were again asked to answer a series of questions to measure their current knowledge about accommodations. This was broken into two measures. The first was an index variable used to gauge knowledge retained since the first training that included questions measuring their knowledge of topics covered earlier. Asked only on the pre-training survey, the total possible points for the index was seven. Among respondents, the mean knowledge score was 5.9 and the standard deviation was 1.1. Participants who identify as special educators had a slightly higher mean than those who identify as general educators (6.14 to 5.74, respectively). The difference between the means is significant when tested, although other measures of association do not all support that the two groups have significantly different levels of knowledge as measured on the survey.

A second index measure assessed knowledge from the second training. Six of the seven component questions were quiz-like, asking respondents to select the correct answer (for a total possible score of seven). The set of questions were related and fairly complex, and the average respondent score was 3.6 prior to training and 3.9 after training. The significance of the difference between the means is very slight, and it is difficult to conclude that the scores before and after different meaningfully. However, the mean difference of 0.30 between knowledge before and knowledge after the training is significantly different than zero, suggesting that some knowledge was gained, though negligible. However, further analysis does not support differences in average knowledge or knowledge gained by the position of the participant (special or general educator).

In terms of feedback, training quality was measured using the same index variable used in the first training sessions, with a total possible score of thirteen. Of the 166 participants who answered the quality questions, the mean score was 9.9 and the median was 10, both lower than the first training. The standard deviation was 2.6, and the range was two to thirteen. The two most frequent ratings were the highest (twelve and thirteen), with 36 percent of participants giving these scores. Once again, general educators perceived the second training session to be of slightly lower quality

Table 4: Participation by District

| District | Training #1 | Training #2 |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Berryhill | 4 | 4 |
| Bixby | 17 | 15 |
| Broken Arrow | 41 | 33 |
| Collinsville | 6 | 6 |
| Glenpool | 17 | 9 |
| Jenks | 37 | 18 |
| Keystone | 2 | 0 |
| Liberty | 33 | 3 |
| Other | 3 | 3 |
| Owasso | 27 | 20 |
| Sand Springs | 22 | 21 |
| Skiatook | 6 | 6 |
| Sperry | 8 | 8 |
| Tulsa | 36 | 8 |
| Union | 26 | 27 |
| Total | 285 | 181 |

than did special educators, and the difference was significant. The difference between the groups' mean rating of training quality was 1.0 point.

Activities in Year Two: Accommodations

The third session of the series is scheduled for May 2017. After this, the leadership team will review the evaluation data to determine whether to continue with the training format or revise it. As discussed previously, based on early results, it is likely that the team will revise the format to create two tracks, one for those new to the topic—including general educators—and those who have more experience. The team will then devise a plan to scale-up the training to other areas of Oklahoma in fall 2017. This plan should be in place by June 30, 2017. It will likely include plans to provide the training through online modules that can be easily shared throughout the state.

At the same time the program is scaled up, the evaluation will continue in Tulsa County. We will begin assessing the intermediate outcomes to determine whether behavioral changes have occurred and whether student outcomes are changing as a result of training participation.

Activities in Year One: Assistive Technology

The leadership team tasked Oklahoma's AT Act Program, Oklahoma ABLE Tech, with organizing and providing the training outlined for this component of strategy four. For several years, ABLE Tech has provided AT training workshops to educators and related service providers including a beginner-level, AT training. The standard half-day, face-to-face workshop focuses on training "AT Support Teams" from districts on the following:

- How to consider AT for all students on IEPs
- How IEP teams can conduct AT assessments
- How to use feature-matching tools to match a student with needed AT
- Where to write AT in the IEP
- Funding options for providing AT to students
- Tools for implementing a plan for training on and using the AT

In addition, ABLE Tech added a second component to the training that specifically addresses assessment for reading accommodations. It took the form of a webinar. The webinar was provided by a representative from Don Johnston (a company known for developing supports and software to help with reading and writing tasks) and hosted by Oklahoma ABLE Tech staff. The content focused on the Protocols for Accommodations in Reading (PAR) and the online version, the uPAR. These tools were discussed as they are one option for educators who are required to administer an assessment to students when requesting the nonstandard read-aloud accommodation on Oklahoma's state assessments. To incentivize participants, ABLE Tech offered free licenses of uPAR to educators and related service providers to use with students in grades pre-k through third.

The plan was to provide both the beginner-level training and the PAR webinar in Tulsa County to support SSIP goals, targeting educators and related service providers who serve children in pre-kindergarten through third grade. Training participants were required to complete both the face-to-face and webinar components but could do so in any order they chose. The leadership team's initial goal was to train 60 educators and related service providers and impact 200 students. We established this number of participants as our target through a statistical estimation of group comparison data requirements.

The first workshop to support the SSIP was offered on September 29, 2016, and included both training components. People from around the state were invited in addition to those in the Tulsa County area. Of the 21 individuals who attended both the face-to-face workshop and the webinar training, only 5 people met the target population criteria who agreed to participate in the SSIP. For

this component, SSIP participation consists of agreeing to participate long-term in the evaluation. The leadership team chose to make long-term participation voluntary for this component because of the commitment required.

Since the goal of training 60 educators was not met, the leadership team decided to expand the opportunity and offer the webinar component first to interested individuals. This way, they could learn more about the available AT tools and resources as well as the SSIP, prior to the formal half-day training. It was offered on 4 different dates and at various locations to accommodate those who could attend. ABLE Tech was able to generate greater interest in SSIP participation through these webinars.

To complete the two-part training, another face-to-face beginner training was offered to webinar attendees. ABLE Tech staff called school districts in the Tulsa County area and increased awareness of the event through focused marketing. Because of this outreach, educators who did not already view the webinar were allowed to attend, meaning another few individuals may still need to do so. The second face-to-face beginner training was completed on February 27, 2017. This training was modified to combine both components to reduce the time commitment for the overall training. (One of the early concerns was that participants were not returning for the second component, so the training itself was adjusted to prevent this from happening.) Participants were still encouraged to take the full webinar.

Table 5 shows when the training components were offered and the number of participants at each. Data was collected through March 1, 2017. Of all participants who agreed to participate in the SSIP evaluation, fifteen have completed both training components and 25 have completed one.

| Table 5 | | Total Participants |
|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 9.29.16 | Face-to-Face & Webinar | 50 |
| | | 21 |
| 10.25.16 | Webinar | 9 |
| 11.28.16 | Webinar | 2 |
| 11.29.16 | Webinar | 13 |
| 2.27.17 | Face-to-Face | 46 |
| Total Participants | | 120 |

Implementation Challenges: Assistive Technology

The lack of participation by the SSIP evaluation population of interest is the primary implementation challenge for this component of strategy four. ABLE Tech has reached out to districts to promote the training and had advertised the opportunity through its standard channels of outreach that often reach teachers directly. Unfortunately, many districts have said that the staff they would prefer to attend an SSIP AT training already have the beginner-level knowledge, and therefore would not be interested in attending another workshop on the same topic.

Another challenge has been that some participants did not appear to understand the purpose of the training components as they related to the SSIP. When the webinar was offered in the Owasso School District, only one of nine attendees agreed to commit to SSIP participation. However, when those same attendees received similar information presented as part of the February 27th in-person

training, four more individuals saw the value of committing to SSIP participation. This suggests that the leadership team may need to tweak how SSIP participation is presented to educators, including the expectations and benefits of doing so.

Following these first-year experiences, the leadership team and ABLE Tech are considering revising the training structure that may include targeting the content and format to better meet the needs and expectations of districts while still meeting the SSIP goals for this strategy. Several districts have responded to ABLE Tech that they would be willing to participate if the training could be tailored to the district's specifications.

Evaluation: Assistive Technology

Objectives one and two are relevant to this component of strategy four. All training participants receive written guidance on AT assessment and selection. Materials include draft assessments, lists of available AT, and related documentation. The training itself guides participants through the ABLE Tech website. This website is important because of its "AT Discovery" feature; this feature provides detailed guidance on which AT items are best suited for meeting students' needs, based on their disabilities. It has a search feature for selection by function and purpose, provides user stories, and describes all AT in detail. Because it can be updated and expanded regularly, it is now the primary reference for ABLE Tech (instead of written documentation).

For objectives three and four, the SSIP lead evaluator assisted ABLE Tech in creating pre- and post-training surveys to capture the change in the level of knowledge each participant experienced. All participants, including those who are not participating in SSIP, completed the pre-survey. Only the five SSIP participants from the first face-to-face training on September 29, 2016 and those who attended the face-to-face training on February 27, 2017 completed post-surveys. The results were informative, and are discussed in the next few paragraphs.

The evaluations have begun for the intermediate-term outcomes five and six. We are counting the number of student AT assessments that result from training participation. Through the end of February 2017, 51 reading assessments have been completed by SSIP participants. We are also beginning to collect baseline data to report change over time in behavior in the development and documentation of IEPs.

Training Survey Results

Of the 40 individuals who have completed one or both components of the training, 24 responded to the pre-training survey and 12 responded to the post-training survey. The vast majority (more than 70 percent) of participants were special educators, and the remainder were related service providers. Most of the latter group were speech pathologists. Knowledge of AT was assessed through a series of questions that were aggregated into an index measure, with a possible total score of eight. The pre-training mean knowledge score was 1.9. After training, the mean score was 5.1. Unfortunately, these two sets of respondents are not directly comparable because fewer answered the post survey. However, the preliminary results are suggestive of a large change in knowledge on core AT topics. We look forward to analyzing the results of the larger pool of participants when available.

Activities in Year Two: Assistive Technology

In the first half of year two, ABLE Tech will continue to reach out to districts and educators in Tulsa County to meet the original goal of training 60 total educators and related service providers. ABLE Tech will also continue to track completion of student AT assessments by participants to determine if 200 students are reached. OSDE will work to monitor IEPs to see if AT is being written into IEPs for students who are assessed and determined to need AT.

During the second half of year two, the leadership team and ABLE Tech will begin to scale-up the implementation of this component to counties and/or regions outside of Tulsa. The Tulsa

experiences will be used to further refine the training content and format as well as outreach techniques to districts and educators.

STRATEGY FIVE: Family Access to Early Literacy Resources

This strategy was selected in Phase II to bridge a gap in effort between SoonerStart and school-age initiatives to improve early literacy (EL). The goal is to promote school readiness efforts in districts in Tulsa County, including increasing family access to early literacy resources. This improvement strategy focuses on coordinating a series of site-level activities such as parent literacy nights, as well as improving methods of imparting information to families with young children. The intent is to support evidence-based practices for increasing EL practice in the home.

Expected Outcomes

The vision for this strategy is that all children of participating families will be school ready at the beginning of kindergarten. Because of the difficulty of observing children directly, monitoring the achievement of this long-term vision would be difficult for this project. Instead, stakeholders identified seven short and long-term objectives and outcomes for strategy five that if achieved, should directly affect child school readiness. The four short-term objectives are:

1. Parents know the domains and practices of school readiness;
2. Parents see modeled best practices for each domain, when possible;
3. Parents understand the impact of behavior on academics; and
4. Parents access shared materials at home.

In the medium-term, the outcomes to be achieved include:

5. Parents work with children to be school ready in all domains;
6. Parents model school-ready, domain-specific practices to their children; and
7. Parents engage in more EL practices in the home.

Activities in Year One

Implementation of this strategy was delayed by about half a year because of a change in the strategy's leadership. We began planning activities and district outreach in early summer 2016, but no additional action occurred until early fall 2016 when the new 619 Coordinator was hired. He worked to develop a team to manage the strategy and build local support. He contacted districts and found one that was interested in partnering on the project. Sand Springs Public Schools agreed to host a family literacy event at the local early childhood center, and the event was held on March 2, 2017. The Sand Springs Early Childhood Education Center co-hosted the event along with six community sponsors, ten volunteers from the OSDE and community groups, and the Oklahoma Parent Center.

The event's agenda included three presentations, a pizza dinner, resource fair, and door prize drawings provided by the OPC and other sponsors. The presentations covered school readiness strategies to improve behavior, early literacy, and special education "child find." Twenty-five families attended at least one of the presentations, and about 70 individuals were present, including children. Each child received a "goody" bag with a book, bingo word game and activity book. The bags also included copies of the presentations and other written materials to promote school readiness and early literacy for parents. Materials and books were available in English and Spanish. The presentations were offered in English and Spanish, although no one attended the Spanish-language presentation.

Implementation Challenges

The original team lead for this strategy left OSDE in early summer 2016. Because this strategy focuses heavily on early literacy and school readiness at the preschool level, the strategy was not re-assigned until the new 619 Coordinator was hired. Once the new lead was in place, implementation began anew. One of the major challenges the team faced was districts' lack of interest in participating because of the perceived high level of commitment required to support the events. Despite regular outreach at county-wide district meetings and in-person contact, it was several months before Sand Springs agreed to partner on the project.

Another challenge has been that local district leadership is limited in its capacity to run major events. Sand Springs, for example, relied heavily on SEA personnel to organize and run the event. This has challenged the leadership team's capacity and discouraged expansion across the district and to other districts. The 619 Coordinator is working with local community groups to build capacity for organizing events themselves, with support from the state.

Evaluation

Objectives one through four are being evaluated through self-reporting by families via surveys. The surveys are being administered to all participants at events. The first event's short-term objectives were evaluated through a survey that was deployed at the end of the event, and asked questions referencing their pre-training perspectives. Although two surveys would have been ideal to assess pre and post knowledge, we felt that the nature of the event and the participant demographics made two surveys inefficient and ineffective. We provided paper surveys with a variety of content knowledge questions and a few demographics.

Unfortunately, the registration process was problematic. We do not have information for follow-up with families to evaluate their personal behavioral change as a result of the training. This was a regrettable occurrence that we will avoid in future events. Thus, at this point, we do not have a way to assess outcomes five through seven until more events or other activities take place.

We learned several other lessons during a process evaluation of the event:

- f. The lack of pre-registration for the event made it difficult to anticipate attendance. Notice went out to more than 400 families through the Sand Springs early childhood learning network, but only 25 families attended. The team was prepared for 200.
- g. Difficulties in advertising the event to the local Spanish-speaking population led to low turnout. More targeted outreach will be done at future events.
- h. More children attended than anticipated, and no childcare was available. The children disrupted the presentations considerably. One family left early because "the chaos was too much to take." Next time, child care will be provided with appropriate child activities.
- i. The survey deployment was problematic. It was initially designed as an online "quiz" that could be completed on a phone. The leadership team believed this would be beneficial because it would prevent attendees from having to answer a paper survey. Unfortunately, the site that was selected was very limiting and had key functional problems (such as that the survey could only be taken if two or more people were taking it at the same time). The limitations were not known until the actual event. Next time, the survey will be piloted and tested in a timely manner.
- j. The event was advertised locally (according to signage) as a "come and go" event. The agenda should have been more widely shared to ensure that parents knew topical presentations were being given. Also, we will revise the format next time to improve parents' attention to topical information and reduce child distractions.

Positively, the event brought together several local community organizations to support the effort. Also, each child who attended received books and games and parents received materials to help them prepare their young children for school and reading. At this point, we are considering this first event as a “pilot” learning experience. Future activities will more deliberately incorporate a long-term evaluation plan, will have a plan to care for children who attend, and will rely more heavily on the support of local partners for implementation.

Event Survey Results

The parent survey response set from the family night event is inconclusive in its measures of knowledge of school readiness and knowledge gained. Twenty-three surveys were returned, with four surveys substantially incomplete. Seventy percent on average indicated that they were “Very familiar” with core literacy and behavioral concepts, while twenty percent (four respondents) said they were “Not at all familiar” with most concepts. The differences between pre and post training self-assessments were not significant, suggesting either that the training was not helpful for increasing knowledge or that the survey was not designed well enough to capture knowledge gained.

Activities in Year Two

In year two of Phase III, the leadership team will focus on enabling districts in Tulsa County to conduct their own literacy nights or otherwise share information on school readiness and early literacy. In this vein, the team will:

1. encourage districts to form local implementation teams that consist of various local stakeholders like community groups and parents;
2. expand access to resources and materials on relevant topics;
3. provide technical assistance to districts that need help or information on creating events;
4. provide copies of materials used during events for parent training; and
5. supply all resources in Spanish that can be disseminated to Spanish-speaking families.

However, to support the evaluation of this strategy of the SSIP, the leadership team is likely to conduct another event ourselves and engage in long-term monitoring and surveying of parents’ knowledge and behavior resulting from participation. We will revise the format of the event and its evaluation based on the lessons learned from the pilot in Sand Springs.

STRATEGY SIX: Early Literacy Professional Development

Oklahoma has offered a rigorous, evidence-based professional development to schools’ reading instructors and specialists for several years through a contractor with the support of the OSDE Office of Instruction and the current State Professional Development Grant. LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) builds educator effectiveness through professional development, emphasizing current research and EBPs in reading, writing and spelling. For the next few years, LETRS will serve as the central component of early literacy training evaluated and monitored through the SSIP. The implementation plan for this strategy has been revised to address challenges in the first year.

The LETRS professional development plan includes a foundations course and nine additional modules that present major literacy topics in great detail. The full set of modules will be provided to districts, with added coaching support. It can take up to six months to schedule all professional development sessions within a single district. The module topics are:

1. The Challenge of Learning to Read
2. The Speech Sounds of English: Phonetics, Phonology, and Phoneme Awareness

3. Spellography for Teachers: How English Spelling Works
4. The Mighty Word: Building Vocabulary and Oral Language
5. Getting up to Speed: Developing Fluency
6. Digging for Meaning: Teaching Text Comprehension
7. Teaching Phonics, Word Study, and the Alphabetic Principle
8. Assessment for Prevention and Early Intervention
9. Teaching Beginning Spelling and Writing

Expected Outcomes

Several objectives and outcomes were identified in Phase II. The long-term goal is that instructors who participate in the professional development will permanently change their instructional practices to incorporate evidence-based practices related to early literacy (EL). In the short-term, the following objectives will be met:

1. Participants understand the foundations of reading and EL;
2. Participants feel competent to select instructional strategies;
3. Participants know EBPs for improving early literacy; and
4. Each participant has a local mentor/ coach.

In the medium-term, the following outcomes will be achieved:

5. Participants positively adjust practice in response to coaching feedback;
6. Teachers implement appropriate instructional strategies in all settings.

Activities in Year One

This strategy has been implemented in collaboration with the SPDG project team, the OSDE Office of Instruction, and other partners such as the LETRS training contractor and 619 Coordinator. The original plan was to offer classroom instruction and coaching to a few individuals at selected intervention sites. These individuals would then become site or district coaches themselves. We identified fourteen sites of interest using district demographics, school support designations, and community demographics. The sites were varied, ranging from high to low on selected factors such as racial diversity, student outcomes, size, and support designation. The leadership team reached out to these districts in August 2016, contacting central district personnel and special education leadership to share the opportunity. We expected that all sites would be interested since LETRS has been well-received in Oklahoma and continues to be a popular PD request across the state.

Unfortunately, none of the sites and districts initially identified displayed interest in participating in the project, despite the offers of long-term support (including materials and substitute reimbursement). We then opened the opportunity to all districts and sites in Tulsa County and prepared outreach materials for presentation at various special education meetings and via newsletters through the fall, but no districts responded. In early December, with the assistance of the OSDE-SES Executive Director, one district agreed to partner on the project. We began discussions and planned to begin training in February 2017.

The first module scheduled for Broken Arrow is LETRS Foundations. It introduces the science of how children learn to read and introduces the importance of reading essentials such as phoneme awareness, phonics, and fluency, among others. The first two days of training were held in early February with 37 instructors from the Broken Arrow Public Schools district. Participants included both general and special educators, reading specialists and others targeted by the school who teach pre-k through 3rd grades or serve that age group. The majority of attendees were special educators

(about 60 percent). The third day of the foundations module is scheduled for March 31, 2017. Additional modules are being planned for summer and fall 2017. Broken Arrow intends to complete all modules relevant to early learners.

Implementation Challenges

We began the site selection process ahead of schedule, in early fall 2016, intending to begin training in November if possible. However, because of the lack of interest from districts and sites, the implementation was delayed until late winter 2017. Although the time frame was not strictly different from the plan described in the Phase II narrative, the number and nature of participants changed substantially. Rather than bringing together a variety of individuals from districts across Tulsa County who were members of assorted schools, we narrowed the districts to one and expanded its count of participants.

Evaluation

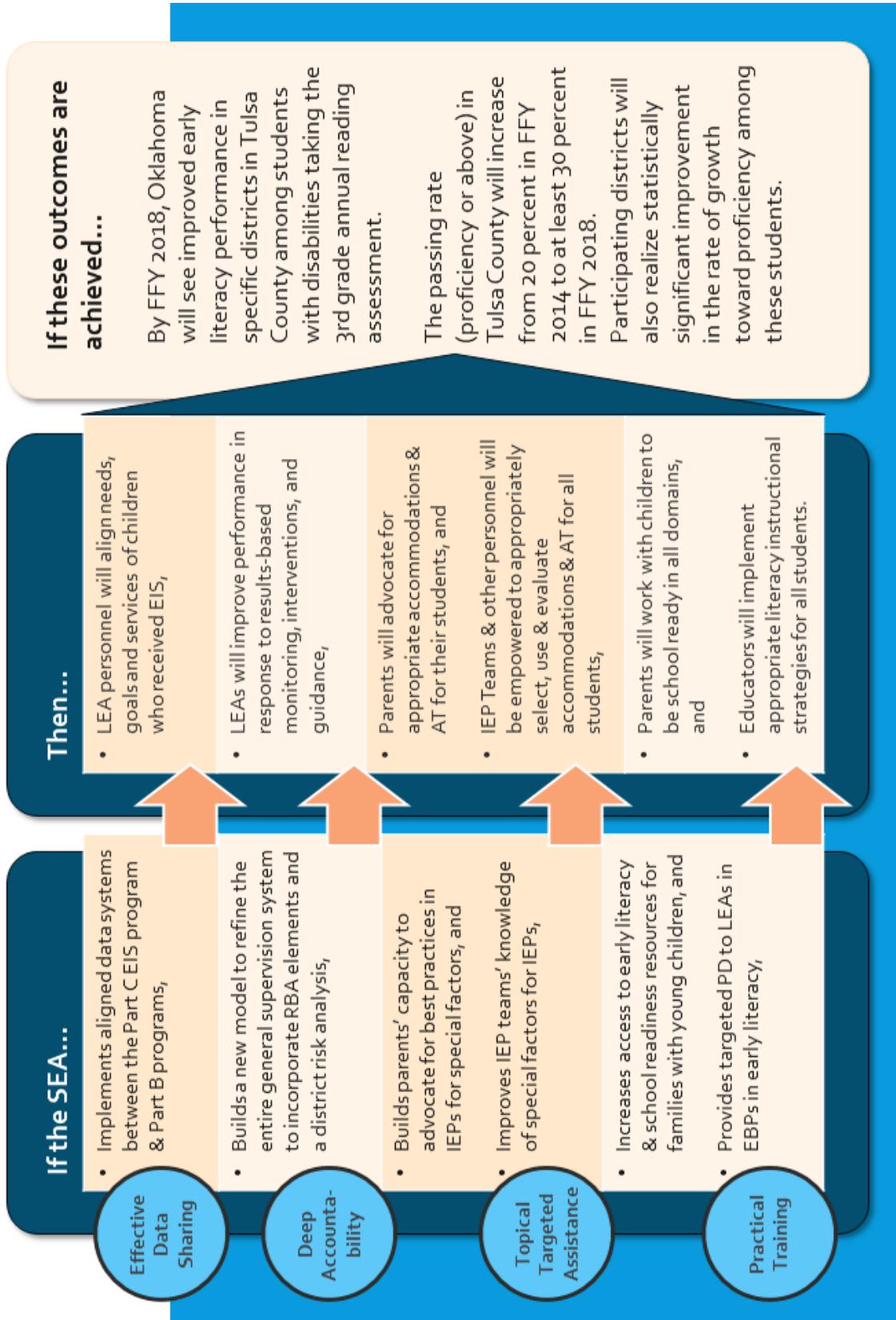
Objectives one through three are being measured via pre and post training surveys that assess knowledge gained and retained over time. Each set of modules (Foundations, one to three, four to six, and seven to nine) will have its own surveys that target the content of those modules. At this time, because of the scheduling of the first Foundations module, we do not have sufficient data to report on knowledge gained from the training. These results will be reported in year two. We will also assess knowledge retained over time through follow-up surveys. Objective four will be assessed once the coaching mechanism is in place.

Outcomes five and six will be assessed once the training is completed and the coaching mechanism has been fully implemented. We intend to track the application of knowledge gained through the coaches' observations. This will begin at the very end of year two or the beginning of year three.

Activities in Year Two

Broken Arrow will continue to participate in LETRS training in year two of implementation. LETRS consists of eight learning modules that require a commitment of several days of professional development. During year two, the coaching component of this strategy will also be implemented. Both Broken Arrow representatives and the Oklahoma State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) team are assisting in the design of the coaching component to ensure it aligns with the needs and expectations of both teams. If the Oklahoma SPDG is funded in 2017, the coaching component will be partially funded through the grant and a Literacy Consultant will be hired to assist with designing and implementing an evidence-based coaching model.

OKLAHOMA PART B THEORY OF ACTION



Appendix B: Part B SSIP Major Performance Indicators

Evaluation Timeline

| Strategy | Project Outcome | Measure(s) | Methods/tools | Note | Length |
|--------------|--|--|---|---|---------|
| One | SIMR | APR Indicator 3C/Reading for Tulsa County LEAs; annual rate of growth over previous year(s). | Annual comparison of rate of proficiency and rate of growth toward proficiency. | Annual OCCT and alternative assessment scores | |
| | IEP team members read and review early childhood IFSPs. | Percentage of early childhood IEPs that are conducted with review of IFSPs, if available: self-reported and observed activities. | Ability to review IFSPs is new, so no prior data exists for comparison. Will compare annually as data is collected. | Begin spring 2017 | 2 years |
| Two | Performance deficiencies are habitually addressed in monitoring and determination processes. | Percentage of determinations and monitoring events that include statements about performance indicators & recommendations for improvement. | Document content review and observation of events such as monitoring visits to LEAs. | Begin when system formally adopted | 2 years |
| Two | Performance deficiencies are habitually addressed in determination and monitoring processes | Rate at which needs and weaknesses are addressed directly through tiered intervention. | Document content review and observation of events such as interventions initiated. | Begin when system formally adopted | 2 years |
| Three | More parents advocate for their students' needs for AT and/or accommodations. | Percentage change in parents who self-report engaging in advocacy actions in IEPs or elsewhere. | Pre-post/comparison group surveys; may include teacher surveys, also. | Begin at first training | 3 years |
| Three & Four | Increased consideration and use of AT. | Count of students who use AT and for whom AT is considered. | Rate of change calculation: comparison of consideration and use IEP data over time. | Begin at first training | 3 years |
| Three & Four | Increased variation in allowed accommodations provided for assessments. | Count of types of accommodations used in assessments. | Rate of change calculation: comparison of prior accommodation data. | Begin at first training | 3 years |
| Five | Parents work with children to be school ready in all domains. | Self-reported activity comparison between non-treatment/non-treatment families. | Pre-post/comparison group surveys (to non-participants at same school). | Begin at first event | 2 years |
| Five | Parents model school-ready, domain-specific practices to their children. | Self-reported activity comparison between non-treatment/non-treatment families. | Pre-post/comparison group surveys (to non-participants at same school). | Begin at first event | 2 years |

| | | | | | |
|------|---|---|--|-----------------------------------|---------|
| Five | Parents engage in more EL practices in the home. | Self-reported activity comparison between treatment/non-treatment families. | Pre-post/comparison group surveys (to non-participants at same school). | Begin at first event | 2 years |
| Six | Participants positively adjust practice in response to coaching feedback. | Rate at which instructors incorporate coaching feedback into practice. | Records of coaches during observation after all modules are completed. Prior data will not exist for comparison. | Begin after all modules completed | 2 years |
| Six | Teachers implement appropriate instructional strategies in all settings. | Rate at which instructors select and implement teaching/intervention strategies appropriate to the situation. | Records of coaches during observation after all modules are completed. Prior data will not exist for comparison. | Begin after all modules completed | 2 years |