

North Dakota Department of Public Instruction

**State Performance Plan / Annual Performance Report (FFY2018) for
Part B.**

The Introductory Sections on General Supervision System; Technical Assistance System; and Professional Development System are being submitted as an attachment.



Introduction

Instructions

Provide sufficient detail to ensure that the Secretary and the public are informed of and understand the State’s systems designed to drive improved results for students with disabilities and to ensure that the State Educational Agency (SEA) and Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) meet the requirements of IDEA Part B. This introduction must include descriptions of the State’s General Supervision System, Technical Assistance System, Professional Development System, Stakeholder Involvement, and Reporting to the Public.

Indicator Data

Executive Summary

Number of Districts in your State/Territory during reporting year

175

General Supervision System

The systems that are in place to ensure that IDEA Part B requirements are met, e.g., monitoring, dispute resolution, etc.

Explanation of the NDDPI Special Education Office

There are varying levels and offices of special education in North Dakota. This section describes each level and the respective responsibilities. The State Education Agency (SEA) in North Dakota is the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI). The following special education positions are held within the Special Education office of the ND Department of Public Instruction:

- a. **Special Education State Director:** The NDDPI employs one SEA special education director. Responsibilities include state legislative responsibilities; and the supervision of NDDPI special education personnel; as well as the oversight of IDEA Regulations in the local special education units and across local special education programs and districts;
- b. **Special Education SEA Staff:** The NDDPI SEA Staff assist the Director with components of IDEA Regulations, and oversight of the local special education units, district special education programs, and special projects. Staff members hold portfolios that include specific state wide responsibilities related to disability categories, trainings, monitoring, and special education program responsibilities;
- c. **IDEA Grant Manager:** The NDDPI employs one grant manager who oversees the IDEA Part B and state special education budgets.

Local Special Education Units (SEU):

North Dakota is divided into 32 local special education units. Each special education unit is responsible for the special education programs and related services in at least one and as many as eighteen school districts. Each unit has a governing board and the relationships between the units and the districts are locally determined. Additionally, each of the special education unit staff members hold local SEU positions, but are not employees of the state office. The following offices may be held within each of the local special education units:

- a. **Special Education Unit Director:** has oversight of all special education programs and unit personnel in member school districts, in partnership with;
- b. **Assistant Special Education Unit Director:** assists the local Special Education Unit Director with the oversight of all special education programs and unit personnel in member school districts, in partnership with NDDPI and LEA administrative personnel within the special education unit;
- c. **Special Education Coordinator:** has a portfolio that contains specific unit-wide initiative and program responsibilities. Each coordinator is responsible for the oversight of technical assistance in each of the LEAs within the special education unit, in partnership with LEA personnel and the NDDPI.

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Local Education Agencies (LEA): North Dakota currently has 175 local school districts. Each school district belongs to a special education unit and collaborates with the special education unit staff to ensure children with disabilities receive appropriate and individualized special education services.

General Supervision Monitoring Overview: The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of IDEA 2004 are carried out within the state. Components of the general supervision system are ongoing SPP indicator monitoring; levels of determination monitoring; focused monitoring; random compliance monitoring related to student files; LEA self-assessment; dispute resolution concerns/complaints; fiscal monitoring; and 618 data.

Statewide Case Management and Database System: A major component in North Dakota’s general supervision system is the statewide Individualized Education Program (IEP) system, TIENET. This statewide TIENET database is a web-based student file database available via a secure site. It contains all of the components of the IEP and other forms required for students receiving special education services. This database has increased the clarity and accuracy of all student data submitted to the state. Attached The following forms are included and maintained within this electronic database and are currently used for reviewing current data and for the verifying of corrections:

Assessment Plan	Integrated Written Assessment Report
Behavior Intervention Plan	Internal Monitoring Transition Req. Checklist
Building Level Support Team Intervention Plan	Joint Notice of Meeting (Part C to B)
Building Level Support Team Interview Log	Manifestation Determination Documentation
Building Level Support Team Observational Record	Meeting Notes
Building Level Support Team Request for Collaboration/Assistance	North Dakota Assistive Technology Consideration
Consent for Evaluation	Child Outcomes Summary Form
Consent for Initial Placement in Special Education	Notice of Changes to IEP Without an IEP Team Meeting
Consent to Bill Medicaid	Prior Written Notice of Special Education Action
ECSE Student Profile: Evaluation	Release of Information
Excusal of Required IEP Team Member(s)	Request to Invite Outside Agency Reps to IEP
Exit Form	Revocation of Consent for Special Education and Related Service
Extended School Year Plan	RTI Cumulative Folder
Functional Behavior Assessment	Standard Treatment Protocol Documentation Form
IEP - Transition 16-21	Student Profile: Evaluation
IEP Ages 3-5	Summary of Performance
IEP Ages 6-15	Transfer of Rights to Student

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Individual Diagnostic Report	Verification of Eligibility to use NIMAS Materials
Individualized Service Program	Integrated Written Assessment Report-SLD/RTI
Notice of Meeting	Student Notice of Meeting

On at least an annual basis, the SEA updates forms and processes as necessary in the database. These updates result from field input, as well as regulatory changes that have occurred. This database includes current data review capabilities and validation procedures to ensure compliance. This also allows NDDPI staff members and local administrators to monitor current data to ensure timely correction of noncompliance. This database increases the ease and accuracy of data input, while providing and maintaining a significant number of generated reports used for monitoring at the student, school, LEA, SEU, and SEA levels. Additional report topics available through this database include, but are not limited to, Assistive Technology, Extended School Year, Exit, Assessment, and Indicators 3, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, and 13. A wide variety of reports are also generated based on immediate need and have been used in all school districts across North Dakota since 2009.

General Supervision Monitoring Process:

The general supervision system integrates data from multiple sources: the APR compliance and performance indicators, LEA level self-assessments, policy and procedures review, and dispute resolution data. Analysis of this data drives technical assistance provided to the LEAs by NDDPI staff. More specifically, the areas of monitoring include:

- *Fiscal Monitoring:* IDEA applications and final reports are reviewed by the NDDPI Special Education Director and Grants Manager to ensure proposed expenditures are allowable and in accordance with IDEA regulations. Processes are in place to ensure an LEA has met excess cost, non-supplanting, and maintenance of effort requirements. LEAs generally receive a fiscal desk audit at least once every five years. Supporting documentation is reviewed to ensure funds were used for allowable expenditures in alignment with the application, as well as other fiscal items such as inventory control, time and effort documentation, parentally placed set-aside form and record retention. Onsite fiscal audits are now conducted in collaboration with the local special education units identified for focused monitoring.
- *Compliance Monitoring Self-Assessment:* The NDDPI has developed toolkits for districts, residential schools, and Department of Corrections to use as a self-assessment of the compliance of special education staff in conjunction to the federal regulations. These toolkits include recommendations for student level and current compliance corrective actions. As part of local responsibilities for General Supervision, Local Special Education Units (SEU) are highly encouraged to use these toolkits to sample a portion of their Unit's population of student IEP files each year.
- *Focused Monitoring:* The NDDPI uses the performance indicators 1, 3, 5 and a Fiscal Risk Assessment Score to rank the 32 special education units in North Dakota over a period of three years. The units who fall below the state average are considered for a Focused Monitoring. Thereafter, the state identifies which units will be monitored and proceeds with the Focused Monitoring process. This process includes a complete review of district data on all indicators, formation of hypotheses (areas of FAPE, LRE, Evaluation and Eligibility and Child Find), file review and an onsite interview process with LEA staff related to performance and possible noncompliance. Following this review, each unit and district receives a report detailing areas of compliance, noncompliance, and recommendations or required corrective actions with completion timelines. In addition, residential schools are focused monitored on a five-year cycle. This process includes a review of documentation outlined in the self-assessment, individual student file reviews and an onsite visit that includes interviews with the school's administration and teaching

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staff. Following the onsite visit, each facility receives a report detailing areas of compliance, noncompliance, recommendations for required corrective actions and completion timelines.

- *Due Process/Mediation/Complaints:* North Dakota provides a series of options to students with disabilities who have reached the age of majority, parents of children with disabilities, and school staff to use when disagreements cannot be resolved without interventions.
 - i. *Facilitated IEP:* A facilitated IEP meeting is an IEP meeting that includes a trained facilitator who promotes effective communication and assists the IEP team in developing an IEP. The facilitator keeps the team focused on the proper development of the IEP while addressing conflicts that arise. IEP Facilitation is not used to resolve disputes unrelated to the IEP.
 - ii. *Mediation:* Mediation offers an informal, effective way to resolve differences through a trained mediator. This process may focus on issues specific to a student’s educational services, or may address communication issues that affect the working relationship of parents and educators. Mediation can help the parties collaboratively create other alternatives to their original positions. If the parties agree on solutions to the issues, those points of agreement are outlined in a Mediation Agreement.
 - iii. *Complaint Investigation:* A formal complaint is a written allegation that special education laws or regulations are not being followed by an LEA or local public agency. Unlike a due process complaint, any individual or organization may file a state complaint.
 - iv. *Due Process Complaint:* A due process complaint is a written document that initiates an impartial due process hearing regarding the identification, evaluation, educational placement, or the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to a child with a disability. Unlike a state complaint, only a parent or an LEA may file a due process complaint. The SEA provides ongoing training and financial support to individuals working in ND as IEP Facilitators, Mediators, Complaint Investigators, and Administrative Hearing Officers. This support pays for professional fees, expenses related to bringing in trainers, and sending individuals to state and national professional development related to dispute resolution.

Identification of Noncompliance:

In the monitoring processes, North Dakota defines a finding as a written conclusion that includes a citation of the regulation/requirement and a description of the quantitative and/or qualitative data supporting a decision of compliance or noncompliance with a specific regulation/requirement. Findings are given to the Special Education Unit as well as the student’s district of residence. Notification of findings occurs as soon as possible after the NDDPI concludes that the LEA has a finding of noncompliance. The one-year correction timeline begins on the date the NDDPI notifies the school district, in writing, of the noncompliant policies and/or practices.

Corrections of Noncompliance:

The following steps are utilized when NDDPI staff members are verifying the Units/Districts corrections to areas of noncompliance:

1. NDDPI monitoring staff review the district submission of documents pertaining to the corrective actions such as individual student level correction of noncompliance and training dates, locations, agendas, and participation lists;
2. Follow-up review of data, other documentation, and/or interviews are conducted to ensure that the noncompliant policies, procedures, and/or practices were revised and corrected within timelines;
3. A written notification is sent to the LEA superintendent, special education unit board president, and the local special education unit director that the noncompliance was corrected as required;
4. When further action is required, NDDPI staff members conduct on-site and/or off-site activities to verify correction of noncompliance; and,

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- The NDDPI monitoring staff randomly verify compliance through district and student level data (when necessary) using the TIENET database. The majority of the student forms are available in the TIENET database. Throughout the year, NDDPI special education coordinators log into the database and view the student files in question. If the corrective action has not taken place as planned, the NDDPI Special Education Monitoring Coordinator contacts the local special education director to discuss the timeline of the required correction. At the agreed upon date, the NDDPI Special Education Monitoring coordinator will log into the system and verify the correction is complete. Once the corrective action is complete and the noncompliance corrected, the NDDPI Special Education Monitoring coordinator sends a “close-out” letter to the local special education unit director, special education unit board president, and LEA superintendent(s) verifying those corrections and the date of completion.

The NDDPI Special Education Monitoring coordinator also maintains an Excel spreadsheet which tracks all findings. This spreadsheet contains the districts who received a letter of notification and the following dates: the letters of noncompliance to LEA, the accepted corrective action plan, the completed corrective action plan, the NDDPI verification of the correction of noncompliance, and the "close-out" letter to the special education unit director, special education unit board president, and the LEA superintendent(s). All corrective actions must be completed as soon as possible, but no longer than one year, after receiving a letter detailing the issue of noncompliance.

Technical Assistance System

The mechanisms that the State has in place to ensure the timely delivery of high quality, evidenced based technical assistance and support to LEAs.

The NDDPI Office of Special Education is proud of its history of mutual respect, collaboration, and partnerships with local special education units and LEA personnel. Although being a rural state presents its challenges, the benefit from these collaborative efforts occurring at all levels cannot be overstated. The NDDPI Special Education Staff provide technical assistance to each of the 32 local special education units throughout the state. Each regional coordinator is assigned a region of the state through which the coordinator serves as the lead technical assistance contact for the local units. Staff members also hold portfolios that include specific statewide responsibilities related to disability categories, trainings, monitoring, and special education program responsibilities.

NDDPI Special Education Section 619 Coordinator, NDDPI Title I, and the ND Department of Human Services (NDDHS) Collaboration:

- Early Childhood Information Data System (ECIDS) – Stakeholders from North Dakota have been directed by the Governor to integrate early childhood data into the State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) to provide evidence on the effectiveness of early childhood programs.
- In addition, a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) exists to formalize the collaboration between the Part B and the NDDHS Part C coordinators to continue work relating to the validity and the sharing of data between the systems to assure a smooth and timely transition for children and their families. The Section 619 Coordinator is a member of the state Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) and Executive Committee.
- Kindergarten Formative Assessment Consortium – A national consortium to support the development or enhancement of a kindergarten formative assessment (KFA) which is aligned with state early learning and development standards. These standards cover all essential domains of school readiness.
- Early Childhood Social Emotional Partners – Representatives from the following entities: NDDHS Children’s Behavioral Health, LSSND/Child Care Aware, NDDPI Office of Early Learning, NDDHS Child and Family Services, ND Head Start State Collaboration Officer, and the NDDPI Office of Special Education are working to create improved social – emotional outcomes through the

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coordination of resources. This collaboration supports a statewide system of early childhood professionals utilizing evidence-based social – emotional practices in supporting young children (prenatal through age eight) and families.

- Linking C and 619 Data Topic Cohort facilitated by DaSy - The Center for IDEA Early Childhood Data Systems – NDDHS Part C and NDDPI Office of Special Education continue to work on identifying and implementing applicable methods for linking data. The state cohort is striving to create a data culture of linking data across early childhood systems.
- North Dakota WIDA Early Years – The NDDPI Office of Early Learning, Office of Indian/Multicultural Education, and Office of Special Education has partnered with WIDA Early Years to help support North Dakota’s dual language learners, ages 2.5-5.5 years, in early care and education settings.
- Preschool Development Grant. The NDDPI office of early learning was awarded a \$2,651,000 preschool development grant on December 31, 2018. The PDG focuses on increasing collaboration, coordination, and efficiency through shared data capabilities, early relationships, and quality services in the B-5 ECE system.

NDDPI Office of Special Education and Office of Assessment Collaboration:

The Office of Special Education and Office of Assessment work in collaboration to provide the field technical assistance on an ongoing basis for both the North Dakota State Assessment (NDSA) and North Dakota Alternate Assessment (NDAA) for students with disabilities. North Dakota is a governing member of the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) consortium which is the platform used for the North Dakota Alternate Assessment (NDAA) system. Within the Office of Special Education and the Office of Assessment, a staff member manages the NDAA and provides technical assistance to special education teachers and local unit directors on changes and updates concerning the NDAA as well as the North Dakota State Assessment (NDSA). North Dakota has also exercised the ESSA option, which allows for LEAs to select and administer a nationally recognized high school assessment in lieu of the statewide high school assessment in English language arts and mathematics. Since the 2017-18 school year, the LEAs have had the choice to administer the NDSA in Grade 10 or the ACT in grade 11.

National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard:

The provision of accessible instructional materials in a timely manner is an essential component of making a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) available to children who, due to their disability, cannot access standard text materials. The NDDPI has adopted the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS) requirements under IDEA 2004. NDDPI has provided assurances to OSEP, as part of the State's Part B application, that students who need curriculum materials in alternate formats are provided those formats in a timely manner. North Dakota is an open territory state and is committed to assisting local education agencies in acquiring student-ready versions in a timely and cost-efficient manner. North Dakota designated the North Dakota Vision Services/School for the Blind (NDVS/SB) as the primary authorized user for downloading or assigning the source files from the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC). NDVS/SB coordinates with the NIMAC, to obtain source files that can then be converted into formats that are accessible by students who are blind or have other print disabilities.

The NDDPI continues to provide technical assistance related to the NIMAS and NIMAC to state educational leaders and school personnel, and coordinate with the NIMAC. NDDPI has posted a NIMAS policy paper at <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/sites/www/files/documents/SpEd/Guidelines/NIMASPolicyPaper.pdf>. The NDDPI

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continues to provide LEAs with guidance on ensuring that students will be provided accessible materials within our state’s model.

State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS):

The SLDS has been developed and is operational for all K-12 public schools. Student data is updated nightly through the vertical data upload process from PowerSchool (the student information system used by all public schools in North Dakota). Student data is augmented with information from the state automated reporting system (STARS) and interim assessment data from multiple vendors. Currently, access to data is available at multiple levels: REA (Regional Education Association), district (LEAs), school, and teacher levels, providing authenticated users with data from:

- Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA), Renaissance Star and AIMSWeb assessment data for districts that have signed a data release agreement.
- State assessments with growth model. ACT, ACT Aspire, PSAT, SAT, and Work Keys scores.
- Students enrolled in dual credit courses at post-secondary institutions.
- Post-secondary remediation data – identifying those students needing remediation (including subject area) from institutions that provide student level data to the SLDS;
- Post-secondary and workforce data to improve follow-up reporting (i.e. indicating students enrolled in post-secondary and students currently employed);
- Drop-out and graduation rates - to improve efficiency of state reporting and advance research, SLDS and NDDPI are aligning student records to identify drop-out and graduation rates; analyzing attendance and truancy data, and student historical course information including grades and AP course data.
- School Accountability – The Student Accountability report sought input from various stakeholders across the state that included educators, community leaders, parents, and state legislators in establishing key performance indicators for measuring how well our school systems meet the needs of all of North Dakota’s students to be successful in every level of their education in our public school system.

More information about the SLDS can be found at the SLDS site (<https://slds.ndcloud.gov/SitePages/Default.aspx>).

The North Dakota State Legislature put control of the SLDS with the North Dakota Information Technology (NDIT). The legislation appointed a management committee with members from state entities, governor’s office and state legislature. The management committee established multiple advisory committees with representatives from LEAs, as well as North Dakota Council of Education Leaders (NDCEL), North Dakota LEAD Center (an information and training support center for school administrators), EduTech (Education Technology Services for North Dakota schools), NDDPI, Career and Technical Education (CTE), Education Standards and Practices Board (ESPB), and NDIT.

EduTech and the State Data Steward provide SLDS training. Regional and local training sessions are organized by the State Data Steward. Sessions are designed to assist schools/districts in using student data to facilitate continuous improvement for all students. Assessment data (state assessment and formative assessment data), along with other data points, are used to determine areas where students may need additional instruction. Group assessment data may indicate areas where professional development or program improvements are needed. More information can be found on the EduTech site (<http://www.edutech.nodak.edu/training/training-category/slds/>).

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Since the 2015 Legislative session, North Dakota has had a K-12 Information Systems Security Analyst who is dedicated to providing guidance and assistance to school staff surrounding student data privacy and security. As the SLDS project continued to move forward, the NDDPI Special Education staff met with Information Technology (IT) development professionals for a requirement gathering session. The development team discussed various special education data sources for creating necessary input and output content. The potential data sources identified would be the SPP/APR indicators and the 618 Data Table. The development team continues to work towards embedding this content in the system.

A method has been developed allowing districts to grant special education units access to student level data. The district signs a data release agreement allowing access to student data within the SLDS. When completed, the special education units are assigned permissions allowing access to student data in the SLDS. The SLDS development team is currently working on:

- Expansion of the eTranscript program to include the state scholarship application
- Expansion of the post-secondary and workforce data
- Inclusion of discipline data from PowerSchool’s Incident Management Module and the School Wide Information System (SWIS). The committee members had lengthy discussions over several sessions regarding the potential for collecting office referral data that would provide more granular data analysis for improving learning for all students and particularly those students who are disruptive to the point that it interferes with their own or others learning in classroom settings;
- A pilot program to link the Department of Human Services early childhood data to the Department of Public Instruction’s K-12 data system. This program assigns state IDs to the voluntary early childhood programs.

Departmental Website:

The NDDPI website is a substantial part of the Department's technical assistance to districts, schools, and families. It contains guidelines, policy papers, forms for local, district, and parent use, resources for the North Dakota Multi-Tiered System of Supports (NDMTSS) and the North Dakota State Standards, assessment information, and student privacy policies and agreements. The overall design has moved from an agency-centric design to a user-centric design.

Other:

Annually, the NDDPI sends out a notification of the link on its website that locates the final ND SPP/APR on the GRADS360 website via email to all local special education unit directors, the ND Pathfinder Parent Center, and the IDEA Advisory Committee members. Located under the Compliance Data and Reports tap, the ND SPP/APR is posted for public viewing under the ND SPP/APR and OSEP Determinations tap at <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/education-programs/special-education>. In addition, the ND Special Education Guidelines are also available on the NDDPI Special Education website under the Special Education State Guidelines tap at <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/education-programs/special-education>. Presentations on each of the guidelines and their requirements are also given to various stakeholder groups, state agencies, and special education staff when necessary throughout the year. NDDPI staff members develop training materials that are widely disseminated across the state. Presentations on the topic of the SPP/APR indicators, requirements, and data collection methods continue to be a frequent activity at North Dakota parent and education forums.

A secure website is also available to local Unit and District personnel for review of individual SPP/APR indicator data. To make sure that special education unit directors and LEA superintendents have ready access

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to the data, the NDDPI has created a web portal where they can log in and view report cards, trend reports, and detailed indicator reports for the past several years. These reports provide an overview of current and past performance as well as state-level, special education unit-level, and district-level reports on SPP/APR Indicators 1-14. Also available are detailed reports for the Parent Survey (Indicator 8) and the Post-School Outcomes Survey (Indicator 14).

Professional Development System

The mechanisms the State has in place to ensure that service providers have the skills to effectively provide services that improve results for students with disabilities.

North Dakota has programs in place to ensure there are highly qualified staff in the public schools to improve results for students with disabilities. North Dakota has taken a “grow-your-own” approach to filling the shortage areas and retaining special education and related services staff. Following are some of the professional development programs the State funds:

Resident Teacher Program:

The Special Education Resident Teacher Program seeks to attract and keep teachers in rural schools in North Dakota that have challenges recruiting and retaining teachers. The purpose is to increase the pool of endorsed and prepared special educators already licensed and admitted to graduate programs in special education. They complete a full-year internship in a school district or special education unit. The resident teachers work under the joint supervision of an experienced special educator and a university special education faculty member. Financial support for this program began in 1998 and continues to assist in meeting the special educator shortage needs in North Dakota.

Speech-Language Pathology Scholarship:

Due to a shortage of Speech-Language Pathologists in North Dakota public schools, seven scholarships, funded through IDEA B funds, are awarded to graduate level Speech-Language Pathologists. These scholarships fund the student’s tuition, university fees and books. For each year the student accepts the scholarship, he/she signs an agreement to work in a school district in North Dakota. The last scholarships were given in 2017-2018 to second year Speech-Language Pathology graduate students. This program became the Speech-Language Pathology Loan Forgiveness Program.

Speech-Language Loan Forgiveness Program

Due to a shortage of Speech-Language Pathologists in North Dakota public schools, six loan forgiveness award agreements, funded through IDEA B funds, were awarded to graduate level Speech-Language Pathologists. For each year the student accepts the loan forgiveness award, the student receives \$10,000 once the student enters into a contract with a North Dakota public school district or Special Education Unit.

Traineeship Scholarship:

Each year, NDDPI awards Traineeship Scholarships in priority disability areas to ND teachers who wish to pursue graduate level retraining in the field of special education. As part of the application, a recommendation is provided by the local Special Education Unit Director where the applicant is working. This recommendation includes information about the applicant’s skills, as well as the identified need of the Special Education Unit for a teacher trained in the identified area. Scholarship amounts are based on the credit hours of coursework taken during a semester. Once accepted for the Traineeship Scholarship, applicants may be funded for a maximum of three years or until they complete their endorsement, whichever comes first. There is an average of 75 scholarships given per year in nine different special education and related service areas.

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Professional Development Collaboration:

The NDDPI plans and provides an annual Fall Educators Conference each October. The ND Office of Special Education serves on the planning committee for this conference and sponsors several special education related sessions during the conference. The most recent annual conference had an attendance of over 600 general and special education professionals from across North Dakota. The office of Special Education offered 6 sessions. The Special Education Office coordinates with the Student Support and Innovation Division to publish a monthly newsletter, which is disseminated to the Special Education and Title field staff.

Special Education Summer Institute

The NDDPI Office of Special Education offered the Special Education Summer Institute for the third year. More than 150 special educators, general education teachers, related service providers, and administrators attended sessions in areas that focused on IEP process and implementation, IDEA compliance, transition, assessment, assistive technology, social-emotional learning and related services among other topics.

Law Conference on Students with Disabilities

The NDDPI Office of Special Education collaborated with the state special education offices from Montana and South Dakota to organize and sponsor the fourth annual Northern Plains Law Conference on Students with Disabilities. The purpose of the multi-state conference is to provide the latest information from special education legal issues, due process hearings, circuit court cases, OSEP/OCR guidance letters, and basic IDEA procedural requirements for general/special education staff, administrators, state/school district attorneys, state education department staff, related services staff, parents and other stakeholders. There were over 200 attendees from the three states at the conference in South Dakota. The fifth Annual Conference will be held in North Dakota.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL):

The NDDPI provides technical assistance and professional development focused on instructional planning incorporating UDL principles. The NDDPI continues to emphasize the UDL framework within the improvement planning model developed as the main strategy of the State Systemic Improvement Plan. NDDPI advocates the use of the UDL framework to design classroom instruction and large-scale assessments. The UDL framework and its guiding principles provide students with equal access and opportunities to learn. Reducing curriculum barriers and providing scaffolds and supports promote deep learning, skill mastery, and valid assessment of student learning. UDL is a natural component of early intervening initiatives, such as Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). More in-depth guidance and learning opportunities regarding NIMAS and UDL that is designed for general and special education teachers, are posted on the department’s website at <https://www.nd.gov/dpi/sites/www/files/documents/SpeEd/March2019AccessManualUpdated.pdf>.

North Dakota Work Group on Improving Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBA) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP): North Dakota Behavior Coaching Initiative

In 2018-19 NDDPI continued contractual arrangements with Dr. Rose Iovanonne, Board Certified Behavior Analyst from University of South Florida, to proceed with the mentoring of the NDDPI’s Prevent-Teach-Reinforce (PTR) Master Coach Cadre. The Master Coach Cadre met across the academic year to review progress with PTR cases and also finalized the PTR professional development cycle for its use in the planning model of the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP).

Training efforts in the 2018-19 school year consisted of Advanced PTR training conducted by Dr. Iovanonne and New Participant PTR training conducted by the ND PTR Master Coach Cadre. Dr. Iovanonne also provided two on-site modeling sessions for the Master Coach Cadre to observe. These modeling sessions involved Dr. Iovanonne guiding teachers and staff through actual student cases.

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Secondary Transition Trainings:

The NDDPI hosts annual training related to the federal secondary transition requirements. The structure and specific topics included in this training are dictated by the annual Indicator 13 monitoring results. Biannually, a Secondary Transition Interagency Conference is held. This conference is sponsored by the NDDPI but planned collaboratively by the members of the State Secondary Transition Community of Practice. This collaborative conference engages all stakeholder groups involved in the secondary transition planning process.

The NDDPI Special Education Unit holds an Intensive Technical Assistance Partnership Agreement with the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition. The focus of the partnership project is to assist ND schools, ND Vocational Rehabilitation, private providers, and parents to effectively implement five Evidence Based and Promising Practices (EBPPs) that improve secondary transition services and result in positive post school outcomes for students with disabilities.

State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)

The identified measurable result of the North Dakota SSIP is to increase the six year extended graduation rate of students identified with emotional disturbance. The target population was identified as being students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs. The scope of NDDPI's effort was defined as keeping students enrolled in school, bringing students back to school (re-entry), and assisting students to earn a diploma. Stakeholders identified improvements in classroom instruction and in the supports that engage students in that instruction. Local special education units conducted a planning process to identify evidence based programs and promising practices that explicitly teach self-regulation skills and provide behavioral supports to apply those skills during instruction activities. The NDDPI supported local units with professional development regarding the planning model and process. The local units then implemented those practices for a fourth year. Implementation with formative evaluation will continue for another year.

Regional Education Associations:

North Dakota has established eight Regional Education Associations (REAs) designated by the North Dakota State Century Code chapter 15.1-09.1-01. NDDPI has the opportunity to coordinate with each REA to assist in the facilitation of professional development for school personnel throughout a region or regions of the state. The collaborative work between the REAs and the NDDPI is exemplified through ND Multi-Tier System of Supports (NDMTSS) work.

As defined in ND Century Code, a "regional education association" means a group of school districts that have entered a joint powers agreement that has been reviewed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction and verified as meeting the requirements of section 15.1-09.1-02. In order to be eligible for state funding, an REA must offer the following services to its member districts:

- a. Coordination and facilitation of professional development activities for teachers and administrators employed by its member districts;
- b. Supplementation of technology support services;
- c. Assistance with achieving school improvement goals identified by the Superintendent of Public Instruction;
- d. Assistance with the collection, analysis, and interpretation of student achievement data; and
- e. Assistance with the expansion and enrichment of curricular offerings. Subsection 1 of ND Century Code does not preclude an REA from offering additional services to its member districts.

North Dakota Multi-Tier System of Supports (NDMTSS): A collaborative effort between NDDPI and REAs to deliver high quality professional learning for schools and districts.

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NDMTSS is a framework to provide all students with the best opportunities to succeed academically, socially, emotionally, and behaviorally in school. NDMTSS focuses on providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to student need, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals. Data are used to allocate resources to improve student learning and support staff implementation of effective practices. The framework is outlined in a playbook titled, “Improving Student Success through North Dakota’s Multi-Tier System of Supports”. This playbook is inclusive of definitions, the five essential components, course offerings and strands for professional development, along with coaching and technical assistance guidance. Although ND has pockets of excellence, students fall through the cracks every year due to a lack of a system approach in many schools. North Dakota has established on-time graduation rates as a goal. NDMTSS focuses on integrating academics and behavioral interventions to improve student outcomes, through a system approach, ultimately increasing graduation rates.

Professional development opportunities, which include the annual NDMTSS Conference, are offered in statewide locations throughout the year. Currently 1,309 educators (duplicated educators attending multiple training sessions) attended NDMTSS training across the 31 sessions of PD delivered statewide, encompassing 206.5 hours of professional learning delivered. In terms of the number of unique educators reached statewide, the total number of participants was 508. These 508 educators represented 111 schools in 49 school districts, three special education units, one career and technology center, and one afterschool program. Educators from ND universities and representatives from public and private agencies did attend the training but were not counted in the participant numbers.

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