# North Dakota SSIP

# Highlights of the 2022-23 PIER Tool

The Planning, Implementing, Evaluation Report (PIER) Tool is an annual, online reporting tool that special education unit directors complete to detail their efforts to increase 6-year graduation rates for ED students. The most prevalent responses made by directors are provided here.

## THEORIES OF ACTION

Strategies to boost graduation rates encompass data collection and monitoring, using intervention frameworks (e.g., multi-tiered systems of support), developing Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIPs), emphasizing evidence-based practices (EBPs), promoting social-emotional learning (SEL), and investing in professional development.

## HELP FROM NDDPI

Technical assistance needs include enhancing expertise in EBPs and EWS, ensuring compliance with special education guidance, improving existing systems, securing funding for programs like BARR, aligning SSIP goals, developing a larger candidacy for special education vacancies, implementing SEL initiatives, and enhancing family engagement with academic and SEL focus.

## PLANS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Plans to enhance graduation outcomes involve ensuring fidelity of EBPs, initiating early engagement in middle school, employing tools such as Behavior Advantage, fostering collaboration through meetings and partnerships, implementing competency-based interventions within an MTSS framework, emphasizing data-driven decision-making, and supporting staff PD.

## GRADUATION RATES

The NDDPI set a 2025-26 target of 67.63% for the 6-year graduation rate for students with ED. Based on the 2019-20 cohort 6-year graduation rates, 10 units are below target, 4 are at target, and 11 are above target.

## COMMUNITY WRAPAROUND SUPPORTS

Community wraparound supports for graduation involve social work, mental health services, law enforcement, Department of Human Services, Career and Technology Centers, vocational rehabilitation and local businesses, all collaborating to provide comprehensive assistance, including but not limited to co-op opportunities, academic incentives, and meal supplements.

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Family engagement efforts include communication channels (e.g., social media, newsletters), participation in intervention planning, and events & workshops. Such efforts are supported by grants, parent advisory committees, family engagement teams, school counselors, vocational rehabilitation staff, and transition coordinators. Governance plays a pivotal role in stakeholder engagement, evident through monthly board meetings and initiatives by school boards to bolster graduation rates.

## EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS (EWS)

Indictors of EWS span academics (e.g., assessment data, grades, credits, course completion, assignment completion, participation), behavior (e.g., referrals, incidents, detentions, suspensions), attendance/tardiness, Individualized Education Plan (IEP) goals and progress, information from teachers and parents, and SEL-related measures (e.g., scores on surveys).

## EBPs

NDDPI supported four EBPs in 2022-23. The most frequently used EBP by the units was Check-In Check-Out; the least frequently used was Teacher-Directed Opportunity to Respond. Units also indicated using a wide variety of other EBPs in addition to the four supported by NDDPI.

## BEHAVIOR-SPECIFIC PRAISE (BSP)

11 of 25 units implemented BSP, leading to positive impacts (e.g., increased student engagement, improved behavioral outcomes). Despite challenges in measuring fidelity, efforts included staff training, collaboration with mental health professionals, and accountability measures through data from the EWS.

## CHECK-IN CHECK-OUT (CICO)

18 of 25 units implemented CICO, reporting improved student outcomes and goal attainment, as well as its effectiveness in helping students manage emotions, schoolwork, and focus. Challenges included difficulties in documentation and data collection, with varying levels of fidelity reported, ranging from implementation with fidelity and inclusion in IEPs to insufficient data and absence of fidelity monitoring.

## TEACHER-DIRECTED OPPORTUNITY TO RESPOND (TD-OTR)

3 of 25 units implemented TD-OTR, expressing intermittent use and challenges in quantifying its impact. Despite difficulties in capturing specific metrics, participants acknowledged the beneficial effects on overall learning, academic feedback, and on-task behaviors, with varied approaches to gauge fidelity, including formative assessments and principal reviews of grades.

## OTHER EBPs

Other reported EBPs included goal-setting, Positive Behavior Support Plans (PBSPs), sensory breaks, visual supports and schedules, Response to Intervention (RTI), the Building Assets, Reducing Risks (BARR) Tool, behavior management tools (e.g., Behavior Advantage), and credit recovery courses. Additionally, several interventions focused on SEL were mentioned.

## CHECK & CONNECT

12 of 25 units implemented Check &Connect, reporting positive outcomes such as improved attendance, behavior, and engagement, but faced challenges in documenting and quantifying its specific impacts.

**DATA DRIVEN** ENTERPRISES