



Promoting Progress Through Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)

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Promoting Progress Through Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)

Specially designed instruction (SDI) is what is “special” about special education.

Introduction

Despite its critical role in promoting progress for students with disabilities, there continues to be confusion about what is special education and specially designed instruction (SDI) for eligible students with disabilities. To further add to the confusion, there is a lack of consistent understanding about how educators can leverage implementation of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) to provide high quality educational programming for students with disabilities.

This document aims to clarify what is specially designed instruction (SDI) and share how schools can leverage MTSS to design and deliver SDI for eligible students with disabilities in North Dakota. This document is not a policy brief or a compliance tool but rather guidance for individualized education program (IEP) team members (i.e., administrators, special and general educators, students and their families, and related services providers) as they design and deliver SDI as part of the broader statement of aids and services for students ages 3-21 with disabilities in North Dakota public schools.

In the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Congress states:

Disability is a natural part of the human experience and in no way diminishes the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities.

The intent of the IDEA is to ensure that eligible students access free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) through the IEP. In 2017, the Supreme Court decision in *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District RE-1* clarified that to meet its substantive FAPE obligation under IDEA, “a school must offer an IEP reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child’s circumstances.”

While supplementary aids and services in the IEP, such as instructional accommodations or modifications, are designed to ensure students with disabilities can access the general curriculum, they are not sufficient for promoting progress toward annual goals and state standards. Students who require an IEP need SDI to gain the skills, knowledge, and strategies necessary for accessing and benefiting from the general curriculum.

Role of SDI in the IEP’s Statement of Aids and Services

According to IDEA, Section 300.320 (a), each child’s IEP must contain

“(4) A statement of the **special education and related services and supplementary aids and services**, based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable, to be provided to the child, or on behalf of the child, and a statement of the **program modifications or supports** for school personnel that will be provided to enable the child. “

The statement includes four parts that outline the proposed aids and services to be provided to the child to address the needs identified in the evaluation report and present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) statement. Under IDEA, “special education means specially designed instruction [Sec. 300.39 (a) (1)]”. It is delivered in coordination with other aids and services outlined in the statement. See the table below for descriptions and examples of each part of the statement.

Part of the Statement	What it means	Examples
Special Education	“ . . . specially designed instruction , at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability . . . ” [Sec.300.39(a)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized instruction conducted in the classroom, home, hospitals, institutions, and other settings • Specialized instruction in physical education • Training on traveling within the community • Vocational education • Speech-language pathology services, or any other related service, if the service is considered special education rather than a related service
Related Services	“ . . . transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education . . . ” [Sec 300.34(a)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation • Speech-language pathology and audiology services interpreting services • Psychological services • Physical and occupational therapy • Early identification and assessment of disabilities in children • Parent counseling and training

Supplementary Aids & Services	“ . . . aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes, other education-related settings, and in extracurricular and nonacademic settings, to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate . . . ” [Sec.300.42].	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional accommodations • Instructional modifications • Classroom testing accommodations • Health care assistant • Peer tutors • Assistive technology • Paraprofessional support • Behavioral coaches offering behavioral supports
Program Modifications & Supports	Supports and modifications to general programming to assist school personnel in implementing the IEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for staff to support IEP implementation • Special equipment or resources for providing instruction and supports • Collaborative planning time to implement the IEP • Modified/adapted general curriculum materials

See **Appendix A** for more information on the Statement of Special Education or SDI.

See **Appendix B** for an Overview of the Statement of Services and Aids.

Setting the Stage for Appropriate Progress Through SDI

To effectively promote appropriately, ambitious growth through SDI for eligible students with disabilities, IEP teams must...

- **Establish and maintain high expectations.** Students with disabilities are, first and foremost, general education students. The intent of IDEA is to ensure that students with disabilities are provided with an IEP that will allow them to access and benefit from the general curriculum and school experience, similarly to their peers without disabilities, in light of the child’s circumstances.
- **Articulate what the team’s vision for school and post-school success.** Clarity about academic and functional expectations, both annual and post-school, assists the team in prioritizing student needs within the IEP. It also provides the benchmark for whether the proposed aids and services, which include SDI, are reasonably calculated to assist the student in progressing towards desired school and post-school goals.
- **Know the child and the child’s circumstances.** Once the IEP team has come to a consensus about indicators of school and post-school success, the team uses data, including informal and formal data, to better understand how the child’s disability affects the child’s involvement and progress in the general education curriculum. IEP

teams outline this information in the PLAAFP statement [IDEA Sec. 300.320 (a)(1)] and use it to justify the annual goals and proposed aids and services, including SDI.

- **Identify the knowledge, skills, or strategies the student needs to be taught.** A well-written PLAAFP statement will also include what and how the student needs to be taught to increase access and benefit from the general curriculum and reduce the need for supplementary aids and services (e.g., accommodations, paraeducator support, modifications), in light of the child’s circumstances. These instructional needs help develop the IEP’s SDI.

What is Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)?

According to IDEA Sec. 300.39(b)(3), “Specially designed instruction [SDI] means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this part, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction”. Its primary purposes in the IEP are:

- To address the unique needs of the child that result from the child’s disability; and
- To ensure access of the child to the general curriculum so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children.

SDI is not determined by the source of funding (i.e., “intervention purchased with IDEA funds”), the disability category, the level of support (Tier 2 or 3), or the program the student is participating in (i.e., “behavior class” or “autism program”).

Some evidenced-based practices have known positive effects for many students with disabilities across disability categories or grade spans. However, there may not be rigorous research evidence for all potential instructional adaptations necessary to meet the unique needs of some students with disabilities. While the preference is for the use of evidence-based practices and interventions, IDEA clarifies that the proposed SDI and other aids and services should be “based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable [300.320 (a)(4)]”.

The table on the next page defines each SDI element and provides examples of adaptations in the three areas.

Elements of SDI	Examples of SDI by Element
Content <i>What is taught</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social behaviors, communication, or language skills • Phonics, vocabulary, phonological awareness, and comprehension skills and strategies • Cognitive and metacognitive strategies • Math language, math calculation, word problems, fractions, number sense • Functional life skills, vocational skills, or adapted physical ed • Handwriting, spelling, sentence construction, typing, and word processing
Methodology <i>How the instruction is delivered or the practices and approach the teacher uses to teach</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic, explicit instruction delivered in small groups or 1:1; co-teaching • Timed activities to build fluency • Concrete and semi-concrete representations and number lines • Scaffolding, repeated reading, peer-assisted learning strategies • Use of instructional technology or computer-based teaching
Delivery of Instruction <i>Who, where, and when the instruction is delivered.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Where:</i> Special classroom, general education classroom, community • <i>Who:</i> Content or behavioral specialist, special education teacher, or related service provider • <i>When:</i> 45 minutes daily, From 9:00-9:30 daily, ten practice opportunities distributed across the day

Some students' SDI may be delivered using existing standardized, purchased programs commonly used within the school's MTSS as long as it addresses the unique instructional needs of the child. **The intervention itself is not the SDI, but the features of the intervention and how the educator uses the materials may provide the SDI that addresses the student's needs.**

What it is not?	What it is...
- SDI is NOT the MTSS Tier 3 system.	✓ But educators may leverage the validated processes, like data-based individualization (DBI), within the Tier 3 system to design and deliver SDI.
- SDI does NOT replace core programming.	✓ It is designed to ensure the child with a disability can access the general curriculum.
- SDI is NOT standards-based instruction.	✓ It is specialized instruction addressing disability-related needs that are preventing the child from accessing and benefiting from the standards-based instruction at Tier 1.
- SDI is NOT special education high-leverage practices (HLPs).	✓ But HLPs can be used to design and deliver SDI.
- SDI is NOT a disability specific program or curriculum.	✓ It is individualized, adapted <i>instruction</i> based on a need outlined in the PLAAFP and evaluation report.
- SDI is NOT providing accommodation or assistive technology.	✓ But <i>providing instruction</i> to the student on how to independently use the accommodation or assistive technology device may be SDI.
- SDI is NOT a commercial, standardized intervention program.	✓ But a commercial standardized intervention program can be used to implement SDI for an individual student.
- SDI is NOT differentiated instruction or universal design for learning (UDL) that is accessible to all students	✓ But SDI may draw on UDL practices within the instructional design to address the unique needs of the child that results from their disability.
- SDI is NOT an excuse for setting low expectations.	✓ SDI is supplemental support designed to assist the student in meeting similar, high expectations as their peers without disabilities.

The effectiveness of SDI depends on the extent to which educators implement, not just describe, the adaptations to instructional content, methodology, and delivery with fidelity.

How Do IEP Teams Know Whether it is SDI under IDEA?

It is important that IEP teams understand the distinctions among the parts, including SDI, that make up the IEP's proposed statement of aids and services. To be eligible under IDEA, an evaluated child must:

1. have an identified disability under IDEA, and because of that disability
2. need special education, or SDI, and related services.

In other words, **eligibility requires that the student need SDI because of the impact of the disability**. A student who only needs accommodations or related services would not be eligible under IDEA [[Sec. 300.8\(a\)\(2\)\(i\)](#)]. Some students may need specialized services that look like SDI, but those services do not meet the definition of SDI under IDEA.

For example, a student who has been chronically absent or is a second language learner may need adaptations to the instructional content, methodology, or delivery to access and benefit from the general curriculum. However, this would not meet the definition of SDI under IDEA because the need for instructional adaptations does not result from the presence of a disability.

To confirm whether the proposed services meet the criteria of SDI, IEP teams should respond with a yes to all three questions.

- ✓ Has the student been evaluated as having a disability under IDEA?
- ✓ Is the student being *taught* knowledge, skills, or strategies through adapted *instruction*?
- ✓ Are the adaptations necessary to address a disability related need outlined in the PLAAFP statement or evaluation report?

Who is Responsible for the Design of SDI?

The IEP team—which includes the special and general education teachers, the student and family, and a representative of the district—uses data presented in the evaluation report and PLAAFP statement to identify the instructional adaptations necessary for the student to progress toward the annual IEP goals and access the general curriculum.

Highly qualified special educators, who possess specialized training and relevant content expertise, use their knowledge of the student's needs to select or develop the most appropriate instructional programming and materials to implement the SDI outlined in the IEP. Design and SDI depend on an evidence-based, repetitive process that uses individual performance and progress monitoring data to make ongoing decisions about necessary adaptations to the instructional delivery, content, and methodology. If the student does not respond to initial special education programming, the educators will continue to make ongoing adaptations and evaluate the extent to which the student responds as expected.

Who Can Deliver SDI?

Under IDEA, “Specially Designed Instruction” (SDI) is a shared responsibility.

- ✓ A special education teacher has expertise in specially designed instruction.
- ✓ A general education teacher has expertise in curriculum and knowledge of the student.
- ✓ A special education teacher and a general education teacher work collaboratively to plan, design and implement specially designed instruction for students with whom they share responsibility.

SDI is typically delivered by the special education staff but may be delivered by another educator or provider if the special educator designs and trains others how to incorporate the SDI that is based on the needs of the child. In some cases, SDI may include “speech-language pathology services, or any other related service, if the service is considered special education rather than a related service under State standards” [[IDEA, Sec. 300.39\(a\)\(2\)\(I\)](#)].

For example, a student identified with a speech and language disability may need SDI delivered by a speech and language pathologist, or a student with a physical impairment may need SDI delivered by a physical therapist to benefit from the general physical education curriculum.

How Can Schools Leverage MTSS to Design and Implement IDEA Requirements?

To appropriately support students with disabilities, we need effective implementation of school wide MTSS. Effective special education delivery leverages the data, instruction, infrastructure, and collective effects of MTSS. For example, the implementation of MTSS can support the development of the IEP and provide a framework for efficient and effective implementation of the IEP. North Dakota’s Multi-Tier System of Supports (NDMTSS) notes the following cultural changes that are also necessary for the implementation of high quality educational programming for students with disabilities.

- Effective teachers create environments where all students can learn and improve.
- Effective schools maintain and communicate a purpose and direction that commit to high expectations for learning as well as shared values and beliefs about teaching and learning.
- Effective systems support both teachers and students by outlining evidence-based instruction and interventions while ensuring appropriate access to resources and supports.

Remember, students with disabilities are general education students who require an IEP to access and benefit from the general curriculum provided at Tier 1. Special education supplements, but does not supplant, the instructional benefit of Tier 1 core programming.

The chart below provides an illustrative, but not exhaustive, list of how a well-implemented MTSS can support the implementation of special education and SDI.

NDMTSS Essential Components	Examples of MTSS Supporting Implementation of IDEA
Assessments: Screening, Progress Monitoring, Diagnostic, and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide objective, measurable data for how “the child’s disability affects the child’s involvement and progress in the general education curriculum” in the PLAAFP statement [Sec. 300.320(a)(1)(i)]. ▪ Set realistic, ambitious IEP goals “to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum” [Sec. 300.320(a)(2)(A)].
Data-Based Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support the IEP team’s use of data for informing SDI, LRE, and supplementary aids and services. ▪ Support implementation of IEP goal monitoring plan [Sec. 300.320(a)(3)(i)].
Multi-tiered Instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support development and implementation of the “statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services” [Sec. 300.320(a)(4)]. ▪ Provide more accurate estimates of the level of service needed to promote progress towards goals [Sec. 300.320(a)(7)]. ▪ Support service delivery and access to high-quality core programming in general education.
Infrastructure and Support Mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide a framework for efficient and effective implementation of IEP. ▪ Ensure a shared vision of high expectations for all students, including students with disabilities. ▪ Support scheduling of service delivery and collaborative teaming with peers.
Fidelity and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote continuous improvement of implementation of schoolwide activities that promote high expectations and improved outcomes for students with disabilities.

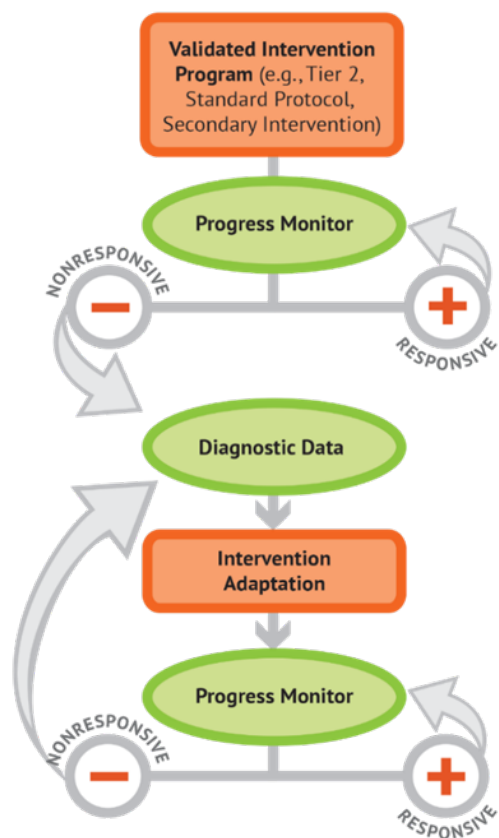
How Can Schools Leverage MTSS to Design and Implement SDI?

The design and delivery of SDI depend on an evidence-based, repetitive process that uses individual student progress monitoring and performance data to make decisions about adaptations to instructional delivery, content, and methodology. In a well-designed tiered system, this process is embedded within the assessment and instructional decision-making at Tiers 2 and 3. For more information on improving the school’s overall system, see “A School Renewal Handbook for ND Public Schools” in the reference section of this document.

SDI can be supported and implemented through data-based individualization (DBI), promoted by the National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII). DBI is an example of a validated process shown to support individualizing and intensifying interventions for students with severe and persistent learning and behavioral needs, including students with disabilities, through the systematic use of assessment data, validated interventions, and research-based adaptation strategies. The five steps of the DBI process integrate evidence-based intervention, assessment, and data-based decision-making.

Throughout the DBI process, special and general educators use progress monitoring data to evaluate the student's response to the proposed IEP's aids and services and then use multiple data sources to develop a hypothesis about why the student is not responding as expected. The team uses the hypothesis to identify necessary changes, including instructional adaptations, to promote progress on appropriately ambitious IEP goals. The following summarizes each step.

1. **Validated intervention program, delivered with greater intensity**, is used to deliver the SDI outlined in the IEP.
2. **Progress monitoring** data are used to evaluate the student's response to the SDI. If the student is not responding as expected, the team moves to the next step. For students responding to their SDI, no additional program adaptations are needed.
3. **Informal diagnostic assessment** data are used to develop a hypothesis about why the student is not progressing as expected, which will help the team select an appropriate adaptation.
4. **Adaptations** to the instructional content, methodology, and delivery are identified to address the team's hypothesis about why the student is not responding as expected.
5. **Continued progress monitoring** is used to evaluate the student's response to the additional adaptations. The team returns to step three for students not responding to the additional adaptations as expected.



See **Appendix C** for more information on Breaking Down the DBI Process.

SDI can be delivered across the tiers of support, depending on the unique needs of the student. For example, a student struggling to transfer learning skills to novel environments, including the general classroom, would benefit from being explicitly taught transfer strategies within the general classroom instruction.

Appendix A: What is the Statement of Special Education or SDI?



IEP Tip Sheet

What is the Statement of Special Education or SDI?

This tip sheet introduces and briefly defines what is needed for the statement of special education defined as specially designed instruction, or SDI and provides tips for implementation. To learn more, review the additional resources and check with state law for supplemental requirements. This is one of four tip sheets in a collection of the statement of services and aids in the individualized education program (IEP; [Sec. 300.320\(a\)\(4\)](#)). The [overview tip sheet](#) provides a summary of the complete statement.

What Does IDEA Say?

According to [IDEA Sec. 300.39\(b\)](#),

"(3) Specially designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this part, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction—

- (i) To address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability; and
- (ii) To ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children."

Let's Break It Down

Who delivers?

SDI is typically delivered by the special educator or related service provider but may be delivered by another educator or provider based on the needs of the child.




Why?

Ensure child's access to the general curriculum so that the child can meet the educational standards.

Where?

SDI is a service, not a place. SDI can be provided in any location, as long as the location is consistent with the student's IEP and the student's least restrictive environment.

Elements of SDI

SDI Element	What it Means	Questions to Consider
 Content	<i>What</i> is taught to allow the student to access general education programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are adaptations needed for the content as a result of the disability?• Is the content aligned to the student's academic and functional needs and grade-level standards?• Does the content address engagement and behavioral supports?• How can we leverage the student's strengths and current knowledge as we identify the content that will be provided?• What is the evidence base for the proposed practices?
 Methodology	<i>How</i> the instruction is delivered or the practices and approach the teacher uses to teach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there a method that has proven to be more effective for this student when acquiring knowledge and skills?• Are there methods that have been ineffective for this student when acquiring knowledge and skills?• What is the evidence base for the proposed instructional strategies?
 Delivery of Instruction	<i>Who, where, and when</i> the instruction is delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the plan for instructional delivery, including the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Who will provide the instruction?◦ How frequently?◦ Where?• Does the delivery (including the group size) provide sufficient opportunities for the student to practice and receive explicit feedback?• Does the provider have the knowledge and skills to individualize and intensify instruction as needed?





Tips for Design and Implementation

- ✓ Determine SDI on an individual basis and justify based on the student's needs identified in the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance statement.
- ✓ Clearly outline the SDI in the student's IEP.
- ✓ Engage students, families, and educators in discussion about instructional approaches that have and have not been successful.
- ✓ Use data throughout the development and implementation of SDI to ensure that it addresses the evolving needs of students.
- ✓ Ensure that team members understand the difference between SDI, accommodations, modifications, intervention programs, and instruction provided to all students. For example,
 - SDI is not an accommodation, but teaching the student how to use the accommodation is a form of SDI.
 - SDI is not a specific intervention program, but an intervention program may be used as part of the design of SDI.
 - SDI is not differentiated instruction or universal design for learning (UDL) that is accessible to all students, but SDI may draw on UDL practices within the instructional design to address the unique needs of the child that results from their disability.

Where Can You Learn More?



Breaking Down the DBI Process: Questions & Considerations (National Center on Intensive Intervention). SDI can be supported and implemented through data-based individualization (DBI). DBI is a research-based process for individualizing and intensifying interventions through the systematic use of assessment data, validated interventions, and research-based adaptation strategies.



High-Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities (CEEDAR Center and Council for Exceptional Children). The 22 high-leverage practices (HLPs) define activities that all special educators should be able to use in their classroom. The HLPs include strategies that can be used in the development and implementation of SDI, such as "provide scaffolded supports," "use explicit instruction," and "use flexible grouping."



PROGRESS Center Website. The PROGRESS Center website includes additional information about developing high-quality IEPs and additional tip sheets in this series




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Appendix B: Overview of the Statement of Services and Aids



IEP Tip Sheet

Overview of the Statement of Services & Aids

This tip sheet introduces and provides an overview of the statement of special education, related services, supplementary aids and services, and program modifications that are part of the individualized education program (IEP). It also includes a brief summary of federal regulations and tips for implementation. To learn more, review the more in-depth tip sheets for all four parts and check with state law for additional requirements.





What Does IDEA Say?

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), [Section 300.320 \(a\)](#), each child's IEP must contain the following:


"(4) A statement of the **special education** and **related services** and **supplementary aids and services**, based on peer-reviewed research to the extent practicable, to be provided to the child, or on behalf of the child, and a statement of the **program modifications or supports** for school personnel that will be provided to enable the child—

- (i) To advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals;
- (ii) To be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum in accordance with paragraph (a)(1) of this section, and to participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities; and
- (iii) To be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and nondisabled children in the activities described in this section [emphasis added]."

Breaking Down the Parts of Statement

Statement Component	Definition	Examples
 Special Education	"... specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability..." [Sec. 300.39(a)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Specialized instruction conducted in the classroom, home, hospitals, institutions, and other settingsSpecialized instruction in physical educationTravel trainingVocational educationSpeech-language pathology services, or any other related service, if the service is considered special education rather than a related service
 Related Services	"... transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education..." [Sec. 300.34(a)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Speech-language pathology and audiology servicesInterpreting servicesPsychological servicesPhysical and occupational therapyRecreation, including therapeutic recreationEarly identification and assessment of disabilities in childrenParent counseling and training
 Supplementary Aids & Services	"... aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes, other education-related settings, and in extracurricular and nonacademic settings, to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate..." [Sec. 300.42]	<ul style="list-style-type: none">AccommodationsModificationsOther direct services
 Program Modifications & Supports	Supports and modifications to assist staff in supporting implementation of the IEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Training for staff to support implementationSpecial equipment or resources for providing instruction and supportsCollaborative planning time between the general education teacher, the special education teacher, and related service providers

PROGRESS Center at American Institutes for Research



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Tips for Implementation

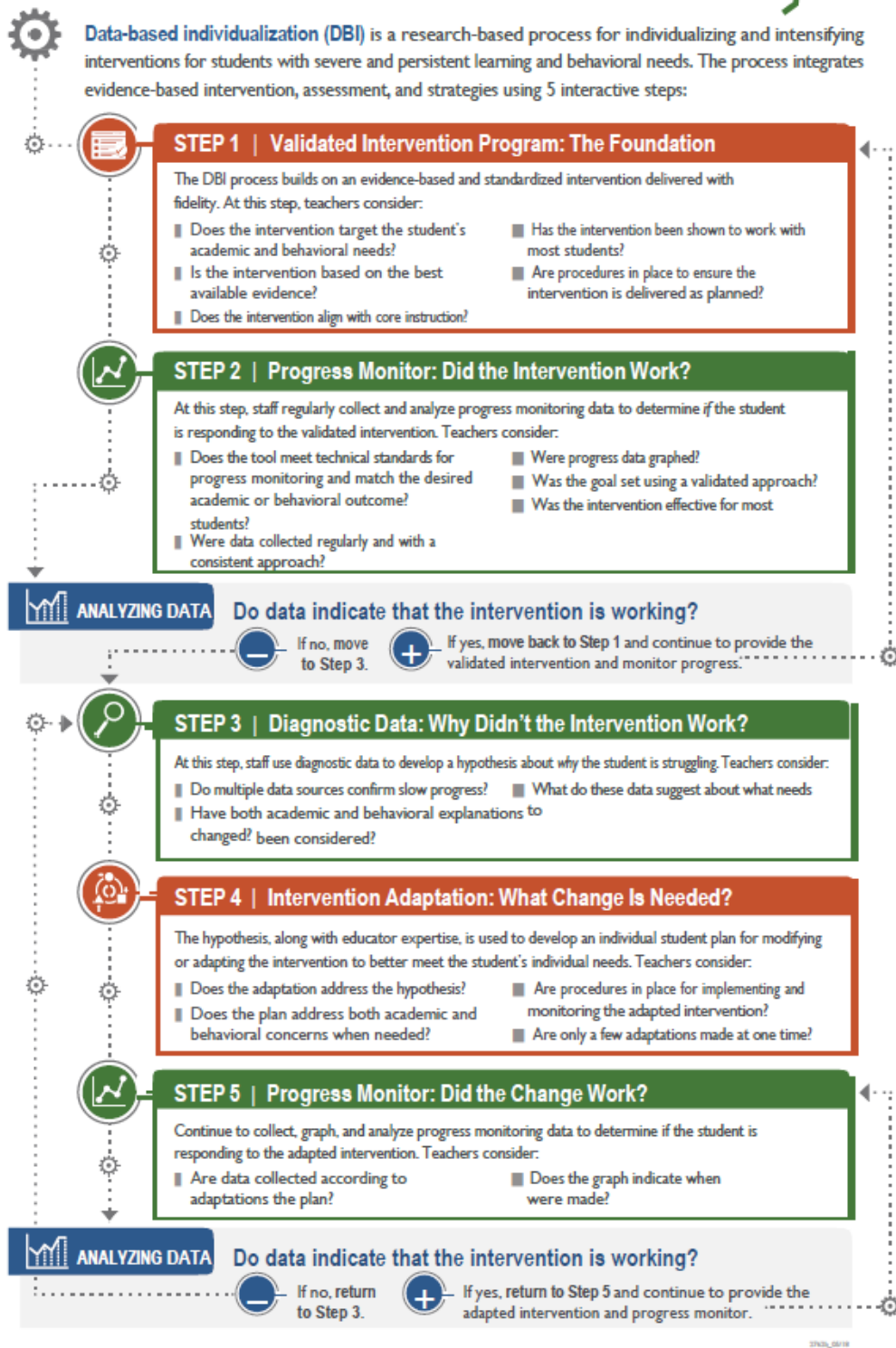
- ✓ Ensure that the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) statement justifies the IEP team's selection of special education, aids, and services to be provided to the student.
- ✓ Avoid identifying specific programs and instead focus on the features of an individualized program necessary for the student to benefit.
- ✓ Identify special education, aids, and services based on the unique needs of the student as opposed to a disability label or the location of services.
- ✓ Consider what knowledge and skills school personnel will need to successfully implement the IEP and support the child across learning environments.
- ✓ For students who are nonresponsive to evidence-based programs, consider using a research-based process, such as data-based individualization, to individualize supports.
- ✓ Review the research and resources from Office of Special Education Programs-funded centers to identify specialized instructional approaches and strategies plus aids and services that are supported by evidence, as appropriate.

Where can you learn more?

Access these PROGRESS IEP Tip Sheets for more details about each part of this required statement:

- ★ [Program modifications or supports](#)
- ★ [Supplementary aids and services](#)
- ★ [Related services](#)
- ★ [Special education](#)

Appendix C: Breaking Down the DBI Process



Resources

Comparing SDI, Personalized Learning, and Tier III Interventions

	Personalized, Competency-Based Learning	Tier III Intensive Intervention	Specially Designing Instruction for Students with Disabilities
Definition	Process of creating engaging learning experiences customized to each student's strengths, needs, and interests (Knowledgeworks)	Individualizing and intensifying interventions through the systematic use of assessment data, validated interventions, and research-based adaptation strategies (NCII)	"Adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this part, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction" [IDEA, Sec. 300.39(b)(3)]
Foundation	North Dakota Personalized, Competency-Based Learning Initiative ((ND PCBL, knowledgeworks.org))	ND MTSS Framework	IDEA
Target Population	All students, including students with disabilities	Students, including students with disabilities, not responding to standardized protocol interventions similar to peers	Students found eligible for special education through a comprehensive evaluation under IDEA.
Who delivers?	General Educators	General Educators or Interventionists	Special Educators
Purpose	<p>Create more engaging learning opportunities for students.</p> <p>Provide districts greater flexibility and local control to implement desired innovative learning opportunities.</p>	<p>Provide brief, intensive instruction/supports for students not progressing in standardized Tier 2 interventions.</p> <p>Provide data for decisions related to referral for a comprehensive SPED evaluation, rule out lack of instruction (IDEA citation), and other special program eligibility referrals (i.e., gifted services, wrap-around services)</p>	<p>To address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability; and</p> <p>To ensure access of the child to the general curriculum so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children.</p>

	Personalized, Competency-Based Learning	Tier III Intensive Intervention	Specially Designing Instruction for Students with Disabilities
What does it look like?	<p>Students are provided standards aligned core instruction and learning opportunities that build on their interests, strengths, and needs.</p> <p>Students are provided different levels of support based on their individual learning needs.</p>	Individual or small group of students participates in a standard protocol intervention that has been individualized based on individual progress monitoring and diagnostic data.	Specialized instruction based on a need outlined in the PLAAFP and evaluation report that addresses disability-related needs that prevent the child from accessing and benefiting from the general curriculum.
Content focus	General curriculum standards	Academic or behavioral skill deficits identified through diagnostic data	Academic, behavioral, or functional skill content based on the unique needs of the child that result from the impact of the disability
Decision Making	Students make daily decisions with educators about how they will create and apply knowledge and demonstrate their learning.	An intervention team	An IEP team, which may include the student with a disability, is responsible for designing and implementing SDI with the IEP.
Family Engagement	Participation is not required under state and federal law	<p>Share progress monitoring data with families</p> <p>Participation is not required under state and federal law.</p>	The parent of the student with a disability is a required member of the IEP responsible for designing the SDI in the IEP.
Outcomes	<p>Increased flexibility of local districts to implement desired innovative learning opportunities.</p> <p>All students graduate choice ready with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they need to be successful.</p>	Progress toward short-term academic or behavioral learning goals often aligned to benchmarks.	<p>Progress on annual IEP goals.</p> <p>Increased involvement in and benefit from general education curriculum for an individual student with a disability.</p>

Resources Continued

[Instructional Practice Briefs](#) (PROGRESS Center). This series of practice briefs highlight six evidence-based, high-leverage practices that research has shown support implementation of high-quality instructional programming for students with and at risk for disabilities regardless of their identified disability category or grade span. These practices were identified through an extensive, systematic meta-analysis* of the [high-leverage practices for students with disabilities](#).

[High-Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities](#) (CEEDAR Center and Council for Exceptional Children). The 22 high-leverage practices (HLPs) define activities that all special educators should be able to use in their classroom. The HLPs include strategies that can be used in the development and implementation of SDI, such as “provide scaffolded supports,” “use explicit instruction,” and “use flexible grouping.”

[Module: Planning for Instruction: What Teachers Need to Know](#) (PROGRESS Center). An interactive course will help to identify the three key steps in planning for Instruction and will further describe how to set meaningful learning targets using IEP goals and/or grade-level standards; identify learning targets to set a clear sequence for instruction; and establish clear lesson objectives with aligned practice opportunities.

[Module: Path to PROGRESS: Developing and Implementing High-Quality Educational Programs](#) An online course intended to encourage reflection on the larger purpose of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and provide a brief introduction to the PROGRESS Center’s approach to promoting progress for students with disabilities by developing and implementing high-quality educational programming that meets procedural, substantive, and implementation requirements and ensures that students with disabilities have access to free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment as outlined by IDEA.

[Webinar: Creating a Comprehensive Statement of Special Education and Aids and Services within the IEP](#) (PROGRESS Center). Did you know that the IEP must include a statement that includes special education and related services, supplementary aids and services, and program modifications and supports? In this webinar, Steven Prater, a PROGRESS Center special education expert, reviewed the IDEA requirements for developing a comprehensive and understandable statement that promotes progress for students with disabilities and provides access to a free appropriate public education and a panel shared tips and considerations for developing the statement.

References:

ND Department of Public Instruction *A School Renewal Handbook for North Dakota Public Schools (Version 2.0)*.

<https://www.nd.gov/dpi/sites/www/files/documents/Division%20of%20SS%26I/ESSA/Accountability/NDSchoolRenewalHandbook2.0.pdf>

Center on Multi-Tiered System of Supports at the American Institutes for Research: Special Education. <https://mtss4success.org/special-topics/special-education>

Georgia Department of Education: Specially Designed Instruction (SDI).

[https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Specially-Designed-Instruction-\(SDI\).aspx](https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/Specially-Designed-Instruction-(SDI).aspx)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b>

KnowledgeWorks: *What is Personalized Learning? What is Personalized, Competency-Based Learning*. <https://knowledgeworks.org/get-inspired/personalized-learning-101/what-personalized-learning/>

KnowledgeWorks: *Personalized, Competency-Based Learning in North Dakota: What We're Learning*. <https://knowledgeworks.org/resources/personalized-competency-based-learning-north-dakota-research-learning/>

National Center on Intensive Intervention at the American Institutes for Research: What is Data-Based Individualization. <https://intensiveintervention.org/data-based-individualization>

North Dakota's Multi-Tier System of Supports: What we do. <https://ndmtss.org/what-we-do.html>

PROGRESS Center Promoting Progress for Students with Disabilities.

<https://promotingprogress.org/>

U.S. Department of Education. (2017, December 7). *Questions and Answers (Q&A) on U.S. Supreme Court Case Decision Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District Re-1*.

<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/qa-endrewcase-12-07-2017.pdf>