

# North Dakota SSIP Highlights of the 2020-21 PIER Tool

The Planning, Implementing, Evaluating Report (PIER) 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 to each of 12 PIER Tool questions are provided here.

## THEORIES OF ACTION

Focusing on providing PD to staff so that they can teach students to develop the social, emotional, and self-regulation skills they need to improve their school experience which will lead to graduation.

## HELP FROM NDDPI

Wanting to know how other districts and units are improving their graduation rates and if their peers have resources to share. Having NDDPI provide additional training and support on the SSIP process, data progress, and data utilization.

## CRITICAL INITIATIVES

Offering PD, building MTSS frameworks, improving intervention plans, implementing EBPs, increasing student/family engagement.

## SUSTAINABILITY

Expanding staffs' social-emotional skills (e.g., Train the Trainer) and collaborating with other districts in their special ed units. Funding was frequently mentioned as a challenge.

## KEY MEASURES

Student data (e.g., graduation rates, intervention documentation, IEP goal growth); assessment data (e.g., Aimsweb, TATE, ALSUPs); PD data (tracking training, attendance, and staff application of new skills); family data (engagement surveys and event attendance).

## PLANS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Developing more formal procedures and using a variety of EBPs. Specifically, using FBAs/BIPs; hiring behavioral specialists/mentors/teachers; providing a wide-variety of behavior-related professional development, trainings, and workshops; teaching self-regulation and life skills to students with disabilities; increasing student and family engagement; providing on-demand resources for staff.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Providing staff with specialized training and resources; hiring behavioral specialists; implementing new programs, curriculum, and interventions; developing new screeners and standardized forms; and creating partnerships with community businesses for meeting students' needs outside of the classroom.

## GRADUATION RATES

Due to covid, many units have seen fluctuations in their rates from 2018-19 to 2020-21, but they hope to gain ground once the health crisis normalizes and once they understand which initiatives and activities have had an impact on improving graduation rates.

## EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

Collecting student data (e.g., attendance, academic performance, behavior) to recognize early warning signs and then implementing a formal, standardized action plan based on these data.

## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Family-focused activities and events, newsletters, and social media groups. Wrap-around approaches connecting families with community services and programs, such as counseling, mentors, after-school programming, and career-training; however, wrap-around programs are difficult in rural areas.

## LOCAL CONTROL

Districts and schools generally have the same initiatives and goals as sped units but have autonomy on how to implement and accomplish the critical initiative goals

## EBPs AND FIDELITY TOOLS

Absenteeism & Truancy, Check and Connect, Conscious Discipline, EWIMS, Restorative Justice, Second Step, Skills Streaming for Adolescence, TATE, Zones of Regulation, Why Try.