2015-16

North Dakota Special Education Improvement Planning Guide

For students with Behavioral, Social/Emotional, Social Communication and/or Mental Health Needs

NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Acknowledgements

Publication Date- July, 2015

2015-16 North Dakota Special Education Improvement Planning Guide was produced by the staff at the Office of Special Education, North Dakota Department of Public Instruction.

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The Department of Public Instruction appreciates the time and effort spent by the diverse groups of stakeholders from throughout North Dakota in contributing to this planning document.

Information from a variety of sources used in the development of this planning guide can be found in the bibliography at the end of this document.

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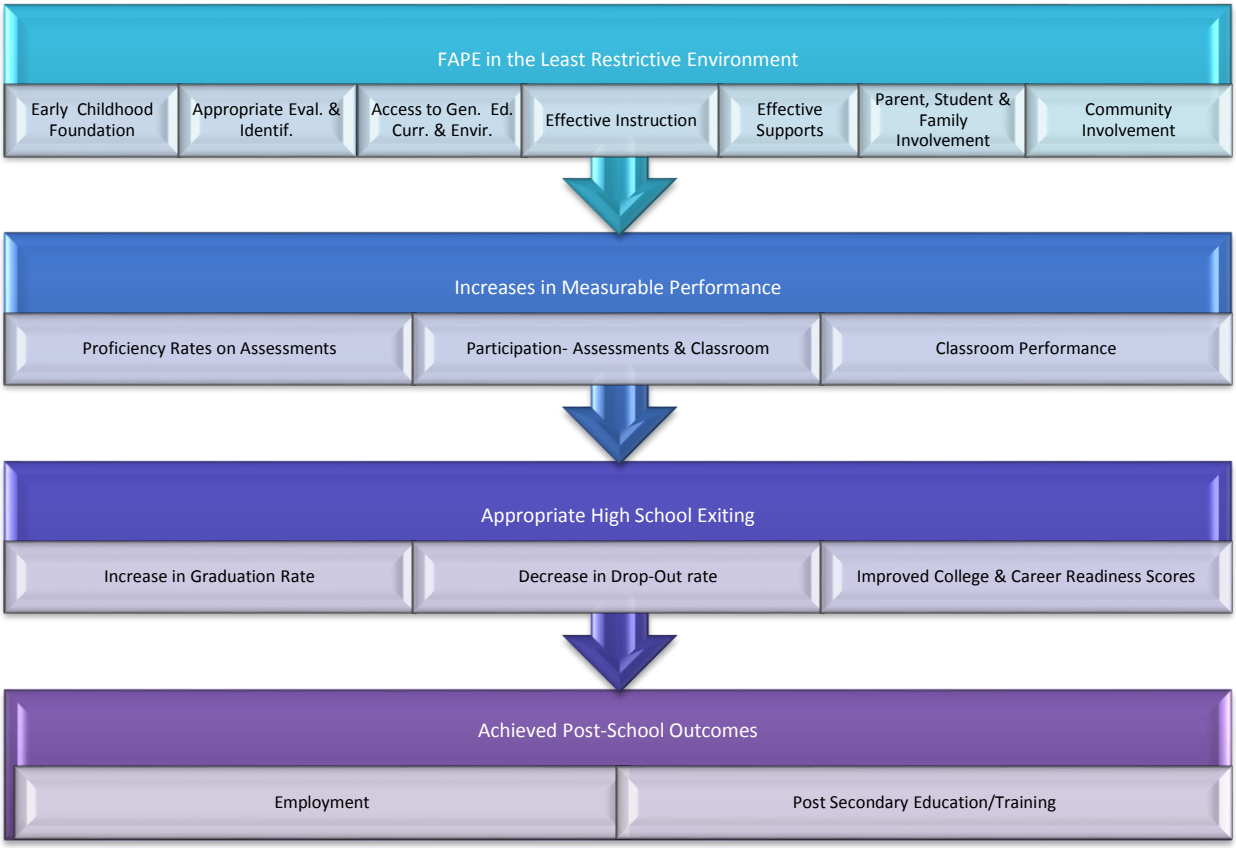
Introduction

Effective schools have a common characteristic- engagement in a continuous planning process related to systematic and systemic improvement. This characteristic applies to various administrative levels of state and local education agencies to improve student outcomes. In this document, this characteristic is applied to North Dakota local special education administrative units to improve outcomes for students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs. Implementing a quality planning process requires: a) definition and assessment of present practice; b) goal setting; c) a monitoring and review process; d) benchmarks of performance to indicate the need for adjustments, changes, or implementations of additional practices; e) set of expected outcomes from the adjustment, change or implementation; and, f) an evaluation system to measure the success.

The ***North Dakota Special Education Program Improvement Model*** (below), developed through the State Systemic Improvement Plan, Phase 1 process, addresses the principles of special education law and critical program elements that effect special education program improvement. Its foundational elements influence the elements of the next two tiers, and ultimately the post-school outcomes of students with disabilities. *Effective Instruction* and *Effective Supports* are the foundational elements emphasized in the special education planning process described in this document. These two elements form the basis for the standards guiding this planning model, its indicators and its performance evaluation rubrics.



Explanation of Model

Moving from the bottom to the top, positive post school outcomes for students with disabilities result from students staying in school, getting a diploma and obtaining college and career readiness skills. In order to stay in school, get a diploma and obtain the necessary skills, the students and their families need to see and feel success with skills and concepts that are taught and demonstrated in the classroom. Success is demonstrated through positive results on State and district assessments that measure the appropriate grade and age level skills that define it. Success is also demonstrated through participation in classroom activities with grade and age level peers, and by receiving meaningful, positive feedback about their performance. In order to demonstrate positive performance each student must receive a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). FAPE in the LRE is defined with seven foundational elements: Early Childhood Foundation, Appropriate Evaluation and Identification, Access to the General Education Curriculum and Environment, Effective Instruction, Effective Supports, Parental Involvement, and Community Involvement. These elements, when improved, will result in an improvement in the elements of the next tier (Increases in Measureable Performance). Improvement in the elements of this tier will result in improvement in the elements of the next tier (Appropriate High School Exiting); and, improvement in that tier will result in improved post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. Thus the direction of the arrows.

The North Dakota special education planning process described within this document aligns with the improvement model and with the *AdvancED* accreditation planning model used by schools throughout the State. In particular, the standards align to the *AdvancED* standard, *Teaching and Assessing for Learning*, and its indicators, "*3.3",* addressing engagement, and "*3.12"*, addressing unique learning support services. They also align to the *AdvancED* standard, *Resources and Support Systems*, and its indicator, "*4.*6", providing support services to meet the needs of the student population. The standards and indicators of this special education model are specific to working with students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs.

Effective Instruction

The standard, *Effective Instruction,* uses guidelines from two principles of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) instructional planning framework as indicators. *Engagement- Provide Options for Self-regulation,* and *Action & Expression- Provide Options for Executive Functions,* are most important when considering instruction for students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs. Students in this target population have difficulty sustaining engagement in the entire lesson and demonstrating their acquisition of skills and concepts that are addressed in the lesson.

Evidence based and promising practices (EBPPs) that are aligned to each indicator provide multiple ways of addressing the elements of the indicator during the planning and delivery of instruction. The tools, resources, interventions and programs identified in this document have been included because they incorporate and embed evidence based and promising practices. The list is not intended to be exhaustive. It represents those most often cited in research databases or have evidence of their effectiveness in North Dakota schools.

The performance rubric for each indicator measures the present implementation of evidence based and promising practices within the system. When present levels are identified, priorities can be made for future implementation, adjustment or change.

Effective Supports

The standard, *Effective Supports,* has three indicators- 1) Academic Supports, 2) Behavioral Supports, and, 3) Parent, Student, Family & Community Supports. It uses a Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) framework to describe the integration of supports into the instructional process. It also describes the components of the system that have to be considered to design and implement effective supports. Although *Parent, Student, Family and Community Supports* are embedded within the other indicators of both standards, it is listed as a separate indicator for the system to evaluate the current level of involvement and availability prior to identifying and implementing such supports. As with the indicators under *Effective Instruction*, each has a four level performance evaluation rubric to measure implementation. Each indicator also includes a representative list of evidence based and promising practices, as well as resources, tools, interventions, and programs.

North Dakota Special Education Improvement Planning Frameworks & Descriptions

The descriptions of the standards and indicators of the North Dakota special education planning model in this section include a suggested list of evidence based and promising practices that help to define each indicator. The lists of suggested tools, resources, interventions and programs have embedded evidence based and promising practices, multiple research studies documenting their effectiveness with students in the North Dakota target population, or documentation of effective implementation in North Dakota schools.

Standard 1: Effective Instruction (for students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs)

Standard Statement- The special education unit supports Individual Education Program (IEP) teams in evaluating the self-regulation and executive functioning skills of students and including the explicit teaching of such skills, when appropriate, in their IEPs. The unit also supports teachers to plan and use multiple means to engage these students in each lesson and multiple means for each student to demonstrate their acquisition of skills and their understanding of concepts.

Access to the curriculum and classroom activities form the basis of effective instruction for all students. Instructional planning to ensure all students can access the general education curriculum and activities is guided by the three principles of *Universal Design for Learning (UDL).* When using *UDL* to design and deliver lessons for students with behavioral, social-emotional, social communication and/or mental health needs, the guideline of "Providing Options for Self-Regulation" under the Engagement principle, and the guideline of "Providing Options for Executive Functions" under the Action and Expression principle, are critical to incorporate into the planning and delivery of lessons. Incorporating them allows this population of students to sustain their engagement in the lesson and demonstrate that they have acquired the skills and conceptual understandings that are addressed in the lesson.

Indicator 1.1 Engagement- Self-regulation- Individual Education Program (IEP) teams evaluate and include, when appropriate, the explicit teaching of individualized self-regulation strategies within the IEPs of students identified with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs. Teachers plan and use a variety of appropriate practices to motivate these students and keep them engaged in lesson activities.

The National Center on UDL defines self-regulation as having the ability to strategically modulate one's emotional reactions or emotional states in order to be more effective at coping and engaging with the environment. This population of students has difficulty acquiring these skills on their own and may need to be explicitly taught. Research findings indicate that students learn self-regulation skills through collaborative work. The learning tasks, whether imbedded in classroom instruction or explicitly taught to particular students, promote the student's development of social interaction skills, especially their ability to generate private talk, recognize shared behaviors and use external supports to engage in appropriate behaviors. The following checkpoints are included in the UDL guidelines under self-regulation and may provide clarification:

- Promote expectations and beliefs
- Facilitate personal coping skills and strategies
- Develop self-assessment and reflection

For further information, refer to "Quick Links, UDL Guidelines" on the UDL website at www.udlcenter.org.

Evidence Based and Promising Practices: Modeling, Simulations, Social Skills training, Self- monitoring, Personal conversations/Self-talk, Response prompting, Procedural prompting, Cooperative learning, Social communication training, Self-questionnaire, Positive reinforcement of appropriate behaviors, Charting & Self-assessment, Project and Evaluation rubrics, Computer-assisted instruction, Consideration of Culture, On-line learning, Alternate education programs

Resources, Tools, Interventions & Programs (with embedded practices): *I do, We do, You do* (Anita Archer), *Social Thinking* (Winner), *Social Stories* (Gray), *Collaborative Problem Solving* (Greene), *Zones of Regulation* (Kuypers), *Nurtured Heart* (Glasser), Peer Coaching Models (Hughes, et al.), Graphic Organizers (Wolgemuth, et al.), Strategy Instruction (Deschler & Shumaker), Peer Tutoring and Strategy Instruction, Self-Directed Learning Model of Instruction (Lee, et al.), Coping Cats (Kendall & Hedtke), I Can Problem Solve (Shure), Prepare (Goldstein), Check-in/Check-out (Horner, et.al.), HOPS (Langberg); Self and Match (Croce & Salter)

Indicator 1.2 Action & Expression- Executive Functions- Individual Education Program (IEP) teams evaluate and include, when appropriate, the explicit teaching of individualized executive function skills within the IEPs of students identified with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs. Teachers plan and use a variety of appropriate practices that allow these students to express their acquisition and understanding of the lesson's concepts and skills.

Executive function capabilities allow students to overcome impulsive, short-term reactions to their environment and instead set long-term goals, plan effective strategies for reaching those goals, monitor their progress, and modify strategies as needed (*National Center on UDL*). To successfully graduate from high school and find success in post-secondary life, students must be able to set goals, plan and manage simple and complex bits of information, monitor their progress toward their goals and revise their goals or actions based on this information. Students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication, and/or mental health needs may need to have these taught through explicit, individualized instruction. The following checkpoints are included in the UDL guideline under executive functions and may provide clarification:

- Guide appropriate goal setting
- Support planning and strategy development
- Facilitate managing information and resources
- Enhance capacity for monitoring progress

For further information, refer to "Quick Links, UDL Guidelines" on the *UDL* website at www.udlcenter.org.

Evidence Based and Promising Practices: Posting class rules, Incentive programs, Behavioral or Academic contracts, Structured groupings, Chunking, Use of Agendas, Conferencing, Graphs/charts, Guides, Checklists, Modeling, Organization strategies, Note taking, Peer feedback, Consideration of Culture, Assistive technology, Graphic Organizers, Mnemonics, Goal setting, Strategy Instruction; Cover, Copy and Compare, Schema Based Instruction, Simultaneous prompting, Cognitive Strategy Instruction and Self-Management, Self-Management Intervention

Resources, Tools, Interventions & Programs (with embedded practices): Stop & Think (Voyager Sopris Publ.), Project planning templates, Exploring Language (Gorshgarian), Video Reviews, Prevent-Teach-Reinforce (Dunlap, Iovannone, Kincaid, et.al), Check and Connect (Christenson et al.), Self-Management Instruction (Wolgemuth, Cobb & Duncan), Self-Directed IEP (Martin et al.), Self-Advocacy Strategy (Test and Neale), Whose Future is it Anyway? (Test and Neale); Self and Match (Croce & Salter)

Standard 2: Effective Supports (for students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication, and mental health needs)

Standard Statement- The special education unit supports Individual Education Program (IEP) teams in considering and implementing a variety of academic and behavioral supports that include the parent, student, family, and community for students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs.

The literature discussing Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) advocates the customization and integration of academic, behavioral and parent, student, family, & community supports to maximize learning for all students, especially for students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs. Designing supports in these areas requires the system (school, district, and special education unit) to consider the components of three features: systems, practices, and data which may assist or may be barriers to effective support design. Planned changes and adjustments to various components within these features allow IEP teams to customize and integrate supports within and outside the school. Components of the features important to consider for these students include:

- Systems- Policies, Personnel, Staffing patterns, Budgets, Team structures, Leadership and Training.
- Practices- Planning & Implementation of interventions, Goal setting, Core academic curriculum and Organization structures (time period for instruction, grouping, and scheduling).
- Data- Monitoring progress, Monitoring Fidelity, Resources for analyzing and interpreting data, Communication of results & findings, Adjustment of interventions based on data review, and Frequency of data review.

For further information about the features and their components, refer to the series of articles titled, "*Integrating Academics and Behavior Supports within an RTI Framework*," by Bohanon, Goodman, and McIntosh on the RTI Network website. For more information about the use of supports in a Multi-tiered

System of Supports (MTSS) model, refer to the Center on Response to Intervention at the American Institutes for Research at www.rti4success.org.

Indicator 2.1 Academic Supports- Individual Education Program (IEP) teams consider and implement a variety of individualized academic supports for students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and/or mental health needs.

The *National Center on Intensive Interventions* at the *American Institutes of Research* (AIR) describes the design of intensive interventions for students with severe and persistent academic needs as including approaches from four categories:

- Change Intervention Dosage or Time
- Change the Learning Environment to promote Attention and Engagement
- Combine Cognitive Processing Strategies with Academic Learning
- Modify the Delivery of Instruction

The IEP team must keep in mind the changes and adjustments in the components of the three features mentioned within the standard statement (Systems, Practices, and Data) in order for these changes and modifications in time, environment, strategy combining and delivery to be able to be implemented with fidelity and be effective.

For more information about intensifying interventions for students with severe and persistent academic needs, refer to "Publications and Other Resources" on the National Center on Intensive Intervention at the American Institutes for Research website at www.intensiveinterventions.org.

Evidence Based and Promising Practices: Increase daily intervention time, Increase number/duration of instructional sessions, Increase frequency of instruction sessions, Reduce group size, Change instructional setting, Review prior learning, Procedural prompting, Rubrics/Study Guides, Teach & Reteach routines, Use of consistent vocabulary, Self-check, Use of visualization strategies, Graphic Organizers, Multi-media presentations, Specific & frequent feedback, Frequent progress monitoring, "Asking for help" communication skills, Frequent positive reinforcement/Celebrate successes, Chunking, Use of Advance Organizers, Use of Concrete/Applicable learning opportunities, Use of visual & verbal cues, Consideration of Culture, Incorporate customized & individual practice, Use of Early Warning Systems, Drop-out Prevention, Re-entry efforts, CRA math instruction, Mnemonics, Direct Instruction, Schema Based Instruction, Cover Copy and Compare, Content Scaffolding, Diagram Proficiency

Resources, Tools, Interventions & Programs (with embedded practices): Check & Connect (University of Minnesota), Think Alouds, Visualizing/Verbalizing (Lindamood Bell), Pragmatic language therapies, Online learning, Alternate ed. programs, Touch Math, Reading Recovery, Read Naturally, Graduated Sequence of Instruction, Administrative Intervention, Peer Assisted Learning, Kansas Strategy Instruction, Peer Assisted Instruction, Simultaneous prompting, Flash cards, Look/ Ask/Pick, Cognitive

Behavioral Interventions (Riccomini et.al), Interleave Worked Solutions Strategy, Anchored Instruction (Bottage)

Indicator 2.2 Behavioral Supports- Individual Education Program (IEP) teams consider and implement a variety of individualized behavior supports for students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and/or mental health needs.

Positive behavior support frameworks incorporate the principles of applied behavior analysis within the process for addressing inappropriate, disruptive, and/or harmful behaviors of students in the target population. These frameworks define, teach, and reinforce positive, appropriate and preferred behaviors at school, within the home, and within communities. Their focus is teaching new skills and making changes to environments that prevent problem behaviors from occurring, thus increasing the quality of life for these individuals. The *Association for Positive Behavioral Supports* describes these frameworks as sets of research-based strategies that combine:

- Functional Behavior Assessment
- Collaborative Teaming
- Proactive Support Strategies
- Positive Consequence Strategies
- Teaching Replacement Skills
- Systems Change/Whole School Approaches
- Group Action Planning
- Competing Behavior Model
- Addressing Cultural and Economic Diversity

The IEP team must keep in mind the changes and adjustments in the components of the three features mentioned within the standard statement (Systems, Practices, and Data) in order for these to be combined, put into place and result in improved behaviors.

For further clarification of these frameworks, refer to the *Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavior Intervention Supports* website at www.pbis.org.

Evidence Based and Promising Practices: Use of appropriate data (Frequency, intensity or duration), Frequent progress monitoring, Use of positive reinforcement strategies, Whole school approaches, FBA drives BIP, Instruction on Replacement skills, Consideration of Culture, Video Modeling, Computer Assisted Instruction, Including behavioral or engagement data in early warning checks

Resources, Tools, Interventions & Programs (with embedded practices): *Check & Connect* (University of Minnesota), *Nurtured Heart* (Glasser), *Zones of Regulation* (Kuyper), Prevent-Teach-Reinforce (Dunlap, Iovanonne, Kincaid, et al.), Self-Management (Wolgemuth et al.), Self-Advocacy Training- I Plan, Person Centered Planning, Self- directed IEP (Martin, MaGahee-Kovac), Whose Future is it Anyway? (Lee, et al.), Teachtown

<u>Indicator 2.3 Parent, Student, Family & Community Supports-</u> Individual Education Program (IEP) teams involve parents, students, and family members in the design and implementation of appropriate educational supports; and, inform them of available community supports.

Supports from multiple sources are needed for students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs, especially for those students with severe and complex needs as identified through the evaluation process. The planning of these multiple sources of supports is often referred to as "Wraparound." The *Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS)* website describes it as "a process that builds constructive relationships and support networks directed specifically to each student." Using such a process at an IEP meeting involves those with the most knowledge about the student and the range of services that can be directed to the student, as well as to the family. It also provides integrated, family centered, community based, and culturally relevant approaches and broadens accountability for improvement in student performance.

For further information about wraparound planning, refer to the *Technical Assistance Center for Positive Behavior Intervention Supports* website at www.pbis.org/school/tertiary-level/wraparound, or enter the descriptor, "Wraparound Planning" into a search engine.

<u>Evidence Based and Promising Practices:</u> Involvement of student in home and community activities; Involvement of parents, student, and family in school-based activities; Involvement of parent, student, family in the IEP process; Self-advocacy training; Regular communication about program, curriculum, classroom activities & progress on individual goals; Consideration of Culture in the development and implementation of educational supports; Parent-to-parent supports; Peer supports; Encouraging involvement in support groups or parent training

<u>Resources, Tools, Interventions & Programs (with embedded practices):</u> Nebraska Dropout Prevention and Transition Support for High-Risk Youth; Bridges (Sawyer), Self-directed IEPs, Self-Advocacy Training (Martin, MaGahee-Kovac)

Standards & Indicators Outline

Standard 1: Effective Instruction

Statement- The unit supports Individual Education Program (IEP) teams in evaluating the self-regulation and executive function skills of students and including the explicit teaching of such skills, when appropriate, in their IEPs. The unit also supports teachers to plan and use multiple means to engage these students in each lesson and multiple means for each student to demonstrate their acquisition of skills and understanding of concepts.

Indicators

1.1	Individual Education Program (IEP) teams evaluate and include, when appropriate, the explicit teaching of individualized self-regulation strategies within the IEPs of students identified with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs. Teachers plan and use a variety of appropriate practices to motivate these students and keep them engaged in lesson activities.
1.2	Individual Education Program (IEP) teams evaluate and include, when appropriate, the explicit teaching of individualized executive function skills within the IEPs of students identified with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs. Teachers plan and use a variety of appropriate practices that allow these students to express their acquisition and understanding of the lesson's concepts and skills.

Standard 2: Effective Supports

Statement- The special education unit supports Individual Education Program (IEP) teams in considering a variety of academic and behavioral supports that involve the parents, student, family and community for students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs.

Indicators

2.1	Individual Education Program (IEP) teams consider and implement a variety of individualized academic supports for students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and/or mental health needs.
2.2	Individual Education Program (IEP) teams consider and implement a variety of individualized behavior supports for students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and/or mental health needs.
2.3	Individual Education Program (IEP) teams involve parents, students and family members in the design and implementation of appropriate educational supports; and, inform them of available community supports.

Special Education Improvement Planning Outline

Standards, Indicators, & Performance Rubrics

An important component within the North Dakota special education improvement planning model is needs assessment. Gathering survey and file review data, then analyzing it to determine the planning and use of evidence based and promising practices allows the leadership team of the special education unit to understand the current level of planning and use of those practices. A performance evaluation rubric is then used to rate a current level of performance. Current levels are used to determine priorities for adjustment, change or implementation of additional practices. The following outline of standards, indicators, and performance rubrics is used to conduct this component.

Standard 1: Effective Instruction

Statement- The unit supports Individual Education Program (IEP) teams in evaluating the self-regulation and executive function skills of students and including the teaching of such skills, when appropriate, in their IEPs. The unit also supports teachers to plan and use multiple means to engage these students in each lesson and multiple means for each student to demonstrate their acquisition of skills and understanding of concepts.

Indicators

1.1	Individual Education Program (IEP) teams evaluate and include, when appropriate, the explicit teaching of individualized self-regulation strategies within the IEPs of students identified with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs. Teachers plan and use a variety of appropriate practices to motivate these students and keep them engaged in lesson activities.
1.2	Individual Education Program (IEP) teams evaluate and include, when appropriate, the explicit teaching of individualized executive function skills within the IEPs of students identified with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs. Teachers plan and use a variety of appropriate practices that allow these students to express their acquisition and understanding of the lesson's concepts and skills.

Performance Rubrics

1.1 Self-Regulation	a. Individual Education Program (IEP) teams evaluate and include, when appropriate, the explicit teaching of individualized self-regulation strategies within the IEPs of students identified with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs. b. Teachers plan and use a variety of appropriate practices to motivate these students and keep them engaged in lesson activities. **Score for a: ___** **Score for b: ___**
Level 4	a. IEP teams are consistent and deliberate in evaluating the need for explicit instruction of self-regulation skills. These teams consistently use this evaluation information to write IEP goals addressing needs for explicit instruction from trained staff, or transfer of the learned skills back to the classroom setting. b. Teachers are consistent and deliberate in planning for and using multiple means of engaging these students in the activities of the entire lesson.
Level 3	a. IEP teams often evaluate the need for explicit instruction of self-regulation skills for these students. IEP teams often write goals on IEPs, to be implemented by trained staff, for student acquisition of these skills, as well as for transfer to a classroom setting. b. Teachers often plan for and use multiple means of engaging these students in the activities of the entire lesson.
Level 2	a. IEP teams sometimes evaluate the need for explicit instruction of self-regulation skills and then include goals on IEPs to address needs for explicit instruction and transfer back to the classroom setting. b. Teachers sometimes plan for and use multiple means of engaging these students in the activities of the entire lesson.
Level 1	a. IEP teams rarely or never evaluate the need for explicit instruction of self-regulation skills. They rarely or never include such instruction or transfer of learned skills back to the classroom setting, as goals on students' IEPs. b. Teachers rarely or never plan for and use multiple means of engaging these students in the activities of the entire lesson.

1.2 Executive Function	a. Individual Education Program (IEP) teams evaluate and include, when appropriate, the explicit teaching of individualized executive function skills within the IEPs of students identified with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs. b. Teachers plan and use a variety of appropriate practices that allow these students to express their acquisition and understanding of the lesson's concepts and skills. **Score for a: ___** **Score for b: ___**
Level 4	a. IEP teams are consistent and deliberate in evaluating the need for explicit instruction of executive function skills for these students. These teams consistently use this evaluation information to write IEP goals addressing needs for explicit instruction from trained staff, or transfer of the learned skills back to the classroom setting. b. Teachers are consistent and deliberate in planning for and allow multiple means for students to express their acquisition and understanding of the concepts and skills taught in each lesson.
Level 3	a. IEP teams often evaluate the need for explicit instruction of executive function skills for these students. They often write goals on IEPs, to be implemented by trained staff, for student acquisition of these skills, and transfer back to the classroom setting. b. Teachers often plan for and allow multiple means for students to express their acquisition and understanding of the concepts and skills taught within each lesson.
Level 2	a. IEP teams sometimes evaluate the need for explicit instruction of executive function skills for these students, and then include goals on IEPs to address needs for explicit instruction and transfer back to the classroom setting. b. Teachers sometimes plan for and allow multiple means for students to express their acquisition and understanding of the concepts and skills taught in each lesson.
Level 1	a. IEP teams rarely or never evaluate the need for explicit instruction of executive function skills for these students. They rarely or never include such instruction or transfer of learned skills back to the classroom setting, as goals on students' IEPs. b. Teachers rarely or never plan for or allow multiple means for students to express their acquisition and understanding of the concepts and skills taught in each lesson.

Standard 2: Effective Supports

Statement- The special education unit supports Individual Education Program (IEP) teams in considering a variety of academic and behavioral supports that involve the parents, student, family and community for students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs.

Indicators

2.1	Individual Education Program (IEP) teams consider and implement a variety of individualized academic supports for students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs.
2.2	Individual Education Program (IEP) teams consider and implement a variety of individualized behavior supports for students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs.
2.3	Individual Education Program (IEP) teams involve parents, students and family members in the design and implementation of appropriate educational supports; and, inform them of available community supports.

Performance Rubrics

2.1 Academic Supports	Individual Education Program (IEP) teams consider and implement a variety of individualized academic supports for students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs. **Score ___**
Level 4	Perceptual data from IEP teams and IEP evidence clearly indicate that IEP teams are considering and implementing a variety of individualized academic supports for students.
Level 3	There is some perceptual data from IEP teams and IEP evidence that indicate that IEP teams are considering and implementing a variety of individualized academic supports for students.
Level 2	There is little evidence within the perceptual data or IEPs that indicate that IEP teams are considering and implementing a variety of individualized academic supports for students.
Level 1	There is no evidence within the perceptual data or IEPs that indicate that IEP teams are considering and implementing a variety of individualized academic supports.

Standard 2: Effective Supports

Performance Rubrics- continued

2.2 Behavioral Supports	Individual Education Program (IEP) teams consider and implement a variety of appropriate behavior supports for students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs. **Score ___**
Level 4	Perceptual data from IEP teams and IEP evidence clearly indicate that IEP teams are considering and implementing a variety of appropriate behavioral supports for students.
Level 3	There is some perceptual data from IEP teams and IEP evidence that indicate that IEP teams are considering and implementing a variety of appropriate behavioral supports for students.
Level 2	There is little evidence within the perceptual data or IEPs that indicate that IEP teams are considering and implementing a variety of appropriate behavioral supports for students.
Level 1	There is no evidence within the perceptual data or IEPs that indicate that IEP teams are considering and implementing a variety of appropriate behavioral supports.

2.3 Parent, Student, Family, & Community Supports	Individual Education Program (IEP) teams involve parents, students and family members in the development and implementation of appropriate educational supports; and, inform them of available community supports. **Score ___**
Level 4	Perceptual data from parents, students, family members or community members clearly indicate that the school involves them in the development and implementation of educational supports; and informs them of available community supports.
Level 3	There is some perceptual data from parents, students, family members or community members that indicate that the school involves them in the development and implementation of educational supports; and informs them of available community supports.

Level 2	There is little evidence within the perceptual data that indicate that the school involves them in the development and implementation of educational supports; and informs them of available community supports.
Level 1	There is no evidence within the perceptual data that indicates that the school involves them in the development and implementation of educational supports; or informs them of available community supports.

North Dakota Special Education

Continuous Improvement Planning Cycle

Continuous Improvement Planning Cycle

Leadership Team

Purpose

The purpose of a planning leadership team is to guide the implementation of the planning process. It is a small, but representative group that brings multiple perspectives to the discussion. It provides leadership when implementing the planning process, assists in the allocation of resources, monitors implementation fidelity, and serves as a means of communication to and from staff, parents and community.

Membership

NDDPI encourages units to start this process using a unit level leadership team to develop unit wide goals and activities. Suggested members for a unit wide team- unit administrator, representatives from unit board members, other school/district administrators, unit coordinators, parents, community members (especially those involved in working with or employing students with behavior, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs), classroom teachers, special education teachers, federal program facilitators, related service providers, students or a student advocate, paraprofessionals, or other support staff.

Committees

The responsibilities of the leadership team include: providing technical assistance, assisting with resources, monitoring fidelity and serving as communication liaisons. The complexities of these responsibilities will involve planning and implementing a variety of activities. Dividing the membership into various committees and sub-committees disperses the responsibilities so that all members are active participants.

Examples-

- Executive Committee- responsible for overall guidance, schedules/timelines and establishing and monitoring implementation fidelity. A process facilitator could be assigned from this committee who schedules, develops agendas and facilitates meetings of the large group.
- Resource Committee- responsible for gathering data, analyzing it and writing a summary to be presented to the large group.
- Communications Committee- responsible for disseminating information regarding the planning process, its goals and supporting activities, and the reporting of progress and success.

Needs Assessment

Purpose

The needs assessment collects and analyzes evidence to determine the current status of the use of evidence based and promising practices within the system. Knowing the system's current use assists the leadership team in identifying evidence based and promising practices that need scaling up for use in instructional activities for students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs. Evidence in the form of quantifiable data is used to specifically define the system's current performance with the implementation of practices, and to identify and define practices that need to be scaled up.

Process

The leadership team or a committee set up by the leadership team guides the steps of the needs assessment process. It is important for implementation fidelity that the team or committee follow the steps of this process:

1. Gather and Analyze Data
2. Write a Summary of the Analysis
3. Rate Current Level of Performance
4. Identify Targets

Gathering Data

When gathering data regarding the performance of the system, the team or committee will need to consider actions and the people responsible for performing them. Both are mentioned within the indicator statements. For Indicators 1.1 and 1.2, the actions and the people are the same- *IEP Teams evaluate and include in IEPs,* and *Teachers plan and use*. For Indicators 2.1 and 2.2, the actions and the people are the same- *IEP teams consider and implement*; but, for Indicator 2.3 the actions differ from the first two indicators- *IEP teams involve,* and *IEP teams inform*.

Quantifiable data regarding people's performance includes both perceptual and observational data. Perceptual data is gathered using surveys and observational data is gathered using file reviews. Respondents rate their perceptions of performance in a survey; and, a trained review team in a file review observes what is contained in the documents of a file and determines whether it meets criteria in order to be counted. Rating scores and frequency scores result from these forms of data collection.

For Indicators 1.1 and 1.2, file reviews will gather data regarding the performance of IEP teams by looking at the number of files that have appropriate evaluations documented in the *Student*

Profile and results documented in the *Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance*. Surveys will gather data regarding teachers' perceptions of their planning and use of evidence based and promising practices.

For indicators 2.1 and 2.2, file reviews will gather data regarding IEP teams' consideration and implementation of academic and behavior supports; and, surveys will gather data from administrators regarding the use of system supports. For Indicator 2.3, surveys will gather data regarding the involvement of parents, students, and family members in the design and implementation of educational supports; and, either surveys or a file review will gather data regarding IEP teams informing parents, students, and family members of available community supports.

Surveys should be designed with respondent inter-rater reliability, validity, response rates (20%- parents, 60% staff), and sub-aggregation as considerations. File reviews should be designed with team inter-rater reliability, files to be reviewed, validity, schedule, collection, and sub-aggregation as considerations.

Analyzing Data

When analyzing data gathered through surveys or file reviews, the leadership team needs to consider the following:

- Who?- Leadership Team or Committee
- Data Sets- What Data and Format?
- Analysis Activity
- Record Keeping

During the data analysis activity, participants make observational statements about positive or concerning trends within the data. The committee prioritizes these statements to produce a comprehensive summative evaluation of current performance data. Statements that make judgmental or comparison observations about the data are not included.

Once priorities are identified, the leadership team or committee conducts a root cause analysis to determine the degree of knowledge, skill or attitude of the critical people whose actions were evaluated by the survey or file review. Knowledge, skills and attitudes have been determined to be the critical factors that can be leveraged to improve the effectiveness of educational programming for students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs. Questions on a survey may provide the team with respondents' perceptions of their knowledge, skills or attitudes. Speculation about the causes may be needed if questions have not been included in the surveys.

Writing the Summary

The needs assessment summary tells the story of people's performance in the implementation of evidence based and promising practices. The description of the current level of performance should include the celebrations and concerns observed within the data. It should also discuss the results of the root cause analysis knowledge, skill and attitude strengths and weaknesses. The current levels and cause descriptions will be used in the next step of the needs assessment process. The summary needs to be sent to each school for upload into the school's current plan using their ASSIST Tool access. It will also need to be sent to the NDDPI, Special Education Unit.

Rate Current Levels of Performance

Using the performance rubrics for each indicator of the planning model, leadership teams rate the overall performance of the unit. The team uses only the rubrics that correspond to the indicators they evaluated in the data and evidence gathering step. A rating score must be determined for each action and each group of people performing an action. Prior to reaching consensus on a rating score, team members must develop a common understanding of the performance rubric's rating descriptions and terminology. Using this common language, which is the same as that used in the AdvancED rubrics, the team then reviews and discusses the summative data analysis to reach consensus on each indicator's score.

Identify Targets for Improvement

The leadership team must identify the group of people, their actions and the practices that will be targeted for improvement. Consideration must be given to the performance rubric ratings and the root cause analysis. Consideration must also be given to developing a manageable timeline of activities, as well as conditions under which adjustments, changes or additions to the evidence based and promising practices known to improve services for students with behavioral, social/emotional, social communication and mental health needs can be made.

Goals

Performance goals and objectives describe the actions that will be done by people within the system. These goals and objectives will be entered as organizational goals by each school within the unit using the AdvancED ASSIST Tool. They identify the expected change, the timeline in which the work must be completed, and how success will be measured. The goal is built within the ASSIST Tool using drop down menus and narrative boxes. The following template provides not only the sequence used within the ASSIST Tool, but also the format that

building administrators will need to enter goals in the ASSIST Tool and for directors to subsequently submit to NDDPI.

Goal/Objective Template:

- Goal Statement- **What** will be achieved
- Objective Statement- **What** action will happen to get there, by **When**, and **How** will it be **Measured**.
    - Strategies
        - Activities

Strategies will name the tools, resources, interventions or programs that will be used to reach the goal. These strategy statements must include some of the evidence based and promising practices embedded within them and include some research to support their use in North Dakota schools.

Activities are individual tasks or functions that are done as part of the strategy. The activity statement needs to include steps to be taken, timelines, resource allocation, staff responsible, and the activity type (professional development, technical assistance, direct instruction, community engagement, etc.).

Initial Planning- 2015-16 School Year- At the high school level, the team will evaluate current performance data and set improvement targets for the behavioral support indicator. The leadership team will then write a goal for high schools emphasizing the implementation of a variety of behavioral supports for students in the target population.

At the elementary and middle school levels, the team will evaluate current performance and set improvement targets for the self-regulation indicator. For these schools, the team will write a separate goal. That goal must be related to evaluating the students' need for self-regulation strategies and the inclusion of goals related to providing students with explicit instruction using evidence based and promising practices within their IEPs; and/or multiple opportunities to implement evidence based and promising practices to support and sustain student engagement in the activities of lessons.

Dissemination

The leadership team must send the written summary and goal statements, including the strategies and activities, to each school administrator and to the NDDPI Special Education office in the ASSIST Tool format. School administrators will use their AdvancED Assist Tool access to

add the special education summary and goal to their current continuous improvement plans. The NDDPI Special Education office will compile them into a statewide list. Analysis will follow to determine which activities are common throughout the state, within a region or are specific to units or districts within a unit. The results of that analysis will determine the North Dakota Dept. of Public Instruction (NDDPI) resource allocation.

The goals, strategies and activities need to also be disseminated to all unit staff and to the unit's board of directors.

Evaluation

Summative Measures

Summative evaluation measures monitor the effectiveness of local and district efforts at the end of the timeline prescribed in the goal and objectives. The instrument used to collect the data to be analyzed to assess the effectiveness of the efforts will not always be listed in the goal or objectives, it may need to be derived from the statement. The data collection instrument should be the same, or closely aligned to the instrument used in the needs assessment process to determine current performance levels.

Formative Measures

Formative evaluation measures check the progress of efforts and assist in determining whether the team needs to adjust, change or add in new practices to reach the target within the timeline. These progress checks need to be scheduled at intervals that will allow the adjustments, changes, or additional implementations to have a positive effect on the progress. Doing so increases the likelihood that the target will be reached. Any progress check showing progress toward the target should be acknowledged and celebrated.

Fidelity Measures

Implementation fidelity, an often overlooked, but necessary factor, determines whether the same degree of success can be obtained as that found in the research. Implementation fidelity is defined as carrying out the strategies and activities in the same way that they were intended or described in the research. Fidelity components for each strategy will be described in the purchased handbooks/manuals or guidelines. They may also be described in the training provided by the developer. During implementation, schools in North Dakota may make adjustments for their specific student populations and those can be gained through communication with other unit directors. Components most often used to measure strategy fidelity include: personnel involved, when the strategy should be taught/implemented, the

length of time for instruction or use, and the essential teaching elements that must be incorporated during the instruction.

Activity type fidelity is dependent upon the supporting research. The activity type used in this special education effort will be professional development. Consideration should be given to the alignment of the professional development to the purpose(s) of your efforts. The team should ask whether it improves the knowledge, skill or attitude that the team thought was needed to make the adjustment, change or implementation of new practices. Quality professional development also provides embedded job-related activities for attendees to engage in and that will be supported by additional professional development and technical assistance.

Reporting Out

Reporting on the targets, progress and successes needs to take place at three different stages of the continuous improvement planning process:

- Targets should be disseminated once the leadership team sets them. They should be reported to the leadership, Board, staff, schools and the community.
- Results of the formative evaluation checks and any adjustments, changes or additional practices should be reported after each checkpoint analysis. They should be reported to the leadership team, Board, staff and schools. Schools will need to add the progress information to their improvement plans.
- The success of efforts should be reported at the end of the timeline listed in the goal. The success should be reported to the leadership team, Board, staff, schools and community. Schools will need to use this information to update their improvement plans.

Note- Each school needs to enter the following into their improvement plan using their ASSIST Tool access:

- *Written Summary from Needs Assessment*
- *Goals, objectives, strategies, activities*
- *Formative and Summative evaluation results*

Note- The following needs to be sent to the NDDPI, Special Education Unit:

- *Written Summary from Needs Assessment*
- *Goals, objectives, strategies, activities*

Timelines/Schedule of Activities

Summer, 2015

- Set up Leadership Team

Fall (September – December), 2015

- Leadership Team Initial Meeting- Understanding Scope of Work & Sequence of Activities
- Needs Assessment
- Goals

Winter (January), 2016

- Disseminate

Spring (February – May), 2016

- Plan for Implementation, Evaluation, and Reporting Out

Summer- 2016, & 2016-17 School Year

- Implement Strategies/Activities
- Implement Progress Checks & Reporting Out
- Implement Fidelity Checks
- Implement Summative Evaluation and Reporting Out

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