

UTAH STATE SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SSIP) EVALUATION PLAN

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Updated January 2022



SSIP Phase III Year 6 Introduction

Utah's State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) describes the state system and its capacity to assist Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to develop the needed capacity to improve outcomes for students with disabilities and then to evaluate the impact of Utah's improvement efforts. These improvement efforts align with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The success of the SSIP requires systematic improvement across the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) and LEAs to leverage existing strengths while simultaneously closing system gaps. For the SSIP to be successful, the USBE and LEAs need to:

- Increase capacity to implement the SSIP,
- Align and leverage current initiatives,
- Increase utilization of evidence-based practices (EBPs),
- Improve infrastructure and coordination for delivering effective professional development (PD) and technical assistance (TA),
- Increase the use of effective dissemination strategies,
- Increase meaningful engagement of state and local stakeholders around SSIP efforts,
- Increase capacity to effectively utilize available TA resources, and
- Increase capacity to implement general supervision systems that support effective implementation of the IDEA and ESSA.

These combined improvement efforts have and will continue to lead to improved educational outcomes for all students in the area of mathematics proficiency, which in turn will also improve state results in graduation, dropout, and post-school outcomes as students with disabilities have the mathematics computation and application skills they need to pass required high school mathematics courses; take and pass the American College Testing (ACT) assessment with a Utah college-ready score; get accepted into post-high training programs, colleges, and universities; acquire competitive employment; and/or live independently.

The State-identified Measurable Result (SiMR) was selected after a review of Utah mathematics data over the five previous years on statewide assessments, in which proficiency trends were obvious. To improve achievement in mathematics, stakeholders identified three primary focus areas for USBE and LEAs:

- I. Administrator, teacher, parent, and student attitudes, expectations, and behavior (resulting in some IEP Team decisions that limit grade-level Core mathematics instruction);
- II. Teacher understanding of mathematics standards and effective instruction; and
- III. An educational system that decreases general education instructional support and interventions in secondary settings, during a time when the mathematics Core standards become more rigorous and abstract.

Figure 1 illustrates the proficiency gaps that led stakeholders to reach consensus on the SiMR. All students with disabilities in grades six through eight had a baseline proficiency rate on the statewide end of level mathematics assessment of 14.9%, while those with the disability categories of Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) and Speech Language Impairment (SLI) only had a proficiency rate of 7.1%. Utah's stakeholders determined that Utah needed to cut that gap in half and increase statewide proficiency by 11.11% for students with SLD or SLI in grades 6–8 on the Student Assessment of Growth and Excellence (SAGE) end of level statewide mathematics

test over a five-year period (2014–2019). (To review the process Utah used to achieve stakeholder consensus on the SiMR, review the [SSIP Phases I and II](https://schools.utah.gov/specialeducation/resources/datareporting?mid=936&tid=1) reports [https://schools.utah.gov/specialeducation/resources/datareporting?mid=936&tid=1]).

Utah then reiterated the process to bring stakeholders to consensus about what specific improvement activities would need to be implemented in order to achieve the SiMR and how the USBE and LEAs would evaluate Utah’s progress toward achieving the SiMR.

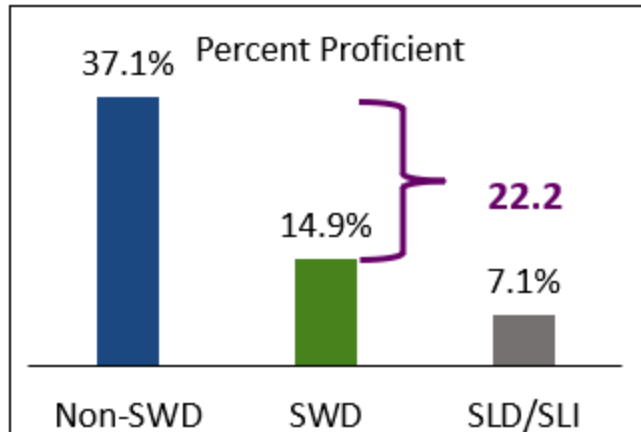


Figure 1: Percentage of sixth through eighth grade students without disabilities, students with disabilities, and students categorized SLD/SLI who were proficient on the SAGE in mathematics in 2013–2014.

However, in FFY2018, Utah administered a new statewide end of level assessment and thus our baseline and targets needed to be reset. Figure 2 illustrates the updated baseline proficiency rate of the SiMR on the new assessment.

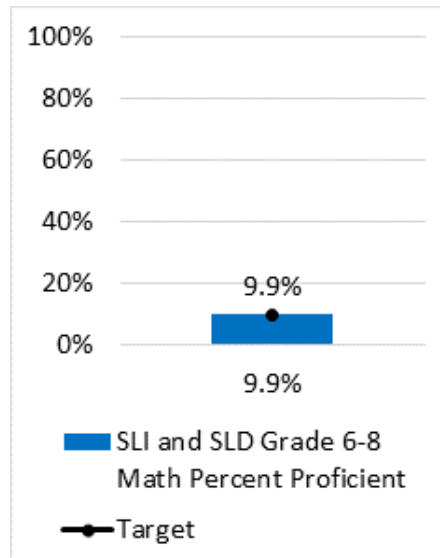


Figure 2: FFY2018 New SiMR baseline.

As Utah administered a new statewide end of level assessment in FFY2018, Utah set a new SiMR baseline data and new SiMR targets. In preparation and evaluation of the SSIP, a stakeholder feedback committee was created and met to discuss Utah’s new baseline results

and proposed targets. The committee evaluated multiple data sets and had robust conversations to ensure the new targets are not only realistic to achieve, but also maintain high expectations for students with disabilities. The goal was to set rigorous but realistic targets, which was done using trend data and appropriate standard deviations calculations. Research suggests effect sizes of 0.25 standard deviations are considered to be substantively important.¹²³ Therefore, the stakeholder committee advised the use of a set of targets that will allow for the achievement of a total of 0.25 standard deviation increase at the end of ten years, which is the calculation Utah has chosen. Utah values stakeholder input and solicits ongoing feedback.

SSIP Evaluation Plan

Utah’s evaluation plan for the SSIP has two major parts. The first is the SiMR target calculation, which is to increase the number of students with SLI or SLD in grades 6–8 who are proficient on the Readiness Improvement Success Empowerment (RISE) statewide end of level (mathematics) assessment by 0.25 standard deviations over ten years (or a target proficiency rate of 10.95% in five years [by 2022-2023]). This is the data Utah reports to OSEP in the SPP/APR online reporting tool.

2018-2019 SiMR Baseline: 9.90% proficient

Year	2018–2019	2019–2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Target	9.90%	10.13%	10.40%	10.68%	10.95%
Actual	9.90%	N/A	8.90%	N/A	N/A

Figure 3: Utah’s SiMR targets and actual data.

Data is collected for this first part of the evaluation plan through the statewide assessment then disaggregated by disability category and grade. The data is analyzed collaboratively by the USBE Special Education and Data and Statistics teams by compared current year data to previous trend data and the data for this SiMR target population with all students with disabilities and then also all students with disabilities with all students without disabilities in the state.

The second part of the evaluation is the periodic evaluation of the components within each of the three Improvement Strategies. Utah evaluates the outcomes of the improvement strategies by 1) evaluating and adding to the infrastructure improvements needed to better support the implementation of the SSIP, 2) comparing the outputs from previous SSIP implementation years with the current year’s outputs, 3) reviewing the output/outcome data of LEAs that have been implementing SSIP-implementation initiatives, and 4) reviewing activities and progress with stakeholders. Most of Utah’s data is related to outputs, as opposed to outcomes, but the fact that educators and administrators continued to collaborate with us to review and improve practices, supports Utah’s decision to continue implementing these improvement strategies.

¹ Cohen, J. (1992). A power primer, *Psychological Bulletin*, 112(1), 155-159. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.112.1.155

² Gong, B., and Tappan, R. (2001, April 10). *How much school improvement should accountability systems require?* Presentation at the Reidy Interactive Lecture Series, Nashua, NH.

³ Institute of Education Sciences. (2014). *What works clearinghouse procedures and standards handbook (v.3)*. Washington, DC: Author.

To achieve the identified systems change, the USBE implemented the following activities (with their related outcomes) for each Improvement Strategy.

High Expectations

1. Mathematics Equity Meet-Ups: Approximately 40 educators from across the state participated in each of the eight monthly meetings.
2. Book Study: Utah provided a parent book study in FFY20 on *Grit* by Angela Duckworth for 150 participants.
3. Equity Corner at State Mathematics Coordinators Committee: Approximately 60 State Mathematics leaders engaged in equity and inclusion discussions four times during the year.

Content and Instruction

1. Special Education Mathematics Endorsement: Support for special education teachers has increased throughout the state, with over 50 secondary math special education teachers enrolled in cohorts across the state, including Nebo School District, Salt Lake Community College, through a program at Utah State University, and within districts.
2. As LEAs that did not meet APR Indicator 3 targets access PL, TA, and ongoing coaching to improve math instruction, intervention, and programming, Utah anticipates the math proficiency scores of SWD in these LEAs to increase.
3. Co-teaching: Utah continued to provide an annual co-teaching initiative cohort. This year USBE offered a year one and year two professional learning cohort. Year one is designed for participants new to Co-teaching or participants that are a new content team. Year two is designed for participants who have previously participated in a cohort within the last three years and want to increase their knowledge of Co-teaching strategies and gain further support. This year we have 32 teachers participating in the year one cohort and eight participating in the year two cohort.
4. IEP Reflective Framework: IEP Task Force created the Framework to support stakeholders in improving IEP goals and services. Currently, more than 200 educators have attended webinars and training on the Framework. A mathematics leadership group of 30 will be trained to be able to facilitate discussions within their LEA to promote effective implementation.
5. Newsletters for Administrators and Teachers: Monthly articles with over 1,000 subscribers receive a newsletter each month.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

1. Equity-based MTSS Canvas course was created and placed on hold for implementation due to the pandemic.
2. Cross-Departmental Implementation Team (CDIT) created an Interventions Document aligned to the agency High Quality Instruction Document and will be used for statewide professional learning in the upcoming year.

Based on discussions with Utah's stakeholders during 2021, they agreed that the improvement activities currently being implemented were appropriate to impact the SiMR and to improve math outcomes for students with disabilities.