

In a simultaneous bottom up and top down manner, every new policy sets the occasion for creating new capacity to effectively implement the policy with demonstrable benefits to students, families, and communities.

New practices that are implemented set the occasion for discovering and creating the infrastructure supports, policy revisions, and funding streams needed to further develop and expand capacity.

This leads to a never ending cycle to sustain and improve both the innovation and the infrastructure supports for the innovation for years to come.

The purpose of the State Implementation & Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practices (SISEP) Center is to help States establish adequate capacity to carry out effective implementation, organization change, and systems transformation strategies to maximize the academic achievement and behavior outcomes of students statewide.

An Overview of the State Implementation and Scaling Up of Evidence-based Practices Center (SISEP)

Ensuring that effective interventions and practices are implemented in schools and districts is a prime function of State Educational Agencies (SEAs). Currently, it is common practice for SEAs to use pilot programs to demonstrate the usefulness of an intervention. However, research indicates that pilots are insufficient for laying the foundations for going to scale statewide with an effective intervention. Thus, States are left with isolated islands of excellence and no framework to scale up success. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has funded a center designed to assist States in building the organizational and procedural supports necessary to take existing evidence-based practices to scale. The SISEP Center currently is assisting selected States (Illinois, Minnesota, and Oregon) to develop the capacity to make effective and sustained use of evidence-based practices statewide. Other States (Michigan, Missouri, and Virginia) are receiving less intensive assistance and about a dozen other

States are actively involved in the OSEP-sponsored State Readiness for Scaling up Community of Practice to prepare for scaling in their States.

Scaling up success is the result of a systematic approach to developing an infrastructure for implementation, a durable in-state capacity to make full use of a variety of effective practices statewide. The process of developing this infrastructure is projected to require about 5 years of intensive work with State leaders, stakeholders, district leaders and managers, and educators. The key elements of an infrastructure for implementation include:

1. A fully engaged State Management Team (the chief State school officer and other State directors) to initiate the process, manage capacity building, and manage the process of changing current roles, functions, and structures to fully support successful practices in State, district, and school organizations;
2. A State Transformation Team made up of individuals selected for their excellent implementation experience, in-depth knowledge of the State education system, and adaptive leadership skills to initiate change; and
3. Regional Implementation Teams (about one RIT for every 100 schools) who are specially prepared to develop, sustain, and continually improve implementation capacity in districts and schools by creating "District" Leadership and Implementation Teams. Because of the great variation in number of schools per district, "District" Teams (in quotes) each work with about 25 schools to assure effective implementation of effective innovations to benefit all students.

These elements of a statewide infrastructure are often the missing ingredients in current recipes for statewide improvement.

Experience shows that it is impossible to change large systems all at once. Thus, implementation capacity development initially is accomplished through work in a Transformation Zone, a vertical slice of the system that includes all key aspects of the current education system from the classroom to the capitol. The Transformation Zone is big enough to be a microcosm of the entire system and small enough to make change manageable (e.g., State leaders, intermediary district organizations, districts and accompanying schools and classrooms, State level stakeholders). Initiating change in a Transformation Zone surfaces fundamental issues (e.g., regulations, credentialing, union contracts, relationships with higher education, job descriptions, hiring practices) that are impediments to using interventions effectively and to building implementation capacity. These issues are presented monthly to the State Management Team for discussion and resolution. This system improvement feedback loop identifies current issues, creates a sense of urgency, and is the driving force for aligning system functions with desired outcomes for students, re-purposing operating units and positions, and enhancing efficiencies while improving effectiveness.

To carry out these capacity-development functions, the SISEP Center engages in frequent email and telephone communication and has monthly in-state meetings with the State Management Team to provide the intensive TA required. In addition to intensive TA, SISEP provides universal and targeted TA nationally. For example, SISEP works closely with the Regional Resource Centers, Comprehensive Centers, school improvement groups, and others to make use of existing resources in education and to contribute implementation knowledge to the TA community.

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