



The Division of Special Education/
Early Intervention Services
(DSE/EIS)

STRATEGIC PLAN

Moving Maryland Forward

Sharpen the Focus for 2020



NOVEMBER 2016

EARLY CHILDHOOD

ACCESS, EQUITY, PROGRESS

SECONDARY TRANSITION

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.

State Superintendent of Schools

Andrew R. Smarick

President, Maryland State Board of Education

Carol A. Williamson, Ed.D.

Deputy State Superintendent for Teaching and Learning

Marcella E. Franczkowski, M.S.

Assistant State Superintendent
Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services

Larry Hogan, Governor

The **Division of Special Education/
Early Intervention Services**
(DSE/EIS)

STRATEGIC PLAN

Moving Maryland Forward

Sharpen the Focus for 2020



NOVEMBER 2016
V. 2

EARLY CHILDHOOD

ACCESS, EQUITY, PROGRESS

SECONDARY TRANSITION

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Moving Maryland Forward 1

Our Vision and Mission 2

Who We Are..... 2

What We Do 3

Who We Serve 4

Our Commitment 5

Our Data Informs the Work 6

Sharpening the Focus..... 7

OUR CALL TO ACTION

Achieving the Goal..... 10

Three Action Imperatives 11

Five Key Strategies 11

IMPLEMENTATION

Differentiated Framework 12

Early Childhood Strategies 14

Access, Equity, Progress Strategies 16

Secondary Transition Strategies 18

BUILDING INNOVATIVE, COHERENT SYSTEMS

Advancing Data-Informed Decision Making

TAP-IT Implementation Process..... 20

LADSS with Advanced Tools..... 21

Leveraging Evidence-Based Practice

State Systemic Improvement Plans 22

SWIFT 23

Team-Based Learning Approach 23

Designing Organizational Frameworks

Interdependent Education Components..... 24

Integrated Tiered System of Supports 24

Layering Funds to Blend Services 25

PLAN IN ACTION

A Logic of Influence 26



Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

The Maryland State Department of Education’s Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (DSE/EIS) has sharpened the focus of their Strategic Plan: *Moving Maryland Forward*. As a former special educator and director, I recognize the power of early childhood intervention, differentiated instruction, and continuous program improvement. This Plan exemplifies and guides the work of the Division and supports to our local school systems. I am certain that when we connect the important work of this Division across the Department as well as with critical external partners, we will ensure that Maryland’s children lead the nation in their preparation to successfully access and participate in a full array of college, career and community opportunities.



Carol A. Williamson, Ed.D.
Deputy State Superintendent
for Teaching and Learning

The DSE/EIS operates within the MSDE as a leader of innovative thinking, performance support, and results driven accountability. This is reflected in the Division’s Strategic Plan through a sharpened focus on the alignment of an integrated system of teaching and learning. The transparent and collaborative process outlined in the Plan effectively operationalizes a comprehensive statewide system of supports that will further narrow the achievement gap for Maryland’s students who have disabilities, as well as for their families.

Moving Maryland Forward

Sharpen the Focus for 2020

With this Strategic Plan, the Division of Special Education/ Early Intervention Services recommits to *Moving Maryland Forward* – introduced in 2013. With the shifting in the national, State, and local education landscape, we have revisited the initial Plan to sharpen our steadfast focus to narrow the gaps for children with disabilities from birth through age 21 for year 2020. To support the ultimate vision of closing opportunity and achievement gaps for all students, this sharpened Plan aligns and guides the work of the Division and the Department, compels stronger interagency and intra-agency collaboration in support of children and families, and serves as a necessary resource to educational leaders, parents, and stakeholders. The Plan refines key measures of success and key strategies for implementation, and expands our innovative tools, resources, and evidence-based practices.



Marcella E. Franczkowski, M.S.
Assistant State Superintendent
Division of Special Education/
Early Intervention Services

Moving Maryland Forward was developed and informed by the strategic thinking and transformative ideas of diverse stakeholders from across the State. It captures our call to action to narrow the achievement gap by ensuring students with disabilities receive access to the general education curriculum, and specially designed instruction, aligned with evidence-based practices selected and implemented to address each student's individual developmental, academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs within culturally-responsive learning environments. With the sharpened focus for moving Maryland forward for 2020, the Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services will hold regional listening forums across the State. The forums will study local results-informed implementation efforts and provide timely, customized technical assistance to enhance program effectiveness.

I sincerely appreciate the significant contributions and commitment of all stakeholders, as well as special and general educators and leaders, who have engaged in the development and ongoing implementation of this strategic plan. I am confident that – guided by *Moving Maryland Forward: Sharpen the Focus for 2020* – we will improve outcomes for all children and families and narrow existing gaps.

Together, we can make a difference.

OUR BOLD VISION

All students, including students with disabilities, will be ready for school, achieve in school, and be prepared for college, career, and community living. Our ultimate vision is to close existing gaps between children with disabilities and their nondisabled peers.

OUR MISSION

The Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (DSE/EIS) provides leadership, accountability, technical assistance, and resource management to Local School Systems, Public Agencies, and stakeholders through a seamless, comprehensive system of coordinated services to children and students with disabilities, birth through 21, and their families.

WHO WE ARE

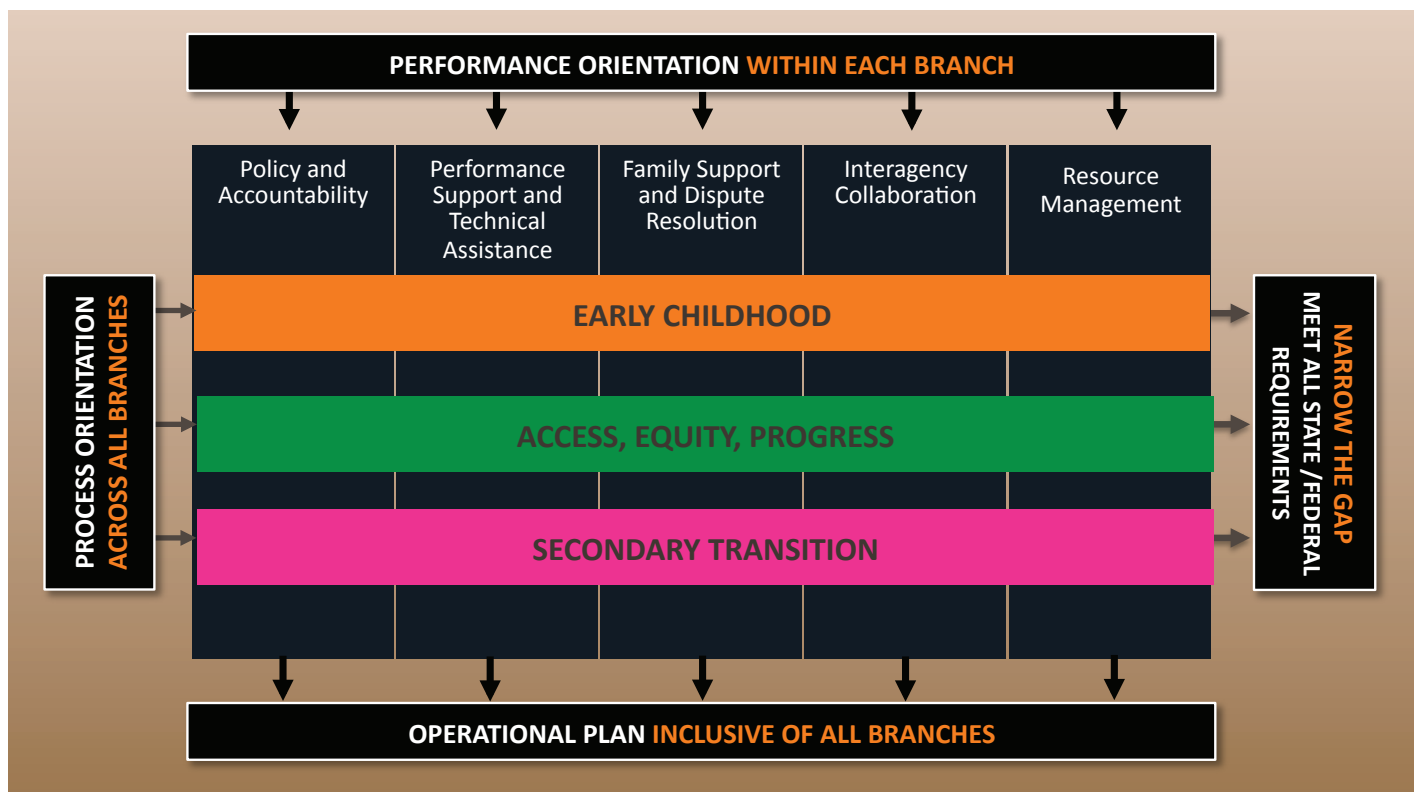
The DSE/EIS is committed to building and sustaining an integrated organizational structure that is based upon the principles of collaboration and shared responsibility. The Division is organized by five branches: Policy and Accountability, Performance Support and Technical Assistance, Family Support and Dispute Resolution, Interagency Collaboration, and Resource Management.

The DSE/EIS has been restructured so that staff is fully involved in addressing the Action Imperatives identified in Moving Maryland Forward. These Action Imperatives focus on three major areas:

- Early Childhood
- Access, Equity, and Progress
- Secondary Transition

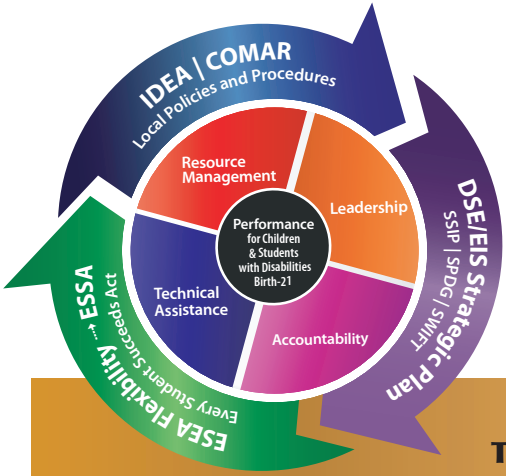
The DSE/EIS collaborative matrix infrastructure integrates knowledge and skills for improvement of compliance and results, and ensures aligned and consistent communication within the DSE/EIS, throughout the Department and with external partners from federal to family.

THE DSE/EIS COLLABORATIVE MATRIX INFRASTRUCTURE



WHAT WE DO

MARYLAND'S WORK The DSE/EIS works within the context of State and federal laws and policies that govern special education, as well as within the broader educational mission of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), a complex organization focusing on the education and well-being of Maryland's children, students, and families. Maryland's interdependent work with federal, State and local systems, and stakeholders aligns with the **Every Student Succeeds Act** (ESSA) in support of our vision that all children are the responsibility of all educators.



The DSE/EIS transforms the business of early intervention and education by breaking down silos to ensure communication and understanding between early and school-age education, general and special education, home and school services, and college, career, and community supports. In alignment with MSDE systemwide priorities, the DSE/EIS leads a seamless integrated system that serves children and youth with disabilities from birth through age 21 and their families. This comprehensive system balances the statutory requirements with equal emphasis on programmatic leadership aimed to narrow existing achievement gaps through the following core functions:

THE DSE/EIS CORE FUNCTIONS

<p>LEADERSHIP Establishes policy guidance and frameworks to govern the provision of early intervention and special education, including actions in response to new legislative policies, and transparent and ongoing communication with stakeholders.</p>	<p>ACCOUNTABILITY Sets clear expectations for implementing the federal and state regulations, policies, procedures, and practices that ensure State and local compliance and maximizes development and learning for all children and students.</p>	<p>TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE Monitors and provides performance support to programs in an effective, efficient and systematic manner that builds and sustains State, local, and stakeholder capacity.</p>	<p>RESOURCE MANAGEMENT Ensures efficient and transparent use of federal, State, and special funds through innovative, layered funding mechanisms to leverage the full complement of dollars to maximize benefit for children and families receiving services.</p>
--	---	--	--

The DSE/EIS works in partnership with 24 Local Infants and Toddlers Programs and Local School Systems (LSS), 14 Juvenile Service Education Schools, the SEED School, the Maryland School for the Deaf, the Maryland School for the Blind, other Public Agencies (PA), and nonpublic schools. DSE/EIS services include:

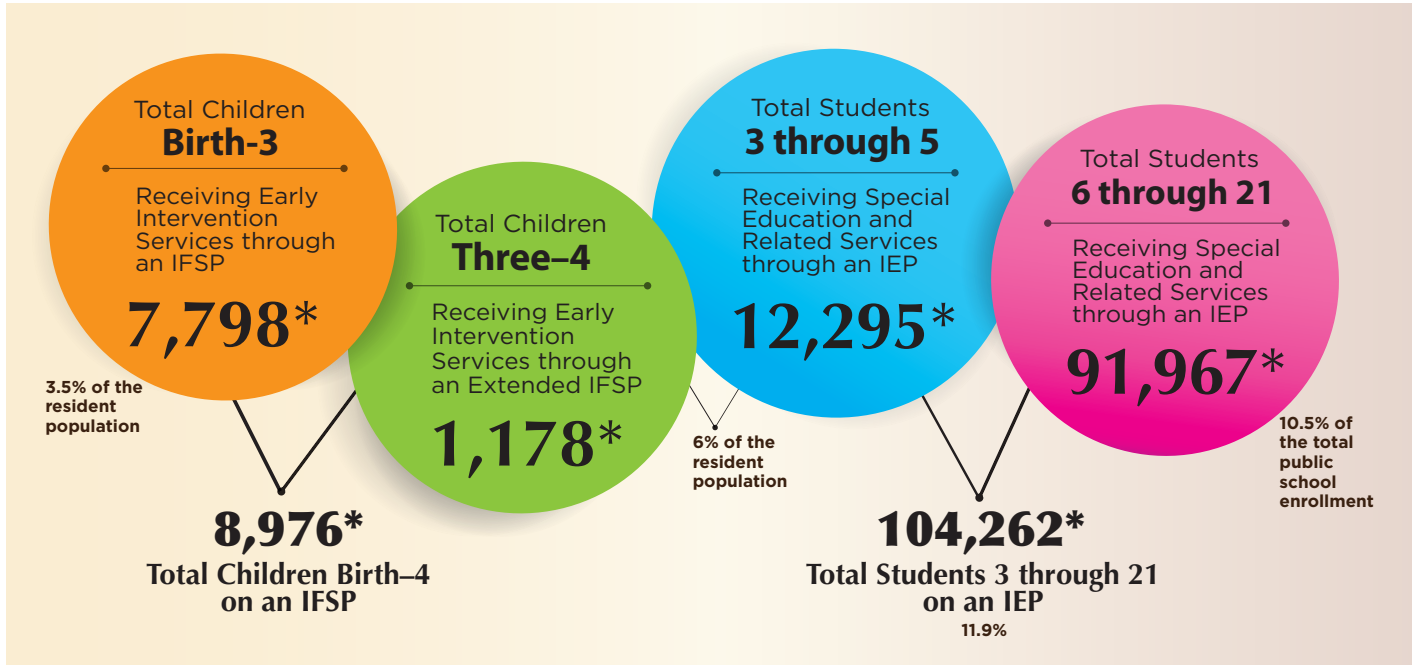
- Early Intervention Services (Maryland's Infants and Toddlers Program)
- Preschool Special Education and Related Services
- Special Education and Related Services (School-Age)
- Nonpublic Education Services
- Family Support Services
- Maryland Hearing Aid Loan Bank
- Medical Assistance for School Health-Related Services
- Home Visiting Services
- Maryland's nationally recognized Autism Waiver
- Mental and Behavioral Health Services
- Blind/Visually Impaired Access Technology Loan Bank

The DSE/EIS provides direct oversight and management of federal, State and special general funds. Early intervention and special education services are provided through a combination of federal, State, and local funds.

WHO WE SERVE

Maryland is the 21st largest state by public school enrollment, with approximately 879,000 enrolled students from public preschool through secondary education. In the 2015-16 school year, approximately 11.9% of children with disabilities ages 3 – 21 received special education and related services; 3.5% of infants and toddlers ages birth to three received early intervention services. These services are provided through the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program (MITP) to over 17,500 children and families annually, representing a 91% increase over the past twelve years. Maryland, as a birth mandate state, serves eligible infants, toddlers and families at no cost.

Total Children/Students with Disabilities Receiving Early Intervention and Special Education/Related Services in Maryland, Birth–21*



On any given day:

- Approximately 9,000 children ages birth through age four with developmental delays or disabilities and their families receive early intervention in their homes and/or other early childhood settings through an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), supporting a family-centered, family capacity-building service delivery model. Infants and toddlers are eligible for the program by demonstrating a 25% delay in at least one of five developmental domains, atypical development, or a diagnosed physical or mental condition that puts the child at high probability for delay. *Maryland was the first, and continues to be one of only a few states in the country offering families the choice to remain in the early intervention program up to the beginning of the school year following the child's fourth birthday.*
- Maryland provides special education and related services to approximately 12,300 preschoolers ages 3–5 and 92,000 school age children ages 6–21 who are eligible through one of the 14 IDEA disability categories. Through an Individualized Education Program (IEP), students have access to a full continuum of services. IEP teams seek to educate preschool and school-age students with their nondisabled peers in the setting or school that they would attend if they did not have a disability. With specially designed instruction, related services, accommodations, and program modifications, children and youth with disabilities can acquire the skills needed to be ready for college, career, and community living.

*October 1, 2015 Snapshot Data Count

Data Sources: Maryland Special Education/Early Intervention Services Census Data and Related Tables and the U.S. Department of Justice Website, <http://www.ojjdp.gov>

OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATORS

The DSE/EIS strategic planning process is rooted in a set of principles that remain essential to the successful implementation and measurement of the *Moving Maryland Forward Strategic Plan* and the achievement of its intended outcomes.

- **Transparency**

We maintain an open door to stakeholders and regularly communicate through formal and informal outreach. This includes monthly birth-21 special education and early intervention leadership updates, quarterly birth-21 Professional Learning Institutes, State and local co-led Steering Committees, meetings of the Assistant State Superintendent's Advisory Council, and regularly scheduled convening of advisory groups including Institutions of Higher Education, State Interagency Coordinating Council, Special Education State Advisory Committee, Education Advocacy Coalition, and the Autism Waiver Advisory Council.

- **Stakeholder Engagement**

We engage our stakeholders in timely and meaningful consultation on significant topics, including policies that affect children with disabilities. Our stakeholders include our governor, local school system and public agency personnel, parents, students, and advocates. We seek input through participatory processes, including regional listening forums that promote innovation, the sharing of best practices, and dissemination of evidence-based strategies. We are committed to strengthening partnerships and planning with other MSDE divisions, other public and private agencies, and stakeholder groups.

- **Effectiveness**

We serve stakeholders in a timely and effective manner and ensure the availability of the best “real-time” data for decision making and dissemination of evidence-based models throughout the State.

- **Alignment**

The work of the DSE/EIS requires that we arrange our priorities to be synchronous with those of MSDE and federal requirements while also including the concerns of our local school systems, public agencies, and advocates. We must align our work to be most effective and efficient, while keeping a focus on important student outcomes.

- **Accountability**

We strive to improve compliance and performance results for all local school systems and public agencies. The DSE/EIS has developed a tiered system of general supervision and performance support to identify systems and agencies in need of differentiated support and technical assistance. (A description of this tiered system is provided on page 13.)



OUR DATA INFORMS THE WORK

While we take pride in the progress our local school systems and public agencies have made to advance practice, placement, and achievement, the DSE/EIS knows that the use of sound and timely data can and must increase the pace of advancement. There are many ways in which we measure the effectiveness of early intervention and special education services. Highlights of our data progress include:

Prevention

In the 2014-15 school year, 68% of the infants and toddlers who received early intervention services no longer needed special education by the time they were in third grade; 71% no longer needed services by sixth grade.

School Readiness

While Maryland has been a national leader in measuring school readiness, the new Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) shows that in the 2015-16 school year, 19% of children with disabilities are ready, with a 28% gap between children with and without disabilities.

English/Language Arts (ELA) Literacy and Mathematics Proficiency

The extent to which Maryland students meet or exceed expectations for grade level ELA literacy and mathematics standards is measured through the PARCC assessment, administered for the first time in the 2014-15 school year. Comparable to all of the other states using the PARCC assessment, student proficiency in ELA literacy and mathematics standards ranged from 22% to 44% in grades 3 through 8 in both years; in 2015-16 the ELA literacy and mathematics gap was 19% to 34% for students with disabilities.

Performance and Participation in the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA)

Maryland's students with significant disabilities are participating for the first time in the new alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards. 29.2% of students met or exceeded expectations in English/Language Arts literacy and 34.1% of students met or exceeded expectations in mathematics. Compared to the 12 other MSAA states, Maryland is the only state already meeting the federal < 1% participation requirement.

Participation in General Education

In the 2015-16 school year, 69% of children with disabilities (compared to 61% nationally) were educated in general education classes more than 80% of the time, with wide variation across our school systems, ranging from 57% to 91%. Nationally, states also vary widely in the percent of students accessing the curriculum in general education settings, ranging from 37% to 84%.

Disproportionality

While Maryland continues to meet several statewide targets for disproportionate identification, placement, and discipline for students with disabilities, closer examination of State and local school system data has revealed challenges in this area, particularly for students of color. In the 2014-15 school year, 11 out of 24 LSSs disproportionately identified students in disability categories, 6 out of 24 disproportionately removed students to separate special education settings, and 3 out of 24 disproportionately removed students through suspension or expulsion.

Graduation and Drop Out

Maryland's students with disabilities are staying in school until graduation more than ever before.

- Over the past two years, **the graduation gap has narrowed** between students with and without disabilities by 2.1 percentage points.
- Fewer students are dropping out of school and 64% are graduating with a diploma after 4 years of high school; higher than the national average.
- Over the past two years, the five-year graduation rate for students with disabilities showed a 5.5% increase.

Post-School Outcomes

Of the students with disabilities who exited school in 2014, over 56% were enrolled in higher education, competitively employed, or in some other postsecondary education/employment training program.

SHARPENING THE FOCUS



The landscape for education has changed dramatically in the short time since we first debuted our plan in 2013. The enactment of the ESSA, major shifts in federal special education accountability, changing student demographics, new assessments, and federal guidance inform this update to our Strategic Plan.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

The new *Every Student Succeeds Act* replaces the No Child Left Behind Act and requires – for the first time – that all students must be taught to high academic standards, including students with disabilities.

Among the recommendations related to students with disabilities, ESSA:

- Requires the same academic content and achievement standards for all students (except alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities);
- Holds States accountable for all children, requiring that States continue to test all students on statewide assessments, as well as examine and report its data for students with disabilities compared to their data for children without disabilities;
- Emphasizes the involvement of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities in the general education curriculum, and ensures that the total number of students participating in the alternate assessments does not exceed one percent of all students who are assessed; and
- Supports improved conditions for teaching and learning including reducing incidents of bullying and harassment in schools, overuse of discipline practices (suspension and expulsion), and the use of aversive behavioral interventions (such as restraints and seclusion).

With the implementation of ESSA, states have a renewed impetus to address educational equity through closing the opportunity and achievement gaps.

Federal Shift to Results Driven Accountability (RDA) in Special Education Services

To improve educational outcomes, the US Department of Education has shifted its accountability system for special education to results as a primary emphasis. This approach emphasizes academic performance, graduation rates, and early childhood measures as indicators of success. Consistent with federal guidance, Maryland joins other states in shifting its accountability focus to results while continuing to monitor compliance with federal and State law. A new federal requirement is the development of State Systemic Improvement Plans to address specific targets for early intervention and school-age outcomes (see page 22).

Maryland's Changing Student Population

Maryland's demographic profile is rapidly changing. The overall student population is more diverse and now reflects a majority-minority, with the number of Hispanic students with disabilities more than tripling, from 4% in SFY 2000 to 14% in SFY 2016. More children are homeless, move frequently, are refugees from other countries, and/or speak other languages.

- Over 45% of Maryland's students are eligible for free- and reduced- meals (FARMS) and this number is considerably higher for students with disabilities (59%).
- Maryland ranks 12th in the nation for the number of active duty members per state, impacting instructional continuity, as children with at least one parent in the armed forces switch schools an average of six times between kindergarten and high school.
- Over the past few years, Maryland has seen a 20% increase in the number of homeless students.
- The number of unaccompanied children seeking refuge has risen by 7%, which directly affects the need to support the English Language Learner population, with 6% of students with disabilities identified as English Language Learners.

SHARPENING THE FOCUS, continued

New State Assessment Measures

Maryland, along with other States, is required to use new Statewide assessments to measure student progress toward educational standards. Maryland assesses student achievement of the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards through the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), and the Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA). These more rigorous standards and new assessment measures require a recalibration of our data metrics and our approach to specially designed instruction.

ABOUT Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)

SDI means adapting the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction:

- to address the unique needs of a child that results from the child's disability; and
- to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that he or she can meet the educational standards adopted by Maryland.

34 CFR §300.39(b)(3)

Snapshot of Federal Guidance Related to Special Education

“Dear Colleague” letters from the US Department of Education are periodically disseminated to provide guidance on various educational matters. These letters are helpful in clarifying recommended practice, but are not binding and do not impose new legal requirements. In the last school year, three such letters directly related to students with disabilities are important to inform our work.

- **Letter on Free, Appropriate Public Education:** Each student identified as having a disability must have an individualized plan that is aligned with the State’s academic content standards for the grade in which the child is enrolled, with high expectations for learning grade level content with appropriate instruction, [specially designed instruction \(SDI\)](#), services, and supports.

For *preschool and school age students*, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are written to reflect performance, progress, and goals aligned with grade level Maryland College and Career-Ready (CCR) Standards.

- **Letter on Use of Positive Behavioral Interventions:** When a child’s behavior impedes their own learning or that of others, the IEP Team must consider the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports and is encouraged to use effective alternatives to disciplinary removals. This letter reminds school personnel that the authority to implement disciplinary removals does not negate their obligation to consider the implications of the child’s behavioral needs.
- **Letter on the Use of “Dyslexia,” “Dyscalculia,” and “Dysgraphia”** in evaluation, eligibility determinations, and IEP documents: States are encouraged to consider situations where the use of these terms are appropriate to address the unique needs of a child as well as effectively communicate with school personnel about a child’s underlying disability.

IN SUMMARY

The interplay of these multiple variables creates challenges and requires that we develop effective solutions to support our children and students with disabilities. These variables shape how we educate all children and drive our need to sharpen the focus on children with disabilities.



NARROW THE GAP



OUR CALL TO ACTION

With this Plan, the DSE/EIS has recommitted to our bold goal; fine-tuned our key measures of success and key strategies for implementation; and expanded our innovative tools, resources, and evidence-based practices to narrow the gap.



ACHIEVING THE GOAL

The goal of the *Moving Maryland Forward: Sharpen the Focus for 2020* remains the same - to narrow the school readiness and achievement gap between children and youth with disabilities and their non-disabled peers to ensure that youth with disabilities are college, career, and community ready when they complete their schooling.

The DSE/EIS knows that reaching our goal requires narrowing not only the achievement gaps, but also the gaps in opportunity, access, workforce, leadership, time, and expectations. These gaps will be narrowed for children and students with disabilities when challenging high-expectations are shared by families and professionals and actualized through:

- Setting ambitious and **individualized** goals that accelerate the trajectory of development and learning;
- Providing access to general education curriculum and programming that are appropriate to a child’s age and **individualized** profile; and
- Implementing specially designed instruction and services informed by ongoing assessments, aligned with evidence-based practices, and targeted to a child’s **individualized** developmental, academic, and social/emotional/behavioral needs.

In Three Action Imperatives



The Plan measures results in **three Action Imperatives**:

- **Early Childhood**
- **Access, Equity, and Progress**
- **Secondary Transition**

Through Five Key Strategies



The Plan employs **five Key Strategies** to improve results for children and youth with disabilities and their families:

- **Strategic Collaboration**
- **Family Partnerships**
- **Evidence-Based Practices**
- **Data-Informed Decisions**
- **Professional Learning**

THREE ACTION IMPERATIVES

EARLY CHILDHOOD	ACCESS, EQUITY, PROGRESS	SECONDARY TRANSITION
<p>A seamless and comprehensive statewide system of coordinated services for children with disabilities – birth to kindergarten – and their families will be implemented in home, community, and early childhood settings to narrow the school readiness gap.</p>	<p>Implementation of effective, equitable, and culturally-responsive education services will result in increased access to instruction, improved educational achievement and functional outcomes, and reduced gaps between students with and without disabilities.</p>	<p>Seamless transition programs and services, aligned with evidence-based practices, will be implemented to increase the number of youth with disabilities who are actively engaged in post-secondary activities such as education, technical and career training, and employment after exiting schools.</p>

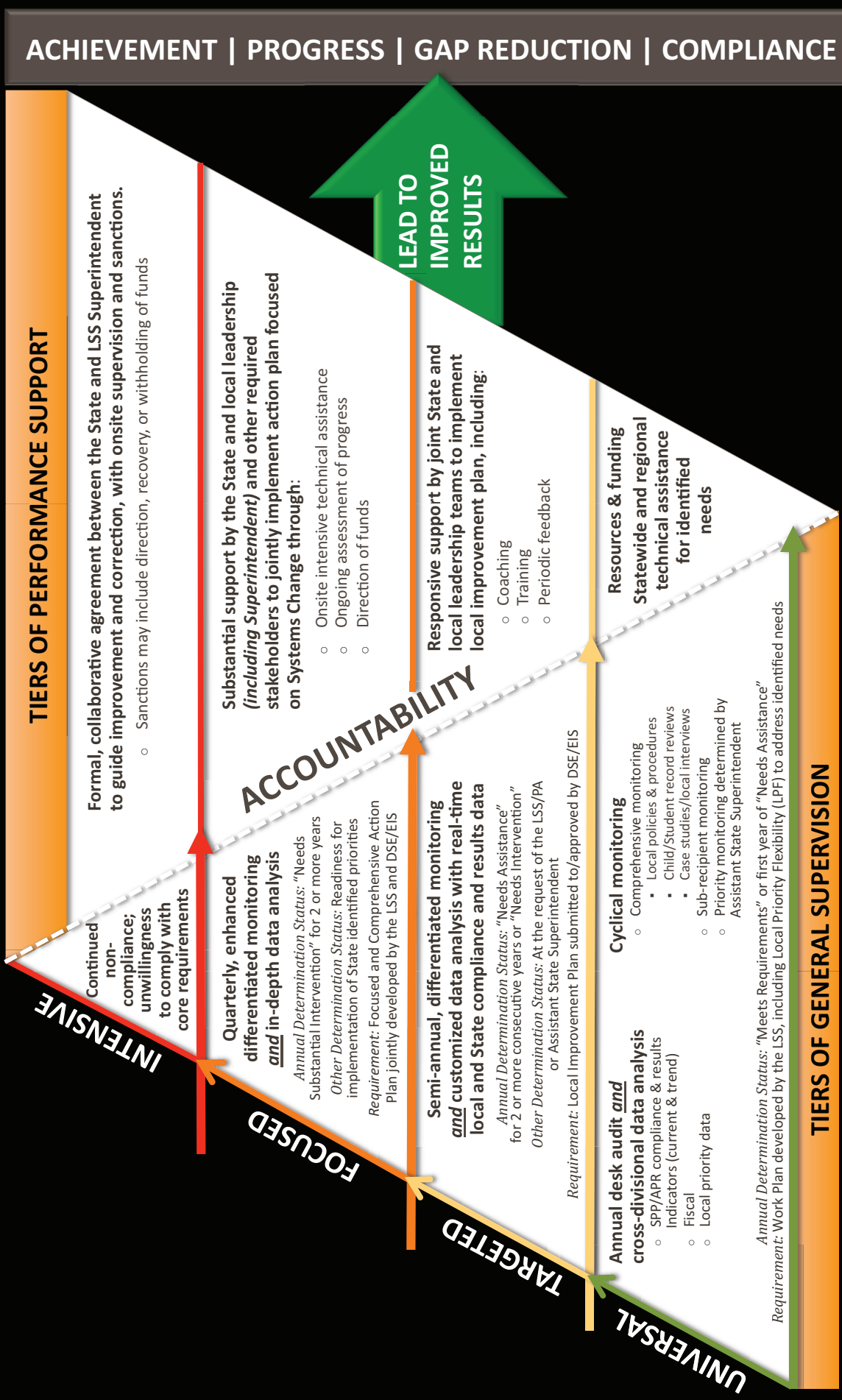
FIVE KEY STRATEGIES

- Strategic Collaboration**
 The DSE/EIS will employ strategic collaboration with partners across State agencies, across divisions within MSDE, among public education agencies, with Institutes of Higher Education, and with families, advocates, and community partners, in order to promote access for all children to high-quality teaching and learning.
- Family Partnerships**
 The DSE/EIS will create and sustain strong family partnerships and will support school and community personnel in their efforts to encourage families, as their child’s first teacher, to make active and informed decisions that contribute to their child’s success.
- Evidence-Based Practices**
 The DSE/EIS will promote the adoption and implementation with fidelity of evidence-based practices to narrow school readiness and achievement gaps. The DSE/EIS will identify and share evidence-based practices, including an integrated tiered system of academic and behavioral supports, to ensure equitable access to high-quality instruction that leads to student progress.
- Data-Informed Decisions**
 The DSE/EIS will increase the capacity to make data-informed decisions at the State and local levels by providing access to real-time student data (including formative and summative assessments, as well as observational and anecdotal documentation). The DSE/EIS will support the implementation of an evidence-based and customized data analysis and decision-making process.
- Professional Learning**
 The DSE/EIS will provide professional learning to promote effective early care and education providers, teachers of students with disabilities, related service providers, paraprofessionals, and leaders. The DSE/EIS will use ongoing, collaborative learning communities, reflective coaching models, online tools, and guidance on evidence-based practices to engage stakeholders in transforming the skills, knowledge, and beliefs of all individuals who impact the life of a child.

The Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services

Differentiated Framework

Tiers of Supervision and Support to Improve Birth-21 Special Education and Early Intervention Results



IMPLEMENTATION

DIFFERENTIATED FRAMEWORK

The DSE/EIS implements a statewide differentiated framework of general supervision and performance support to operationalize the strategies to narrow the opportunity and achievement gaps.

The DSE/EIS continues its commitment to Results Driven Accountability (RDA) to improve the results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and their families. Based on their unique strengths, challenges, priorities, and progress, each LSS and public agency is assigned to one of four supervision tiers: **Universal, Targeted, Focused, or Intensive** – and provided a corresponding tier of customized performance support differentiated based upon the level of need and the commitment to change.

The tiers of **General Supervision** are based on comprehensive compliance- and results-monitoring of the IDEA State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) indicators; analysis of local policies, procedures, and practices; student record reviews; data analysis; fiscal management; and correction of identified non-compliance. With the respective LSSs and public agencies, the DSE/EIS cross-functional monitoring team engages in such activities as: IFSP and IEP reviews, root cause analysis, identification of local evidence-based and best practices with recommendations for immediate and systemic corrections.

The tiers of **Performance Support** address the levels and types of assistance that will support LSSs and public agencies in meeting indicators of effective practices, and compliance and result requirements. The DSE/EIS provides universal resources to all LSSs and public agencies including federal and State guidance documents and an annual series of Statewide Professional Learning Institutes. Performance support is further differentiated to respond to current needs through a State-local implementation team partnership, using an evidence-based data analysis and decision-making process. The Division provides a customized response that varies in intensity and frequency as required by local needs. This response may include professional learning with follow up consultation, systems coaching, financial assistance, or direction of State resources. More intensive assistance is also provided when a LSS or public agency demonstrates readiness to implement, sustain and scale up evidence-based practices.

From IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK To IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The DSE/EIS implements a statewide differentiated framework to focus on the three action imperatives, with MEASURES OF SUCCESS and STRATEGIES to ultimately narrow the gap:

- EARLY CHILDHOOD, *pages 14-15*
- ACCESS, EQUITY, PROGRESS, *pages 16-17*
- SECONDARY TRANSITION, *pages 18-19*

EARLY CHILDHOOD ACTION IMPERATIVE

By 2020, a seamless and comprehensive statewide system of coordinated services for children with disabilities—birth to kindergarten—and their families will be implemented in home, community, and early childhood settings to narrow the school readiness gap.

Rationale

Intervening early with family-centered, evidence-based practices can change a child’s developmental trajectory and improve outcomes for children and families. Research shows school readiness begins at birth to build a strong foundation for kindergarten and beyond.

- We know effective early intervention and preschool special education supports the development of positive social-emotional skills and social relationships, the acquisition and use of knowledge and skills to successfully participate in activities, and the use of appropriate behaviors to meet needs that lead to increased independence.
- We know intentionally engaging families as equal and informed partners supports families to know their rights, effectively communicate their child’s needs, and help their child develop and learn.
- We know children learn best through natural learning opportunities in everyday routines and activities in home, community, and early childhood settings with typical peers.
- We know meaningful, inclusive early childhood opportunities are an evidence-based practice that must be supported by a skilled and competent workforce.
- We know strong alignment across early childhood programs and systems creates seamless transitions to local school systems and public agencies.

Ultimately, we know early childhood intervention and education works. The earlier services and supports are provided to a child and family, the greater the opportunity to close gaps.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

		Baseline (2015-16)	2018	2020
Birth to Kindergarten Child Outcomes: The percentage of children who receive early intervention services or preschool special education services and substantially increased their rate of growth by the time they exited the program in the following areas.				
Early Intervention Services Birth – 4 (IFSP & Extended IFSP)	Positive social-emotional skills	58%	60%	62%
	Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills	61%	63%	65%
	Use of appropriate behaviors to meet needs	68%	70%	72%
Preschool Special Education Services Ages 3 – 5 (IEP)	Positive social-emotional skills	69%	71%	73%
	Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills	66%	68%	70%
	Use of appropriate behaviors to meet needs	66%	68%	70%
Service Delivery:				
Natural Environment Birth – 4 (IFSP & Extended IFSP)	The percentage of children, ages birth -4, who primarily receive early intervention services in the home or in a program for typically developing children	97.5%	97.75%	98.0%
Least Restrictive Environment Ages 3-5 (IEP)	The percentage of children, age 3 – 5 years, who attend a regular early childhood program, and receive the majority of their special education and related services in a regular early childhood program	60%	64%	70%

Strategic Collaboration

- Coordinate across early childhood systems and interagency partners (MSDE-Division of Early Childhood Development, DHMH, Univ. of MD, JHU, Kennedy Krieger Institute) for effective workforce development; increase the number of Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) with dual certification programs and increase cross-sector professional learning.
- Issue discretionary grants to IHEs and partner agencies to research effective local early intervention and preschool special education service delivery models and create evidence-based practice models for scale-up.
- Create and sustain teaming structures that include families and early childhood partners (State Interagency Coordinating Council, the Early Childhood Mental Health Steering Committee, Home Visiting Consortium, IFSP/IEP teams and user groups, early childhood transition workgroup, and access and equity workgroup).
- Convene collaborative State and Local Implementation Teams for systems change to improve outcomes including the development of an Inclusion Cohort Technical Assistance Plan.

Family Partnerships

- Develop and implement a family- and community-friendly online referral process utilizing the Community Compass tool for appropriate identification of eligible infants and toddlers.
- Develop resources, tools, and practices to engage families as equal, informed, and active team members throughout the evaluation/assessment process, IFSP/Preschool IEP development and implementation, Child Outcomes Summary (COS) rating process, progress monitoring, and early childhood transitions.

Evidence-Based Practices

- Implement targeted evidence-based practices (Reflective Coaching, Social Emotional Foundations in Early Learning, and Routines Based Interview) with fidelity to increase the development of positive social-emotional skills by infants, toddlers, and preschool age children.
- Create preschool demonstration sites that apply targeted inclusive, evidence-based practices such as the Team-Based Learning Approach for school and classroom with full implementation of the Early Learning Assessment (ELA).

- Issue discretionary grants to local programs for direct implementation, scale-up, and sustainability of evidence-based practices that result in improved child and family outcomes.
- Develop and disseminate State/local performance information delineating Birth to K evidence-based practices, implementation activities, and results.

Data-Informed Decisions

- Assign a Birth to K Liaison as a member of a State/local team to assist each local lead agency/school system in data-informed decision-making (team, analyze, plan, implement, track), identification of resources to address performance needs, and connections to professional learning opportunities.
- Inform policy to support a seamless Birth to K system: 1) Implement a consistent child outcomes measurement methodology, 2) Provide guidance for flexible use of funds to increase the availability of inclusive early care and education settings, and 3) Continue to implement an Extended IFSP Option for family choice.
- Develop and disseminate electronic tools (Child/Student Compass) as part of the IFSP/IEP tool suite to routinely monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of child specific strategies and interventions.
- Build a longitudinal Birth to K data system linking the online IFSP and the newly developed preschool component of the IEP to analyze and evaluate child outcomes over time and overall program effectiveness.

Professional Learning

- Develop and implement cross-agency training with follow-up coaching for evidence-based practices in home, community, and early childhood settings.
- Develop and disseminate online just-in-time resources and toolkits (i.e., Making Access Happen) to support the development and implementation of routines-based IFSPs, standards-based preschool IEPs, and evidence-based practices.
- Create statewide professional learning activities and resources with the capability to customize based on local need.
- Expand Birth to K Child Outcomes Summary (COS) professional learning materials, training protocols, and resources to implement core components of COS with fidelity; require COS Competency Check for all Birth–K staff.

ACCESS, EQUITY, PROGRESS ACTION IMPERATIVE

By 2020, implementation of effective, equitable, and culturally-responsive education services will result in increased access to instruction, improved educational achievement and functional outcomes, and reduced gaps between students with and without disabilities.

Rationale

Research shows that students with disabilities learn and achieve more when they are taught with their typical peers; supporting students with disabilities must be seen as a school-wide general education priority.

- We know effective instruction for the wide variety of learners in a school requires:
 - ◊ evidence-based curricula aligned with the College and Career-Ready Standards and based on principles of Universal Design for Learning and
 - ◊ district policy and procedures for implementing evidence-based curricula and interventions with fidelity.
- We know organizational structures that support school-wide collaboration for planning, teaching, and instructional decision-making, allow educators to assess student learning and align instruction to meet individual student needs.
- We know a school-wide integrated, tiered system of supports designed to meet the academic and social/behavioral needs of all students will reduce disparities in the identification, placement, and suspension/expulsion rates for students.
- We know that educators must increase the intensity and frequency of intervention and progress monitoring for those students whose performance is not on track with their peers.
- We know specially designed instruction, including related services, program modifications, assistive technology, accessible educational materials, and accommodations for learning and assessment within all tiers of intervention ensures that the individual learning needs resulting from a disability, will help narrow the achievement gap.

Ultimately, all students can learn and it is the collective responsibility of educators and families to join together for the educational benefit of each student.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

		Baseline	2018	2020
Access to General Education	School age students with disabilities are educated in general education classes 80% or more of the time.	68.95% (2015-16)	72%	75%
Equity in Education	No LSS will disproportionately identify students with disabilities by race or ethnicity.	11 (2014-15)	5	2
	No LSS will disproportionately place students in separate special education programs and schools by race or ethnicity.	6 (2014-15)	4	2
	No LSS will disproportionately suspend or expel students with disabilities by race or ethnicity.	3 (2014-15)	2	0
Progress	The gap in reading performance of elementary and middle school-age children with disabilities will be narrowed. (PARCC).	28 – 34 points (2015-16)	23 – 29 points	20 – 25 points
	The gap in math performance of elementary and middle school-age children with disabilities will be narrowed. (PARCC).	20 – 33 points (2015-16)	18 – 30 points	15 – 25 points
	The performance of students who take the alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards will improve. (MSAA).	29% ELA 34% Math (2015-16)	5% over baseline	10% over baseline

Strategic Collaboration

- Inform federal/State legislation and local policies and practices through collaboration with the US Department of Education and by responses to Maryland General Assembly and Maryland State Board of Education inquiries.
- Engage advisory partners and families through transparent and reciprocal feedback opportunities to inform DSE/EIS priorities, including the Assistant State Superintendent's Advisory Council, the State Interagency Coordinating Council, the Special Education State Advisory Committee and the Education Advocacy Coalition; design and implement a communication plan to disseminate the Division's work and impact on results.
- Provide leadership for cross-Divisional/cross-Departmental collaborative work (general and special education) to address federal/State policy (i.e., ESSA, IDEA), professional learning, and supports for implementing culturally-responsive, evidence-based interventions through coordinated State initiatives; create and fund inter-divisional positions to support cross-functional decision-making.
- Lead State Steering committees, IHE partners, and targeted workgroups (i.e., Access and Equity) to: 1) Analyze State and local outcome data identifying patterns and trends, 2) Identify State/local promising practices within general and special education that impact student and family outcomes, and 3) Advise DSE/EIS of recommended policies/procedures/practices and necessary resources.

Family Partnerships

- Serve as a liaison between parents and LSS/PAs by responding to parent concerns and assisting with navigating the educational system and accessing resources, including IEP team facilitation.
- Provide a network of family- and community-friendly online resources disseminated via web platforms such as Maryland Learning Links, social media, and a variety of print outlets and shared through a cadre of partners.
- Enable and support parent training and information events such as a series of community offered training for families about assistive technology (AT Home) and ongoing family education through of Maryland.

Evidence Based Practices

- Create and sustain a State/local implementation team to assist each local lead agency/local school system in utilizing an evidence-based data-informed decision-making (team, analyze, plan, implement, track) process to develop effective local action plans for performance results.
- Pilot a Systems Coaching Model with local

jurisdictions to develop an infrastructure to implement evidence-based practices with fidelity.

- Leverage federal/State initiatives and priorities (SWIFT Framework, Team-Based Learning Approach, MCIE Systems Change Process, and State Systemic Improvement Plans for improvement of math performance and social-emotional skill development) to develop demonstration sites for delivering specially designed instruction and implementing evidence-based instruction within an integrated system of tiered academic interventions and behavior supports.

Data Informed Decision Making

- Support overall district accountability through annual and tri-annual reports to local Superintendents and leaders that analyze local data, propose a root cause analysis, and make recommendations for professional learning and changes in procedures or practices that impact compliance, progress, and identified gaps in performance.
- Develop and deploy data systems and decision models, including the Maryland longitudinal data system and the online IFSP and IEP systems, integrated with the online progress monitoring tools for local program effectiveness as well as instructional planning and evaluation of interventions matched to specific skills that a student needs.
- Hire external researchers to conduct longitudinal studies to evaluate academic and non-academic (i.e., chronic absence, climate) factors that lead to improvement of organizational systems and ultimately, student performance.

Professional Learning

- Conduct an annual series of Professional Learning Institutes to share knowledge and solutions, and culturally-responsive practices from national experts, spotlight local results achieved through innovation, and guide LSS/PA leaders in early intervention/special education reform; each LSS/PA receives follow-up coaching support through their State/local implementation team.
- Provide online training with a self-assessment and coaching component to facilitate data-informed decision making and to implement specially designed instruction with a standards-based approach.
- Develop resources and tools on the use of educational technology, assistive technology, and accessible educational materials and technology to address opportunity gaps and improve achievement gaps, including communicative competency skills.
- Provide universal professional learning to paraeducators to increase their ability to implement academic, behavioral, technical, and health supports across settings, as determined by the IEP.

SECONDARY TRANSITION ACTION IMPERATIVE

By 2020, seamless transition programs and services, aligned with evidence-based practices, will be implemented to increase the number of youth with disabilities who are actively engaged in post-secondary activities such as education, technical and career training, employment, and community participation after exiting schools.

Rationale

Research shows student-centered transition approaches set the stage for a seamless transition to a life of economic independence and meaningful participation in the community. In Maryland, transition planning for students with disabilities begins at age 14.

- We know youth need individually designed transition plans to document their high school experiences, establish specially designed goals for exploring post-secondary education and career preparation, and obtain services and supports.
- We know effective transition services for students with disabilities should include workforce training, paid employment, higher education and technical education—all provided by knowledgeable transition service professionals.
- We know paid work experiences while in secondary education are the most compelling predictor of post-school success.
- We know instruction in self-determination and self-advocacy results in informed decision-making such as accommodation needs, disclosure decisions, and career preferences.
- We know cross-system and cross-agency collaboration supports customized employment and pathways to college, agency linkages, and access to full community integration.

Ultimately, a student’s first day of adulthood should be no different than his or her last day of high school, resulting in a seamless transition.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

		Baseline (2014-15)	2018	2020
Graduation	An increasing percent of students with disabilities will graduate with a Diploma in 4 years of high school.	63.93%	66%	68%
	An increasing percent of students with disabilities will graduate with a Diploma in 5 years of high school.	69.33%	72%	74%
Drop Out	Fewer students with disabilities will drop out of high school.	4.73%	4.25%	3.75%
Post-Secondary Outcomes	An increasing percent of students with disabilities will participate in paid employment, post-secondary education, and/or employment training	56.23%	60%	64%

Strategic Collaboration

- Create a Core School-to-Work Leadership Team with critical decision-makers (DORS, DDA, BHA, MDOD, IHE, MCIE, DLLR, MSDE),* local school system partners, and the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition, to improve post-school outcomes of youth with disabilities.
- Co-lead with other State service systems to support grant funded disability employment initiatives (i.e., Maryland Work-Based Learning Collaborative, Working Marylanders with Disabilities, and Maryland PROMISE) and serve as a liaison to local school systems for implementation.
- Inform local practices to implement current legislation and provide implementation support (Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act, Employment First, and Ken Capone Equal Employment Act) focused on equal access and community integration for people with disabilities, including youth with disabilities to provide work-based learning and paid employment opportunities.
- Collaborate with service system partners to research federal waiver opportunities available for funding, family training, and child/youth transition services and supports.

Family Partnerships

- Develop and disseminate materials, resources, and tools that assist families to navigate the transition planning process and agency linkages, including the development of a family transition planning guide, and a dedicated channel on Maryland Learning Links of interactive resources, including the LifeCourse framework.
- Develop and fund a Family Leadership training series with Parents' Place of Maryland to build capacity for family transition decision-making, and for family and student voice in the development and implementation of effective IEP transition goals, services, and supports.

Evidence Based Practices

- Release and disseminate the Maryland Transition Digital Portfolio tool to allow students to create, own and share an electronic, strengths-based picture of their personal profile, educational history, work experiences, and daily life activities that promote their plan for independence and pathways toward graduation, career, and college.
- Issue discretionary grants to IHEs and partner agencies, to research and evaluate innovative national trends and develop State best practice models (i.e., Towson University to implement a new postsecondary education program for students with intellectual disabilities).

- Create differentiated State and local career pathway program options: embedding employment training within existing career clusters, developing a 5th year transition program option on post-secondary career development, identifying industry-related credentials within existing programs, and Career Research Development programs in all local school systems to increase diverse employment training opportunities for students with disabilities.

Data Informed Decision Making

- Assign a State-level secondary transition Liaison as a member of a State/local team to assist each local lead agency/school system in data-informed decision-making (team, analyze, plan, implement, track), identification of resources to address performance needs, and connections to professional learning opportunities.
- Promote a data-informed technical assistance process for continuous monitoring and assessment of secondary transition IEP goals and post-school outcomes through local reports cards, back-mapping reports, national web-based decision-making tools, and access to online data reports; identify predictors for dropout risk using data analytics in Student Compass tool.

Professional Learning

- Develop and implement cross-agency training specific to secondary transition evidence-based practices (i.e., self-advocacy, age-appropriate transition assessment, work-based learning) with follow-up coaching and technical assistance across various environments (school, community, worksite, and home).
- Create and deliver online just-in-time resources and tools such as the Maryland Transition Assessment Toolkit to support the development and implementation of evidence-based transition practices as predictors to positive outcomes.=

*Division of Rehabilitation Services

*Developmental Disabilities Administration

*Behavioral Health Administration

*Maryland Department of Disabilities

*Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education

*Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation

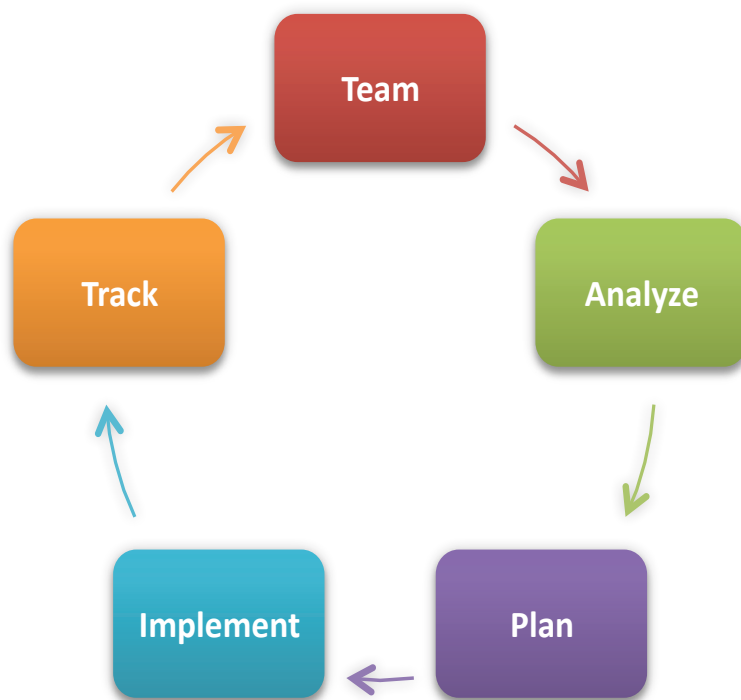


BUILDING INNOVATIVE, COHERENT SYSTEMS TO SHARPEN THE FOCUS

- Advancing Data-Informed Decision Making
- Leveraging Evidence-Based Practice
- Designing Organizational Frameworks to Narrow the Gap

ADVANCING DATA-INFORMED DECISION MAKING

▶ THE TAP-IT IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS AND TOOL



The DSE/EIS adopted an evidence-based data analysis and decision-making cycle, TAP-IT* that guides education leaders and practitioners through a structured examination of data and inquiry.

The TAP-IT process has been implemented at the State, LSS/public agency, and school levels. Through the use of the **TAP-IT digital portfolio tool**, teams can make decisions and archive data to improve policy, programs, professional practice, and ultimately, child/student and family outcomes.

TAP-IT includes a five-stage decision-making cycle with specific protocols designed to guide State-Local-School inquiry teams through a systematic process for using relevant data sources to: analyze student performance, select appropriate instructional and behavioral interventions, monitor the quality of intervention implementation, and determine the effectiveness of selected interventions in producing positive outcomes for students. TAP-IT is recursive and designed to promote the on-going use of data in decision making at all levels.

At the State level, the **TAP-IT process** is used to implement the Statewide Differentiated Framework (pages 12-13) for systems improvement.

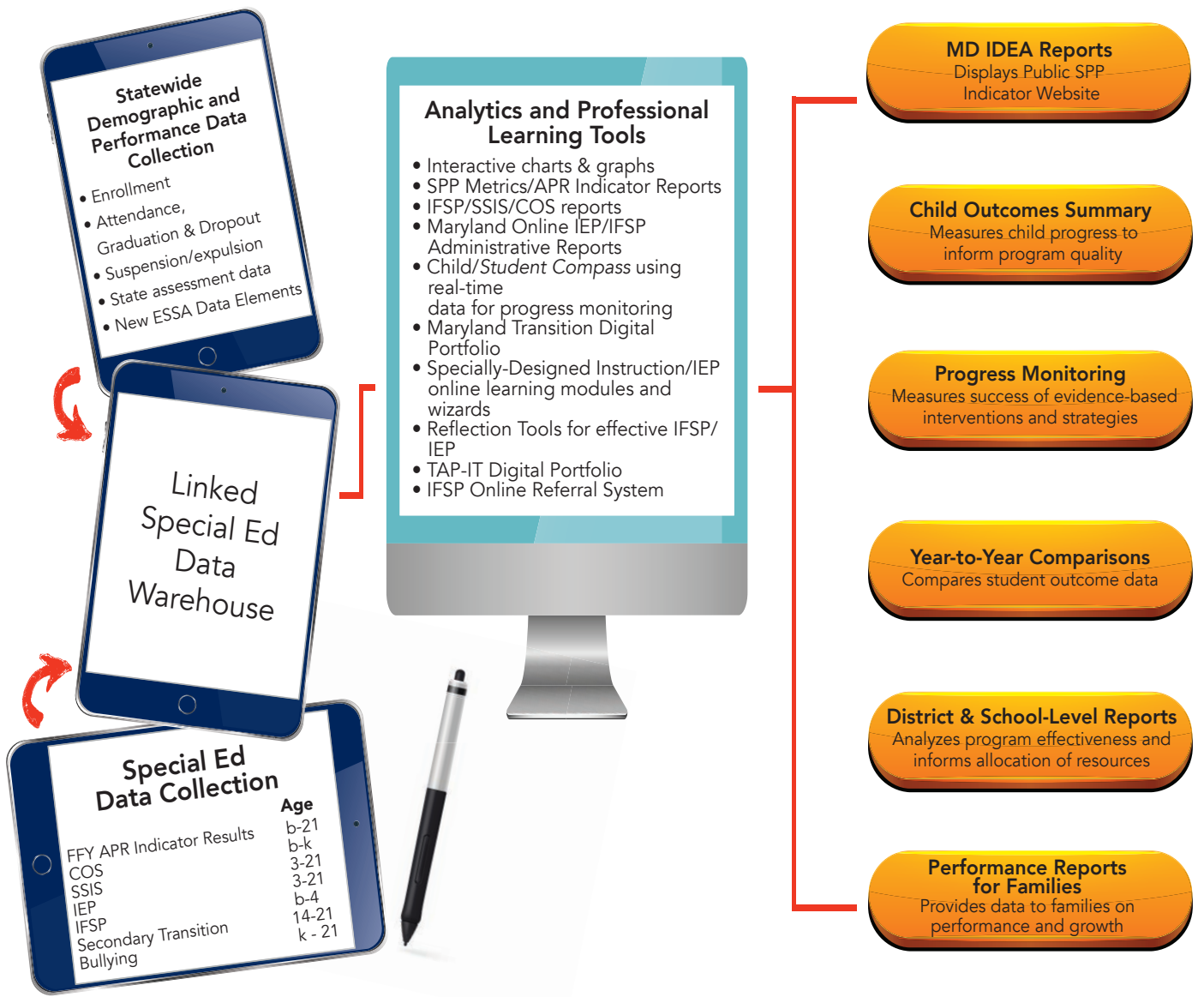
- **Team** focuses on increasing a jurisdiction’s capacity to build a high performing, State/local implementation team whose purpose is to drive improved outcomes for children.
- **Analyze** focuses on assessing needs, identifying root causes of an identified need, examining possible solutions/ evidence-based practice, and assessing how those solutions fit into a jurisdiction’s context and readiness.
- **Plan** identifies action steps, timelines, resources and persons responsible to implement the solution/evidence-based practice with fidelity.
- **Implement** is an ongoing process that takes 2-4 years involving multiple decisions, actions, and corrections.
- **Track** assesses how well changes are being implemented using fidelity checks and other data.

**The TAP-IT Model was developed by the The Johns Hopkins University School of Education, Center for Technology in Education (CTE), for the Maryland State Department of Education through a grant provided by the Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services.*

▶ LONGITUDINAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM WITH ADVANCED TOOLS

To improve results and narrow the gap for students with disabilities, the DSE/EIS, in collaboration with the Center for Technology in Education at The Johns Hopkins University School of Education (CTE), developed the Maryland Special Education and Early Intervention Longitudinal Accountability Decision Support System (LADSS) to augment decision-making among teams across Maryland, including state, district, school, and grade-level teams. This powerful system integrates statewide demographic and performance data with special education and early intervention data. Even more, the LADSS seamlessly connects to a set of sophisticated electronic tools that enrich the **TAP-IT Data-Informed Decision Making Process**.

With these robust tools, teams using TAP-IT are able to efficiently analyze real-time and longitudinal data as they monitor the effectiveness of specific student interventions. While the LADSS supports these convincing statewide efforts to implement evidence-based processes for narrowing the gap between children and students with and without disabilities, it also provides data that address federal reporting and accountability. Central to the continuous improvement of LADSS is the commitment by the DSE/EIS and CTE to utilize national resources and obtain feedback from a variety of stakeholders, including special education directors, teachers, providers, and families, via user groups, focus groups, and surveys.



LEVERAGING EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE

▶ STATE SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Maryland has developed early childhood and school-age State Systemic Improvement Plans (SSIP) as part of their State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR). The SSIPs are intended to improve the State infrastructure for providing technical assistance, support the local implementation of evidence-based practices, and evaluate the impact of the SSIP work on targeted child and student outcomes. Infrastructure and technical assistance strategies used by the DSE/EIS in their partnership with Local Infants and Toddlers Programs and Local School Systems are Implementation Science, Systems Coaching, and an Evidence-Based Data-Informed Decision Making Model.

Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program SSIP

The Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program (MITP) State Systemic Implementation Plan (SSIP) focuses on increasing the rate of growth of positive social-emotional skills in infants, toddlers, and preschool age children with developmental delays/disabilities. The initial implementation of the MITP SSIP is in four Local Infants and Toddlers Programs.

The MITP has developed three key approaches to improve social-emotional development:

1. Providing leadership for strategic collaboration and resource management through inter- and intra-agency collaborative teaming.
2. Providing technical assistance and programmatic support with a focus on family partnerships and evidence-based practices using Systems Coaching and professional learning in:
 - Division of Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) recommended practices/key principles
 - Authentic Family Assessment, including the Routines-Based Interview (RBI)
 - Reflective coaching
 - Social-Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
3. Ensuring accountability with a focus on results through data-informed decision-making.

School-Age Special Education SSIP

The Maryland School-Age Special Education State Systemic Implementation Plan (SSIP) focuses on increasing mathematics proficiency of students with disabilities in grades 3 through 5. The initial implementation of the School-Age SSIP is in six Local School Systems (LSS).

The DSE/EIS has developed three key approaches to improve results for students with disabilities:

1. Providing leadership for strategic collaboration and resource management through cross-functional and cross-departmental teaming.
2. Providing technical assistance and programmatic support focused to build LSS capacity to implement targeted evidence-based practices, including Systems Coaching, online resources and professional learning for LSS Implementation Teams in:
 - Effective core math instruction and advanced tiered math interventions
 - Culturally responsive, specialized instruction within a tiered intervention system
 - Family partnerships
3. Ensuring accountability with a focus on results through data-informed decision-making.



▶ SCHOOL WIDE INTEGRATION FRAMEWORK FOR TRANSFORMATION

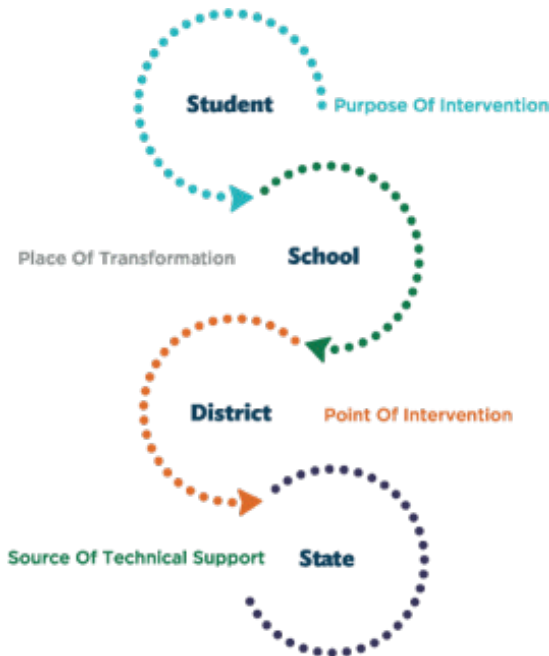
Maryland is one of five States selected to participate in the national K-8 technical assistance center to bridging general and specialized education through academic and behavioral supports. Four local school systems in Maryland are participating in the SWIFT project with four schools identified in each system.



The SWIFT framework is based on research indicating the influence of the following on improving student outcomes:

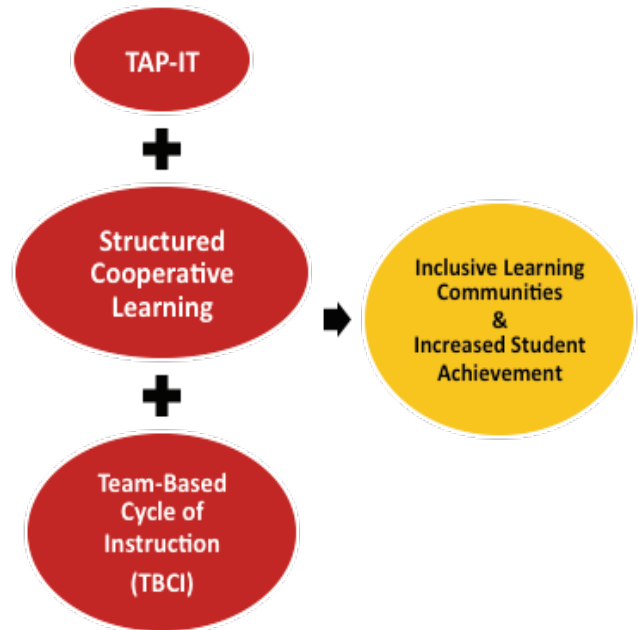
- Administrative Leadership and Educator Support Systems
- Inclusive Multi-Tiered System of Supports in Reading, Math, and Behavior
- An Integrated Organization that engages all adults and all students in a culturally responsive and positive system
- Strong Family and Community Partnerships
- Inclusive Policy Structure and Practice

Through six technical assistance processes, SWIFT partners use data to identify priorities for improvement, target practices that will be implemented, and engage in the work of systems change. Implementation of practices occurs in the school and classroom; capacity for supporting, sustaining, and scaling up practices occurs at the district and State level.



▶ AN EFFECTIVE TEAM-BASED LEARNING APPROACH FOR SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM

An analysis of the 2010 State achievement results for students with disabilities revealed greater deficits in mathematics than English language arts, and persistent gaps between children with and without disabilities. In response, the MSDE sought a State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) focused on positive achievement outcomes for students with disabilities in mathematics while building the capacity of districts and schools to sustain and scale these interventions.

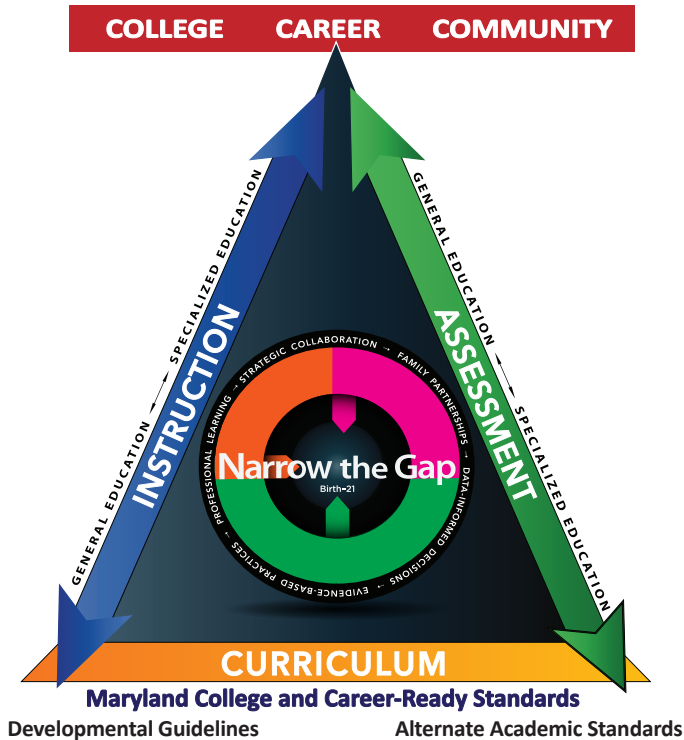


Three interrelated interventions were chosen to enhance decision making processes among state, district, and school educators and to change instructional and management practices within the general education class for the benefit of students with disabilities. The evidence-based interventions selected — the *TAP-IT Data Informed Decision Making* process, *Structured Cooperative Learning*, and the *Team-Based Cycle of Instruction* are grounded in over 40 years of comprehensive research related to effective collaboration and team-based learning.

Teachers systematically implement a consistent cycle of daily instruction along with specific protocols for differentiating instruction to build a positive, inclusive learning community that fosters equal opportunities for success and learning among students with disabilities.

DESIGNING ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORKS TO NARROW THE GAP

▶ INTERDEPENDENT EDUCATION COMPONENTS

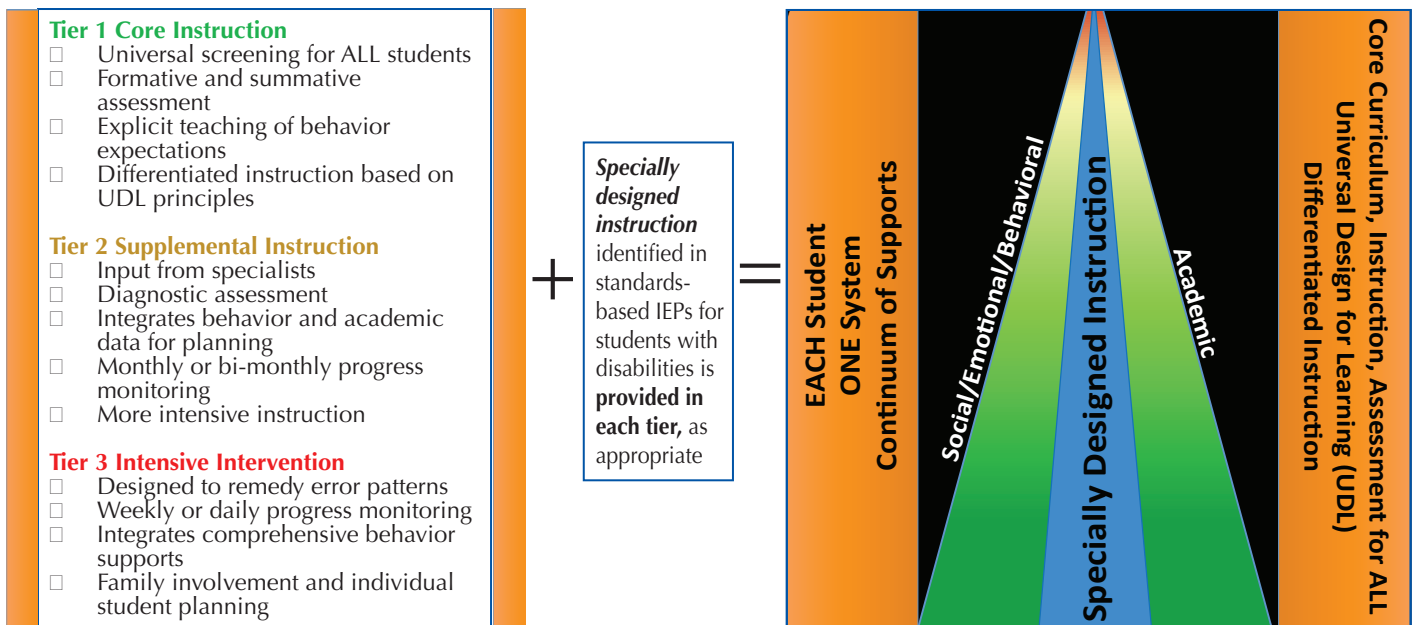


In a highly effective teaching and learning system, educators have HIGH EXPECTATIONS for each student and align all three components of **curriculum, instruction, and assessment** to focus on positive student outcomes in reading, math, and behavior.

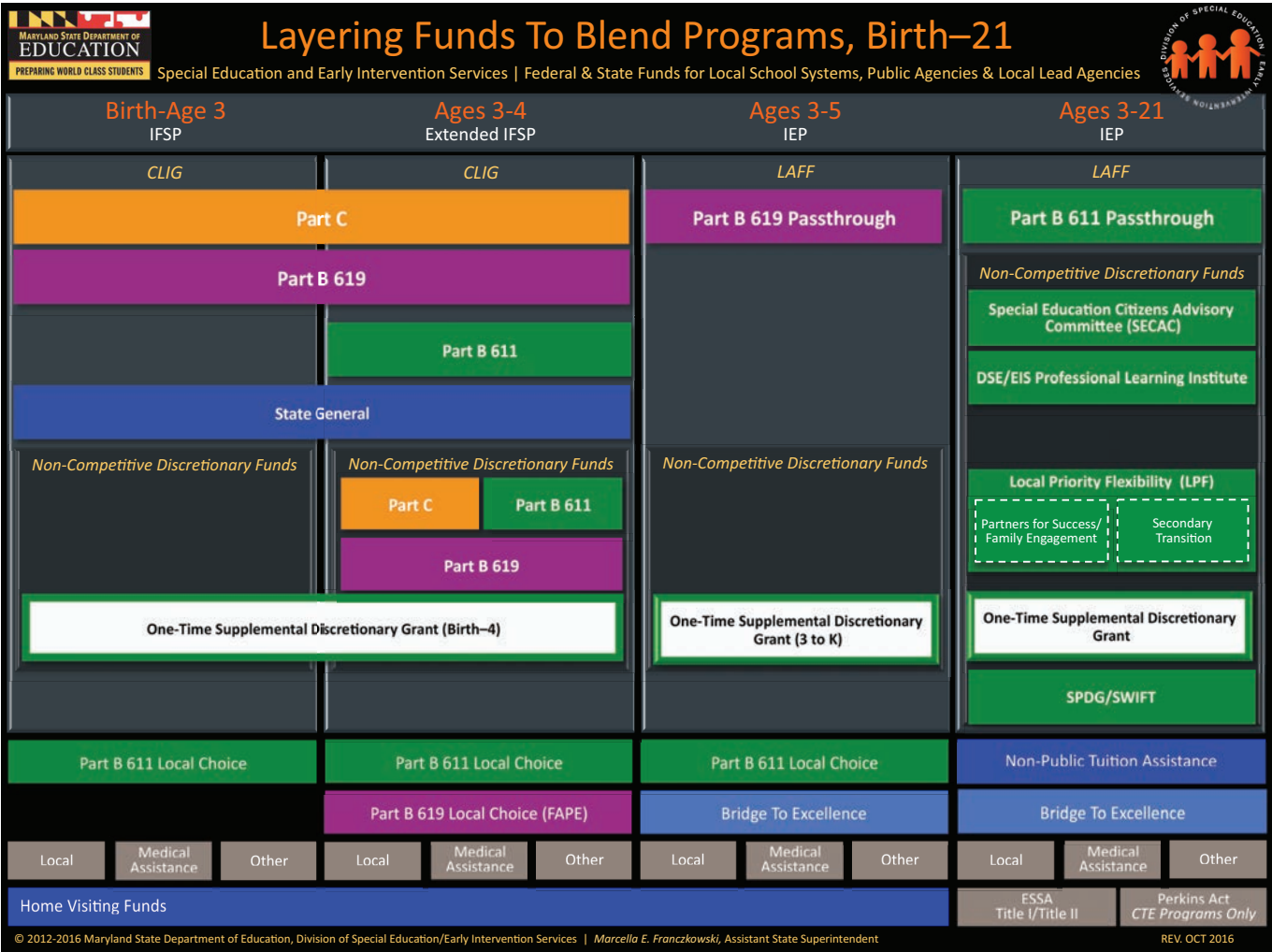
To address the opportunity gap and narrow the achievement gap, educators need to provide access to rigorous, developmentally-appropriate content through both differentiated instruction and specially designed instruction to personalize learning for each and every student.

▶ AN INTEGRATED TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS

The DSE/EIS supports the implementation of a tiered system that integrates a focus on a student’s social emotional learning needs in conjunction with behavioral and academic instructional interventions to decrease opportunity and achievement gaps in performance among student groups. For **schools**, this means implementation of a school-wide organizational framework and data systems to provide culturally-responsive, evidence-based targeted and intensive interventions through collaborative planning.



▶ LAYERING FUNDS TO BLEND SERVICES



The DSE/EIS supports local school systems and public agencies to layer funds to blend services. This framework encourages local stakeholders to think more holistically across programs to advance a comprehensive strategy rather than considering each funding stream and planning requirement in isolation. Incorporating alignment among federal funds awarded (including IDEA, ESSA, and the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technology Act); State funds awarded (including Bridge to Excellence, Nonpublic Tuition Assistance Program, dedicated general funds); and local government funds strengthens the coherence and effectiveness of improvement activities.

Early intervention and special education services are provided through a combination of federal, State, and local funds. In Maryland, funding supporting early intervention and special education programs represents approximately 12% of the total education funding. This chart depicts by program (IFSP/IEP) and by age (Birth to age 3, ages 3 – 4, ages 3 – 5, and ages 3 – 21) Maryland’s strategy to layer various funding streams to blend services.

The DSE/EIS uses a significant portion of federal set-aside funds to create innovative grant opportunities for each birth through 21 local systems. Non-competitive discretionary grants are issued to:

- **Provide** local priority flexibility to craft solutions tailored to data-informed needs for results
- **Target** State identified priorities and initiatives
- **Focus** resources and supports to local school systems/public agencies of greatest need

In addition, the DSE/EIS issues a substantial competitive grant to a local school system every three years to implement systems change to narrow the gap.

To ensure the layering of funds strategy aligns with federal and State regulations, the DSE/EIS implements a sub-recipient monitoring protocol. Monitoring activities may include, but are not limited to, on-site review of operations, the provision of training, and technical assistance.

Moving Maryland Forward In Action

A Logic of Influence



MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION/EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES
200 West Baltimore Street, 9th Floor, Baltimore, Maryland 21201
MarylandPublicSchools.org | MarylandLearningLinks.org

The contents of this publication were developed and produced through grant funds received by the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs/Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education. However, the contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education and should not be regarded as such.

The Maryland State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, national origin, religion, or disability in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs. For inquiries related to departmental policy, please contact the Equity Assurance and Compliance Branch: Phone 410-767-0433, TTY/TDD 410-333-6442, Fax 410-767-0431.

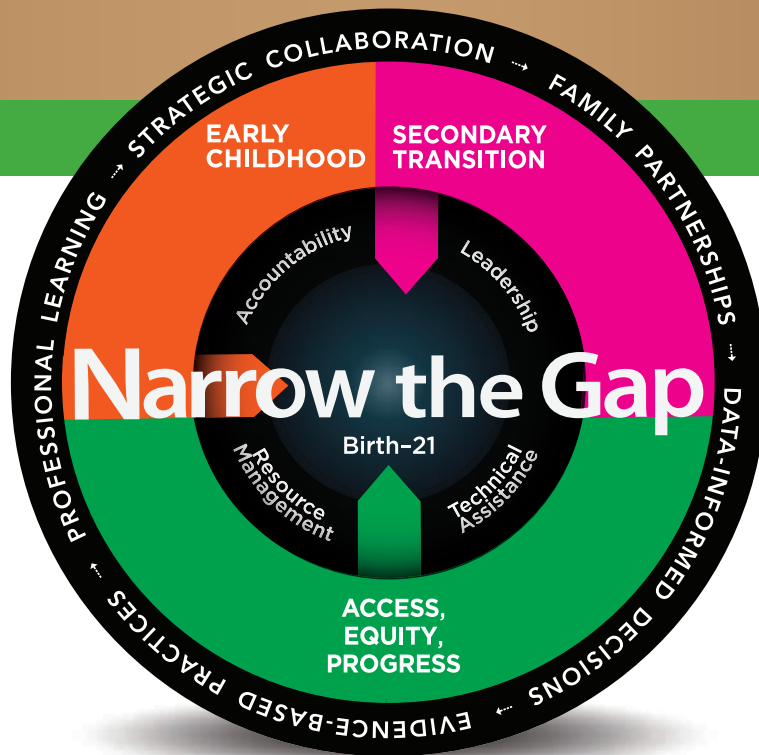
In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), this document may be made available in alternative formats upon request. Contact the Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services: Phone 410-767-0238, Fax 410-333-8165.

The **Division of Special Education/
Early Intervention Services**
(DSE/EIS)

STRATEGIC PLAN

Moving Maryland Forward
Sharpen the Focus for 2020

NOVEMBER 2016



© 2013-2016 Maryland State Department of Education

Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

