

## 2021 SPP/APR Stakeholder Improvement Strategies Feedback Process

### SUMMARY OF BREAKOUT SESSIONS

#### INDICATOR 3 (State Assessment) and 7 (Preschool Outcomes)

##### INDICATOR 3 (State Assessment) Improvement Strategies

The following information/feedback was collected from a representative group of Connecticut Stakeholders:

##### Factors:

- *Shortage of special educators (showing impact on proficiency rates on standard assessments). Evidence based ways to help with this issue, perhaps explore national models.*
- *COVID 19 and the social emotional condition of students has had major impact on Indicator 3.*
- *Cultural capacity and cultural responsiveness—affects staff. Admin, paraprofessionals, & parents—whole team.*
- *Attendance among students with disabilities impacts test results (even more so in math). Intermittent attendance is a major factor.*
- *Not all families have access to computers and the internet. Low and high tech resources. Family access to technology can be an issue. Troubleshooting needed.*
- *Variance from district to district in educational requirements for paraprofessionals.*

##### Suggestions:

- *How can the CSDE better understand what learning is happening inside classrooms to help improve student assessment proficiency rates?*
- *IEP desk audit process—share results with families so they have a better understanding of what is going on in school districts. Share with special education advisory committees in districts.*
- *More involvement at local school district level with the BSE.*
  - *Targeted assistance for school districts who are most in need.*
- *It would be helpful to understand the intended outcomes of the improvement activities.*
- *We should test students on what they can do rather than what they cannot do. Testing to their strengths.*
- *Question: What happens when a student cannot complete the CTAA (Alternate Assessment)?*
- *Suggest looking at the models of other states.*

## Indicator 3 and 7 Improvement Strategy Feedback

- *Provide training on Marilyn Friend co-teaching models.*
  - *Look at the fidelity of the implementation of these models. There seems to be an over-reliance on 1 teach – 1 assist (co-teaching models) or co-teaching not being implemented with fidelity and lack of differentiation impacting delivery of specialized instruction. What happens with 1 teach, 1 assist is that General Education teacher provides the instruction and is the lead teacher, and the special education teacher helps the students. To maximize the expertise of the special education teacher to (deliver specialized instruction in alignment with the student's IEP).*
- *Math – study/review academic achievement for students with disabilities as it shows up on proficiency.*
- *Parents should be provided with the same education & manipulatives as students so they can support the student at home. When parents are involved and given tools, (APR ind 3) increases in child outcomes.*
- *Provide flexibility in remote instruction.*

## Strategies

- *Provide a structure/format for school districts to share why/how they are having success.*
  - *Understand/review school districts who are not meeting success and determine root causes.*
  - *Provide a universal resource for districts who need assistance with this. A way to share best practices without reinventing the wheel.*
- *Assistive technology and AAC—knowledge and tools to level playing field; curriculum development to support staff and kids. Place more emphasis and provide more information on AT and accommodations on standard assessments.*
- *Provide more opportunities for students to take standard assessment practice tests. Inform the field so they know about the available resources.*
  - *Assessment Practice is important not only for educators to show how students are doing but also for families because families also feel their child feel diminished not taking the standardized assessment.*
  - *Students could have a better understanding of what the assessment is like.*
- *Participation rate of students who are blind and visually impaired have increased and scores improved. Not just credit of teachers but also partnership w/ state dept of ed b/c training on what expectations are (two-way partnership worked well).*
- *Strategies children are taught may not be available for them to utilize in standardized testing. If PPT determines that students should be able to utilize certain accommodations—it should be universal not limited to school-based assessments but also standardized tests.*

## Indicator 3 and 7 Improvement Strategy Feedback

- *Math assessment – one of the strategies used in past experiences involved use of different modes, formats, ways to problem solve. However, SBAC has only one mode students could access/use. This seems like a mismatch because we are teaching with alternate strategies (visuals, manipulatives, schema frameworks) however, very little of that is available on assessment.*
- *PPT team should be required to discuss the necessary accommodations and available options.*

### Resources & Guidance

- *Provide parents with written materials in addition to the resources currently available on CSDE website.*
  - *Help families to receive resources.*
    - *Partner with libraries so they can support parents with technology.*
- *Investing resources in regular education around supporting students with disabilities and general education curriculum in the classroom is very helpful. Most students spend 80%+ in general education classrooms and support in being successful in that environment = increased achievement*
- *Districts benefit from personnel resources, embedded coaches for best practices in math instruction, tailored to needs of ss w/ disabilities & ss in SRBI (particular shortage area).*
- *Special education teachers may be more adept in repertoire in ELA & Reading—districts would benefit from investment in personnel and embedded coaching.*

### Training

- *Provide parents and/or parent groups with trainings around the CTAA for them to develop a better understanding of the assessment.*
- *Parent training both at the school level and through parent associations—what are the assessments and how parents can support their children.*
- *Partnering with or increasing awareness of other community affiliations—they are already working with the parents.*
- *Work with schools' equity committees. Special education compounds disparities.*
- *Increase Universal Design Learning offerings.*
- *PD focused on improving the skills of students.*
- *PD opportunities – collaborate with speech and language pathologists on how they can support teams—does this already exist?*
- *Assistive technology and Augmentative and Alternative Communication.*
- *Cultural capacity/responsiveness.*

**What data should the CSDE be using to inform the development of improvement activities and continuous improvement for students with IEPs?**

## Indicator 3 and 7 Improvement Strategy Feedback

- *Look at disparities of resources between districts across the state and what resources are available to students.*
- *How are we quantifying the data? Is the data accurate? Is the data we are using too broad or do we need to target specific data—looking at the students that are struggling the most. What are success factors (e.g., they can test well in one area, but they may struggle with attendance—we lump students too broadly)?*
- *Disaggregated data by race and ethnicity and disability category. Get as granular as possible—not just by district but also by school.*
- *Be aware of FERPA limitations—difference between can't publish and can't use. Should not let privacy issues impact appropriate people and entities from examining data.*
- *Capture information about students who are making growth. Find a way to represent that data.*
- *One of the problems with the data collection is that it is data collection for its own sake and not always used for improvement. Suggestion to use data beyond compliance purposes.*
- *Could the state access or use school districts learning management platform data? For example, Fast Bridge—that data could be very helpful.*
- *Challenge—lag in data (don't get it back until following school year). As a result, it is difficult to make informed plans.*

### **What recommendations do you have for the CSDE to evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies?**

- *Circulate a survey to districts following the district trainings provided by SERC and the Performance Office to learn to what extent participants utilize the information learned/obtained at the trainings.*
- *Alignment with school improvement plans and key performance indicators—how are things connected?*

## **INDICATOR 7 (Preschool Outcomes) Improvement Strategies**

### **The following information/feedback was collected from a representative group of Connecticut Stakeholders:**

#### **Suggestions:**

- *When district do not meet their reporting expectations, they should provide a narrative in their reporting about how they will improve their plan moving forward. Not just once*

## Indicator 3 and 7 Improvement Strategy Feedback

*a year when it is time to make a correction. Just like IEPs need to be monitored quarterly.*

- *Connect with professionals in the school to review what is applicable to practice.*
- *How can we align high impact practices between PreK and K-12 – keeping it developmentally appropriate. Teachers in PreK should have access to the same supports as K-12 teachers. They should be part of the school community.*
- *Parent perspective of indicators.*
  - *What is their involvement and what are their expectations?*
  - *Focus on teen moms and generational gaps depending on who primary caregivers are (teen parents, grandparents).*
  - *Pupil engagement is also missing throughout. Need youth engagement to be ahead of plans moving forward.*
- *Focus on enhancing the transition process from Part C to Part B.*
- *We need universal preschool in Connecticut.*
- *Administrators should participate (if they are not already) in the convenings that were mentioned in the Indicator 7 presentation. Not just the pre-school teacher level. Consider opportunities for COPs across the spectrum of special education providers. Suggest sharing best practices, and problem solving. Perhaps to bring in some public school expertise in this area.*

### Strategies

- *How are school districts forging community partnerships (community-based organizations and private PreK).*
- *Regional Early Childhood Advisories as partners. Helping to support early education across the community.*
- *Increased focus on SEL needed. SEL issues to be addressed at the family level (training and supports) is important preschools in your community. Make certain there could be partnerships with preschools re: student w/behavioral struggles. Having these partnerships is very helpful. This is stronger in some towns than others because they have existing structures in place.*
- *Additional focus on effective transition to K to make the transition between (e.g., participate in K reading group and acclimation to K during summer months).*
- *Sharing of best practices in districts should continue. How we meet the needs of students using the ELDS, inclusion. The roundtable is a great step!*
- *Maximizing role of paraeducators in early childhood—districts can be guided in intensively training their paraprofessional staff. Districts tend to provide resources for certified staff. Paras are very important on all levels especially early childhood programs. Are districts using own resources to do that? Ex., speech lang path doing strong training in language devo among spec populations. District paras shadowing related service providers to full extent—doesn't always happen (paras usually have break time when kids w/ related service providers).*

## Indicator 3 and 7 Improvement Strategy Feedback

- *Invest in parent/family involvement. Preschool first space in public education—relationship and work done so early sets stage for relationship and trajectory of student.*
  - *Collaborative efforts-strategies that families can use at home alongside schools.*
  - *Outreach with parents and families during alternative times because it is difficult during days (working) weeknights (competing commitments) weeknight outreach—thinking out of the box.*
- *Including youth if/when possible, also paraeducators (authentic feedback, can make anonymous).*

### Resources & Guidance

- *Cross district advisory groups—what supports are needed (e.g., instructional guides and supplemental resource guides).*
- *Time for resource access and delivery.*
- *Connectivity and appropriate number of devices per family.*
- *Are people familiar with the CT-Early Learning Development Standards? “end of program goals” with priority areas for planning to help people know the standards and research. What will prepare teachers to focus on the Standards?*
- *The guidebook for ASD sounds great!*
- *Continue to use technology to meet/connect with parents (Zoom for some parents is the best way to meet).*
- *Birth to 3 providers—connecting with them. The better the relationship with birth to 3 provider and preschool, the better the process.*
- *Birth to 3 case manager / supervisor training in IDEA and related SPED laws. Sometimes case manager attends the PPT meeting and is not aware of laws and rights so in end child loses out on services.*
- *Part C and Part B—understanding each.*
- *Looking forward to the updated ECO tool aligned with the CT-ELDS. Would love to have access to training staff and understand this is very new. Ensure all are prepared to make the most meaning of the assessment. Communication of the assessments and preparation for administering the assessments is essential.*

### Training

- *How are we training leaders?*
- *Job embedded growth and PD opportunities.*
- *Being able to access all the information and training. Can't have all staff attending meetings at same time, due to scheduling issues.*
- *Expanded training programs for SLPs and School Psychologists*
  - *Related services, extreme difficulty sourcing speech & lang pathologist*
- *Wraparound initiative for the entire team.*

## Indicator 3 and 7 Improvement Strategy Feedback

- Substitutes—training (many moving parts).
- *SEL-Importance of SEL and how children make progress. Important to have some training / guidance around what pieces are incorporated into an SEL training. If done on statewide level and can see results that CSDE and DCF around doing around social emotional trauma and impact on children. Look at this data and see what is going on statewide. Ensure partnerships to achieve this. Work between public schools and private providers to look at the social emotional well-being of all children.*

### **What data should the CSDE be using to inform the development of improvement activities and continuous improvement for students with IEPs?**

- *Getting beyond the data collection, but the importance of analyzing it and using the data for programming.*
- *Suggest measuring how children enter K and exit K?*
- *Look longitudinally—what has been the impact of Early Intervention over time (maybe across all the early childhood years).*
- *How are wraparound services impacting this indicator?*
- *What data can we use particularly with regard to SEL?*
- *Is there a difference in the growth for children who also received B23? We need to look more longitudinally.*
- *Data needs to be disaggregated to know if we are being effective. Also, to determine if other factors are impacting outcomes (e.g., exclusionary discipline practices).*
- *Does the state have data pertaining to different disabilities? Wondering—are students with certain disabilities able to access information with remote learning and is it better for certain students—does in school provide more stressors. Maybe the remote instruction is the reason for improvement in behavior, social status.*
- *Students who performed well during remote and homebound – what options/resources can district provide to family?*
- *Curious to know about families who opted out of services during Covid—was there a drop in achievement? If yes, why? Can that be addressed?*
- *Trajectory of preschool students—not as likely that within two-year period that everyone will be at grade level—is there a way to look longer term as to benefit of kids who attended preschool? How does that affect what they do 2 – 3 years after that and what is relationship in exiting at grade 2 or 3?*
- *Go to source and ask teachers (survey teachers and parents—what are they getting and what missing).*
- *Are there enough standardized measures?*
- *The CSDE just adopted new SEL measure (Devereaux). It would be great to receive data from this measure. What measures and data and interventions do we have for those with Tier 3 needs? Share what is in place for families and students?*

## Indicator 3 and 7 Improvement Strategy Feedback

- *Looking at profiles of the PreK programs (e.g., 1/2 day vs. full-day, separate vs. inclusive, push in vs. pull out, services in community-based programs)*

### **What recommendations do you have for the CSDE to evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies?**

- *Follow up needs assessment (e.g., were children between off/making better progress after adults participated in activities like the assessment symposium).*
- *Equity, every school system abides by different standard, some way to ensure equitably providing sources and education statewide (rural and urban).*
- *State does a great job sending out various offerings, but pre-school looks different in towns, districts, etc. All is so individualized with some commonalities. Would like more opportunities for partnerships with other districts. Is there something going on currently that is addressing this? District to district collaboration opportunities or if CT could help develop collaboration opportunities with other states.*