



The Division of Early Intervention  
and Special Education Services

# STRATEGIC PLAN

Moving Maryland Forward

*Sharpen the Focus*



NOVEMBER 2016

JUNE 2021 Update

EARLY CHILDHOOD

ACCESS, EQUITY, PROGRESS

SECONDARY TRANSITION

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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

The Maryland State Department of Education’s Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services 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 Division 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*

With this Strategic Plan, the Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services recommits to *Moving Maryland Forward* – first 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. To support the ultimate vision of closing opportunity and achievement gaps for all students, this sharpened Plan aligns and guides the work of the DEI/SES 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 Early Intervention and  
Special Education 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, the DEI/SES will hold regional listening forums and other one-on-one engagement opportunities with leaders across the State. These 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* – 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 (MSDE), Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services (DEI/SES) provides leadership, accountability, technical assistance, and resource management to local school systems (LSS), public agencies (PA), 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

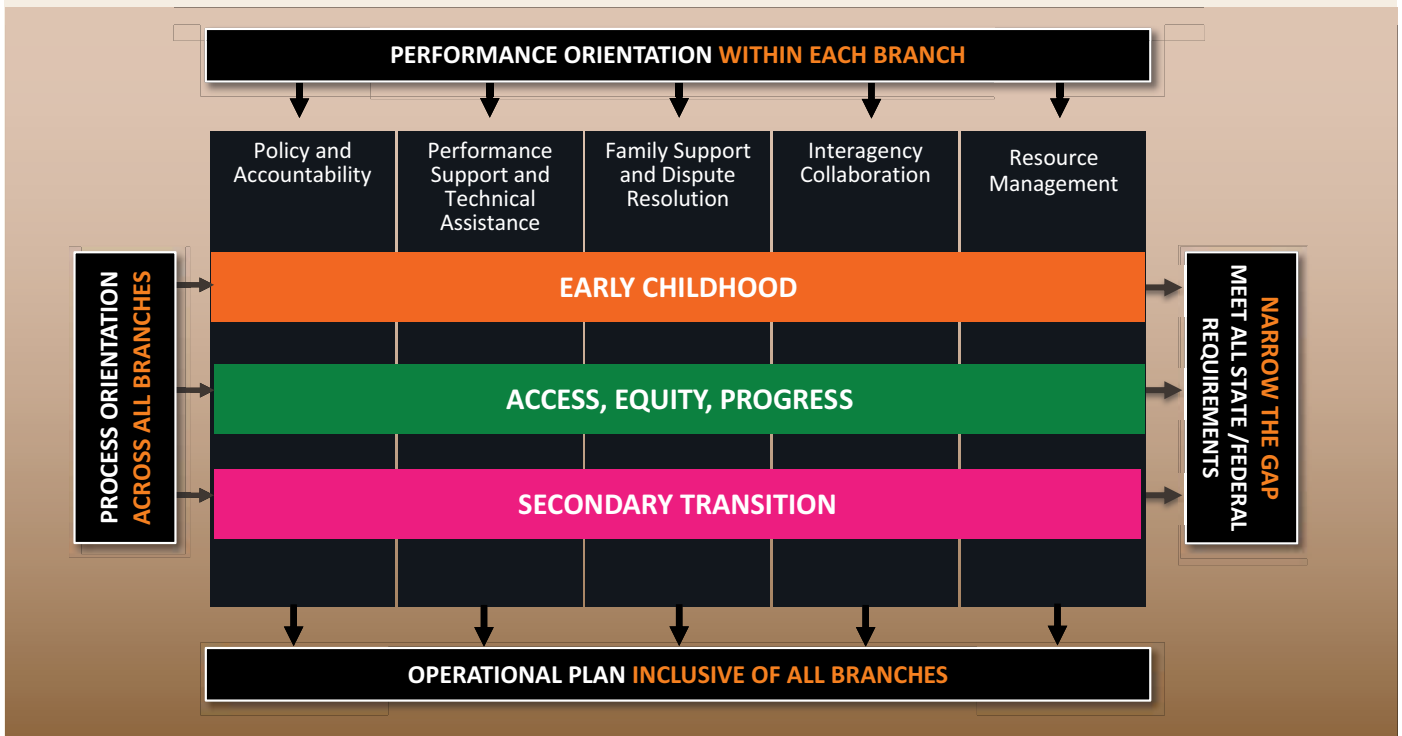
The DEI/SES is committed to building and sustaining an integrated organizational structure that is based upon the principles of collaboration and shared responsibility. The DEI/SES is organized by five branches: Policy and Accountability, Performance Support and Technical Assistance, Family Support and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

The DEI/SES has been restructured so that staff is fully involved in addressing the **three action imperatives** identified in *Moving Maryland Forward*. These action imperatives focus on three major areas:

- **EARLY CHILDHOOD**
- **ACCESS, EQUITY, AND PROGRESS**
- **SECONDARY TRANSITION**

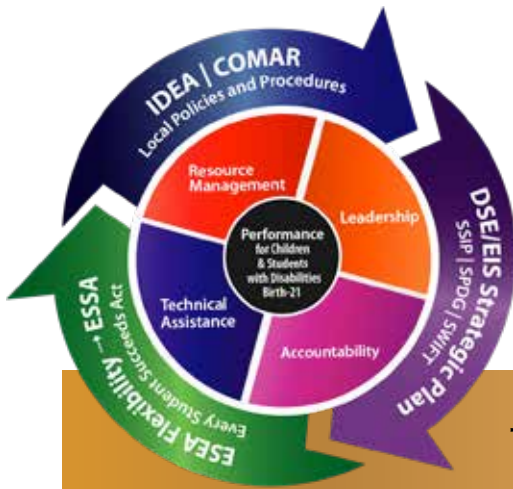
The DEI/SES **collaborative matrix infrastructure** integrates knowledge and skills for improvement of compliance and results, and ensures aligned and consistent communication within the DEI/SES, throughout the Department and with external partners from federal to family.

### THE DEI/SES COLLABORATIVE MATRIX INFRASTRUCTURE



# MARYLAND'S WORK

The DEI/SES 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 MSDE, a complex organization focused 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. With the passage of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, major reforms will be initiated to close achievement gaps. Increasing funds means increasing responsibility and focus on equitable outcomes for all children, in a fiscally responsible and sustainable manner.



The DEI/SES 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 DEI/SES 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 DEI/SES CORE FUNCTIONS

|  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Leadership</b><br/>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><b>Accountability</b><br/>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><b>Technical Assistance</b><br/>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><b>Resource Management</b><br/>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 DEI/SES works in partnership with twenty-four Local Infants and Toddlers Programs and local school systems, fourteen Juvenile Service Education Schools, the SEED School of Maryland, Maryland School for the Deaf, Maryland School for the Blind, other public agencies, and nonpublic schools.

**The DEI/SES services include:**

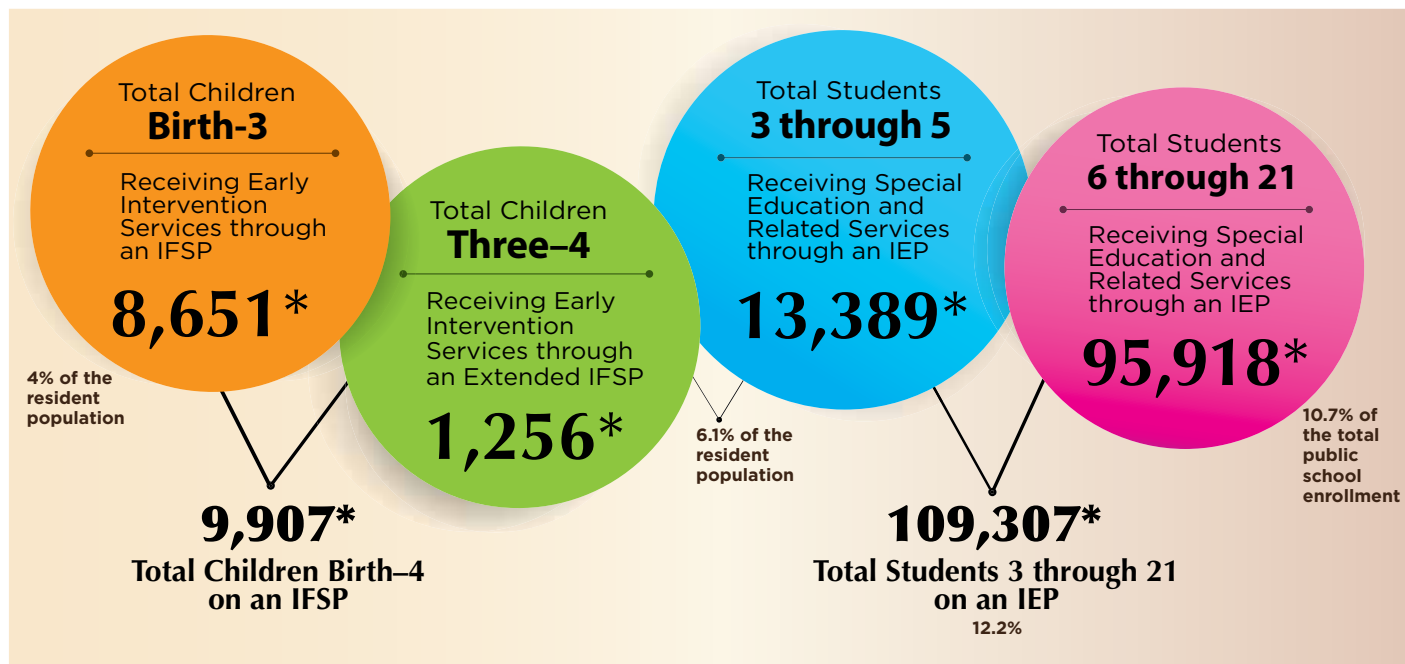
- Early Intervention Services/Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program (MITP)
- Preschool Special Education and Related Services
- Special Education and Related Services (School Age)
- Nonpublic Special Education School Services
- Family Support Services
- Home Visiting Services
- Maryland's nationally-recognized Medicaid Home & Community-Based Services Waiver for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Medical Assistance for School Health-Related Services
- Maryland Hearing Aid and Language and Communication Video Loan Bank
- LSS/PA Performance Support & Technical Assistance
- Interagency Coordinating Services
- Dispute Resolution
- State Special Education Complaints
- Early Intervention and Special Education grants management (federal, State, and special general funds)
- Monitoring, Accountability, and Data Collection

# 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 2018-19 school year, approximately 12.2% of children with disabilities ages 3–21 received special education and related services; 4% 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 about 16,000 children and families annually, representing a 74% increase over the past fifteen years. Maryland, as a birth mandate State, Maryland 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 10,000 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 13,400 preschoolers ages 3–5 and 96,000 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, 2018 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 DEI/SES's 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, eight State and local co-led Steering Committees, meetings of the DEI/SES 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 DEI/SES 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 DEI/SES 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 DEI/SES 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:

### Early Intervention

In 2018-2019, 68% of infants and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities in the MITP made as much or progress as their typically developing peers in positive social-emotional skills; acquisition and use of knowledge and skills; and use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

### Prevention

In the 2018-19 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 2018-19 school year, 19% of children with disabilities are ready, with a 32% gap between children with and without disabilities.

### Participation in General Education

In the 2018-19 school year, 70.2% of children with disabilities (compared to 64% nationally) were educated in general education classes more than 80% of the time, with wide variation across our school systems, ranging from 57.2% to 89.7%. Nationally, States also vary widely in the percent of students accessing the curriculum in general education settings, ranging from 43.9% to 83.6%.

### Graduation and Drop Out

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

- Over the past three years, **the graduation gap has narrowed** between students with and without disabilities by 2.77 percentage points.
- Over the past three years, the five-year graduation rate for students with disabilities showed a 1.7 percentage point increase.
- 67% of students are graduating with a High School Diploma—an increase of 2.91 percentage points over the past three years.
- Fewer students are dropping out of school; the Dropout rate has decreased by .75 percentage points in three years.

### 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 MCAP assessment. Despite general gains over time for both ELA and Mathematics in grades 3 through 8, only in math is there a general narrowing of the gap across grade levels when student with disabilities are compared to all students. In comparing the gaps from 2018 and 2019, gaps were narrowed for 3rd, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grades.

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

Maryland's Students with significant cognitive disabilities are participating in alternate assessments based on alternate achievement standards. 35.4% of students met or exceeded expectations in English Language Arts literacy and 41.2% of students met or exceeded expectations in mathematics.

### Significant 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 2018-19 school year, 13 out of 25 LSSs disproportionately identified students in disability categories, 1 out of 25 disproportionately removed students to separate special education settings, and 12 out of 25 disproportionately removed students through suspension or expulsion.

### Post School Readiness

100% of LSSs in Maryland provide programming to prepare students for employment and career readiness. This programming includes collaboration with local business and agency partners. There has been a 62% increase in students with IEPs, ages 14-21, accessing Pre-Employment Transition Services over the past three years.

### Post-School Outcomes

Of the students with disabilities who exited school in 2018, over 67% 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, the passage of the **Blueprint for Maryland's Future**, major shifts in federal special education accountability, changing student demographics, State assessment measures, and federal guidance inform this update to the DEI/SES Strategic Plan.



## Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

The *Every Student Succeeds Act* replaced 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 federal requirement is the development of State Systemic Improvement Plans (SSIP) to address specific targets for early intervention and school-age outcomes. Maryland has developed an early childhood SSIP and a school-age SSIP as part of its State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report (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 quadrupling, from 4% in SFY 2000 to 18% in SFY 2018. More children are homeless, move frequently, are refugees from other countries, and/or speak other languages.

- Over 43% of Maryland's students are eligible for free- and reduced- meals (FARMS) and this number is considerably higher for students with disabilities (52%).
- 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.
- About 12% of students with disabilities identified as English Language Learners.
- Almost 2% of students in Maryland are homeless and almost 10% live below the poverty level.

# SHARPENING THE FOCUS, continued

## State Assessment Measures

Maryland, along with other States, is required to use statewide assessments to measure student progress toward educational standards. Maryland assesses student achievement of the **Maryland College and Career-Ready (CCR) Standards** through the **Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP)** and the **Maryland Alternate Assessments**, using the **Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)** system for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and the **Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA)** to measure the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that children should be able to demonstrate at the start of kindergarten.

### 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 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 and “Questions and Answers” 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 past five years, seven such guidance documents 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 Education Program (IEP) 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 through effective specially designed instruction, related services, and supports to participate in the general education curriculum. 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 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.
- **Letter on Preschool Least Restrictive Environments:** The least restrictive environment (LRE) requirement of the IDEA is applicable to the placement of preschool children with disabilities. This letter highlights the importance of inclusive high-quality early childhood programs.
- **Questions and Answers on U. S. Supreme Court Case Decision *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District Re-1*:** The Court held that “[t]o meet its substantive obligation under the IDEA, a school must offer an IEP that is reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child’s circumstances.”

## IN SUMMARY

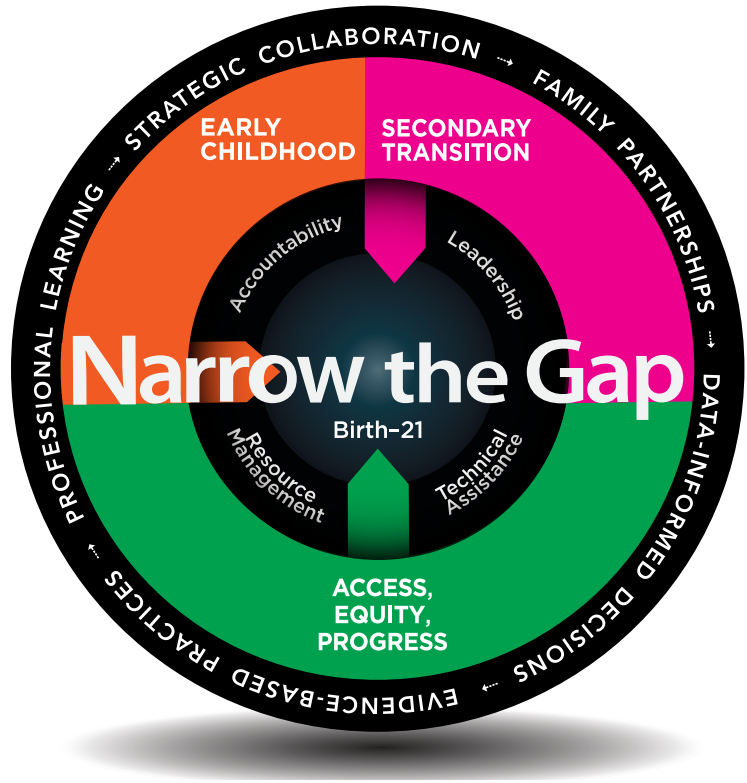
**The interplay of these multiple variables creates challenges and requires that we develop effective solutions to support our children and students with disabilities. These variables shape how we educate all children and drive our need to sharpen the focus on children with disabilities.**

# NARROW THE GAP





With this Plan, the DEI/SES 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* 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 DEI/SES 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**
- **Data-Informed Decisions**
- **Evidence-Based Practices**
- **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 is 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, is 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

### ● **Established, Meaningful Strategic Collaboration**

The DEI/SES will employ strategic collaboration with partners across State agencies, across divisions within the 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.

### ● **Engaged, Informed Family Partnerships**

The DEI/SES 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.

### ● **Applied Data-Informed Decisions**

The DEI/SES 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 DEI/SES will support the implementation of an evidence-based and customized data analysis and decision-making process.

### ● **Installed Evidence-Based Practices with Fidelity**

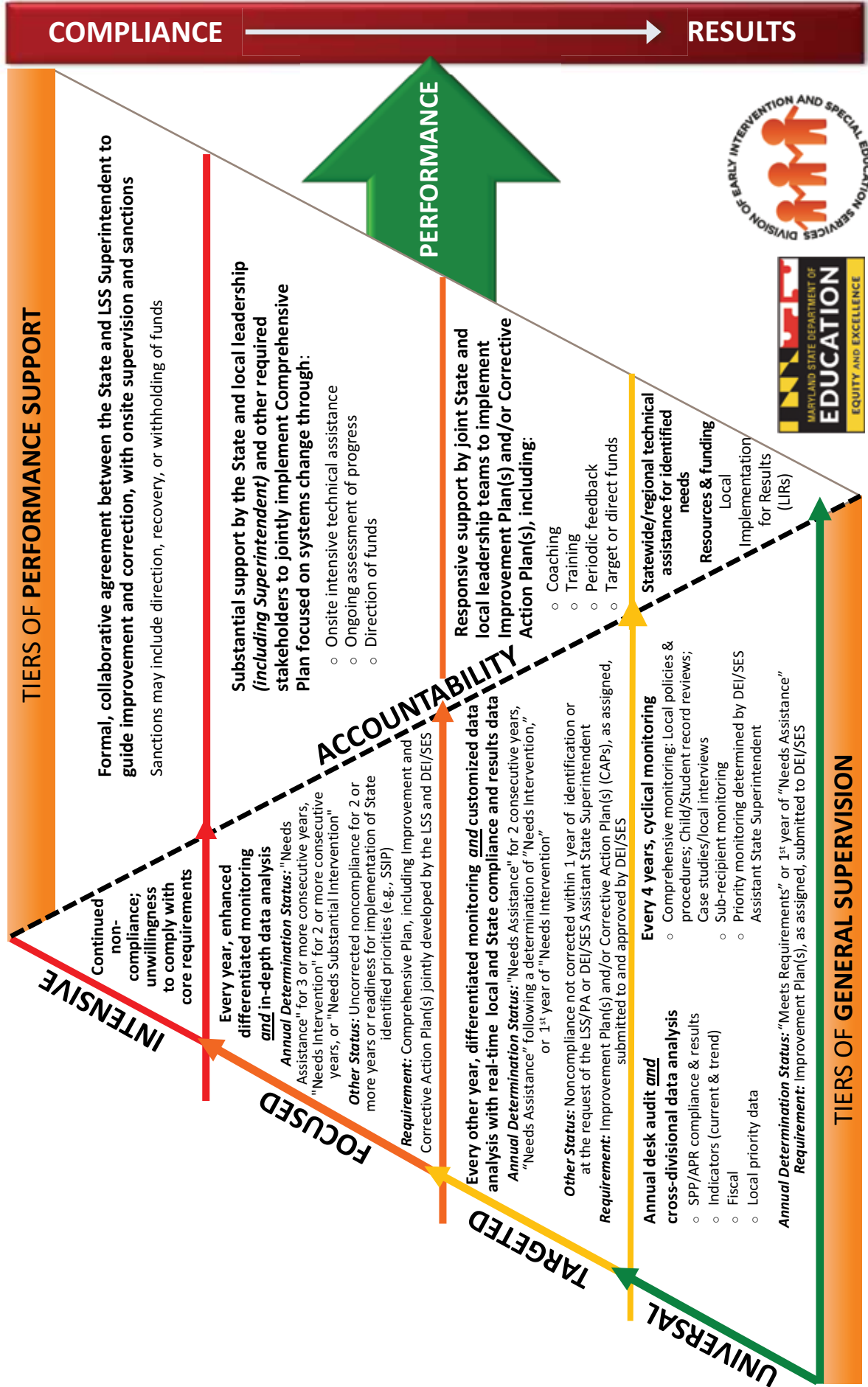
The DEI/SES will promote the adoption and implementation with fidelity of evidence-based practices to narrow school readiness and achievement gaps. The DEI/SES will identify and share evidence-based practices, including an integrated tiered system of academic and behavioral supports, to ensure equitable access to high-quality instruction that leads to student progress.

### ● **Effective, Ongoing Professional Learning with Coaching**

The DEI/SES will build the capacity of early intervention providers, general and special education teachers of students with disabilities, related service providers, paraprofessionals, and leaders through a regionalized technical assistance model to achieve positive student outcomes. The DEI/SES 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 Early Intervention and Special Education Services Differentiated Framework

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





# IMPLEMENTATION

## DIFFERENTIATED FRAMEWORK

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

The DEI/SES 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/PA 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.

### Tiers of General Supervision

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 DEI/SES 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.

### Tiers of Performance Support

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 DEI/SES 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 DEI/SES 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 DEI/SES 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

**In Maryland, a seamless and comprehensive statewide system of coordinated services for children with disabilities—birth to kindergarten—and their families is 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<br>(2015-16) | 2018-2019<br>(Accurate) | 2022<br>(Target) |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
|-----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|

**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.

|   |  |       |        |       |
|---|--|-------|--------|-------|
| <b>Early Intervention Services<br/>Birth – 4 (IFSP &amp; Extended IFSP)</b> | Positive social-emotional skills   | 58%   | 58%    | 60%   |
|   | Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills  | 61%   | 62%    | 64%   |
|   | Use of appropriate behaviors to meet needs   | 68%   | 64%    | 66%   |
| <b>Preschool Special Education Services<br/>Ages 3 – 5 (IEP)</b>            | Positive social-emotional skills   | 69%   | 70%    | 72%   |
|   | Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills  | 66%   | 73%    | 75%   |
|   | Use of appropriate behaviors to meet needs   | 66%   | 73%    | 75%   |
| <b>Service Delivery:</b>  |  |       |        |       |
| <b>Natural Environment<br/>Birth – 4 (IFSP &amp; Extended IFSP)</b>         | 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% | 98.14% | 98.5% |
| <b>Least Restrictive Environment<br/>Ages 3-5 (IEP)</b>                     | 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%   | 60%    | 65%   |

## Strategic Collaboration

- Coordinate across early childhood systems and interagency partners (MSDE-Division of Early Childhood, University of Maryland, Johns Hopkins University, 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, 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-Local Implementation Teams for systems change to improve outcomes, e.g., the State Implementation Team and the State Inclusion Leadership Team.

## Family Partnerships

- Develop and implement a family- and community-friendly online referral process utilizing the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program (MITP) online referral website 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, The Pyramid Model for Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children and Routines Based Interview) with fidelity to increase the development of positive social-emotional skills by infants, toddlers, and preschool age children.
- Support and scale preschool demonstration sites that apply targeted inclusive, evidence-based practices 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 through K evidence-based practices, implementation activities, and results.

## Data-Informed Decisions

- Assign a Birth through 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 through 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 through 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

- Implement a statewide regionalized technical assistance model with universal and targeted professional learning to share information and expertise with local Birth through K leaders about authentic assessment practices, natural and inclusive learning opportunities in everyday routines and activities, data-informed solution finding and decision-making, engaging families as equal and informed partners in their child's development and learning, and evidence-based practices to narrow the performance gap with typical peers; each LITP/LSS/PA receives follow-up coaching and support through their State/local implementation team.
- 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 (e.g., Maryland Learning Links) 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 through K staff.

# ACCESS, EQUITY, PROGRESS ACTION IMPERATIVE

**In Maryland, implementation of effective, equitable, and culturally-responsive education services resulting 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                         | 2019<br>(Accurate)     | 2022<br>(Target)        |
|------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Access to General Education</b> | School age students with disabilities are educated in general education classes 80% or more of the time.                     | 68.95%<br>(2015-16)              | 70%                    | 72%                     |
| <b>Equity in Education</b>         | No LSS will disproportionately identify students with disabilities by race or ethnicity.                                     | 13<br>(2017-18)                  | 13                     | 10                      |
|                                    | No LSS will disproportionately place students in separate special education programs and schools by race or ethnicity.       | 4<br>(2017-18)                   | 1                      | 0                       |
|                                    | No LSS will disproportionately suspend or expel students with disabilities by race or ethnicity.                             | 11<br>(2017-18)                  | 12                     | 8                       |
| <b>Progress</b>                    | The gap in reading performance of elementary and middle school-age children with disabilities will be narrowed. (MCAP).      | 28 – 34<br>points<br>(2015-16)   | 21 – 28<br>points      | 19 – 25<br>points       |
|                                    | The performance of students who take the alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards will improve. (MSAA). | 29% ELA<br>34% Math<br>(2015-16) | 5%<br>over<br>baseline | 10%<br>over<br>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 DEI/SES 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 DEI/SES's work and impact on results.
- Provide leadership for cross-Divisional/cross-Departmental collaborative work (general and special education) to address federal/State policy (e.g., 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 (e.g., 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 the DEI/SES 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.
- Collaborate with Maryland educators to create an electronic toolbox of solutions to problems of practice related to the delivery of specially designed instruction, especially for situations and populations that present a challenge to educators.
- Leverage federal/State partnerships to support priorities (Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education

Systems Change Process and TIES Center focused on increasing inclusive opportunities for students with disabilities, including those with the most significant cognitive disabilities, the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) and State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) for improvement of mathematics achievement and social-emotional skill development) to develop demonstration sites for the delivery of specially designed instruction and the implementation of 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 (e.g., chronic absence, climate) factors that lead to improvement of organizational systems and ultimately, student performance.

## Professional Learning

- Implement a statewide regionalized technical assistance model with universal and targeted professional learning 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

**In Maryland, seamless transition programs and services, aligned with evidence-based practices, are 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

|                                |   | <b>Baseline</b><br>(2014-15) | <b>2019</b><br>(Accurate) | <b>2022</b><br>(Target) |
|--------------------------------|---|------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Graduation</b>              | An increasing percent of students with disabilities will graduate with a Diploma in 4 years of high school.                                   | 63.93%                       | 67%                       | 72%                     |
|                                | An increasing percent of students with disabilities will graduate with a Diploma in 5 years of high school.                                   | 69.33%                       | 71%                       | 73%                     |
| <b>Drop Out</b>                | Fewer students with disabilities will drop out of high school.  | 4.73%                        | 4.0%                      | 2.5%                    |
| <b>Post-Secondary Outcomes</b> | An increasing percent of students with disabilities will participate in paid employment, post-secondary education, and/or employment training | 56.23%                       | 67%                       | 72%                     |

### Strategic Collaboration

- Implement a Memorandum of Understanding with State agency partners\* to improve post-school outcomes of youth with disabilities.
- Lead efforts with other State service systems and stakeholders to develop standards and competencies for 3 endorsements (Work-Ready/Career/Employment, Postsecondary Education, and Community Citizenship) to provide added value to the post-school environments that students with disabilities will be entering after receiving a Certificate of Program Completion.
- Inform local practices to implement current legislation and policy directives, and provide implementation support (Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act, Perkins V., and Blueprint for Maryland's Future) focused on equal access and community integration for people with disabilities, including youth with disabilities to provide and further track 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 page of interactive resources on Maryland Learning Links with the *Charting the LifeCourse* framework and *Transition Talks*.
- Develop and fund a Family Leadership training series with Parents' Place of Maryland to build capacity for family transition decision-making and family and student voice in the development and implementation of effective IEP transition goals, services, and supports.

### Evidence Based Practices

- Expand and disseminate the Maryland Transition Digital Portfolio to build a strengths-based personal profile across age-bands through the use of student-focused planning, career awareness and self-determination/self-advocacy evidence-based practices that lead to 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 for Inclusive Higher Education Programs for students with disabilities.
- Release and implement the Maryland Transition Linkage Tool as a secure online data-sharing tool through a collaborative interagency partnership that will streamline the agency linkage process for students and families, improve student/parent knowledge of resources and postsecondary options, and improve communication between all key stakeholders.

- Create differentiated State and local career pathway program options: embedding employment training within existing career clusters, developing a fifth year transition program option on post-secondary career development, identifying industry-related credentials within existing programs, and implementing Career Research Development programs in all local school systems and public agencies 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); identify resources to address performance needs and enforce connections to professional learning opportunities.
- Promote a data-informed technical assistance process for the continuous monitoring and assessment of secondary transition plans and post-school outcomes through local report cards, national web-based decision-making tools, and access to online data reports; identify predictors for dropout risk using data analytics.

### Professional Learning

- Implement a statewide regionalized technical assistance model with universal and targeted professional learning specific to secondary transition evidence-based practices that will support and improve the transition planning process, services, and outcomes for students; disseminate information and guide LSS/PA secondary transition leaders to build a data-driven system of effective transition practices that prepares all students with disabilities for success in meaningful college, career and community experiences; create and disseminate resources and tools to support a seamless transition to adult life through collaboration with families, agencies and community partners; provide follow-up coaching and technical assistance across various environments.
- Create and deliver online and just-in-time resources and tools (such as Transition Assessment Toolkit, Transition Talks, and TIP sheets) based on needs identified through regional technical assistance and the Effective Transition Practices (ETP) self-assessment process to increase the use of evidence-based practices and predictors of post-school success.

\*Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services  
 Division of Career and College Readiness  
 Division of Rehabilitation Service  
 Department of Human Services  
 Department of Juvenile Services  
 Developmental Disabilities Administration  
 Behavioral Health Administration  
 Maryland Department of Labor  
 Maryland Department of Disabilities

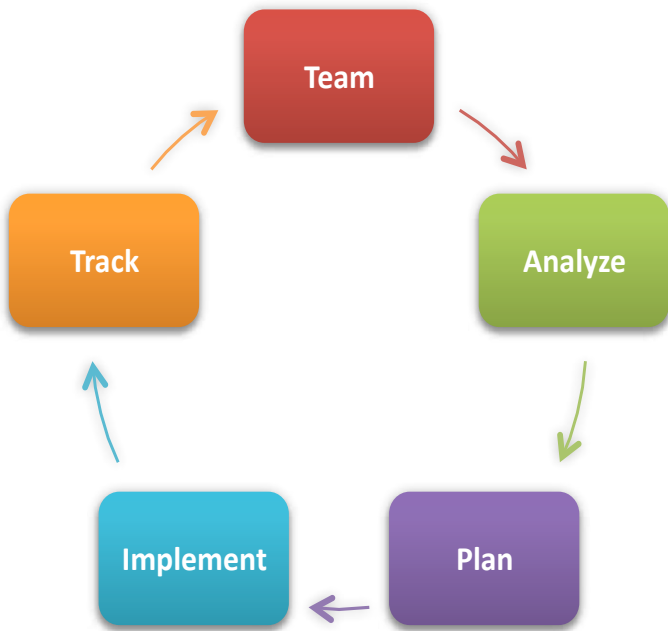


# BUILDING INNOVATIVE, COHERENT SYSTEMS TO SHARPEN THE FOCUS

- 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 DEI/SES adopted an evidence-based data analysis and decision-making cycle, the **TAP-IT\*** model, 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:** 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.

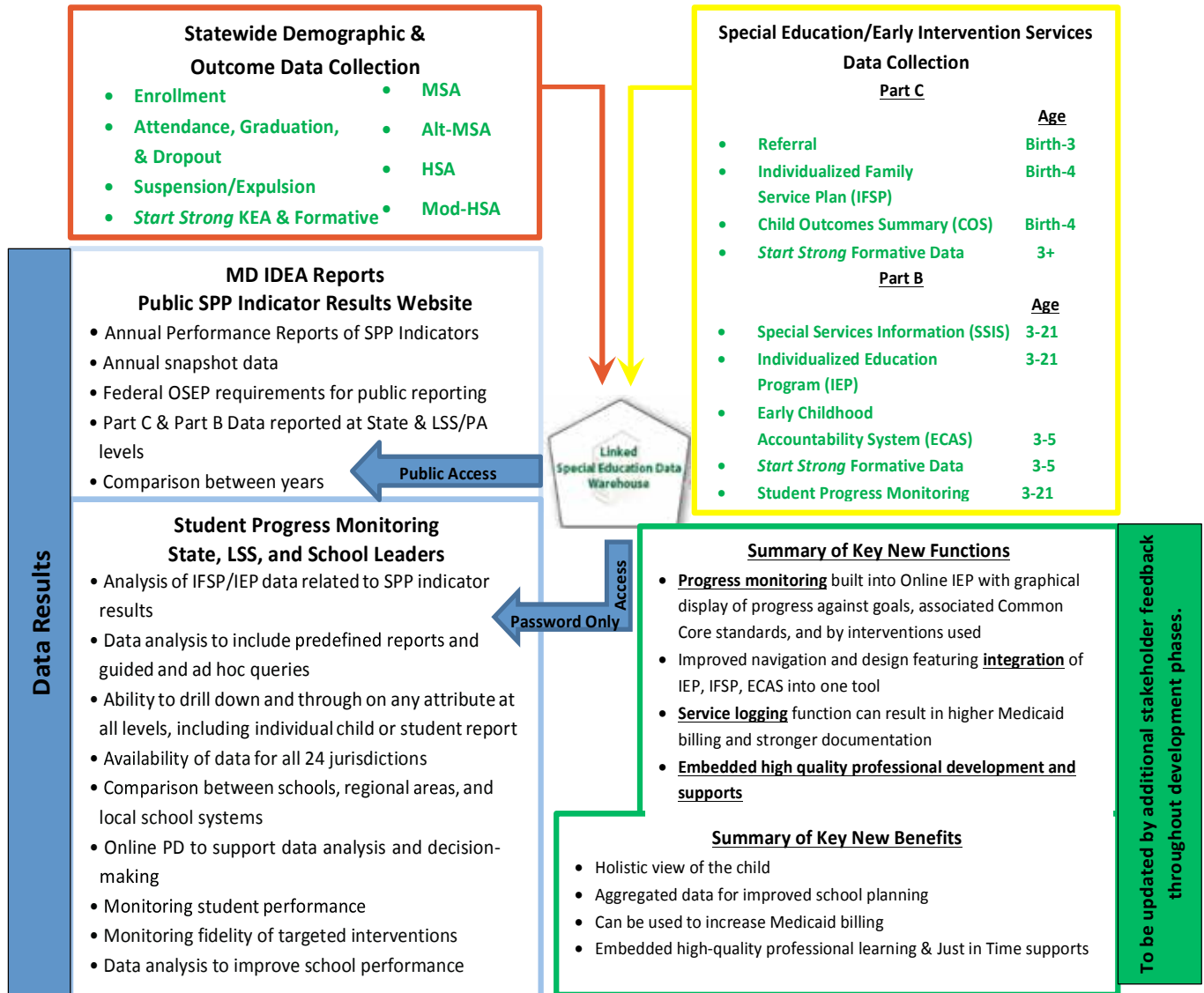
*\*The TAP-IT model was developed by the The Johns Hopkins University School of Education, Center for Technology in Education (CTE) for the Maryland State Department of Education through a grant provided by the Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services.*



# ▶ LONGITUDINAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM WITH ADVANCED TOOLS

To improve results and narrow the gap for students with disabilities, the DEI/SES, 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 DEI/SES 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.

## LADSS Conceptual Framework Enhanced Functions and Benefits



# LEVERAGING EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE

## ▶ STATE SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLANS

**Maryland has developed early childhood and school-age State Systemic Improvement Plans (SSIP) as part of its 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 DEI/SES 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 & Toddlers Program SSIP

The Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program (MITP) 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:

- Providing leadership for strategic collaboration and resource management through inter- and intra-agency collaborative teaming.
- 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 and key principles, Authentic Family Assessment, including the Routines-Based Interview (RBI), Reflective Coaching, and Social-Emotional Foundations for Early Learning.
- Ensuring accountability with a focus on results through data-informed decision-making.



### School-Age Special Education SSIP

The Maryland School-Age Special 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. The DEI/SES has developed three key approaches to improve results for students with disabilities:

- Providing leadership for strategic collaboration and resource management through cross-functional and cross-departmental teaming.
- 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, and family partnerships.
- Ensuring accountability with a focus on results through data-informed decision-making.



## ▶ INCLUDING ALL STUDENTS



**Maryland is one of two States selected to participate in the national K-8 technical assistance center focused on the inclusion of children with significant cognitive disabilities.**

Inclusion is an ongoing commitment to work for the valued membership, active participation, and learning of each student with their age grade peers, utilizing a wide array of school community structures, practices, and supports. Specific outcomes and values underlying each area of focus are:

- **Time:** Increasing number of students included in general education classrooms for 80% or more of the day.
- **Instructional Effectiveness:** Collaboration across educators and specialized support personnel to provide instruction in the general education classroom.
- **Engagement:** Engagement with the general education curriculum and with peers without disabilities.
- **Support:** Support at the State and district level with a shared understanding of “inclusive” placement as the first option in IEP decisions.

As a result, each child experiencing a sense of belonging, learning, relationships, and the opportunity to contribute to their school community.

Each child is a learner and a valued school member.

## ▶ COMPLIANCE AND PERFORMANCE SUPPORT



**Maryland Elevate is one of the country's most innovative and holistic performance monitoring systems for continuous improvement.**

Maryland has developed a unique cloud-hosted software application to support the Division's *Accountability to Improve Progress* monitoring process for Local Infants and Toddlers Programs, Local School Systems, and Public Agencies. The system, known as Maryland Elevate streamlines compliance and results data with a focus on supporting continuous improvement.

- **Data Collection:** Through a series of self-standing but connected modules, data collection and data use requirements are monitored, providing easy access to the information needed for responsive program improvement and planning.
- **Reporting:** A robust reporting mechanism generates student-specific and system-level reports. Any need for corrections can be addressed and managed through an automated process.
- **Performance Monitoring and Technical Assistance:** The system interacts with State and local monitoring staff in a straightforward and meaningful way, allowing for better communication and management of all requirements associated with performance monitoring.

Maryland Elevate is hosted on a data center that offers the highest level of security for cloud solutions.

## ▶ STATE PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT GRANT



**Maryland is the recipient of a \$5.5 Million federal award to improve and reform personnel preparation and professional development systems to improve outcomes for children with disabilities.**

Through a multi-agency collaboration, MSDE will work with Towson University, LSSs, and national and local experts to:

1. Demonstrate evidence-based personnel preparation and professional learning strategies by university faculty, State technical assistance staff, and local instructional coaches; and
2. Demonstrate the delivery of evidence-based specially designed math instruction and social-emotional supports for elementary age students with disabilities by special and general educators.

This plan aligns with Maryland’s State Systemic Improvement Plan and State-identified Measurable Result and with the actions described in Maryland’s Every Student Succeeds Act Consolidated Plan. It establishes sustainable and replicable practices that address school-wide structures for supporting the collaborative implementation of evidence-based instruction for elementary students with disabilities.

Maryland will have demonstration sites for preservice preparation, inservice preparation, State technical assistance, and local implementation of evidence based practices to improve outcomes for our children with disabilities.

## ▶ IEP CHAIRPERSON MICRO-CREDENTIALING



**Maryland is developing a first-of-its-kind micro-credential program with the Loyola University of Maryland and the Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education.**

A micro-credential is a short, competency-based recognition that allows an educator to demonstrate mastery in a particular area.

In Maryland, special educators will be able to participate in a micro-credential program for IEP Chairpersons to build their knowledge and skills in the legal requirements, best practices, and expectations outlined in Maryland written guidance. As a result, participants will be able to design and support the implementation of effective, high quality Individualized Education Programs for our children and youth with disabilities

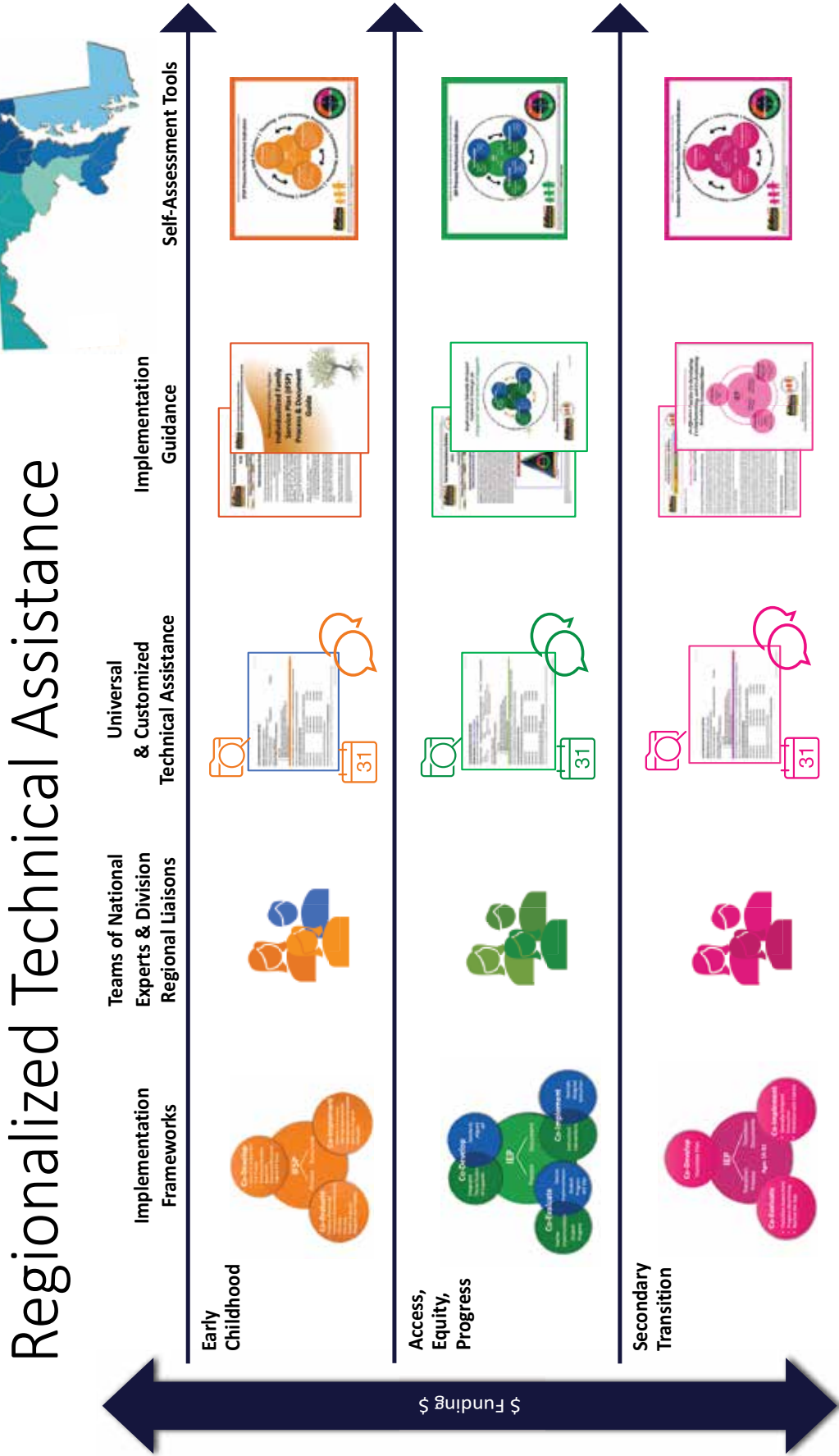
The Micro-credential consists of six courses, each requiring approximately 10 hours to complete asynchronously. The modules address topics that cover legal requirements and best practices aligned with Maryland guidance on the collaborative development, implementation, and evaluation of the IEP.

The Micro-credential also provides training on the role of the IEP Chairperson in relation to administrators, educators, and other implementers of the IEP; and how to include the family and student in the IEP process.

Participants will have access to a wide variety of resources on specially designed instruction, placement decisions, early childhood, secondary transition, and all of the required components of the IEP.

# REGIONALIZED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

A Statewide Model to Build Local School System/Public Agency Capacity to Achieve Outcomes

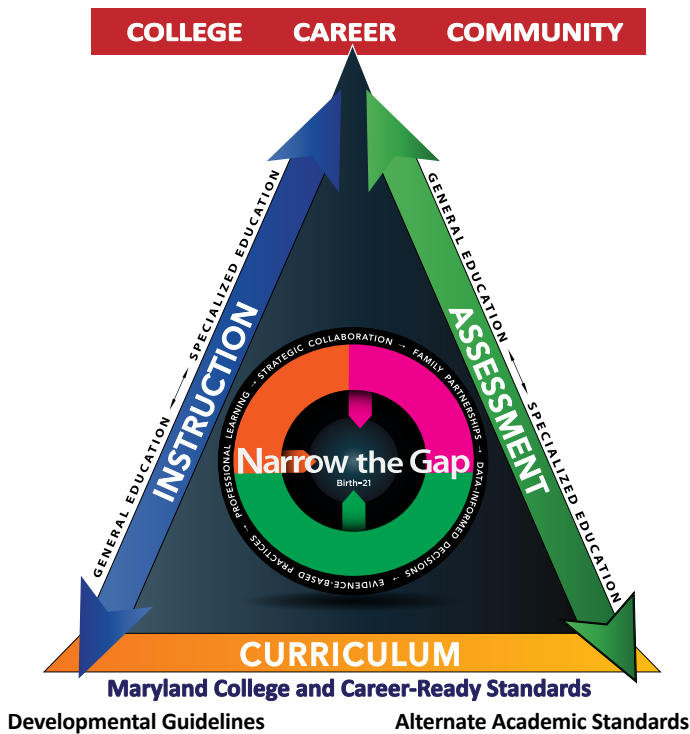


## Regionalized Technical Assistance

Statewide model to build local school system/public agency capacity to achieve outcomes

# DESIGNING ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORKS TO NARROW THE GAP

## ▶ INTERDEPENDENT EDUCATION COMPONENTS

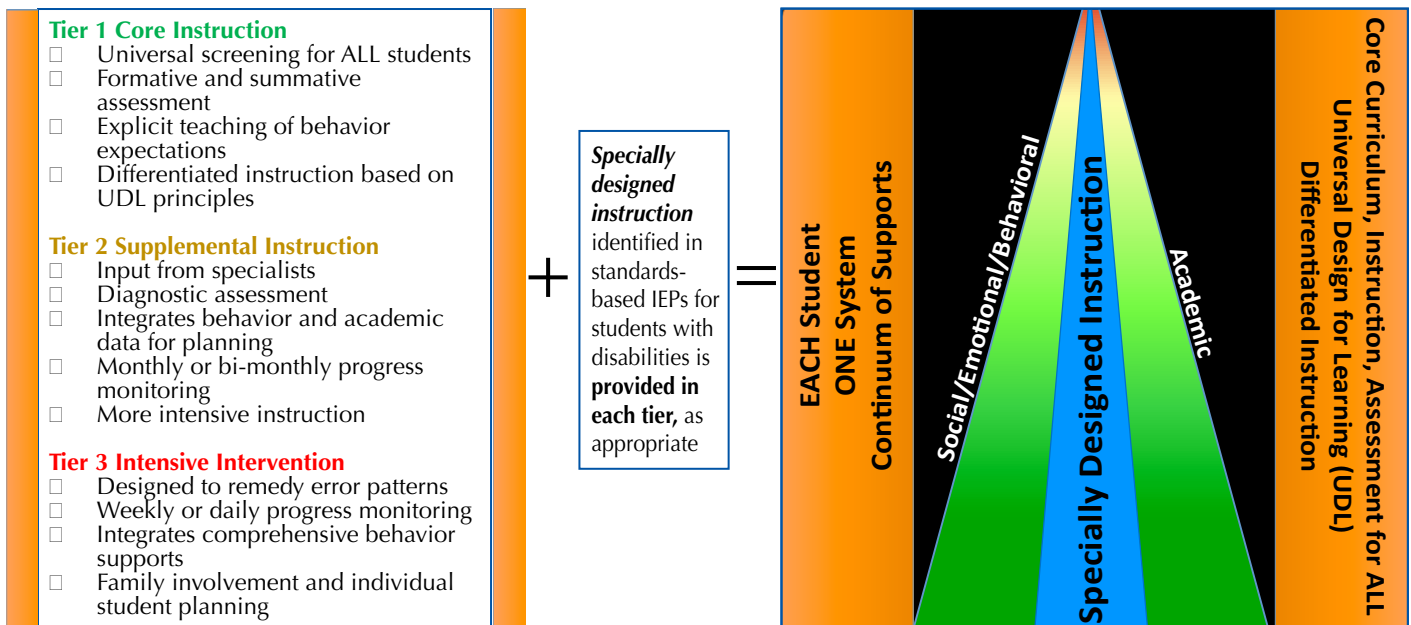


In a highly effective teaching and learning system, educators have **HIGH EXPECTATIONS** for each student and align all three components of **curriculum, instruction, and assessment** to focus on positive student outcomes in reading, math, and behavior.

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 **DEI/SES 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 DEI/SES SFY 2022 BRAIDING OF FUNDS *Birth-21 Early Intervention and Special Education Services in Maryland Federal and State Funds for Local School Systems, Public Agencies, and Local Lead Agencies*

| Birth-Age 3<br>IFSP  |                    |       | Ages 3-4<br>Extended IFSP      |                    |       | Ages 3-5<br>IEP                                     |                    |       | Ages 3-21<br>IEP  |                    |                                    |
|--|--------------------|-------|--------------------------------|--------------------|-------|---|--------------------|-------|---|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| CLIG   |                    |       | CLIG                           |                    |       | LAFF  |                    |       | LAFF  |                    |                                    |
| FEDERAL PART C   |                    |       |                                |                    |       | FEDERAL PART B 619 PASSTHROUGH                      |                    |       | FEDERAL PART B 611 PASSTHROUGH  |                    |                                    |
| STATE GENERAL FUNDS  |                    |       |                                |                    |       |   |                    |       |   |                    |                                    |
| NON-COMPETITIVE DISCRETIONARY FUNDS  |                    |       |                                |                    |       | COMPETITIVE DISCRETIONARY FUNDS                     |                    |       | NON-COMPETITIVE DISCRETIONARY FUNDS   |                    |                                    |
| FEDERAL PART C<br>Focused Discretionary Supplement   |                    |       |                                |                    |       | FEDERAL PART B 619<br>PRESCHOOL INCLUSION PRACTICES |                    |       | Special Education Citizens Advisory Committee (SESAC)   |                    |                                    |
| FEDERAL PART B 619<br>Preschool Partners   |                    |       |                                |                    |       |   |                    |       | Family Support  |                    |                                    |
| FEDERAL PART B 611<br>LITP Implementation  |                    |       | FEDERAL PART B 619<br>Services |                    |       | FEDERAL PART B 611<br>LOCAL CHOICE                  |                    |       | Local Implementation for Results (LIR)<br>EARLY CHILDHOOD (B-K)<br>SECONDARY TRANSITION (14-21)<br>ACCESS, EQUITY PROGRESS (3-21) |                    |                                    |
| FEDERAL PART C:<br>State Systemic Improvement Plan (4 LITPs)   |                    |       |                                |                    |       |   |                    |       | Institutes of Higher Education (IHE)  |                    |                                    |
|  |                    |       |                                |                    |       |   |                    |       | Non Local School Systems (Non-LSS)  |                    |                                    |
|  |                    |       |                                |                    |       |   |                    |       | Alternate Framework (2 LSS)   |                    |                                    |
|  |                    |       |                                |                    |       |   |                    |       | State Systemic Improvement Plan (4 LSS)   |                    |                                    |
| ADDITIONAL FEDERAL RELIEF FUNDING RESOURCES  |                    |       |                                |                    |       |   |                    |       |   |                    |                                    |
| Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act: ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS EDUCATION RELIEF (ESSER I) – LOCAL CHOICE Expires 9/30/2022                     |                    |       |                                |                    |       |   |                    |       |   |                    |                                    |
| Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSA) ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND (ESSER II): – LOCAL CHOICE Expires 9/30/2023 |                    |       |                                |                    |       |   |                    |       |   |                    |                                    |
| American Rescue Plan (ARP) ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND (ESSER III): – LOCAL CHOICE Expires 9/30/2023   |                    |       |                                |                    |       |   |                    |       |   |                    |                                    |
| ARP IDEA PART C - Expires 9/30/2023  |                    |       |                                |                    |       | ARP IDEA PART B619 - Expires 9/30/2023              |                    |       | ARP IDEA PART B 611 - Expires 9/30/2023   |                    |                                    |
|  |                    |       |                                |                    |       |   |                    |       | NON PUBLIC TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM<br>+ Special Education Teacher Salaries   |                    |                                    |
|  |                    |       |                                |                    |       | FEDERAL PART B 619<br>LOCAL CHOICE (FAPE)           |                    |       | AUTISM WAIVER   |                    |                                    |
|  |                    |       |                                |                    |       |   |                    |       | STATE GENERAL FUNDS   |                    |                                    |
| LOCAL  | MEDICAL ASSISTANCE | OTHER | LOCAL                          | MEDICAL ASSISTANCE | OTHER | LOCAL   | MEDICAL ASSISTANCE | OTHER | LOCAL   | MEDICAL ASSISTANCE | OTHER                              |
| HOME VISITING FUNDS  |                    |       |                                |                    |       |   |                    |       | TITLE I/TITLE II  |                    | PERKINS ACT V<br>CTE PROGRAMS ONLY |

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**The DEI/SES 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, Title I, 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. The *Braiding of Funds* chart depicts Maryland’s strategy to layer various funding streams to blend services by program (IFSP/IEP) and by age (Birth to age 3, ages 3–4, ages 3–5, and ages 3–21).

The DEI/SES uses a significant portion of federal set-aside funds to create innovative grant opportunities for each birth through 21 local system. 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

To ensure the layering of funds strategy aligns with federal and State regulations, the DEI/SES 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





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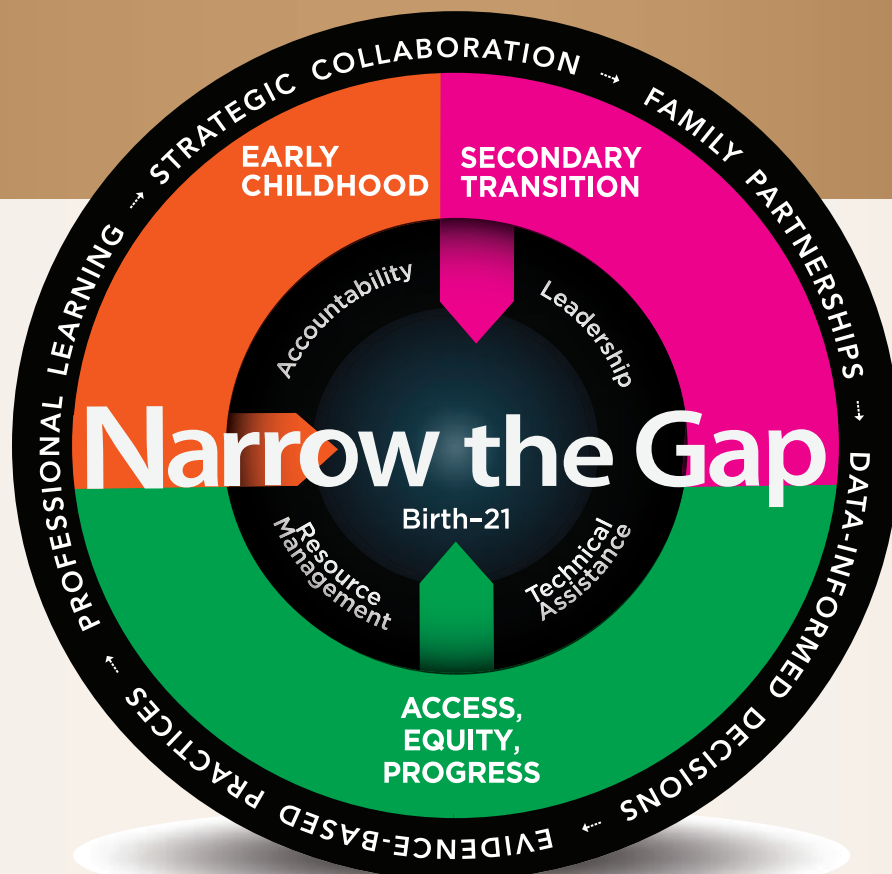
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# The Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services

## STRATEGIC PLAN Moving Maryland Forward

NOVEMBER 2016

JUNE 2021 Update



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