



THE DIVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION/ EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES (DSE/EIS) STRATEGIC PLAN

Moving Maryland Forward

EARLY CHILDHOOD

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

ACCESS, EQUITY, PROGRESS

SECONDARY TRANSITION



MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION/EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES
OCTOBER 2013

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Introducing the DSE/EIS Strategic Plan— *Moving Maryland Forward*



The Five-Year Strategic Plan of the Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (DSE/EIS) is designed to guide the work of the Division and Department, compel stronger interagency and intra-agency collaboration in support of children and families, and serve as a necessary resource for partners and stakeholders.

The DSE/EIS Strategic Plan focuses essential resources, expertise, and support on narrowing the achievement gap between Maryland's students with disabilities and their nondisabled peers. I firmly believe that by working together, across the Department and throughout the State, we will narrow the existing achievement gap, prepare young children with disabilities and their families for the earliest years of learning in Maryland classrooms, and prepare all students for college and career after successful completion of school.

Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Schools



The DSE/EIS is embarking on the implementation of its bold statewide Strategic Plan—*Moving Maryland Forward*. The Plan focuses on narrowing achievement gaps for students, particularly children with disabilities from birth through age 21. Over the next five years, the DSE/EIS will target four strategically chosen Action Imperatives. The Plan, which is fully integrated into the overall aims of MSDE, includes a strong commitment to collaboration and shared responsibility, multi-tiered systems of support, and family and community partnerships.

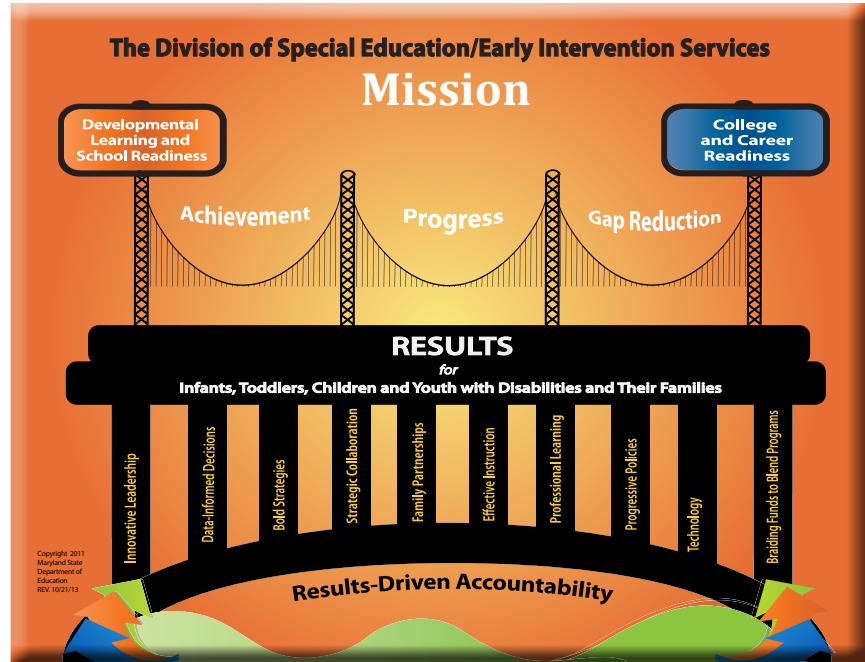
Moving Maryland Forward was developed and informed by the innovative thinking and transformative ideas of stakeholders from across the State. This included Local School System superintendents, special education directors, early intervention and preschool special education coordinators, instruction and curriculum specialists, family advocates and support coordinators, and parents and community partners. The DSE/EIS Assistant State Superintendent's Advisory Council, State Advisory Councils, and the DSE/EIS leadership staff collaborated to produce this final plan.

I sincerely appreciate the significant contributions of all stakeholders, as well as the specialized and general educators who engaged in developing this Strategic Plan. I feel certain that—guided by *Moving Maryland Forward*—we will together improve outcomes for all children and families and narrow achievement gaps for specialized populations.

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

Our Mission

The Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services provides leadership, support, and accountability for results to Local School Systems, Public Agencies, and stakeholders through a seamless, comprehensive system of coordinated services to children and students with disabilities, birth through 21, and their families.



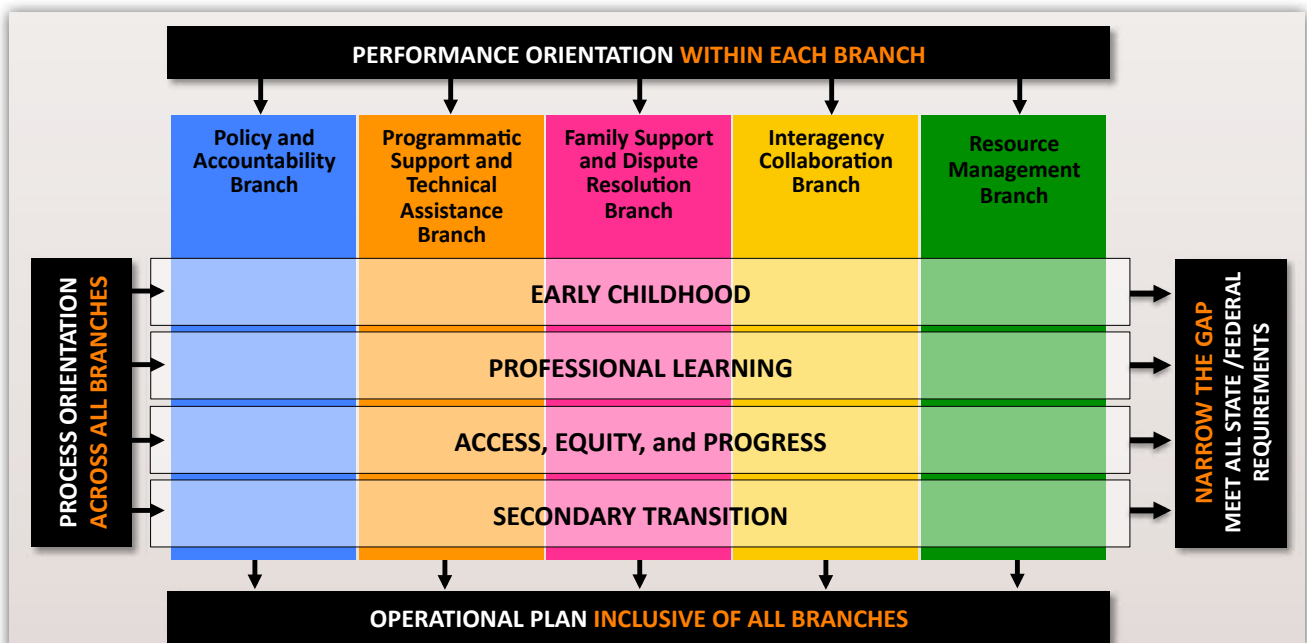
Who We Are

The Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (DSE/EIS) is committed to building and sustaining an integrated organizational structure that is based upon principles of collaboration and shared responsibility. The Division is organized by five branches: Policy and Accountability, Programmatic Support and Technical Assistance, Family Support and Dispute Resolution, Interagency Collaboration, and Resource Management. The DSE/EIS has recently been restructured so that staff is fully involved in addressing the four Action Imperatives identified in *Moving Maryland Forward*. These Action Imperatives focus on four major areas:

- 1) Early Childhood;
- 2) Professional Learning;
- 3) Access, Equity, and Progress; and
- 4) Secondary Transition.

The new DSE/EIS matrix organizational structure integrates knowledge and skills for improvement of compliance and results, and ensures consistent communication within the DSE/EIS, throughout the Department, and with external partners.

THE DSE/EIS COLLABORATIVE MATRIX ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



What We Do

The DSE/EIS operates within and contributes to the work of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), a complex organization focusing on the education and well-being of Maryland's students and families. Maryland's plan for educational reform includes higher standards for all students through the implementation of Common Core State Standards, the Maryland Common Core State Curriculum, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), and the National Center and State Collaborative (NCSC) assessments. The plan also includes strategic help for struggling schools, the use of a robust statewide data system to improve instruction, and the implementation of a new teacher/leader evaluation system to develop and support effective teachers/leaders. Education reform is consistent with and aligned to Race To The Top and Maryland's Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Flexibility Plan.

In alignment with MSDE priorities, the DSE/EIS leads a seamless integrated system that serves children and youth with disabilities from birth through 21 and their families. This comprehensive system balances the statutory requirements with equal emphasis on programmatic leadership aimed to narrow existing gaps. The DSE/EIS works in partnership with twenty-four local Infants and Toddlers Programs, twenty-four Local School Systems (LSS), the Maryland School for the Blind, the Maryland School for the Deaf, other Public Agencies (PA) and nonpublic agencies and organizations. **Programs of the DSE/EIS include:**

- Early Intervention;
- Preschool Special Education;
- Special Education (birth through 21)
- Nonpublic Schools;
- Maryland Hearing Aid Loan Bank
- Medical Assistance for School Health-Related Services
- Home Visiting
- Maryland's Autism Waiver (nationally-recognized home and community based services; serving 1,000 children and families), and other related interagency programs and mental health initiatives.

CORE FUNCTIONS OF THE DSE/EIS

Leadership	Accountability for Results	Technical Assistance and Program Support	Fiscal and Resource Management
For a comprehensive and coordinated birth through twenty-one system of services with high expectations for all children	To narrow the achievement gap—maximizing learning for all students, and to ensure State and local compliance	To build and sustain local capacity	To ensure efficient and transparent use of federal, State, and special funds

The Division is charged with providing leadership, shared accountability for results, technical assistance and program support, and fiscal and resource management. This comprehensive system aligns policy and requires the essential relationship among State, LSS/ PAs, and schools to ensure the timely and appropriate provision of early intervention and special education services.

Early intervention and special education services are supported through a combination of federal, State, and local funds. Most of the federal funding for school-age students comes from allocations under the ESEA and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). On average, across Maryland, approximately 70 percent of the funding for these services comes from local sources and flows directly to the Local School Systems. Local School Systems receive State funds through the Special Education Formula in the Bridge to Excellence and through the nonpublic placement offices. The DSE/EIS has responsibility for direct oversight and management of federal, State, and special funds.

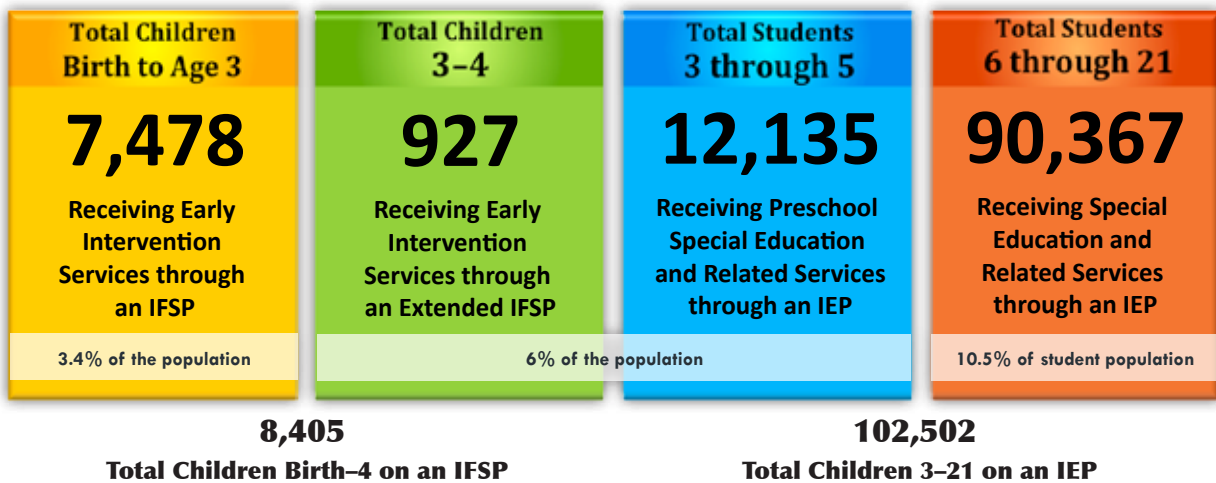
The Division provides State and local capacity-building strategies for braiding funds to blend programs through passthrough and competitive and non-competitive discretionary grant funding opportunities. This initiative allows local flexibility to address identified priorities focused on narrowing the existing gaps. The DSE/EIS is also responsive to new State legislation and policy. For example, during the 2013 General Assembly, House Bill 1161 was passed requiring the establishment of The Commission on Special Education Access and Equity. The 25-member Commission is headed by its Governor-appointed chair, the Assistant State Superintendent for the DSE/EIS. The Commission is required to report its recommendations in June of 2014 to the Governor and the Legislature.

Who We Serve

In the 2012-2013 school year, 859,643 children, ages three through 21, were educated through Maryland's public education system; of these, 102,502 (11.9%) were children with disabilities.

Early intervention services are provided through the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program (MITP) to over 16,000 children and families annually, representing a 78% increase over the past ten years. Infants and toddlers are eligible for the program by demonstrating a 25% delay in development, atypical development, or a condition that puts the child at high probability for delay. Maryland is the only state 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.

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



On any given day:

- Over 20,500 children ages birth through five with developmental delays or disabilities are provided with early intervention or preschool special education services in their homes, in childcare settings, and in public and private preschool classes. The program implements a family-centered services model empowering families as partners in the education process and provides services in natural environments and least restrictive environments where young children typically spend time.
- Maryland provides special education services to more than 90,000 students with disabilities, ages 6 through 21 years, eligible through one of the IDEA 14 disability categories. The program offers a full continuum of services while striving to educate school-age children and youth with their nondisabled peers in the school that they would attend if they did not have a disability. With specialized instruction, related services, accommodations, and program modifications, students with disabilities can acquire the skills needed to be ready for college, career, and community living.

*October 26, 2012 Snapshot Data Count

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

Our Commitment to Children, Families, and Educators

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

- **Transparency.** We maintain an open door to stakeholders and regularly keep our stakeholders informed through formal and informal feedback loops. This includes quarterly birth-21 special education and early intervention leadership meetings, the annual birth-21 Professional Learning Institute, meetings of the Assistant State Superintendent's Advisory Council, and regularly scheduled convening of advisory groups. Advisory groups include the State Interagency Coordinating Council, Special Education State Advisory Committee, Education Advocacy Coalition, and the Autism Waiver Advisory Council.
- **Stakeholder Engagement.** We involve stakeholders through participatory processes that promote innovation, the sharing of best practices, and dissemination of research and evidence-based models. We are also committed to strengthening partnerships and planning with other MSDE divisions and external stakeholder groups.
- **Effectiveness.** We make every effort to serve stakeholders in a timely and effective manner and to ensure the availability of "real-time" data for decision making and dissemination of models of best practices throughout the State.
- **Accountability.** We strive to improve results for all Local School Systems and Public Agencies. The DSE/EIS has developed a tiered system of general supervision and engagement to identify systems and agencies in need of differentiated support and technical assistance. *(A description of this tiered system is provided on page 15.)*

Our Data Informing the Work

In recent years, children and youth with disabilities have demonstrated progress in addressing the State achievement gap. However, the DSE/EIS believes that the pace of change can and must increase.

1. **School readiness** for young children with disabilities has increased by 27 percentage points since 2002. However, in 2013, despite a significant gain over time, just 57% of children with disabilities (compared with 84% of their nondisabled peers) are "fully ready" according to kindergarten entry assessments.
2. Maryland's proficiency for students with disabilities in **reading and math** has been above the national average for 5 years and has been increasing over time. However, in 2013, the gap in achievement between students with disabilities and their nondisabled peers is quite variable, ranging from a low of 25% for reading in grade 3 to a high of 48% for math in grade 8.
3. In 2013, 68% of children with disabilities received general and specialized instruction in regular education classes more than 80% of the time. While Maryland continues to be a leader in **including students with disabilities** 80% or more of the time, variability exists statewide, ranging from 52% to 92%.
4. While students with disabilities are staying in school until **graduation** more than ever before, the dropout rate for students with disabilities is higher and the graduation rate lower than for nondisabled students. In 2012:
 - The dropout rate for students with disabilities was 18%, compared with 9% for nondisabled students.
 - The 4-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for students with disabilities was 57%, compared with 86% for nondisabled students.

Of the students with disabilities who exited school in 2011, 33% entered employment and 25% enrolled in post-secondary education—representing lower percentages than for their nondisabled peers.

Our Bold Vision for Maryland's Students

All students, including students with disabilities, will be ready for school, achieve in school, and be prepared for college, careers, and community living as a result of their participation in Maryland's early intervention and special education programs. All existing gaps between children with disabilities and that of their nondisabled peers will be narrowed.

Bold Strategic Goals for Moving Maryland Forward

- The overarching goal of the DSE/EIS is to **narrow the school readiness and achievement gap** between children and youth with disabilities and their nondisabled peers and ensure that youth with disabilities are college, career, and community ready when they complete their schooling.
- The supporting goal for the DSE/EIS is to develop and maintain effective, efficient, and integrated organization infrastructures and processes to meet all State and federal requirements and requests related to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the General Education Provision Act (GEPA), the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) procedures, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the Annotated Code of Maryland, and the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR).

The Four Action Imperatives

To improve results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities, and their families, the DSE/EIS Strategic Plan will focus on Action Imperatives in four critical areas: (1) Early Childhood; (2) Professional Learning; (3) Access, Equity, and Progress; and (4) Secondary Transition.

By 2018, in collaboration with all partners, the DSE/EIS will narrow the gaps in school readiness, school achievement, and readiness for adult life after school.

EARLY CHILDHOOD	PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	EQUITY, ACCESS and PROGRESS	SECONDARY TRANSITION
A seamless and comprehensive statewide system of coordinated services for children with disabilities, birth through age 5, and their families will be fully implemented to narrow the school readiness gap.	A statewide system of differentiated tiers of professional learning and support to Local School Systems and Public Agencies (LSS/PA) will be fully implemented to produce effective early childhood service providers, teachers, related service providers, and paraprofessionals.	Implementation of equitable services, universally designed instruction, evidence-based academic and behavior interventions, technology, and accessible materials will result in increased access to instruction based on the Common Core State Standards and improved educational achievement and functional outcomes.	Evidence-based transition programs and services will be implemented to increase the number of youth with disabilities who are actively engaged in post-secondary activities such as education, technical and career training, and employment after exiting school.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Action Imperative 1: By 2018, a seamless and comprehensive statewide system of coordinated services for children with disabilities, birth through age 5, and their families will be fully implemented to narrow the school readiness gap.

DSE/EIS Action	Why this is Important
<p>It is critical that the DSE/EIS offer leadership that supports the coordination and alignment of early childhood services that transition seamlessly to our Local School Systems and Public Agencies. Therefore—</p> <p>1.1 The DSE/EIS, in partnership with local early intervention and early childhood programs, will implement evidence-based family-centered practices, interventions, and instructional strategies that actively engage families in all aspects of their child's early intervention and early childhood programs.</p> <p>1.2 The DSE/EIS, in partnership with local early intervention and early childhood programs, will expand access for children with disabilities to the full range of community and school-based early childhood programs and settings through collaboration with general education, family and center-based child care, Early Head Start and Head Start, libraries, park and recreation organizations, and other programs and settings in which children without disabilities and their families participate.</p> <p>1.3 The DSE/EIS, in collaboration with the Division of Early Childhood Development (DECD) and other early care and education organizations and agencies, will develop and implement a set of shared metrics and expectations to effectively measure ongoing child progress, inform intervention and instructional practices, and evaluate the effectiveness of local programs in promoting school readiness for young children with disabilities, aligned with the DSE/EIS Birth through Five Assessment Framework.</p> <p>1.4 The DSE/EIS will support Local Infants and Toddlers Programs (LITPs) to increase the number of infants and toddlers appropriately referred for early intervention services.</p>	<p>When we intervene early with family-centered supports and services, children have the foundational skills needed to be successful in kindergarten.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-quality, coordinated early childhood services are critical to foster the growth and development of infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children who have disabilities or developmental delay. • In order for young children with disabilities to be ready for kindergarten, early intervention and early childhood programs need to implement evidence-based family-centered practices, interventions, and instructional strategies that actively engage families in all aspects of their child's early intervention and early childhood programs in natural environments. • Early childhood programs need to support families in knowing their rights, effectively communicating their children's needs, and helping their children develop and learn. Preschool programs need to facilitate parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for young children with disabilities. • Meaningful assessments should be available to accurately measure a young child's progress and inform practices, services, instruction, and interventions. • When services are aligned across various providers, and when educators and service providers are aware of available services, knowledgeable about evidence-based interventions, competent in early childhood assessment, and skilled in working with and supporting families, then young children with disabilities will enter kindergarten ready to learn and participate in the kindergarten curriculum.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Action Imperative 2: By 2018, a statewide system of differentiated tiers of professional learning and support to Local School Systems and Public Agencies will be fully implemented to produce effective early childhood service providers, teachers of students with disabilities, related service providers, and paraprofessionals.

DSE/EIS Action	Why this is Important
<p>It is critical that our professional learning opportunities be designed to address the skills needed for professionals and paraprofessionals to provide appropriate high-quality instruction, targeted interventions, and individualized supports using a data-informed decision making approach and research-based practices. Therefore—</p> <p>2.1 The DSE/EIS, in collaboration with LSS/PAs and strategic partners, will provide differentiated professional learning opportunities and resources to LSS/PAs on areas identified using a needs assessment related to data-informed decision making, appropriate assessments, IFSP and IEP processes, evidence-based early intervention and specialized instruction, student behavior and intervention, and family engagement.</p> <p>2.2 The DSE/EIS will implement a data system that enables LSS/PAs to use real time data to develop and manage relevant annual professional learning plans, aligned with the Standards for Professional Development, linked to child outcomes, school readiness, instructional achievement, functional outcomes, and data-based decision making for results; and allows tracking progress for improvement.</p> <p>2.3 Through a collaboration between MSDE, Institutes of Higher Education (IHE), and Maryland Approved Alternative Personnel Preparation Programs (MAAPP) coordinators, early childhood and educator preparation programs will utilize evidence-based instruction and practices to increase the knowledge and skills of service providers and teacher candidates teaching students with disabilities related to data-informed decision making, appropriate assessments, IFSP and IEP processes, evidence-based early intervention and specialized instruction, student behavior and intervention, and family engagement.</p>	<p>There is a positive correlation between highly effective teachers and student achievement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infants and toddlers need to receive high-quality family-centered services in natural settings to build the foundational skills for school readiness. Students with disabilities need to receive high-quality instruction and interventions to achieve the Common Core State Standards. Therefore, educators and paraprofessionals need the knowledge and skills to be highly qualified and effective. • Evidence-based pre-service and inservice professional learning aligned with the Standards for Professional Development from Learning Forward needs to be provided statewide in a coordinated systemic manner. This includes a focus on data-informed decision making, appropriate assessments, early intervention and specialized instruction, student behavior and intervention, and family engagement. • Teacher preparation programs need to be able to meet the demands for skilled educators and create programs of study that prepare teachers and specialists for the schools of the future. • Early childhood service providers and general and special education teachers must be knowledgeable in assessment, specialized instruction, and student behavior and intervention. • All teachers and service providers, from early intervention to post-secondary programs, need to know instructional and intervention practices that are based on research and show evidence of effectiveness. • Educators need to know how to modify the curriculum, use technology to promote learning, and create positive learning environments that promote student engagement. • Educators need to know how to collaborate effectively with each other to design and provide instruction that reaches all children and youth with different instructional and support needs.

ACCESS, EQUITY, and PROGRESS

Action Imperative 3: By 2018, implementation of equitable services, universally designed instruction, evidence-based interventions, technology, and accessible materials will result in increased access to instruction based on the Common Core State Standards and improved academic achievement and functional outcomes.

DSE/EIS Action	Why this is Important
<p>It is critical that Maryland LSS/PA offer curricula based on the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL); develop and use culturally responsive practices; select and use technology for students who need it for learning, literacy, and communication; and provide specialized instruction within the general education curriculum. Therefore—</p> <p>3.1 The DSE/EIS, in collaboration with the Division of Curriculum, Assessment, and Accountability and strategic partners, will provide differentiated technical assistance and support to LSS/PAs to implement effective collaborative, evidence-based instructional models so students with disabilities to have access and are engaged in rigorous universally designed instruction, targeted interventions, and appropriate assessments.</p> <p>3.2 The DSE/EIS, in collaboration with the Division of Curriculum, Assessment, and Accountability, will provide differentiated technical assistance and support to LSS/PAs in the implementation of the new State assessments and use of the data to make informed decisions related to instruction and services for students with disabilities.</p> <p>3.3 The DSE/EIS, in collaboration with Johns Hopkins Center for Technology in Education (JHU/CTE), will revise the IEP online system to include diagnostic and prescriptive tools that match interventions to student needs, and allow the LSS/PAs to monitor student progress.</p> <p>3.4 The DSE/EIS, in collaboration with LSS/PAs, will use tiers of general supervision and engagement with evidence-based models to ensure equity in the identification and provision of services.</p>	<p>Students with disabilities learn and achieve more when they are taught with their typical peers. There is also a positive relationship between the amount of time students with disabilities spend in general education classrooms and post-secondary employment and community participation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students with disabilities need to acquire the knowledge and skills defined by the Common Core State Standards and the functional skills needed to be independent and engaged young adults after exiting our schools. • Students with disabilities will be able to access and make progress in the general education curriculum when evidence-based instruction and interventions meet their unique learning needs. • Students with disabilities need access to rigorous universally designed instruction, targeted interventions, appropriate assessments, and accommodations and supports—including assistive technology. • With the support of technical assistance, professional development, funding, and collaboration with general education, students with disabilities can receive needed access to appropriate materials, instruction, accommodations, and assessments. • Public schools offer equitable instruction when all students—regardless of their culture, language, disability, home, economic status, or other defining characteristics—have equal opportunity to learn and make progress in the general education curriculum and are provided with the supports needed to participate in their schools with nondisabled peers. • Access to high-quality instruction alone is not sufficient. Students need to be engaged in learning so that they can progress and become ready for college, careers, and community living. • When all educators are versed in specialized instruction, students with disabilities can have access to relevant academic materials that are available in general education classrooms.

SECONDARY TRANSITION

Action Imperative 4: By 2018, evidence-based transition programs and services will be implemented to increase the number of youth with disabilities who are actively engaged in post-secondary activities such as education, technical and career training, and employment after exiting schools.

DSE/EIS Action	Why this is Important
<p>It is critical that Maryland LSS/PA have models for high-quality high school and transition services that lead students with disabilities to college and career readiness and their individual post-secondary goals. Therefore—</p> <p>4.1 The DSE/EIS, in collaboration with LSS/PAs and partner agencies, will establish statewide, high-quality, evidence-based models of transition services and activities that include data-informed decision making to inform student focused planning; student development of community life, career and self-advocacy skills; meaningful internships; strong family engagement; and interagency collaboration as evidenced by compliance, performance, and results data.</p> <p>4.2. The DSE/EIS will collaborate with the Division of Career and College Readiness, to build capacity and support LSS/PAs in developing more inclusive program opportunities in Career Technology Education for students with disabilities.</p> <p>4.3. The DSE/EIS, in collaboration with the Division of Career and College Readiness and IHEs (including Community Colleges), will develop more inclusive opportunities and supports for students with disabilities to pursue post-secondary education and training.</p>	<p>Effective transition planning for high school students with disabilities substantially contributes to their success in adult life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-quality transition services for students with disabilities are needed to ensure attainment of post-secondary goals and independent living. • While some students with disabilities may require life-long supports, they need to learn to advocate for themselves and their post-secondary options need to be based on their individual talents and interests. • Youth with disabilities need individually designed plans to define their high school experiences, establish goals for exploring post-secondary education and career preparation, and obtain the services that will help them achieve a life of economic independence and meaningful participation in their communities. • Transition services for students with disabilities should include workforce training, competitive higher education provisions, and development of self-determination and independent living skills—all provided by knowledgeable transition service providers.



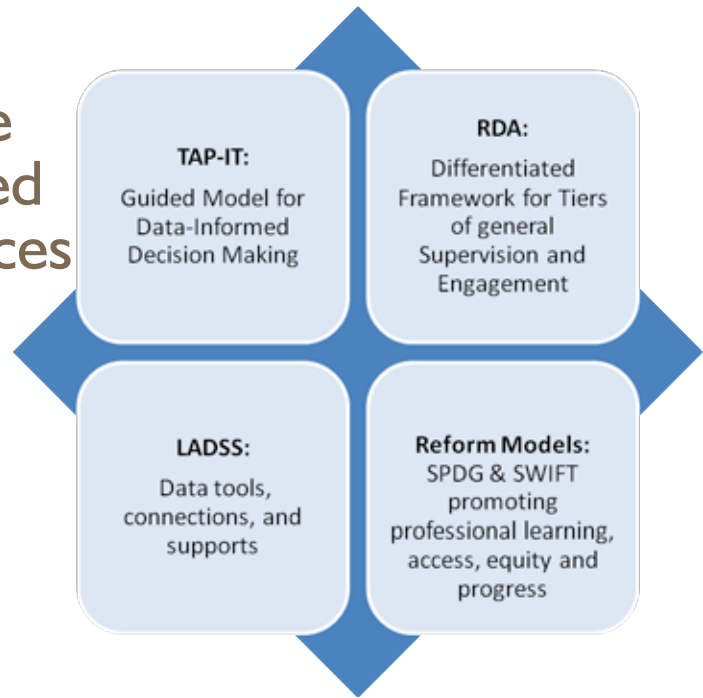
How We Will Achieve the Vision— *Key Strategies*

The DSE/EIS will employ four key strategies to improve results for children and youth with disabilities: 1) Strategic Collaboration; 2) Family Partnerships; 3) Evidence-Based Practices; and 4) Data-Informed Decisions.

1. **Strategic Collaboration:** The DSE/EIS will employ strategic collaboration with partners across State agencies, across divisions within MSDE, among public education agencies, with Institutes of Higher Education, and with families, advocates, and community partners, in order to promote access for all children to high-quality teaching and learning.
2. **Family Partnerships:** The DSE/EIS will create and sustain strong family partnerships and will support school and community personnel in their efforts to encourage families, as their child's first teacher, to make active and informed decisions that contribute to their child's success.
3. **Evidence-Based Practices:** The DSE/EIS will promote the adoption and implementation with fidelity of evidence-based practices to narrow school readiness and achievement gaps. The DSE/EIS will identify and share evidence-based practices, including multi-tiered systems of academic and behavioral supports, to ensure equitable access to high-quality instruction that leads to student progress.
4. **Data-Informed Decisions:** The DSE/EIS will increase the capacity to make data-informed decisions at the State and local levels by providing access to real-time student data (including formative and summative assessments, as well as observational and anecdotal documentation). The DSE/EIS will support the implementation of an evidence-based and customized data analysis and decision-making process.

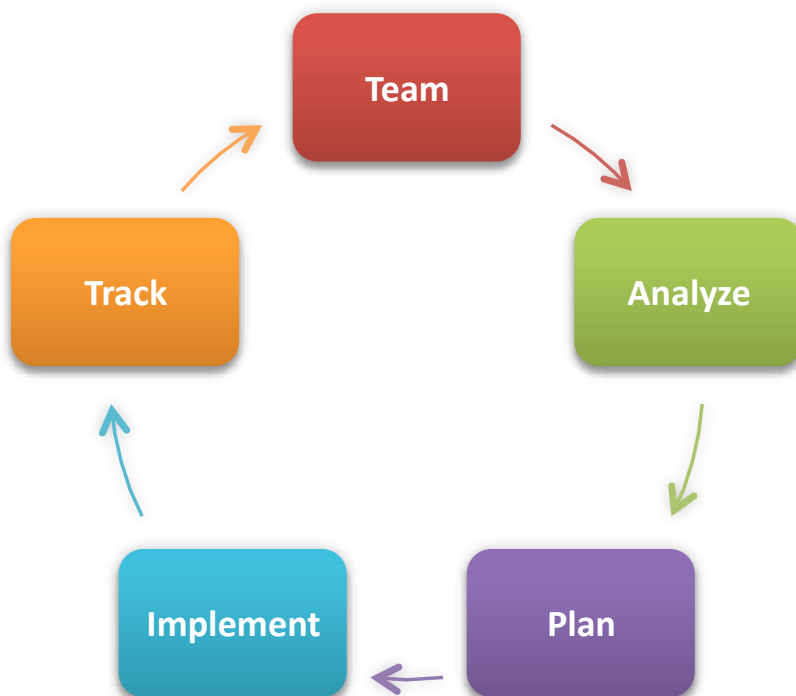
Moving Maryland Forward Through the Use of Evidence-Based and Innovative Practices

The DSE/EIS is committed to promoting innovative practices bolstered by the power of data. To this end, the Division has integrated four evidence-based and innovative approaches to positively impact the lives of children and youth with disabilities and their families.



Using Data to Narrow the Gap— The Statewide Model For Data-Informed Decision Making

THE TAP-IT MODEL FOR DATA-INFORMED DECISION MAKING*



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

The TAP-IT process will be implemented at the State, LSS/PA, and school levels. Through use of TAP-IT, information acquired will improve policy, programs, professional practice, and ultimately, student and family outcomes.

TAP-IT includes a 5-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.

*TAP-IT Model developed by the Center for Technology in Education, Johns Hopkins University School of Education

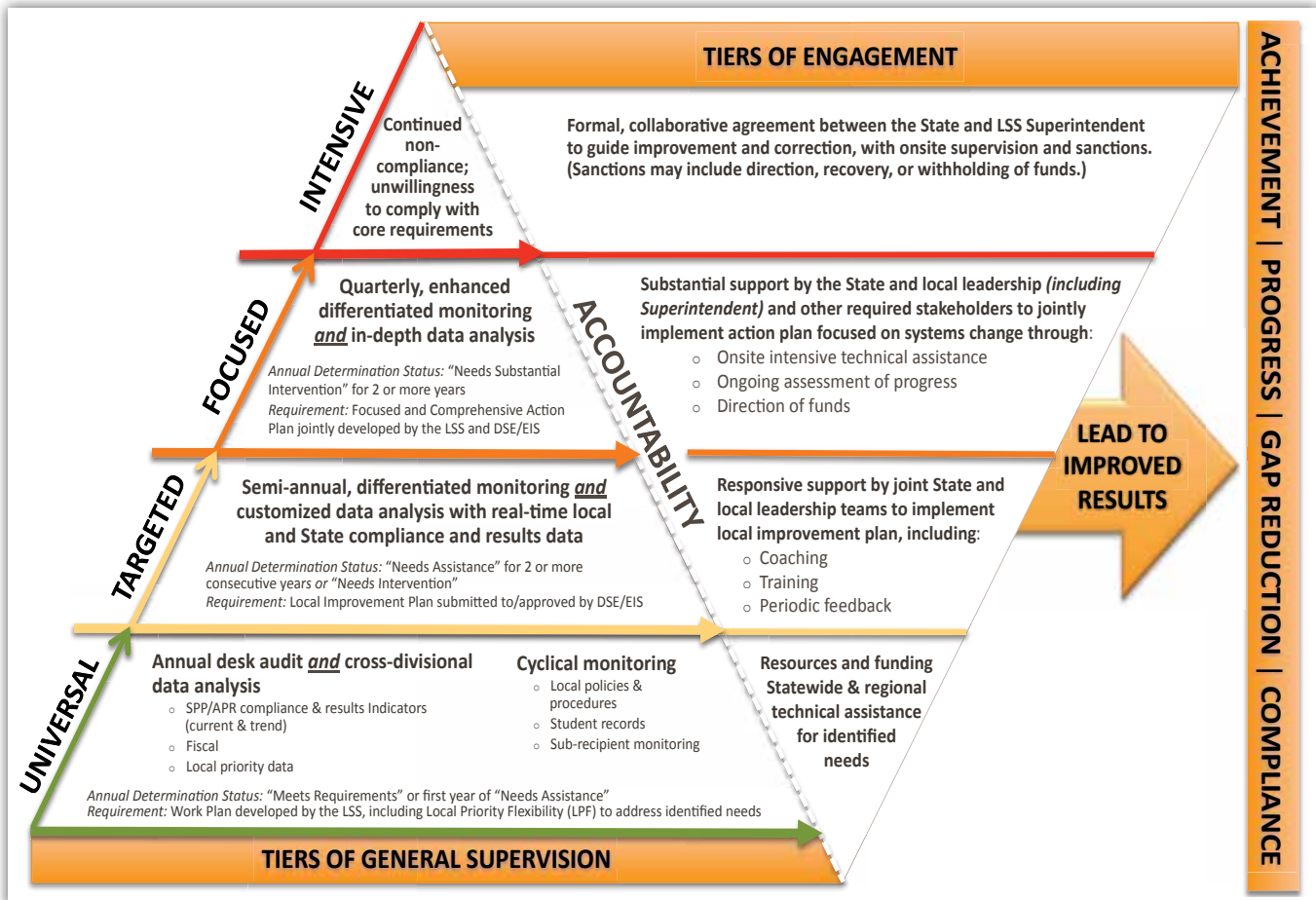
Using a Tiered Approach to Narrow the Gap A Statewide Differentiated Framework

Each Local School System and Public Agency serving children and youth with disabilities is unique, and their needs for general supervision and engagement from the DSE/EIS vary greatly depending upon numerous factors. The reorganization of the DSE/EIS and its new focus on the four Action Imperatives and Results Driven Accountability (RDA) will allow Division staff to monitor and provide technical assistance and support to programs in a more effective, efficient, and systematic manner.

An LSS/PA is assigned to one of four tiers – **Universal, Targeted, Focused, or Intensive** – of general supervision based upon performance on the IDEA State Performance Plan and Annual Performance Report (SPP/APR) compliance and results indicators, correction of noncompliance, analysis of data, fiscal management, and monitoring findings. This comprehensive information is used to provide differentiated engagement that focuses on building capacity to improve results and directs State resources to those LSS/PAs that are the lowest performing. At the same time, LSS/PAs that are achieving success are recognized and provided with the support needed to publish and disseminate their successful best practices.

The DSE/EIS leaders are committed to Results Driven Accountability by maintaining compliance and providing technical assistance and supports to improve results for all—including infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and their families.

THE DSE/EIS DIFFERENTIATED FRAMEWORK: TIERS OF GENERAL SUPERVISION AND ENGAGEMENT TO IMPROVE BIRTH-21 SPECIAL EDUCATION/EARLY INTERVENTION RESULTS

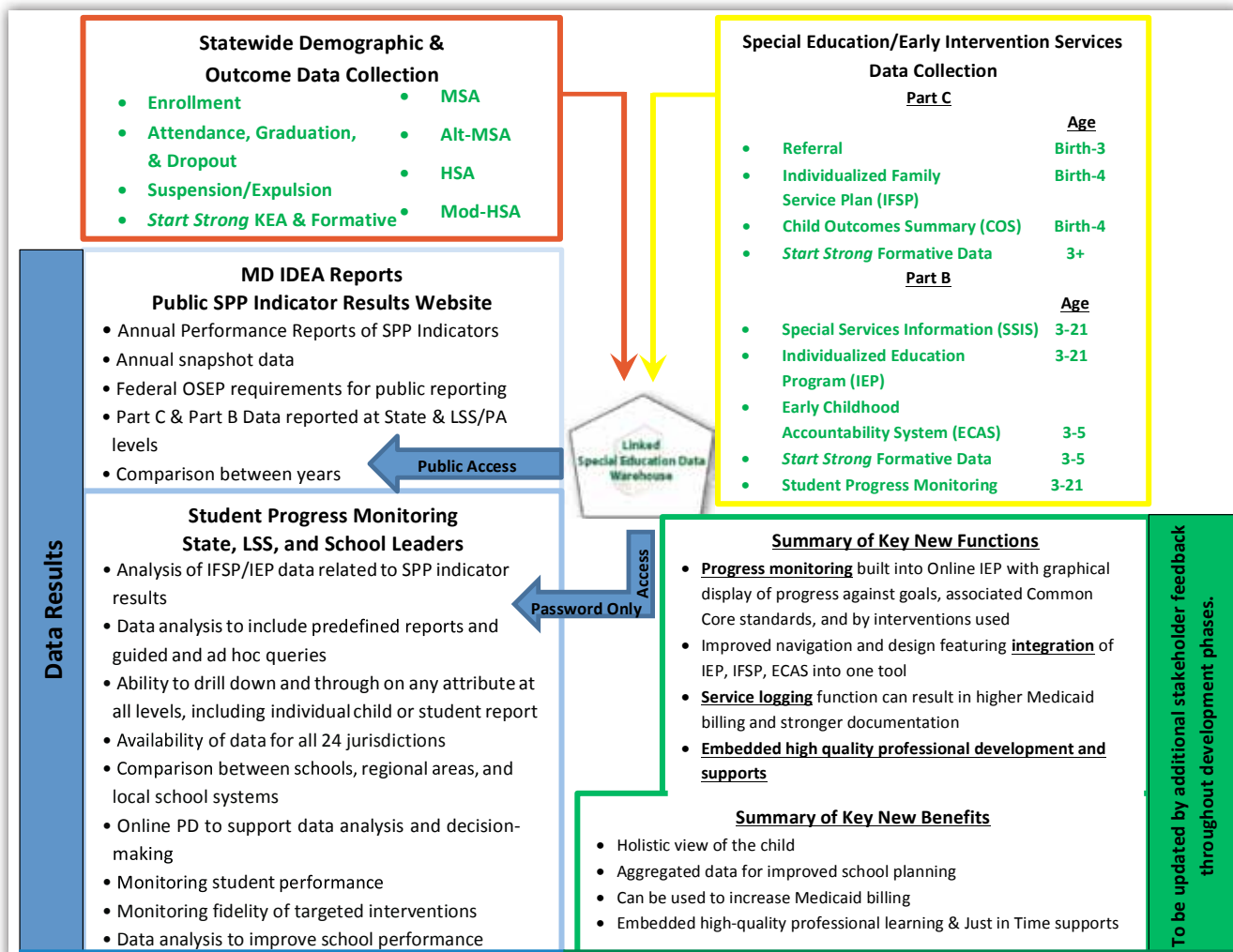


Using Advanced Tools to Narrow the Gap A Longitudinal Accountability Decision Support System (LADSS)

DSE/EIS, in cooperation with the Center for Technology in Education at the Johns Hopkins University, has developed the Maryland Special Education and Early Intervention Longitudinal Accountability Decision Support System (LADSS). This system encompasses the integration of statewide demographic and outcome data with special education and early intervention services data collection tools through a linked special education longitudinal data warehouse.

After gathering feedback from the Online IEP User Group, Maryland special education directors in a sampling of local school systems, a national survey of State special education directors, and focus groups with parents conducted in conjunction with the Parents' Place of Maryland, a proposed conceptual framework of initial enhancements and new functions were defined and are described below. The iterative design process includes continuous user and stakeholder feedback to identify additional system upgrades as part of a phased development approach aimed at narrowing the gap through using advanced decision support tools. Phase 1 is expected fall 2014.

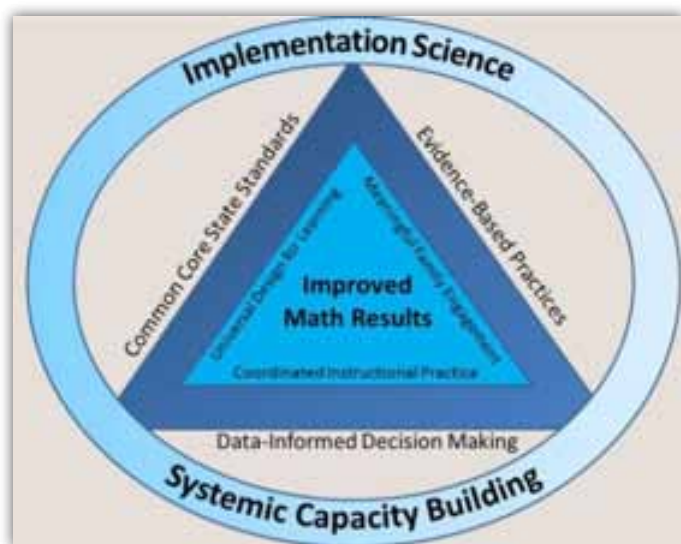
LADSS CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: ENHANCED FUNCTIONS AND BENEFITS*



Using Innovative Resources to Narrow the Gap Two Competitive Federal Initiatives for State–Local–School Capacity Building

State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG)

Maryland was awarded a U.S. Department of Education, State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG). The overarching goal of this SPDG grant is to improve academic outcomes for students with disabilities in pre-K through Grade 6. Maryland will use SPDG funds to accomplish three major goals by providing professional development at the State, district, and school levels in three local school systems.



Goal 1: Build capacity through increased use of data-informed decision making and implementation science by State, local, and school leaders.

Goal 2: Increase use of evidence-based practices in early and elementary math instruction based on Common Core State Standards.

Goal 3: Increase parent involvement in educational decision making and instruction.

To accomplish these goals, the State is applying the principles of **implementation science** to implement, sustain, and scale-up strategies including Common Core State Standards, evidence-based research on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Student Teams – Achievement Divisions (STAD) Math, data informed decision making using the TAP-IT model; all of which have been shown to improve teacher practices in math instruction.

School Wide Integration Framework for Transformation (SWIFT)

Maryland was recently awarded the opportunity to become one of four sites in the nation to participate in the School Wide Integrated Framework for Transformation, or SWIFT, project. SWIFT is a national K-8 technical assistance center committed to eliminating silos in education by bridging general and specialized education through academic and behavioral supports, creating powerful learning opportunities for all students and teachers, and promoting active, engaged partnerships among families and community members.

Four local school systems in Maryland are participating in the SWIFT project with four schools identified in each system.

SWIFT provides a framework to:

- Establish quality instruction based on principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS);
- Install a Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) with data-informed decision making;
- Develop cultural responsiveness;
- Promote family and community partnerships; and
- Establish a strong integrated state, local and school leadership structure.



Measuring Our Progress in Narrowing Existing Gaps

The DSE/EIS is committed to measuring and reporting its progress in accomplishing the ambitious Goals and Action Imperatives set forth in this five-year Strategic Plan. The *Key Measures of Success* table that follows presents our expectations for change from baseline in 2013 through 2018. Additional measures are included in an Appendix to this plan and may be obtained from the DSE/EIS in the near future. The DSE/EIS has also developed a detailed operational plan that is being utilized by Division staff to manage and track their work.

Key Measures of Success

Metric	2012-2013 Baseline	2018 Target
EARLY CHILDHOOD		
Children Functioning within Age Expectations by the Time They Exit Early Intervention or Preschool Special Education	<p>The number of children who received early intervention services or preschool special education services and who were functioning within age expectations by the time they exited the program in the following 3 child outcome areas:</p> <p>Early Intervention Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive social emotional skills 65.6% • Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills 60.9% • Use of appropriate behaviors to meet needs 59.0% <p>Preschool Special Education Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive social emotional skills 66.5% • Acquisition and use of knowledge and skills 55.7% • Use of appropriate behaviors to meet needs 64.1% 	Increase of 5 percentage points across all three child outcome areas
Access (ages 3 through 5)	In 2012, 63.6% of children ages 3 through five with disabilities attended a regular early childhood program and received the majority of special education and related services in the regular early childhood program.	Increase of 5 percentage points in the regular early childhood program
PROFESSIONAL LEARNING		
Percentages of Suitably Qualified Service Providers	In 2012, 100% of early childhood service providers were suitably qualified in 9 of the 27 LSS/PAs.	100% of service providers and special educators in LSS/PAs are suitably certified/fully certified.
Fully Certified Educators	<p>81% of special education teachers instructing students ages 3 through 5 are fully certified.</p> <p>93% of special education teachers instructing students ages 6 through 21 are fully certified.</p>	
Dually Certified Educators	Dual certification varies by local school system/public agency. A workgroup will be convened to establish a common baseline metric.	

Key Measures of Success

Metric	2012-2013 Baseline		2018 Target
ACCESS, EQUITY, and PROGRESS			
Achievement Gaps	<p>MSA/HSA</p> <p>The Elementary/Middle Reading gap ranges from 25.4 percentage points in Grade 3 to 44.8 percentage points in Grade 8.</p> <p>The Elementary/Middle Math gap ranges from 35.8 percentage points in Grade 3 to 47.6 percentage points in Grade 8.</p> <p>The Elementary/Middle Science gap ranges from 40.9 percentage points in Grade 5 to 45.2 percentage points in Grade 8.</p> <p>The High School English gap is 39.5 percentage points.</p> <p>The High School Algebra gap is 44.1 percentage points.</p> <p>The High School Biology gap is 37.3 percentage points.</p>	<p>PARCC</p> <p>Baseline data to be established with the implementation of PARCC assessments in 2015.</p>	Average gap decrease of 10 percentage points
Proficiency in the Alternate Assessment	<p>Alt-MSA</p> <p>Percentage of Students Proficient:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading 87.4%• Math 82.0%• Science 73.4%	<p>NCSC</p> <p>Baseline data to be established with the implementation of NCSC assessments in 2016.</p>	Increase of 5 percentage points
Access to General Education	<p>68% of students were educated in general education classes 80% or more of the time.</p> <p>13.3% of students were educated in general education classes less than 40% of the time.</p>		<p>Increase of 7 percentage points</p> <p>Decrease of 5 percentage points</p>
Equity	<p>No LSS had significant disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in specific categories as a result of inappropriate identification.</p> <p>Two LSSs had significant disproportionate representation of racial and ethnic groups in disciplinary removals and placement in particular educational settings.</p>		No LSS will have significant disproportionality.
Parent Involvement	47% of parents of preschool age children and 40% of parents of school age children report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities.		Increase of 10 percentage points

Key Measures of Success

Metric	2012-2013 Baseline	2018 Target
SECONDARY TRANSITION		
Graduation with a Diploma	<p>Class of 2012</p> <p>The 4-year cohort graduation rate was 57.4% compared to 86.4% of nondisabled peers.</p> <p>The 5-year cohort graduation rate was 62.7% compared to 88.0% of nondisabled peers.</p>	Increase of 10 percentage points
Dropping out of High School	<p>Class of 2012</p> <p>18.4% of students with disabilities dropped out of high school, compared to 9.3% of nondisabled peers.</p>	Decrease of 6 percentage points
Participation in Employment, Post-Secondary Education, Supported Employment, or Employment Training	<p>Class of 2011</p> <p>86% of students with disabilities were actively engaged within the first year of exiting.</p>	Increase of 5 percentage points

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION/EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

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

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THE DIVISION OF
SPECIAL EDUCATION/
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STRATEGIC PLAN
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Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services