Nevada Department of Education

Office of Special Education

NEVADA STATE SYSTEMIC IMPROVEMENT PLAN (SSIP)

FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

FFY 2013 – FFY 2018

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INTRODUCTION

It is a fitting coincidence that the acronym for "ASSESS, PLAN, TEACH" is "APT." The adjective "apt" is defined as "exactly suitable, appropriate; suited to the purpose or occasion." Nevada's decision to invest in the Clark County School District APT Model for improving special education teachers' skills in assessment, instructional planning, and teaching reading is exactly suited to the purpose of the state's systemic improvement plan (SSIP) and is appropriate to accomplishing the state-identified measurable result (SIMR).

After much work and reflection, Nevada has selected the following SIMR as its focus for the SSIP:

> The Nevada Department of Education will improve the performance of third-grade students with disabilities in Clark County School District on statewide assessments of reading/language arts through building the school district's capacity to strengthen the skills of special education teachers in assessment, instructional planning, and teaching.

We did not arrive at this decision easily. Initially, we contemplated a goal that involved increasing high-school graduation rates. But through data analysis, infrastructure analysis, and broad stakeholder involvement in the spring, summer, and fall of 2014, we realized that for many reasons increasing high-school graduation rates was not exactly suited to the purpose of the SSIP. Chief among those reasons is that Nevada is completely overhauling its assessment system, and for two years in the span of years from FFY 2013 through FFY 2018, Nevada students will not be required to meet a state performance standard in high-school proficiency examinations in order to earn standard diplomas. Because there will be two years out of five that Nevada's standard diploma graduation rate data will be distorted, this initial idea for a SIMR was dismissed by late summer 2014.

As the SSIP work proceeded with more targeted stakeholder input, our focus sharpened. The congruence of several factors moved us toward looking at early literacy as a potential SIMR. Primary among these factors was that Nevada's Governor Sandoval began to propose legislation and funding to support an initiative to ensure that all of Nevada's students read by third grade **(the "Read by Three" initiative – now Senate Bill 391)**. At the same time, additional factors began to clarify our vision:

- State law requires that the Nevada Department of Education ("NDE") and the State Board of Education annually prepare a State Improvement Plan (the "STIP," titled "Nevada Ready! 2.0") to outline NDE strategies designed to improve student achievement. GOAL #1 in the STIP developed during 2014 is **"All students are proficient in reading by the end of third grade."**

- In June 2014, the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) determined whether states met the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) by taking "results" into account, including the gap between the performance of students who are disabled and non-disabled on NAEP assessments of reading. Nevada's performance was inadequate in this measure of results. We believe that improving performance for third graders will inexorably lead to improved performance in fourth graders, which in turn will reduce gaps. Further, **Indicator 3C in the IDEA Annual Performance Report measures the % of students with disabilities in third grade who are proficient in reading**.

- In September 2014, OSEP provided on-site technical assistance to Nevada, clarifying that states were not required in the SIMR to address the entire state as a whole, but rather **could focus on a subpopulation, such as a school district**, so long as improvements in the subpopulation had the potential to improve statewide data.

- In 2014, the Clark County School District unveiled its Strategic Plan entitled "Pledge of Achievement – Every Student. Every Classroom. Every Community Member." The plan includes a strategic imperative for academic excellence: "Literacy across all subject areas pre-k through 12th grades" which will be measured by increasing the percent of proficient students in assessed subjects and grades, and by reducing the percentage point gap between proficiency of the highest and lowest subgroups, including students with disabilities as a subgroup. In his "State of the District" speech on January 26, 2015, Superintendent Pat Skorkowsky reiterated that **increasing third-grade literacy** one of six goals set by the School Board of Trustees. The plan also includes a strategic imperative for school support: "Focused support, preparation, training and resources for all staff in the schools." The Clark County School District captured input from more than 3,000 individuals in developing the Strategic Plan, including business and civic leaders, finance and data professionals, parents, teachers, and principals.

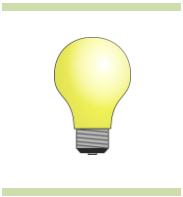
- In 2013-2014, the Clark County School District had just begun implementing the APT Model in its some of its classrooms where students with the most significant learning disabilities are in self-contained placements. The Model showed promise, but much work remained to refine its implementation and scale-up its success. **Importantly, the work was completely aligned with the school district's Strategic Plan ("Pledge of Achievement"), the NDE's state plan ("Nevada Ready! 2.0"), the Governor's "Read by Three" legislation (Senate Bill 391), and Indicator 3C in the state's IDEA Annual Performance Report.**

- In 2014, the NDE had also begun to revise the Nevada State Literacy Plan ("NSLP") which guides the work in Nevada's federally funded Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Initiative. The new NSLP **"aims to address the literacy needs of all identified struggling student sub-populations in Nevada,"** including **"students with exceptional needs."** The NSLP requires a focus on five key essentials including literacy assessment systems, and data-driven standards based instruction and intervention. Because Clark County School District is one of the sub-

grantees, this project presented another opportunity to align goals and resources at the state and local level aimed toward improving reading for third-grade students with disabilities.

- Finally, the NDE was contemplating submitting a proposal to OSEP to support special education personnel development (State Personnel Development Grant – the "SPDG"), and the opportunity to align goals and resources toward a common objective – **improving the reading proficiency of third-grade students with disabilities** – was compelling.

Throughout Phase I, the NDE embraced and espoused a principle that we borrowed from a long-ago BASF advertising campaign.[1] "We don't make the light bulb, we make it brighter." Of course, the purpose of the SSIP is to make sure that the SIMR ("the light blub") is appropriate to the task at hand, and the DATA ANALYSIS section tells the story of why improving reading proficiency in third-grade students with disabilities in the Clark County School District will improve statewide results. A SIMR in Nevada that is not woven into already-existing priorities and initiatives for student achievement in Nevada's school districts would be doomed for failure, and the INFRASTRUCTURE ANALYSIS section tells the story of why we think this SIMR is destined for success. The light bulb also has to have a basic structure that is based on research (thank you Mr. Edison) and has an evidence base to support its use, and the SELECTION OF COHERENT IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES section explains the research base to support the APT Model. We must be able to communicate how we intend to make the light bulb brighter, and the THEORY OF ACTION section paints that picture. Finally, if we are to make the light bulb brighter, we need ambitious yet achievable targets to guide the work. The BASELINE DATA AND TARGETS section tells that story.



So how and why did the NDE arrive at its SIMR? In retrospect, perhaps it was inevitable.

[1] BASF trademarked its slogan: "We don't make a lot of the products you buy. We make a lot of the products you buy better."

THEORY OF STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

Throughout this SSIP, we will discuss the kinds of information various stakeholders considered relative to each Component in the Plan. We will summarize key conclusions of the stakeholders, and the significance of those conclusions for further development the SSIP. The purpose of this THEORY OF STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT section is to explain how we stratified stakeholder groups and stakeholder input, based on a theory of *authentic engagement* that involved the right stakeholders at the right time, making recommendations that spoke directly to the decisions we were making. We did not form an omnibus stakeholder group to guide our thinking about every Component in the SSIP. Instead, we brought together various groups of stakeholders depending on the task at hand. In this way, we conceptualized stakeholder involvement as involving three purposes: (1) **informing** to build awareness, (2) **networking and collaborating** to build support and align resources, and (3) **transforming** to vitalize the work in the trenches.

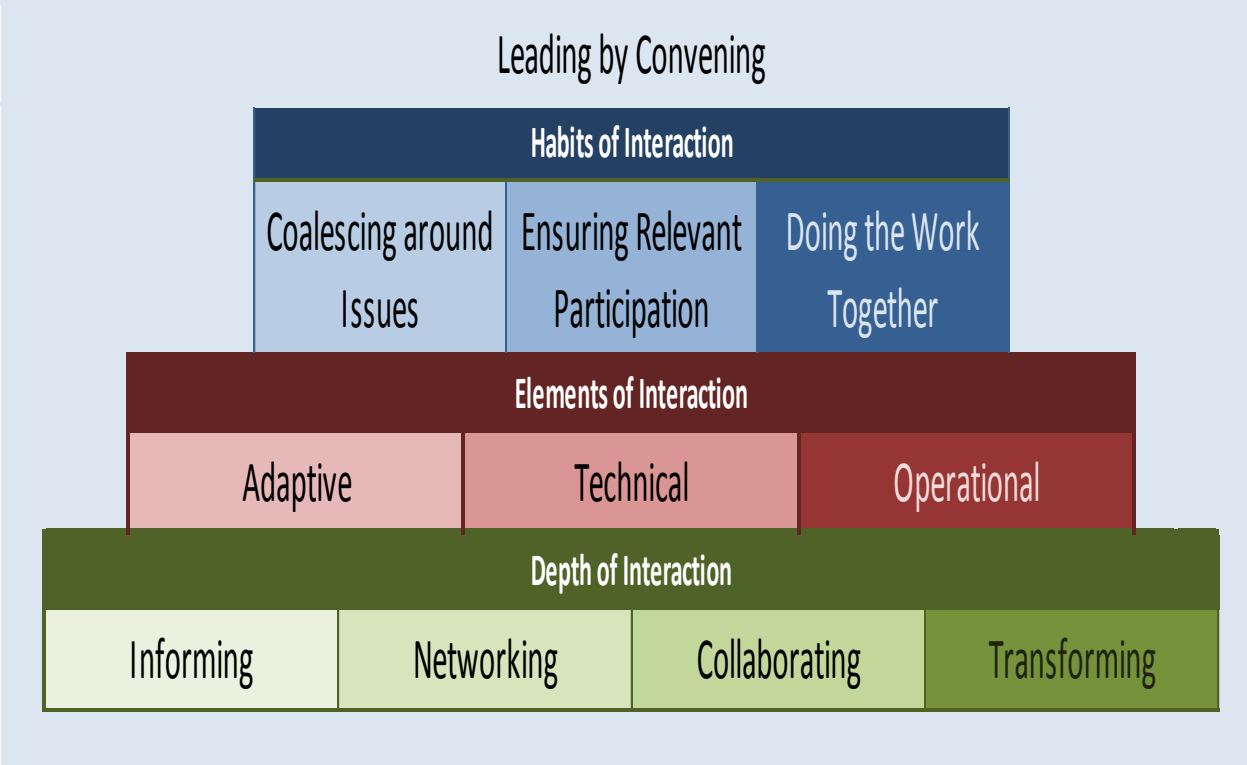
Stakeholder involvement is sometimes necessary to establish support for a project so that if statutes, regulations, policies, or practices need to change, there is support from decision-makers who rank above those doing the frontline work. In Nevada, our choice to focus on improving the reading proficiency of third-grade students with disabilities fit within a well-established set of leadership commitments that we did not have to invent from scratch. That framework was already moving toward changes in law, funding, and policies necessary to support the SIMR.

Stakeholder support for this specific SIMR had to build upon the work already moving ahead in the legislature, in the NDE, and in the CCSD. It required a principled approach, and we looked to the "Leading by Convening" model to support our approach (Hernandez, 2012).

Approaching Stakeholder Involvement from a Principled Perspective

In August 2014, the NDE brought together the state's 18 special education directors and leadership staff, representing 17 school districts and the State Public Charter School Authority, for a two-day meeting to bring additional focus to SSIP activities and narrow the possibilities for a SIMR after the graduation-rate improvement idea had floundered.

"Leading by Convening" provided a foundation for this two-day meeting. Dr. JoAnne Cashman, Director, The IDEA Partnership at The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), worked intensively with the group for an entire day, first introducing concepts and strategies for *authentic engagement*, and then providing practice opportunities to apply the concepts and strategies based on participants' authentic initiatives and priorities for change. Following is a graphic display of the "Leading by Convening" scheme:



The "Leading by Convening" model is a useful framework for describing how the NDE ensured that *authentic engagement* underpinned its work with stakeholders. We wanted stakeholder involvement that was targeted and purposeful, rather than perfunctory. In this way, we sought to "ensure relevant participation" as urged in the "Leading by Convening" model. It also provides a useful organizing tool to summarize the groups with whom the NDE has worked to identify and develop support for its SIMR, depending upon whether the purpose ("depth of interaction") was to inform, network and collaborate, or transform. An overview of those stakeholder groups and the level of their involvement is described below. We plan to continue authentic engagement of each of these stakeholders in Phases II and III of the SSIP.

"Informing" – Summary of Stakeholder Groups

From January 2014 through March 2015, the NDE Director of Special Education, Ms. Marva Cleven, and her staff have met with the various groups to discuss (1) the purpose of the SSIP, (2) the work which must be done in the various Phases of SSIP development, (3) emerging ideas and the data base to support various proposed SIMRs, and (4) the commitments being made by the NDE and its partners to improve outcomes for students with disabilities in Nevada. These groups included:

- Nevada School District Title I and Title III Directors, May 2014
- Nevada School District Testing and Curriculum Directors, September/October 2014
- Nevada Association of School Administrators, November 2014
- Nevada State Board of Education (specifically about the APT Model in the SSIP and SPDG), January 2015

"Networking and Collaborating" – Summary of Stakeholder Groups

Two existing, *crucial* stakeholder groups – the statewide Special Education Advisory Committee ("SEAC") and the school district Special Education Directors Association ("SEDA") – have provided insights and guidance for the last 18 months *ad hoc* and through formal quarterly meetings with NDE staff. Other stakeholders who are important partners have been engaged in small and large groups to review data, consider possible SIMRs, and suggest opportunities for collaboration in future Phases of SSIP development. These stakeholders include:

- Staff members from NDE Offices are engaged *ad hoc* to work toward the NDE's legislative agenda, STIP goals, and SSIP development:
  - Office of Educator Development and Support
  - Office of Parental Involvement and Family Engagement
  - Office of Assessment, Data and Accountability Management
  - Office of Early Learning and Development
  - Office of Standards and Instructional Support
  - Office of Student and School Supports, including
    - Title I
    - Title III
    - Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Initiative

- Individual stakeholders and representatives from various organizations convened for specific input into SSIP development (May 2014):
  - Executive Director, Nevada PEP (Nevada's federally funded Parent Training and Information Center)
  - Parents of students with disabilities
  - Special Services Director, Carson City School District
  - Special Services Director, Churchill County School District
  - Assistant Superintendent, Student Services Division, Clark County School District
  - Executive Director, Student Services Division, Clark County School District
  - Director, Psychological Services, Clark County School District
  - Special Services Director, Humboldt County School District
  - Executive Director, Student Support Services, Washoe County School District
  - Nevada State Public Charter School Authority
  - University of Nevada Reno
  - Nevada Speech-Language Hearing Association
  - NDE Office of Career Readiness, Adult Learning and Education Options
  - NDE Office of Standards and Instructional Support
  - NDE Office of Student and School Supports

- Stakeholders convened for input into the Special Education State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) proposal which contains a GOAL for APT Model implementation (January 2015):
  - NDE Office of Student and School Supports
  - NDE Office of Assessment, Data & Accountability Management
  - NDE Business and Support Services Division
  - Executive Director, Nevada PEP
  - University of Nevada Reno, Center for Excellence in Disabilities

- In addition, the 2014-2015 work to develop the Nevada State Improvement Plan (Nevada Ready! 2.0) included the following stakeholders:
    - The Education Alliance of Washoe County, Inc.
    - Nevada Association of School Boards
    - Nevada Association of School Superintendents
    - Nevada Parent Teacher Association
    - Nevada Succeeds (a bipartisan education policy group backed by Nevada's business community – the group advocates for an education system that ensures all students can read proficiently by third grade)
    - Nevada System of Higher Education
    - Las Vegas Metro Chamber of Commerce
    - The Chamber-Reno-Sparks-Northern Nevada

"Transforming" – Summary of Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholders involved in "transforming" work in classrooms include those who were consulted to examine state-, district-, and school-level data to determine baseline data and set targets. In various configurations, these stakeholders also explained how the APT project came into existence, including the root cause analysis that led district leaders to begin development of APT in the first place. These stakeholders also helped us learn what work has already taken place. Critically, they also helped us identify the major factors that may be part of the problem of low reading performance among third-grade students with disabilities, and more importantly, the possible causes of those factors. This input will be particularly helpful in Phase II as we make specific plans for how the APT Model will be implemented, evaluated, strengthened, and scaled-up (how we will make the light bulb brighter).

Clark County School District leaders and frontline implementation staff in the "Transforming" group included:

- Deputy Superintendent of Educational and Operational Excellence
- Assistant Superintendent, Student Services Division
- Executive Director, Student Services Division
- Directors, Student Services Division
- Coordinators, Student Services Division
- Nevada PEP, including the Educational Services Director
- School Principals
- Title I Coordinator
- Directors, K-12 Literacy and Talent Development, Instructional Design and Professional Learning Division (including CCSD's "Striving Readers" project)
- Instructional Facilitators at the APT schools
- Coaches at the APT schools

Component #1: DATA ANALYSIS

The INFRASTRUCTURE ANALYSIS described in Component #3 led Nevada toward the idea that improving the reading proficiency of third-grade students on statewide assessments would be an "apt" state-identified measurable result. But the mere fact that leadership initiatives throughout the state and at school district levels were coalescing on improving third-grade reading was not enough to support a decision to focus our capacity-building work on a project in Clark County School District that was in its infancy, but had promise.

This DATA ANALYSIS SECTION explains how Nevada identified and analyzed key data to select the SIMR and identify some of the root causes contributing to the low performance of the state's students with disabilities on assessments of third-grade reading proficiency.

The stakeholders who were involved in the data analysis involved NDE staff members from the offices listed in the "Networking and Collaborating" stakeholder group meeting *ad hoc* and formally on two occasions, and various configurations of the "Transforming" stakeholder group, meeting on three occasions. Each time a stakeholder group met to review and analyze data, additional data analysis was requested and the NDE Office of Special Education responded. This iteration led to an increasingly detailed data set, now showing various disaggregations by disability category, placement category, race/ethnicity category, identification as English Language Learner, and as participant in the Free or Reduced Lunch Program. As you read the DATA ANALYSIS section, we hope you can hear how one set of data led us to another set, and then to another.

We begin with a discussion of the STUDENT ENROLLMENT and PROFICIENCY DATA that were analyzed, followed by a discussion of the ROOT CAUSES contributing to low performance. We present these data in a "question and answer" format, by posing a question, presenting the data, analyzing the data, and describing the implications for Nevada's SIMR.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

We knew simply from experience that Clark County School District (CCSD), where Las Vegas is located, educated approximately 70% of the state's public school students. But we needed to explore in more detail whether and how improving results in CCSD would improve results statewide. An analysis of demographic data appropriately begins with enrollment data.

ENROLLMENT DATA – ALL STUDENTS

We wanted to get a clear understanding of the proportion of Nevada's students who are educated in CCSD.

What data did we analyze and what did we learn about the enrollment of students in Nevada and in the Clark County School District?

Following is an analysis of the total enrollment of CCSD as a percentage of the total Nevada enrollment.

School Year	Nevada Total Enrollment	Clark County School District Total Enrollment	CCSD Enrollment as % of Nevada Total Enrollment
2011-12	439,277	308,237	67.4%
2012-13	445,381	311,029	67.6%
2013-14	451,730	314,636	67.5%

- **Data analysis:** In 2013-2014, Clark County School District educated 67.5% of Nevada's public school children.

  Implication for selection of SIMR: *Improving statewide results necessarily involves improving results in CCSD.*

ENROLLMENT DATA – STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Next, we wanted to get a clear understanding of the proportion of Nevada's students with disabilities who are educated in Clark County School District (CCSD).

What data did we analyze and what did we learn about the enrollment of students with disabilities in Nevada and in the CCSD?

Following is an analysis of the total enrollment of students with disabilities in CCSD as a percentage of total enrollment of students with disabilities in Nevada.

School Year	Nevada Total IEP Enrollment (ages 3-21)	Clark County School District Total IEP Enrollment (ages 3-21)	CCSD IEP Enrollment as % of Total Nevada IEP Enrollment (ages 3-21)
2011-12	49,117	33,129	67.5%
2012-13	50,332	33,947	67.5%
2013-14	52,052	35,253	67.7%

- **Data analysis:** In 2013-2014, Clark County School District educated 67.7% of Nevada's public school children with disabilities.
  Implication for selection of SIMR: *Improving statewide results for students with disabilities necessarily involves improving results for students with disabilities in CCSD.*

We also wanted to know whether a focus on improving third-grade reading proficiency for a particular group of students with disabilities in CCSD would have the greatest impact on district-wide, and, ultimately, statewide results. Not unexpectedly, students with Learning Disabilities comprise the largest group of students in any particular disability category in CCSD. Following is an analysis of CCSD students with Learning Disabilities as a percentage all CCSD students with disabilities.

School Year	# CCSD IEP Students (ages 6-21)	# CCSD IEP Students with Learning Disabilities (ages 6-21)	Students with Learning Disabilities as a % of IEP Students in CCSD (ages 6-21)
2011-12	27,569	14,654	53.2%
2012-13	27,274	13,723	50.3%
2013-14	29,124	15,152	52.0%

- **Data analysis:** Students with Learning Disabilities in CCSD account for more than 50% of all students with disabilities in CCSD ages 6-21.
  Implication for selection of SIMR: *Because students with Learning Disabilities comprise more than half of the students with disabilities in CCSD, improving results for students with disabilities in CCSD necessarily involves improving results for students with Learning Disabilities.*

To understand the magnitude of the effect of improving results for students with Learning Disabilities in CCSD, in the following table we analyzed what percentage of all students with disabilities in Nevada were students with Learning Disabilities in CCSD.

School Year	# Nevada IEP Students (ages 6-21)	# CCSD IEP Students with Learning Disabilities (ages 6-21)	Students with Learning Disabilities in CCSD as a % of IEP Students in Nevada (ages 6-21)
2011-12	40,594	14,654	36.1%
2012-13	41,470	13,723	33.1%
2013-14	43,787	15,152	34.6%

- **Data analysis:** More than one-third of all students with disabilities in Nevada are students with Learning Disabilities in CCSD.
  Implication for selection of SIMR: *Improving results for students with Learning Disabilities in CCSD has the capacity to improve statewide results for IEP students.*

ENROLLMENT DATA – THIRD-GRADE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Because we had begun to think about focusing the SIMR on third-grade readers with disabilities (based on the infrastructure already being built through legislation and policy development at state and local levels), we decided to look more closely at third graders as a subpopulation of students with disabilities to see whether narrowing our focus to just one grade in just one district could move the needle on statewide results.

What data did we analyze and what did we learn about the enrollment of third-grade students with disabilities in Nevada and in the CCSD?

We turned our attention to drilling down into data about third graders with disabilities. We wanted to know how many third-grade students with disabilities there were in Nevada, and how many there were in CCSD. We also wondered if the overall percentage of Nevada's students with disabilities that were in CCSD (67.7% in 2013-2014) was also true at the third-grade level.

School Year	# Third-Grade IEP Students in Nevada	# Third-Grade IEP Students in CCSD	Third Grade IEP Students in CCSD as a % of Third Grade IEP Students in Nevada
2011-12	3,200	2,088	65.3%
2012-13	3,401	2,261	66.5%
2013-14	3,607	2,397	66.5%

- **Data analysis:** In 2013-2014, CCSD educated 66.5% of all third-grade students with disabilities in the state. This proportion is comparable to the data for all students with disabilities ages 6-21

(67.7%). Another way of looking at it is this: third-grade students with disabilities in CCSD represent 2/3 of all third-grade students with disabilities in the state.

Implication for selection of SIMR: *Improving results on reading assessments for third-grade students with disabilities in CCSD will improve statewide results for third-grade students with disabilities.*

ENROLLMENT DATA – THIRD-GRADE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES DISAGGREGATED BY RACE/ETHNICITY CATEGORY

At this point, we had an overall picture of third-grade students with disabilities in CCSD, but we wanted to know more about their composition in terms of race/ethnicity.

What data did we analyze and what did we learn about the race/ethnic composition of all students in the CCSD, third-grade students in the CCSD, and third-grade students with disabilities in the CCSD?

We wanted to know whether the race/ethnic proportions were comparable among all CCSD students, all CCSD third-grade students, and all CCSD third-grade students with disabilities. In the following table, we examined the data for 2013-14, and the proportions were mostly comparable.

2013-14	Am In/AK Native	Asian	Black	Hispanic	Two or More Races	Pacific Islander	White
CCSD All Students	0.5%	6.6%	12.4%	44.4%	6.0%	1.5%	28.6%
CCSD 3rd Graders	0.4%	5.8%	12.9%	45.9%	6.5%	1.5%	27.0%
CCSD 3rd Graders with IEPs	0.7%	2.5%	13.7%	42.1%	6.8%	1.4%	32.8%

- **Data analysis**: There is some underrepresentation of Asian students among students with IEPs, and slight overrepresentation of White students, not unlike national trends. CCSD has been a "majority minority" school district for many years.

  Implication for selecting SIMR*: Although the proportion of students within race/ethnicity categories is somewhat stable, there may be critical differences in the academic performance when comparing these subgroups. These data are examined under THIRD-GRADE READING PROFICIENCY DATA.*

ENROLLMENT DATA – THIRD-GRADE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES DISAGGREGATED BY PLACEMENT CATEGORY

Placement in the least restrictive environment is also important when considering the focus of a SIMR, and more importantly, when considering root causes for low performance and the selection and implementation of coherent improvement strategies. In our story, we were considering investing in CCSD's APT Model which is being implemented in the district's "self-contained" LD classrooms where students with disabilities receive reading instruction primarily from special education teachers.

What data did we analyze and what did we learn about the placement of third-grade students with disabilities in Nevada, in the Clark County School District, and in the APT schools?

We compared the 2013-14 placements of third-grade students with Learning Disabilities ("LD") in CCSD with third-grade students with LD statewide. There were some compelling differences. We also analyzed placement data for students with LD in the 48 schools that are currently in the APT project.

2013-14	# 3rd Grade LD Students	3rd Grade LD Students in Regular Education 80-100% of School Day		3rd Grade LD Students in Regular Education 40-79% of School Day		3rd Grade LD Students in Regular Education 0-39% of School Day	
		#	%	#	%	#	%
Nevada	1417	985	**70%**	301	**21%**	130	**9%**
CCSD	890	508	**57%**	258	**29%**	124	**14%**
APT Schools	253	112	**44.3%**	65	**25.7%**	76	**30%**

- **Data analysis:** Compared to the state as a whole, CCSD removes third-grade students with Learning Disabilities ("LD") from regular education environments at a higher rate. In fact, CCSD educates all but 6 of the state's third-grade students with LD who are included in regular education environments between 0-39% of the school day (130-124=6).

  Implication for selection of SIMR: *Improvement activities must focus on the 45% (29% + 14%) of LD students in CCSD who are removed from regular education environments for more than 20% of the school day.*

  Possible implications: *Third-grade students with LD in CCSD may be more likely to be taught reading in separate special education classrooms as they are to be taught reading solely in general education classrooms.*

- **Data analysis:** In the APT Project schools in CCSD, 30% of the third-grade students with LD are removed from regular education environments for more than 60% of the school day. This rate is more than twice the rate for all third-grade students with LD in CCSD (14%), and more than three times the rate for all third-grade students with LD in the state (9%).

  Implication for selection of SIMR: *More than half of the third-grade students with LD in APT classrooms are receiving direct reading instruction from special education teachers, and that instruction is critical to their development as readers. The special education teachers in those classrooms should be highly skilled in individualizing reading instruction to meet the unique needs of the students.*

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS FROM ANALYSIS OF ENROLLMENT DATA

Analysis of the enrollment data confirmed that Clark County School District, representing 67.7% of the state's third-grade students with disabilities, had enough influence on statewide data such that an improvement in CCSD's third-grade reading proficiency percentages would improve the state's third-grade reading proficiency percentages.

THIRD-GRADE READING PROFICIENCY DATA

We knew that CCSD had enough population to influence statewide proficiency data, but we needed to know more about the proficiency levels of third-grade students with disabilities in the school district.

What data did we analyze and what did we learn about the proficiency of third-grade students with disabilities ("IEP") and without disabilities ("Not IEP") in Nevada?

We began by looking at the gaps between students with disabilities and students who do not have disabilities at the statewide level. The following table shows the % proficient for **Nevada's** third-grade students with disabilities ("IEP"), the % proficient for **Nevada's** third-grade students without disabilities ("Not IEP"), and the gap in percentage points between the two.

		State Assessments of Third-Grade Reading – Gaps between IEP and Not IEP Students						
		2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
	IEP	**25.6%**	**27.2%**	**26.8%**	**28.4%**	**26.5%**	**27.3%**	**26.6%**
	Not IEP	**62.4%**	**63.5%**	**64.3%**	**61.4%**	**64.9%**	**64.1%**	**65.1%**
Nevada	**GAP**	**36.8**	**36.3**	**37.5**	**33.0**	**38.4**	**36.8**	**38.5**

- **Data analysis:** Although year-to-year variability exists, between 2007-08 and 2013-14, proficiency of all Nevada students with disabilities on statewide assessments of third-grade reading has increased only 1 percentage point (25.6% to 26.6%).
  Implication for selection of SIMR: *Reading proficiency of third-grade students with disabilities in Nevada is improving only very slightly as measured by statewide assessments.*
- **Data analysis:** Although year-to-year variability exists, between 2007-08 and 2013-14, proficiency for "Not-IEP" students on statewide assessments of third-grade reading has increased by almost 3 percentage points. However, between 2007-08 and 2013-14, the GAP between IEP and "Not-IEP" students has grown.
  Implication for selection of SIMR: *Reading proficiency of third-grade IEP students in Nevada has not improved at the rate that the proficiency of "Not IEP" students has improved. Students with disabilities are falling farther behind their nondisabled peers as the gap widens.*

We wanted to analyze these same data points within the **CCSD.**

What data did we analyze and what did we learn about the proficiency of third-grade students with disabilities ("IEP") and without disabilities ("Not IEP") in the Clark County School District?

The following table shows the % proficient for **CCSD's** third-grade students with disabilities ("IEP"), the % proficient for **CCSD's** third-grade students without disabilities ("Not IEP"), and the gap in percentage points between the two.

		State Assessments of Third-Grade Reading – Gaps between IEP and Not IEP Students						
		2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Clark County School District	**IEP**	**26.6%**	**26.5%**	**26.0%**	**27.7%**	**23.9%**	**25.7%**	**26.1%**
	Not IEP	**61.7%**	**62.7%**	**62.8%**	**60.0%**	**63.0%**	**62.4%**	**63.9%**
	GAP	**35.1**	**36.2**	**36.8**	**32.3**	**39.1**	**36.7**	**37.8**

- **Data analysis:** Although year-to-year variability exists, between 2007-08 and 2013-14, reading proficiency of third-grade CCSD students with disabilities has decreased by 0.5 percentage point.
  Implication for selecting the SIMR: *Reading proficiency of third-grade students with disabilities in CCSD is not improving as measured by statewide assessments.*
- **Data analysis:** Although year-to-year variability exists, between 2007-08 and 2013-14, proficiency for "Not-IEP" students on statewide assessments of third-grade reading has increased by 2.2 percentage points. However, between 2007-08 and 2013-14, the gap between "IEP" and "Not-IEP" students has grown.

  The gap between "IEP" and "Not IEP" students was higher in 2013-2014 than it had been in the previous seven years, except for 2011-2012 when the gap was 39.1 points.

  Implication for selection of SIMR: *Reading proficiency of third-grade students with disabilities in CCSD has not improved at the rate that proficiency of students without disabilities has improved.*

CCSD THIRD-GRADE PROFICIENCY DATA DISAGGREGATED BY RACE/ETHNICITY

Proficiency gaps among race/ethnicity subpopulations are widely acknowledged in school populations, but we wondered what the gaps would look like if we compared students with disabilities to students who did not have disabilities. We also wanted to look at potential gaps across race/ethnicity, but within the subgroup of students with disabilities. The following table analyzes % proficient data by race/ethnicity category, for CCSD's third graders who do not have disabilities (first row) and those who have disabilities (second row). The percentage point gap has been calculated in the third row.

% Proficient on Statewide Reading Assessment CCSD Third-Grade IEP and "Not IEP" Students – 2013-14							
	American Indian or Alaska Native	**Asian**	**Black or African American**	**Hispanic/ Latino**	**Two or More Races**	**Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander**	**White**
CCSD 3rd Graders "Not IEP"	60.5%	79.6%	47.8%	54.7%	74.0%	67.3%	80.5%
CCSD 3rd Graders with IEPs	* fewer than 10 students assessed	44.4%	9.9%%	18.7%	27.6%	29.6%	40.7%
GAP	--	35.2	37.9	36.0	46.4	37.7	39.8

- **Data analysis**: There is significant variability among the % proficient for students with disabilities within each race/ethnicity category – from 9.9% among Black or African American students to 40.7% among White students (second row). Furthermore, there is a significant gap between the % proficient for IEP students and "Not IEP" students within each race/ethnicity category – while 47.8% of the CCSD's third graders **without** disabilities are proficient in reading at third grade, only 9.9% of the students **with** disabilities are proficient, resulting in a 37.9 percentage point gap (third row).

  Implication for selection of SIMR*: Recall that the overall % proficient in reading for third-grade students with disabilities in 2013-2014 was 26.1%. Two race/ethnic subpopulations significantly outperform the average (Asian and White), two race/ethnic subpopulations slightly outperform the average (Two or More Races, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander), and two race/ethnic subpopulations significantly underperform the average (Black or African American, Hispanic/Latino). These data support the need to improve the proficiency for third-grade students with IEPs, but they highlight the fact that other race/ethnic groups do not perform as well as White and Asian students. In Phase II Plan development, stakeholder work will need to focus on what the causes are for low performance, particularly among Black or African American and Hispanic/Latino children. We will explore in more depth the connections and overlaps between these two race/ethnic groups and other characteristics such as English Language*

Learner status and participation in the Free or Reduced Lunch Program (see disaggregation for these learner characteristics below). For example, we will drill down more into data at the APT schools to examine attendance rates, student discipline rates, transciency rates among students and staff, staff and administrator experience levels, and parent involvement data. We will also design an evaluation plan that provides analysis of disaggregated data in both formative and summative measures. This more fine-grained root cause analysis is expected to lead to APT implementation strategies that better address the needs of third-grade students in these race/ethnic groups within APT schools.

These data, particularly for Hispanic/Latino students, suggested the need to look more closely at students with disabilities who are also English Language Learners.

CCSD THIRD-GRADE IEP PROFICIENCY DATA DISAGGREGATED BY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER STATUS

In Clark County School District, approximately **16.5**% of all the district's students in 2013-2014 were identified as English Language Learners ("EL"). That percentage grows to **25.9%** at the third-grade level, probably reflecting the demographic composition of younger families in the district. And when students with disabilities in third grade are examined, the rate grows slightly to **26.1%**. The size of the EL population at third grade led us to drill down in these data.

What data did we analyze and what did we learn about the proficiency of third-grade students who also English Language Learners ("EL") in the Clark County School District?

Because English Language Learners comprise such a significant segment of CCSD's third-grade population, we wanted to compare the reading proficiency between those who **are** and those who **are not** identified as English Language Learners.

% Proficient Third-Grade Reading in Clark County School District
All Third Graders Compared to Third Graders who are also English Language Learners (EL)

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
CCSD 3rd Graders **All**	59.8%	57.3%	59.6%	58.9%	60.2%
CCSD 3rd Graders **EL**	41.0%	42.4%	31.5%	38.7%	37.8%

- **Data analysis**: Third-grade students in CCSD who are English Language Learners have lower reading proficiency percentages than third-grade students in CCSD as a whole.
- ***Implication for selection of SIMR****: These data suggest that drilling down to compare proficiency percentages between students with disabilities who **are** and **are not** identified as English Language Learners may reveal important gaps in performance, even among students with disabilities.*

These data led us to disaggregate further, to look more closely at students with disabilities who are also identified as English Language Learners.

What data did we analyze and what did we learn about the proficiency of third-grade students with disabilities ("IEP") who are also English Language Learners ("EL") in the Clark County School District?

We wanted to see how the reading proficiency of third-grade students with disabilities as a whole compared to two groups: (1) third-grade students with disabilities who **are** also English Language Learners, and (2) third-grade students with disabilities who **are not** identified as English Language Learners.

To understand the magnitude of this subgroup of students with disabilities (those who are also identified as English Language Learners), recall that we calculated the percentage for 2013-2014 and found that **26.1%** of CCSD's third-grade students with disabilities are also English Language Learners.

% Proficient Third-Grade Reading in Clark County School District

All Third Graders with IEPs
Third Graders with IEPs who <u>are</u> also English Language Learners (IEP + EL)
Third Graders with IEPs who <u>are not</u> English Language Learners (IEP + Not EL)

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
CCSD 3rd Graders **IEP Only**	26.0%	27.7%	23.9%	25.7%	26.1%
CCSD 3rd Graders **IEP + EL**	11.3%	12.6%	10.1%	10.5%	12.0%
CCSD 3rd Graders **IEP + Not EL**	30.5%	33.0%	28.4%	30.9%	31.0%

- **Data analysis**: Within the third-grade population of students with disabilities, the reading performance for those who are also identified as English Language Learners is significantly lower than those who are not.
- ***Implication for selection of SIMR****: These data teach an important lesson – overall performance percentages do not identify the particular groups whose performance is particularly low. The 2013-2014 data show a significant gap between the performance of IEP students who are identified as English Language Learners (12.0%) and those who are not (31.0%). While the data certainly provide support for selection of a SIMR that focuses on improving third-grade reading performance, the data more importantly point to the need for the Phase II Plan to take these data into account as the APT Model is implemented, evaluated, and scaled up. For example, the Plan must include an evaluation strategy that will closely examine how APT is directed toward identifying and addressing any unique reading difficulties experienced by students who are also identified as English Language Learners. The challenge of learning to read while also learning English must be addressed by the APT project in its diagnostic assessments and in planning for*

individualized instruction. The APT project must also coordinate its work with other initiatives at the district level that focus on the learning challenges faced by English Language Learners. All of these factors must be fleshed out in Phase II, and continue to be monitored closely in Phase III. Given the size of this subpopulation within students with disabilities, the overall proficiency rate for third-grade students with disabilities will not increase unless significant improvement is made within this subpopulation of learners.

These data led us to disaggregate further, to look more closely at students who are participating in the Free or Reduced Lunch Program.

CCSD THIRD-GRADE IEP PROFICIENCY DATA DISAGGREGATED BY PARTICIPATION IN FREE/REDUCED LUNCH PROGRAM

In Clark County School District, approximately **56.8%** of all the district's students in 2013-2014 participated in the Free or Reduced Lunch ("FRL") Program. That percentage grows to **65.9%** at the third-grade level. And when students with disabilities in third grade are examined, the rate grows to **70.2%.** At the third-grade level, students with disabilities are even more likely to be from low-income families than are third graders overall. Given the prevalence of FRL participants among students with disabilities, we needed to drill down in these data.

What data did we analyze and what did we learn about the proficiency of third-grade students who also participate in the Free or Reduced Lunch ("FRL") Program in the Clark County School District?

Because FRL Program participants comprise such a significant segment of CCSD's third-grade population, we wanted to compare the reading proficiency between those who **do** and those who **do not** participate in the FRL Program. We began with an analysis of all students, without regard to IEP status.

% Proficient Third-Grade Reading in Clark County School District

All Third Graders Compared to Third Graders who participate in Free/Reduced Lunch Program (FRL)

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
CCSD 3rd Graders **All**	59.8%	57.3%	59.6%	58.9%	60.2%
CCSD 3rd Graders **FRL**	49.2%	46.6%	50.1%	49.2%	50.8%

- **Data analysis**: Third-grade students in CCSD who participate in the FRL Program have lower reading proficiency percentages than third-grade students in CCSD as a whole.
- ***Implication for selection of SIMR****: These data suggest that drilling down to compare proficiency percentages between students with disabilities who **do** and **do not** participate in the FRL Program may reveal important gaps in performance, even among students with disabilities.*

These data led us to disaggregate further, to look more closely at students with disabilities who are also participating in the FRL Program.

What data did we analyze and what did we learn about the proficiency of third-grade students with disabilities ("IEP") who also participate in the Free or Reduced Lunch ("FRL") Program in the Clark County School District?

We wanted to see how the reading proficiency of third-grade students with disabilities as a whole compared to two groups: (1) third-grade students with disabilities who **do** participate in the Free or Reduced Lunch ("FRL") Program and (2) third-grade students with disabilities who **do not** participate in the FRL program.

To understand the magnitude of this subgroup of students with disabilities (those who participate in the FRL Program), recall that we calculated the percentage for 2013-2014 and found that **70.2%** of CCSD's third-grade students with disabilities are also FRL participants.

% Proficient Third-Grade Reading in Clark County School District

All Third Graders with IEPs (IEP Only)
Third Graders with IEPs who do participate in the FRL Program (IEP + FRL)
Third Graders with IEPs who do not participate in the FRL Program (IEP + Not FRL)

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
CCSD 3rd Graders **IEP Only**	26.0%	27.7%	23.9%	25.7%	26.1%
CCSD 3rd Graders **IEP + FRL**	17.8%	18.3%	17.4%	18.3%	18.2%
CCSD 3rd Graders **IEP + Not FRL**	39.6%	45.4%	38.4%	43.6%	44.6%

- **Data analysis**: Within the third-grade population of students with disabilities, the reading performance for those who do participate in the FRL Program is significantly lower than those who do not.
- ***Implication for selection of SIMR****: As was true in the disaggregation of data by EL subpopulations, overall performance percentages do not identify the particular groups whose performance is particularly low. The 2013-2014 data show a staggering gap between the performance of IEP students who participate in the FRL Program (18.2%) and those who do not (44.6%). These data support selection of a SIMR that focuses on improving third-grade reading performance, but the data also point to the need for the Phase II Plan to take these data into account as the APT Model is implemented, evaluated, and scaled up. For example, the Plan must include an evaluation strategy that will closely examine how APT is directed toward identifying and addressing any particular reading difficulties experienced by students whose families are challenged by poverty and low income. Given the size of this subpopulation within students with*

disabilities, the overall proficiency rate for third-grade students with disabilities will not increase unless significant improvement is made within this subpopulation that includes some of our most vulnerable children.

CCSD THIRD-GRADE IEP PROFICIENCY DATA DISAGGREGATED BY EL STATUS AND FRL PARTICIPATION

Once we disaggregated the data by English Language Learner status and Free/Reduced Lunch Program participation, we wondered about the performance of students who are identified in all three categories: IEP, EL and FRL.

What data did we analyze and what did we learn about the proficiency of third-grade students with disabilities ("IEP") who are identified as English Language Learners ("EL") and who participate in the Free or Reduced Lunch ("FRL") Program in the Clark County School District?

To understand the magnitude of this subgroup of students with disabilities, we calculated the percentage for 2013-2014 and found that **23.2%** of CCSD's third-grade students with disabilities are identified as English Language Learners and they are Free/Reduced Lunch Program participants.

The table below compares the reading proficiency among these various subgroups of third-grade students with disabilities. The top row shows the reading proficiency rates for CCSD third-grade students with disabilities as a group. The second row shows reading proficiency rates CCSD third-grade students with disabilities who are also English Language Learners (EL). The third row shows reading proficiency rates CCSD third-grade students with disabilities who participate in the Free/Reduced Lunch (FRL) Program. Finally, the bottom row shows reading proficiency rates of CCSD third-grade students with disabilities who are identified as EL and who participate in the FRL Program.

% Proficient Third-Grade Reading in Clark County School District

All Third Graders with IEPs (IEP Only)
Third Graders with IEPs who are identified as English Language Learners (IEP + EL)
Third Graders with IEPs who do participate in the FRL Program (IEP + FRL)
Third Graders with IEPs who are identified as EL and participate in the FRL Program (IEP + EL + FRL)

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
CCSD 3rd Graders **IEP Only**	26.0%	27.7%	23.9%	25.7%	26.1%
CCSD 3rd Graders **IEP + EL**	11.3%	12.6%	10.1%	10.5%	12.0%
CCSD 3rd Graders **IEP + FRL**	17.8%	18.3%	17.4%	18.3%	18.2%
CCSD 3rd Graders **IEP + EL + FRL**	10.6%	10.9%	9.7%	8.9%	10.6%

- **Data analysis**: Students with disabilities who are English Language Learners and who participate in the Free/Reduced Lunch Program are lower performing than either of these subpopulations considered separately.
- ***Implication for selection of SIMR**: These data also provide support for selection of a SIMR that focuses on improving third-grade reading performance, but the data more importantly point to the need for the Phase II Plan to take these data into account as the APT Model is implemented, evaluated, and scaled up. For example, the Plan must include an evaluation strategy that will closely examine how APT is directed toward identifying and addressing the particular reading difficulties experienced by students who are learning English at the same time that their families are challenged by poverty or low income. Given the size of this subpopulation within students with disabilities, the overall proficiency rate for third-grade students with disabilities will not increase unless significant improvement is made within this subpopulation that includes children with multiple needs for support and specialized instruction.*

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS FROM ANALYSIS OF PROFICIENCY DATA

This was a great deal of data to synthesize. There is no question that improving third-grade reading proficiency among students with disabilities in Nevada is an important goal. Here is how we believe the proficiency data supports the need for Nevada's SIMR:

- The reading proficiency of third-grade students with disabilities is low statewide, and low in Clark County School District (CCSD).
- Neither the state nor CCSD has met the APR target for third-grade reading proficiency in the last three years (see page 40).
- Critical gaps exist between the reading proficiency percentages of students with disabilities and students who do not have disabilities, at the state level and in CCSD.
- Serious gaps in reading proficiency percentages exist among CCSD third-grade students with disabilities in various race/ethnicity categories, from 9.9% proficient among Black or African American students to 44.4% proficient among Asian students in 2013-2014.
- Significant gaps in reading proficiency percentages exist between CCSD third-grade students with disabilities who are identified as English Language Learners (12.0% proficient in 2013-2014) and those who are not identified as English Language Learners (31.0%).
- Important gaps in reading proficiency percentages exist between CCSD third-grade students with disabilities who participate in the Free/Reduced Lunch Program (18.2% proficient in 2013-2014) and those who did not (44.6%).
- Among the lowest performing subgroups of third-grade students with disabilities in CCSD are those who are identified as English Language Learners and who participate in the Free/Reduced Lunch Program (10.6% proficient in 2013-2014).

ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS

The APT project was just underway during the 2013-2014 school year, but CCSD administrators had already done a great deal of work. Because we wanted to build on and strengthen that foundation, we needed to know what CCSD administrators had already learned about the root causes contributing to low reading performance among students with disabilities that were served in CCSD's "self-contained"[2] LD classrooms (frequently referred to as "SLD classrooms").

What data did we analyze and what did we learn about the root causes contributing to low reading performance among third-graders with disabilities in CCSD?

CCSD stakeholders in the "Transforming" group met with NDE on at least three occasions (in different configurations) to explore root causes for low performance among young readers in the school district, including explaining the root causes they had uncovered before they began implementing the APT Model.

In the summer of 2012, teams of general education teachers and special education teachers totaling about 1,500 teachers in CCSD participated in a five-day CORE Collaborative Reading Academy. The Academy was designed to support and foster the most effective instructional practices which maximize the implementation of comprehensive reading instruction. The Academy taught best practices regarding assessment, early literacy, decoding and word study, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, differentiated instruction, and the connections to the Common Core State Standards (Nevada's academic content standards).

During the 2012-2013 school year, CCSD administrators gathered data through what are known as "walk-throughs" in the self-contained LD classrooms throughout the district. The walk-through data revealed that the SLD special education teachers did not appear to be consistently or effectively applying the knowledge and skill they developed through participation in the CORE Collaborative Reading Academy. Observational data told the story of the "major factors that may have been part of the problem" of low reading performance among students with disabilities in these classrooms:

- Many SLD special education teachers were not using the assessment tools provided in the CORE Collaborative Reading Academy, and did not appear to know how to assess individual students' needs in order to plan instruction
- Many SLD special education teachers continued to teach whole-group lessons, despite the fact that they had multi-age, multi-grade students with disabilities in their classrooms, whose specific skill development needs probably varied
- Many SLD special education teachers were not teaching individual or small-group lessons based on identification of students' needs for specially designed instruction
- Many SLD teachers were not using evidence-based reading practices or programs

[2] In CCSD, "self-contained" refers to students who spend the majority of their school day in special education environments.

- SLD classroom libraries were almost nonexistent, making it difficult for students to be reading authentic texts
- Many SLD special education teachers were not using progress-monitoring data to inform their teaching
- Across the SLD classrooms, there was no uniformity in assessment or data collection, or accountability for student performance

CCSD administrators then identified the possible causes for what they were seeing in the SLD classrooms. They considered these areas as possible sources of explanation: assessment practices and the use of data, curriculum and instruction, levels of support available to teachers and paraprofessionals, professional development and technical assistance (what, how much, how often), leadership, and commitment of resources. Walk-throughs were the primary source of data, but as soon as the APT project was conceived in 2012-2013, input was gathered from teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators through round-table discussions and other planning sessions. These were some of CCSD's conclusions about root causes for the low performance of students with disabilities in the SLD classrooms:

- Special education teachers are not trained to be reading teachers in their preservice programs; when they take a course in teaching reading, it is often a survey course about various methods, as opposed to an intensive practicum with specific instruction on how to teach reading to students with a variety of disabilities
- The large-group training in the CORE Collaborative Reading Academy did not provide most teachers with sufficient skill to independently implement the CORE assessment and instruction principles
- The large-group training was a one-shot, concentrated learning experience, with no follow-up opportunities for on-site, individualized training and support
- Teachers were not given an opportunity to practice what they learned at the CORE Academy, to implement it with support, and to have the fidelity of their implementation evaluated by a coach or colleague
- Paraprofessionals had not been trained in CORE Academy principles for assessment and instruction, yet they provided integral support in the SLD classrooms
- Administrators had no mechanism to keep track of which teachers had participated in the CORE Academy to provide follow-up support
- Many administrators did not communicate expectations to special education teachers about implementing the CORE principles for assessment and instruction
- Many special education teachers had not been included in school- or district-level training to unwrap the Common Core State Standards for assessment and instruction
- Most special education teachers did not use the district's "Curriculum Engine" tool, developed by CCSD as an extension of CCSD's Wiki-Teacher to put lesson plans, unit plans, centers, textbook supplements, and other resources in a searchable electronic data base for access by all

With these causes identified, CCSD administrators designed and began implementation of the APT Model, and the APT Model addresses most of these root causes. The SELECTION OF COHERENT IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES describes the APT Model more fully.

Over the last 18 months, CCSD administrators have begun to identify additional factors contributing to low performance at APT schools. These causes reflect the APT experiences thus far and provide rich data for developing the actual Plan in Phase II. For example, "Transforming" stakeholders now recognize the following factors which may keep APT from realizing its full potential:

- The APT project is not yet well-integrated with the district's Striving Readers project, although collaboration has begun with a March stakeholder meeting
- The APT project lacks sufficient personnel to be able to visit schools often enough to provide high-quality coaching and support to the special education teachers and paraprofessionals
- Staff turnover, particularly high at some schools, slows implementation with fidelity
- Special education teachers at many schools are actually long-term substitutes who have not been trained in the CORE principles—and this fact also slows implementation with fidelity
- The project has focused on phonemic awareness and phonics, but needs to expand to focus more on vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension
- Expectations for student performance still need to be raised; the success of APT can be used to demonstrate that high expectations and evidence-based assessment and instruction can significantly improve achievement
- Teachers, administrators, and all staff can suffer from "initiative fatigue" – the district must be stay committed to the APT principles, while strengthening integration with other district initiatives all working toward the common goal that all students will "read by third grade"
- The data analysis done as part of SSIP development also challenges us to sharpen our focus on evidence-based practices that will improve the performance of students in certain race/ethnicity groups, students who are English Language Learners, and students whose families are challenged by poverty or low income.

Root cause analysis never ends. It led to the design of the APT Model. It will lead to refinements of the APT Model as we strengthen and scale-up the model in CCSD and, eventually, in other Nevada school districts.

ADDITIONAL DATA NOTES

DATA QUALITY
METHODS/TIMELINES TO COLLECT/ANALYZE ADDITIONAL DATA

In our data analysis, we did not identify concerns about data quality. Of more concern is the difficulty of accessing certain data that are suppressed in the state's data base because of confidentiality protections. An additional problem is that the state's data base does not disaggregate proficiency data, for example, by separate disability categories or by placement categories. These categories of data are collected by the NDE from school districts through the NVSEARS project, a system that is separate from the state's assessment system and data base.

Consequently, while the state works toward developing its integrated student data system, these data sets will have to be collected from within the CCSD itself, and comparable statewide data will not be available for perhaps the first two years of SSIP implementation. CCSD data analysis resources are overburdened, and capacity-building within the CCSD will necessarily involve the commitment of funding to support all the data collection and analysis needs of the SSIP. During Phase II, these data plans will be developed and funds will be made immediately available to CCSD for implementation. The data collection plans will also include collection of various formative and summative data for use in APT project evaluation.

Component #2:
STATE-IDENTIFIED MEASURABLE RESULT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Statement of the result Nevada intends to achieve through implementation of the SSIP.

Nevada has selected the following State-Identified Measurable Result (SIMR) to guide its work to improve the academic performance of students with disabilities:

> The Nevada Department of Education will improve the performance of third-grade students with disabilities in Clark County School District on statewide assessments of reading/language arts through building the school district's capacity to strengthen the skills of special education teachers in assessment, instructional planning, and teaching.

Description of Nevada's SIMR.

Alignment of Nevada's state-identified measurable result (SIMR) to an SPP/APR indicator.

Nevada's SIMR, which focuses on improving reading proficiency at third grade, is completely aligned with Indicator 3C in Nevada's SPP/APR. Indicator 3C measures the proficiency rate for children with IEPs against grade level, modified and alternate academic achievement standards. The required measurement for Indicator 3C is:

> Proficiency rate percent = [(# of children with IEPs scoring at or above proficient against grade level, modified and alternate academic achievement standards) divided by the (total # of children with IEPs who received a valid score and for whom a proficiency level was assigned, and, calculated separately for reading and math)]. The proficiency rate includes both children with IEPs enrolled for a full academic year and those not enrolled for a full academic year.

This is precisely the measure we used to establish our SSIP baseline data, and it is the measure we will use to evaluate our actual data against the targets that have been set.

Relationship of Nevada's SIMR to data analysis.

As described in more detail elsewhere in this document, Nevada's SIMR is well-supported by data analysis. Analysis of the enrollment data confirmed that Clark County School District, representing 67.7% of the state's third-grade students with disabilities, had enough influence on statewide data such that an improvement in CCSD's reading proficiency percentages would improve the state's reading proficiency percentages. The proficiency data also supports the need for Nevada's SIMR:

- The reading proficiency of third-grade students with disabilities is low statewide, and low in Clark County School District (CCSD).

- Neither the state nor CCSD has met the APR target for third-grade reading proficiency in the last three years (see page 40).
- Critical gaps exist between the reading proficiency percentages of students with disabilities and students who do not have disabilities, at the state level and in CCSD.
- Significant gaps in reading proficiency percentages exist
    - among CCSD third-grade students with disabilities in various race/ethnicity categories
    - between CCSD third-grade students with disabilities who are identified as English Language Learners and those who are not
    - between CCSD third-grade students with disabilities who participate in the Free/Reduced Lunch Program and those who do not
- Among the lowest performing subgroups of third-grade students with disabilities in CCSD are those who are identified as English Language Learners and who participate in the Free/Reduced Lunch Program

Every element of data supported our focus on the reading proficiency of third-grade students with disabilities. Much of the data for subpopulations within that group suggested that not only is it an appropriate SIMR, it is an imperative SIMR.

Relationship of Nevada's SIMR to state infrastructure analysis.

Nevada's infrastructure analysis made three things very clear to stakeholders. First, the NDE has little authority to mandate school district participation in any initiative, and the history of success in our state has relied on cooperation and collaboration – if we want success, we request, rather than require. Second, the NDE has relatively little funding to build capacity at the school district level, so it is critical that any state improvement initiative leverage resources and relationships at the local level. Third, school boards and superintendents have broad authority to establish their own priorities for student achievement, and the expansion and sustainability of any statewide improvement initiative build on the priorities established by local leaders – and that requires flexibility. For these reasons related to governance, finance, and leadership, the SIMR was necessarily connected to an already existing – promising but not fully implemented – improvement strategy underway and receiving broad support in the Clark County School District.

As described in more detail elsewhere in this document, Nevada's SIMR is very closely connected with policy and legislative initiatives at the state level, and closely tied with goals and priorities established at the school district level. These policy and legislative initiatives include:

- Senate Bill 391 – The Governor's "read by three" initiative proposes specific legislation to ensure that all students will be proficient readers by the end of third grade, including an appropriation of $27.2 million to support the initiative
- Nevada Ready! 2.0 – GOAL 1: All students are proficient in reading by the end of third grade
- Nevada State Literacy Plan – The "Striving Readers" project being implemented in CCSD addresses literacy needs of all students including students with disabilities

- Nevada SPDG Proposal – GOAL 2: The NDE will support improved performance of third-grade students with disabilities on statewide assessments of reading/language arts through building LEA capacity to strengthen the skills of special education teachers in assessment, instructional planning, and teaching
- Clark County School District "Pledge of Achievement" – "Literacy across all subject areas pre-k through 12th grades." Increasing third-grade literacy is one of six goals set by the School Board of Trustees

Component #3
ANALYSIS OF STATE INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT IMPROVEMENT AND BUILD CAPACITY

A. ANALYSIS OF STATE INFRASTRUCTURE

Welcome to Nevada. As of "count day" in September 2014, there were 451,730 students enrolled in Nevada's K-12 public schools (school district and charter schools combined). Three entities – Clark County School District, Washoe County School District, and the State Public Charter School Authority – represent 87 percent of the total statewide enrollment, with the balance distributed among the other 15 school districts.

Nevada is the 35th largest state in the U.S. (2013 U.S. Census estimate), with a population of 2,790,136 people. While one of the smaller states in population, Nevada is the seventh largest U.S. state in land mass, adding a significant challenge to collaboration, training, and on-site technical assistance. The majority of the state's population is located in two of the state's 17 counties. The largest county, Clark County (where Las Vegas is located), has 2,027,868 residents. There are 433,731 people living in the second largest county, Washoe County (where Reno is located). The remaining 328,537 people are spread out across very large, rural, and rugged areas of the state. In comparison to the remainder of the state, the two large urban districts have a significant advantage in their access to professional development, service resources, and technical support.

Nevada has 17 school districts that are contiguous with its 17 counties. The State Public Charter School Authority is the 18th local educational agency (LEA) in the state. There are 626 schools across the 18 LEAs. Clark County School District serves approximately 70% of the total student enrollment in the state. Esmeralda County School District, with the smallest student enrollment, has approximately 80 students. Yet the county is larger than two actual states in the U.S.

1. GOVERNANCE

For SSIP purposes, we defined "governance" as:

(a) the legal authority underpinning the Nevada Department of Education's ability to support improvement and build capacity in LEAs;

(b) the state leadership necessary for advocacy, and

(c) the administrative structures necessary to implement strategies and ensure accountability.

Legal authority. The Nevada Constitution directs the legislature to encourage education, provide for the appointment of the state Superintendent, and provide for a uniform system of common schools. The Nevada State Board of Education and the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) are created by statute. State law directs that the Governor appoint the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Nevada's seventeen school district LEAs are created by state law, as is the State Public Charter School Authority – the state's eighteenth LEA. Nevada is traditionally a "local control" state, although the policy influence by state lawmakers and by state and federal governments has increased in recent years. Even so, local school boards and local administrative officials have broad latitude to establish priorities and to direct curriculum, instruction, and resources toward achieving the state-imposed content standards and demonstrating student proficiency on state-imposed assessments.

State law imposes requirements for LEAs to develop policies, conduct training, and collect and report various data about schools, staff, students, and funding. The NDE has sufficient legal authority through state and federal law to monitor LEAs to ensure compliance with state and federal mandates. Historically, improvement in results has relied less on "authority" than on "collaboration and cooperation."

State leadership. The NDE consists of the State Board, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, approximately 130 employees, and more than a dozen committees, councils, and commissions created by state statute. The Superintendent is the executive head of the NDE, working in partnership with the State Board on the development of regulations and policies governing K-12 public education. From the licensure of new educators to the adoption of academic content standards to the reporting of school performance and the administration of federal and state appropriations, the NDE directly and indirectly impacts the achievement of nearly half a million school-aged children and some 30,000 adults seeking high school equivalency education. The NDE works in close coordination with 17 local school districts, the State Public Charter School Authority, the Nevada System of Higher Education, and Regional Professional Development Programs.

The leadership initiatives of the NDE are set by the Superintendent in the Nevada State Improvement Plan (Nevada Ready! 2.0), discussed at length below. Among the NDE's STIP goals is a goal to ensure that all students are proficient readers by third grade. At this moment, this goal is being advanced by the Governor in a legislative proposal to spend $27.2 million to help accomplish the goal (Senate Bill 391). Nevada's goal of achieving proficiency for third-grade readers is also supported by the NDE investment in submitting a Special Education State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) with a goal of increasing teachers' competence using the APT Model in Clark County School District.

Administrative structures. The NDE engaged in a significant restructure that concluded in winter 2014. As part of the restructuring, NDE staff reviewed data and research to identify critical strategies within and across offices that will result in increased student achievement and educator effectiveness. This process, which spanned months, resulted in a number of objectives nested under each goal that defines the focus of each office within the NDE. Each office, in consultation with leadership, is tasked with identifying the work or strategies that are aligned with and will result in the measurable objectives listed in the STIP.

The NDE Office of Special Education is led by a Director and six education program professionals support the work of the Office. The Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and the Special

Education Directors Association (SEDA) serve as leadership and advisory groups to the NDE and to the education community within the state.

The NDE Office of Student and School Supports is a critical partner of the Office of Special Education in work to improve results for students with disabilities. The work within this office includes school improvement through the Nevada State Performance Framework (NSPF), ESEA Flexibility waiver, and State Improvement Grants (SIG).

2. FISCAL

For SSIP purposes, we have defined "fiscal" the extent to which the state has fiscal resources available to implement high-quality programs to improve the achievement of students with disabilities.

Fiscal resources. In Nevada, federal funds pay for approximately 13% of the special education costs in the state, and state general funds pay for 23% of the costs. Local general funds pay for the remaining 64% of costs.

No state funds are appropriated directly to support program improvement in special education. There is a limited amount of federal "state set-aside" funding to support program improvement in special education. The NDE has authority to direct the use of "state set-aside" funds. These funds support special education monitoring, enforcement, and complaint investigations; mediations; training and technical assistance; technology devices and services; secondary transition programs; positive behavior supports and interventions programs; personnel shortages; and unanticipated student direct service needs. For FFY 2015, we have proposed setting aside $3.8M for capacity building at the LEA level, and much of that will be spent to implement this SSIP.

3. QUALITY STANDARDS

For SSIP purposes, we have defined "quality standards" as the content and performance standards adopted by the state to support high expectations for student achievement.

> *"The move to new standards is critical to Nevada's progress. In Nevada, almost one-third of our high school graduates must take remedial classes to prepare for college-level coursework. Nevada's new standards, which promote critical thinking, reasoning and application of knowledge, are expected to drastically reduce the need for remedial classes. The standards will also strengthen the state's workforce and economy as more students graduate from high school with the knowledge, skill and ability needed to succeed in a new economy and more students are able to finish higher education with certificates or degrees."*

Governor Brian Sandoval, History of Common Core State Standards in Nevada, 2014

State academic standards. In October 2010, the Nevada State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as the Nevada Academic Content Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics. With this action, the State Board committed to ensuring that all students are ready for college and careers.

Commitment to the CCSS comes from other leadership groups in the state as well. In July 2013, the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) Board of Regents adopted a resolution expressing support for and encouraging long-term commitment by the state of Nevada in the adoption and implementation of the CCSS. The Colleges, Schools, and Departments of Education within NSHE are actively preparing future teachers in Nevada to teach under the CCSS.

In April 2014, the Executive Committee of the Nevada Association of School Boards (NASB) approved a resolution expressing support for the Common Core State Standards. NASB consists of representatives from all seventeen Nevada school districts.

4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

"Professional development" refers to the mechanisms Nevada has in place to ensure that service providers have the skills to provide effective services that improve results for students with disabilities.

Nevada maintains a comprehensive scheme of licensure, established by state law, designed to prepare teachers to meet the unique needs of students with various disabilities. Licensure and endorsement standards are regulated by the Commission on Professional Standards.

The Nevada State Board of Education has adopted regulations that set forth the expectations which teachers and administrators are required to meet under the Nevada Educator Performance Framework (NEPF). Teachers are expected to:

- Connect the prior learning and experience of students to guide current learning
- Assign tasks based upon the appropriate cognitive demands for students with diverse abilities
- Require students to engage in learning through discourse and other strategies
- Require students to engage in metacognitive activity
- Integrate assessment into instruction

In order to support effective teaching and learning that results in positive student performance, school administrators are expected to create and sustain:

- A focus on learning at the school
- A school culture of striving for continuous improvement
- Productive relationships
- Structures to support an effective school

For both teachers and administrators, robust sets of indicators specify the measurable behaviors that exemplify these standards in practice. Significant resources have been invested to ensure that all teachers have the skills and knowledge to provide instruction, and all administrators have the instructional leadership capacity aligned to these standards and indicators, to create teaching and learning parameters that result in high achievement for all students. The states' system of Regional Professional Development Programs—a regional configuration of training entities—has been charged with providing opportunities for educators to learn the standards themselves, and to deepen their capacity to engage in practices that exemplify these standards. Trainings are provided at the school,

district, regional, and statewide level, in partnership with LEAs. An aligned system of observation and other data collection mechanisms is in place to check for educator understanding and mastery of content. Systems of educator preparation and teacher and administrator licensure are being aligned to the standards to ensure that coherence across the state's systems of personnel development, accreditation, and professional development.

Additionally, at the systems level, the NDE annually hosts the Mega Conference, a statewide conference that draws hundreds of educators to gather for 2½ days of learning about long-standing practices as well as emerging strategies for successful teaching and learning. Every year, explicit attention is paid to ensuring that evidence based practices associated with teaching and learning for students with disabilities are substantially represented during the conference. NDE staff members also collaborate with the Nevada Association of School Administrators to provide training during functions offered across the state, three times per year.

Specifically targeted for special education leaders, the NDE also coordinates a three-day workshop each summer, where experts present on practices associated with standards, assessment, accountability, instruction, and educator development. Special education directors and their senior staff members listen, learn, exchange ideas, and deepen professional connections. They engage in action planning to develop strategies for implementing said evidence based practices in their home districts, which are then revisited in conversations with NDE staff across the year informally, and during specified opportunities in the quarterly meetings described under the state's TA approach, below.

5. DATA

We have defined "data" to refer to the mechanisms that the state has in place to support data-driven decisions about program improvement and accountability.

The NDE has implemented SAIN (System of Accountability in Nevada), a longitudinal, student-level data base containing basic demographics and most data required to be reported about all students to the U.S. Department of Education. SAIN does not collect data on all fields connected with special education, e.g., student placement data, unique categories for disciplinary action, and unique categories for special education program exit.

The NDE has implemented NVSEARS (Nevada Special Education Accountability & Reporting System) to collect a variety of unique special education student data for reporting to the U.S. Department of Education. NVSEARS provides the interface between the LEAs and the NDE for reporting federal categories for child count, placement, exit status, and discipline data. NVSEARS also provides the interface for reporting Indicator 7 (Early Childhood Outcome) and Indicator 14 (Post-School Outcome) data for Nevada's special education Annual Performance Report (APR).

In addition to these basic data collection and reporting systems, the NDE has also developed the NCCAT-D (Nevada Comprehensive Curriculum Audit Tool for Districts), an instrument for use by LEAs in identifying their strengths and needs in the areas of curriculum and instruction, assessment and

accountability, and leadership. The audit provides a rich source of data to inform district improvement planning efforts.

6. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

"Technical assistance" (TA) refers to the mechanisms that the State has in place to ensure the timely delivery of high quality, evidenced-based technical assistance and support to LEAs.

The NDE implements a comprehensive TA system that maximizes opportunities for face-to-face interactions and leverages technology to sustain the delivery of ongoing technical assistance and support. Intentional engagement occurs with special education leaders as well as with other district leaders who have a role to play in the performance of students with disabilities including superintendents, as well as directors of assessment/accountability, curriculum and instruction, career and technical education, and information technology. Quarterly, NDE leaders plan agendas, coordinate learning opportunities, and facilitate meetings that are routinely attended by the special education directors from each Nevada LEA. These meetings are designed to engage district leaders in learning about evidence-based practices for results (e.g., multi-tiered systems of support, formative assessment practices, universal design for learning, and others) as well as requirements for general supervision (e.g., fiscal issues, grant planning and administration, monitoring and compliance indicators, and so forth). In between these meetings, calls are routinely held, and emails are exchanged, among NDE and LEA personnel to address individualized TA needs.

Monthly meetings are held with the superintendents from each LEA and attended by the State Superintendent and the Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement. At these meetings, dialogue occurs regarding student performance, including practices that the state and districts are implementing to support improved results in their schools. The performance of students with disabilities, and the evidence-based practices that LEAs are employing with regard to instruction, assessment, accountability, identification, and educator expectations and support are focused subjects of conversation during several meetings across the year. Meetings are also regularly scheduled to occur quarterly and in some cases, semi-annually, among district leaders across various programs such as assessment, accountability, curriculum and instruction, career and technical education, special education, Title I, and Title III. Issues associated with results for special education students are addressed in these meetings, often as part of the LEAs' larger efforts to close achievement gaps for low performing students.

The NDE also employs routine systems of information dissemination. The State Special Education Director transmits memos and email correspondence as needed to share information about legal requirements and best practices, including guiding LEA personnel to engage in webinars offered by the OSEP TA&D Network. State special education leaders are also engaged in cross-team efforts to build and sustain statewide systems that promote the implementation of evidence-based practices as part of the state's comprehensive approach to school and district improvement, under the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) and the aligned expectations of Nevada's ESEA Flexibility Waiver.

Finally, the state utilizes meetings of the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) as part of the TA system. The SEAC meets quarterly, and meetings are designed to provide opportunities for

sharing of information, exchange of ideas, and to make requests of SEAC members to communicate with and share perspectives of the constituencies whom they represent.

7. ACCOUNTABILITY/MONITORING

We have defined "Accountability/Monitoring" as the mechanisms the state has in place to evaluate programs on an ongoing basis and to hold them accountable to agreed-upon standards.

Accountability

The NDE collects and reports two primary sources of accountability concerning the achievement of pupils: the Nevada Report Card and the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF). The NDE also collects and reports data from the National Assessment of Educational Performance (NAEP), as well as information on Career and Technical Education (CTE) that is not included in the Nevada Report Card.

Nevada School Performance Framework – ESEA Flexibility Waiver

In July 2012, Nevada's ESEA Flexibility request was approved officially marking an end to the school accountability system known as Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). AYP has now been replaced by the Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF). The NSPF moves away from labeling schools as failing when they do not reach proficiency targets. The NSPF recognizes that nuances exist in school performance and that rating every school as passing or failing is not singularly helpful. The NSPF classifies schools within a five-star performance rating system, described more fully below.

For elementary and middle schools, star ratings in the NSPF are based on student growth, proficiency, subgroup performance gaps, and average daily attendance. High school ratings are based on student proficiency, subgroup performance gaps, growth, graduation rates, college and career readiness, and other indicators. For all schools, the NSPF provides actionable feedback to schools and districts to help determine if current practices are aligned to improve educational outcomes for all students.

Star ratings are generally referred to as school "classifications." The NSPF index score is divided into five score ranges that correspond to star ratings, with five stars as the highest rating. The overall index values for the schools at the 90th percentile form the basis for the point range for 5-Star schools. Conversely, the schools among the lowest 5% of schools within the NSPF form the basis for a 1-Star rating. Continuing in this manner, a 4-Star rating represents schools in the 75th to 89th percentile range, a 3-Star rating represents schools within the 25th to 74th percentiles and 2-Star schools fall between the 5th and 24th percentiles.

The NSPF reports underperforming schools in three categories: **Priority**, **Focus** and **One Star**.

Priority schools are among the lowest 5% of Title I-served schools based on student performance (status) and progress (growth) in reading/ELA and mathematics. Priority schools have room for substantial improvement in proficiency and growth within the whole school.

Focus schools are among the lowest 10% of Title I-served schools based on student achievement gaps in subgroup calculations. Focus schools have room for substantial improvement in the area of student achievement with specific subgroup populations, such as students with disabilities.

One-Star schools earned fewer than 32 index points from all the measures in the NSPF. This means that the school has room for substantial improvement in multiple areas.

In January 2015 the NDE identified the 2015-16 schools that will fall into the categories of Priority, Focus and One-Star schools. This new list has identified 78 Nevada schools which fall into the above listed categories. This number reflects 27 additional schools from the previous year which included 51 schools. Of the 78 schools identified for 2015-16, 60 are Priority and Focus schools. Within the three categories, 62% of Nevada's underperforming schools are in the Clark County School District (CCSD), with 70% of the **Focus** and **Priority** schools in CCSD.

Significance for SSIP: Of the 48 schools where the APT Model is being implemented, three are designated as Priority schools, two are designated as Focus schools, and one is designated as a One-Star school. This means that each of these schools will receive increased attention and resources from the CCSD designed to improve overall performance and to reduce gaps for subpopulation performance.

Special Education Annual Performance Report (APR)

A significant development in the state's accountability for the performance of students with disabilities occurred in December 2005, when the NDE submitted a State Performance Plan to the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) describing baseline data, six-year targets, and improvement activities for making improvements in 20 key areas over the next six years. The following 17 Performance Indicators have been established by OSEP to ensure compliance with state and federal special education laws and to improve results for students with disabilities. The 17 Performance Indicators are designed to:

(1) increase high-school graduation rates for students with disabilities earning regular diplomas;
(2) decrease the dropout rate for students with disabilities;
(3) ensure that all students participate in statewide assessments and improve the performance of students with disabilities in those assessments;
(4) reduce suspension and expulsion rates when those rates significantly exceed statewide averages;
(5) provide school-age students with disabilities ages 6-21 with services in the least restrictive environment;
(6) provide preschool children with disabilities ages 3-5 with services in the least restrictive environment;
(7) improve knowledge, skills, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes for preschool children with disabilities;
(8) improve parents' involvement in their children's special education programs;
(9) eliminate disproportionate identification of students in race/ethnic groups as having a disability when it is the result of inappropriate identification;
(10) eliminate disproportionate identification of students in race/ethnic groups as having a particular disability when it is the result of inappropriate identification;
(11) improve efforts to evaluate students with disabilities in a timely manner;

(12) ensure a smooth transition from infant/toddler programs to school-based programs for preschool children with disabilities at age three;
(13) improve transition planning for students with disabilities at the secondary school level;
(14) improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities in the areas of post-secondary education/training and employment;
(15) promote resolution sessions as a mechanism for resolving disputes;
(16) promote mediations as a mechanism for resolving disputes; and
(17) design, implement, and evaluate a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) that meets the requirements set forth by the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs.

Annually since February 2007, the NDE has reported on the performance of the state against performance and compliance targets. The performance of each LEA against the statewide targets has also been reported each year, and based upon that performance each LEA has been determined to (1) meet requirements, (2) need assistance, (3) need intervention, or (4) need substantial intervention.

Significance for the SSIP: Nevada's targets for % proficient and performance data in reading for third-grade students with disabilities are as follows:

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Targets	25%	26.5%	28%	29.5%	31%	32.5%	34%	35.5%	37%
State Data	25.7%	33.1%	30.9%	31.1%	33.3%	33.0%	31.4%	32.5%	32.3%
State Met Target?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	**N**	**N**	**N**
CCSD Data	25%	33%	31%	30.4%	31.9%	32.8%	29%	31.4%	32.6%
CCSD Met Target?	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	**N**	**N**	**N**

During the last three years, neither Nevada nor the CCSD has reached the targets established for the % proficient in reading for third-grade students with disabilities.

Special Education Monitoring

NDE facilitates comprehensive record review in each LEA (17 school districts and the state charter school authority) at least once every four years, and facilitates a targeted record review as necessary in each LEA each year (targeted to previous noncompliance findings). Nevada's monitoring procedures are described below.

- NDE conducts policy/procedure/form review to evaluate procedural compliance
- A 90-item checklist is used to monitor the record for each student selected for monitoring
- Nevada implements a 100% compliance criterion
- All noncompliance, both individual and systemic, is corrected within one year of identification

The schedule has been established to ensure selection of a representative group of LEAs to be monitored in each of the four years of Nevada's four-year monitoring cycle.

- All schools in the LEA have records selected for review (except Washoe County and Clark County, where size dictates selection); in Washoe County and Clark County, schools are selected to ensure a representative sample among elementary, middle, and high schools
- Record selection is stratified to ensure representation among race/ethnicity, disability, and placement categories in proportion to the LEA's total child count

A Corrective Action Plan (CAP) is required to address noncompliance found through NDE-facilitated review of records and policies/procedures/forms

- CAPs are designed collaboratively between LEAs and the NDE
- CAPs must include procedures for review and revision, if necessary, of policies and procedures, and the provision of training to ensure that systemic noncompliance is corrected within one yea
- LEAs must submit verification that CAP activities have been implemented as approved, and provide record review documentation to demonstrate correction of individual and systemic noncompliance

Significance for the SSIP: In spring 2013, the NDE conducted a comprehensive monitoring of Clark County School District to evaluate compliance with IDEA and state law (Nevada Administrative Code) requirements. The monitoring did not reveal any fundamental compliance issues in IEP development, including present levels of performance, goals and objectives, services, or placement.

B. STRENGTHS OF NEVADA'S INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT CAPACITY-BUILDING AT THE LEA LEVEL

A group of "Networking and Collaborating" stakeholders met in May 2014 and used a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) Analysis tool to identify strengths of Nevada's infrastructure to support capacity-building at the LEA level. The stakeholders identified the following strengths:

- Governance:
    - As a small state, the use of collaboration as opposed to issuing directives remains an effective way to coalesce thinking and advance important agendas
    - There are only 18 LEAs, which makes collaboration itself easier
    - Because local school boards are closest to their communities, local control remains an important feature of Nevada's education landscape, although that control is gradually lessening
- Fiscal Resources:
    - The NDE retains flexibility and authority to direct the use of IDEA "state set-aside" funds for capacity-building projects
- Quality Standards:

  - Common Core State Standards
  - End of Course Assessments aligned to the Common Core State Standards
  - IDEA requirements in federal law, and as more specifically outlined in the Nevada Administrative Code
- Professional Development & Technical Assistance:
  - Technology introduces possibilities for innovation and improvement
  - Collaborations among the NDE, LEAs, and other stakeholder organizations have produced excellent professional development opportunities
  - If implemented sensibly, the Nevada Educator Performance Framework has the potential to improve teaching
- Data Systems:
  - Tools like the NCCAT-D are available for school districts in program evaluation
  - Clark County School District and Washoe County School District use the same data system (Infinite Campus) and it could serve as a model for aligning the data systems among all LEAs
  - The education community is increasingly aware of and competent in their use of data to make key decisions that affect students, teachers, and systems
- Accountability & Monitoring:
  - The Nevada School Performance Framework, the state's Title I accountability system, represents an improvement over the previous AYP Model, because it accounts for growth rather than merely status

C. WEAKNESSES OF NEVADA'S INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT CAPACITY-BUILDING AT THE LEA LEVEL

Using the same SWOT analysis, the stakeholder group identified these infrastructure weaknesses:

- Governance:
  - The NDE has a very small staff but the same responsibilities that staffs in larger states have
  - In recent years, there have been Superintendent leadership changes that have impacted long-term planning and implementation, although leadership seems more stable at the present time
  - Local school districts can suffer from "initiative fatigue" if initiatives at the state level lack long-term commitment and stability – the initiative *du jour* is destined for failure
- Fiscal Resources:
  - There are no state funds to implement and sustain improvement efforts targeted specifically for students with disabilities
- Quality Standards:
  - With implementation of the Common Core State Standards, there has been constant and confusing change regarding curriculum, instruction, and assessment

  - Lack of resources to implement the Common Core State Standards and assessments
  - Perception that the state has an exclusive focus on academic standards, to the exclusion of other important goals of an education
- Professional Development & Technical Assistance:
  - The NDE sponsors major training events, but devotes few resources to follow up ("mile wide—inch thick")
  - The NDE has limited funding and personnel to invest in professional development and technical assistance
  - The RPDP system is disconnected across the regions and does not adequately address needs of staff working with students with disabilities
  - The new Nevada Educator Performance Framework (educator evaluation system) is perceived as a threat to teachers, particularly when their performance will be evaluated based on their students' performance; this threat is particularly felt among teachers who work with students who have disabilities
- Data Systems:
  - Lack of system integration
  - Lack of system comprehensiveness—very limited ability at the NDE to disaggregate performance data for students with disabilities by key features, such as specific disability category, federal placement category, federal discipline incidents, and federal exit categories. These data elements are collected in a system that is separate from the assessment data collection system.
- Accountability & Monitoring:
  - Assessments are under development and will affect any target-setting that occurs for the SSIP
  - As new assessments are implemented, we lose stability in data trends over time

D. CONCLUSIONS REGARDING STRENGTHS/WEAKNESSES IN THE STATE INFRASTRUCTURE

The SWOT analyses suggested key implications for Nevada's SIMR. The NDE lacks authority, funding, personnel, and data systems to engage in SSIP activity without collaboration and cooperation from the LEA level. Further, that collaboration must respect locally established priorities, and where possible, build upon the work LEAs have already undertaken. A new light bulb, when LEAs have already invested human and fiscal resources in the light bulb they already have, would be met with considerable resistance. The task, then was not to make the light bulb, but to make it brighter.

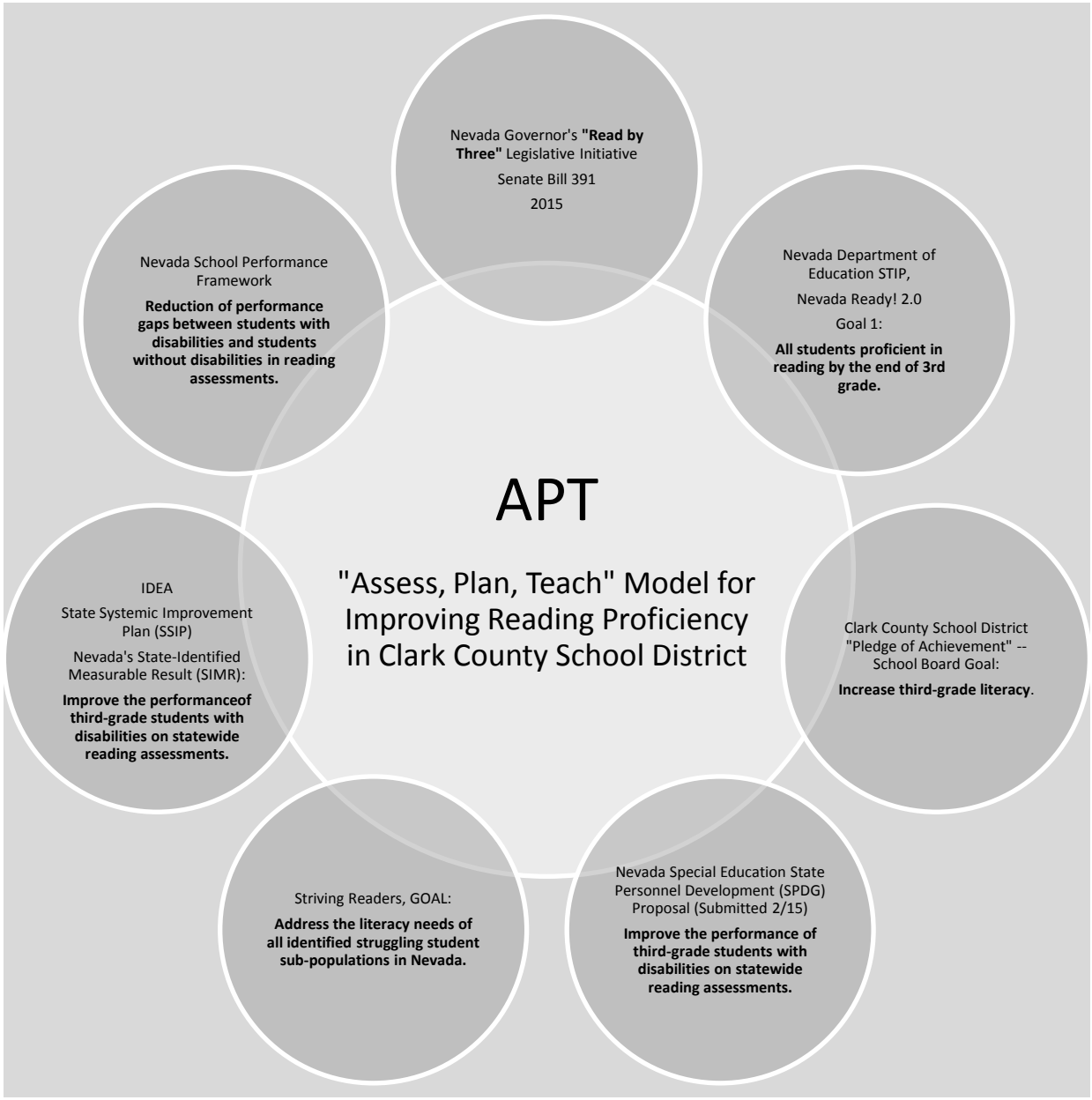
E. AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF FUNCTIONING WITHIN AND ACROSS SYSTEMS

Among the most important weaknesses in the state's infrastructure systems are these:

- The lack of a longitudinal data system that centralizes all data collected and reported to the U.S. Department of Education concerning students with disabilities. The NDE is currently working to pilot implementation of a data system that would solve this problem.
- The lack of state funds to support improvement initiatives related to third-grade reading proficiency. Governor Sandoval's Senate Bill 391 proposes an appropriation of $27.2 million to support school districts in implementing the legislative initiative

F. STATE-LEVEL IMPROVEMENT PLANS AND INITIATIVES

Several state-level and district-level improvement plans, initiatives, and accountability systems support Nevada's SIMR and the APT Model that will be used as the central improvement strategy to achieve our goals. Following is a graphic illustration of the projects directly or indirectly supporting the APT Model.



Nevada Governor Brian Sandoval's "Read by Three" Legislative Initiative (Senate Bill 391)

> *We must also improve our students' reading skills. Studies show that a child's chances of graduating from high school are cut in half if they are not reading at grade level by third grade. I will therefore work with Senator Becky Harris and the Senate Committee on Education to introduce a "Read by Three" bill to help ensure every student is reading by third grade. My budget includes nearly $30 million to support this literacy effort.*

Governor Brian Sandoval, State of the State Address, January 15, 2015

Under the leadership of Nevada's Governor Brian Sandoval, legislation is being proposed in spring 2015 for the NDE to establish a literacy-based grant program to augment reading proficiency programs in schools not served with other state reading centers or programs (Senate Bill 391). Literacy plans with performance measures will be required from elementary schools that apply for funding. This initiative will support activities found to be effective in improving the academic achievement of students in grades kindergarten through third grade. The Governor has proposed funding at the level of $4.9 million in 2015-2016 and $22.3 million in 2016-2017 (total of $27.2M).

Nevada Department of Education Annual Plan to Improve the Academic Achievement of Pupils: "Nevada Ready! 2.0"

State law requires that the NDE and the State Board of Education annually prepare a State Improvement Plan (commonly known as the "STIP") to outline NDE strategies designed to improve student achievement. Nevada's STIP is titled "Nevada Ready! 2.0." The Nevada Ready! 2.0 initiative is financially supported by the Nevada Public Education Foundation, and the NDE partners with the Nevada System of Higher Education, local school districts, and public and private organizations and agencies to implement the goals.

When the Nevada Ready! 2.0 stakeholders met in 2014, they identified five problem areas, based on school and student performance data that impact all students. Two identified problem areas were student performance in reading, and achievement gaps between student subgroups. Goals were established to address problem areas, including one goal and related objectives specifically directed to third-grade reading:

GOAL 1: All students are proficient in reading by the end of third grade

The Nevada Ready! 2.0 initiative will raise awareness of the state's public school standards, which define what students are expected to learn and be able to do as they move from grade to grade. Through a comprehensive communications initiative, Nevada Ready! 2.0 will provide information to help educators, students, parents, community leaders and others understand the standards of education adopted by the Department and Board, the tests that will be given to assess student and teacher performance and ways to use those results to help students, educators, schools and school districts reach these new, rigorous standards. The Nevada Ready! 2.0 initiative started with a focus on implementation of the Common Core State Standards for English language arts and mathematics, but also addresses new science standards adopted by the State Board of Education in February 2014 and

standards in many other subject areas including social studies, the arts, pre-K/early learning, and career and technical education.

With its goal to achieve proficiency for all third-grade readers, Nevada Ready! 2.0 is completely aligned with Senate Bill 391, and third-grade reading initiative in Clark County School District's "Pledge of Achievement."

The Nevada State Literacy Plan (NSLP) – Nevada's Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Initiative

In 2010, the U.S. Department of Education introduced an historic literacy initiative titled the Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Initiative (SRCL). In 2011 Nevada developed a Nevada State Literacy Plan (NSLP) and applied for and became one of only six states in the country to be awarded a SRCL grant with funding for five years. In 2014, Nevada's new Superintendent of Public Instruction launched an initiative to revise the SNLP. A 25-member group of literacy leaders across the state was convened to revise the NSLP. The group included representatives from urban and rural areas of the state, professionals working from the pre-K level through the university level, and leaders from business and the state PTA.

As this SSIP is being finalized, so too is the work of the stakeholders revising the NSLP. The team has established its own definition of literacy as follows:

> *Literacy is the ability to actively and critically read, write, speak, and listen across all academic content areas and/or career pathways in order to construct meaning and communicate effectively. A literate individual is able to independently and collaboratively function in a global society by using evidence, creativity, questioning, reflecting, and problem-solving skills.*

Among the NSLP core beliefs is the belief that *The NSLP aims to address the literacy needs of all identified struggling student sub-populations in Nevada (English learners, students with exceptional needs, children of poverty, gifted and talented students, etc.).* The NSLP is structured around five key essentials: Leadership and Sustainability, Data-Driven Standards Based Instruction and Intervention, Literacy Assessment Systems, Professional Learning, and Family and Community Engagement. There are four primary goals of the grant:

1. To provide professional learning opportunities in literacy (including training and coaching)
2. To improve literacy assessment, instruction, and intervention by aligning all efforts to Nevada's academic content standards (Common Core State Standards)
3. To establish data-based decision making teams across districts and schools that analyze data in order effectively to inform all educational practice
4. To establish community partnerships aimed at strengthening the role of literacy acquisition across every segment of Nevada society with a primary focus on children and families

The SRCL project is seen as a statewide leader in improving literacy assessment and instruction, and its goals connect to both the NDE's and the Governor's leadership initiatives. Further, Clark County School District is one of the four SRCL subgrantees in Nevada. Of the 48 schools who are implementing APT in CCSD, four are also participating in CCSD's Striving Readers initiative. The Director of CCSD's Striving Readers project has participated as one of the "Transforming" stakeholders, and work is underway to more closely coordinate the work in the APT schools with the work of the Striving Readers project.

Nevada School Performance Framework – ESEA Flexibility Waiver

The Nevada School Performance Framework (NSPF) is described in detail above at pages 37-38. As a reminder, the NSPF reports underperforming schools in three categories: Priority, Focus and One Star:

- Priority schools are the lowest 5% of Title I-served schools based on performance, and the schools have room for substantial improvement in whole school proficiency and growth.
- Focus schools are the lowest 10% of Title I-served schools based on performance, and the schools have room for substantial improvement in the area of student achievement with specific sub-groups, such as students with disabilities
- One-Star schools earned fewer than 32 index points from all the measures in the Nevada School Performance Framework, and the schools have room for substantial improvement in multiple areas

There are a total of six Priority, Focus, and One-Star schools among the 48 schools presently implementing the APT Model. Importantly, these schools will receive additional technical assistance and support as a result of these designations. We anticipate that the APT project implementation will be a key component in improving the performance of students with disabilities in these schools.

Nevada Department of Education, State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) Proposal

In February, 2015, the NDE submitted a State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) proposal to the Office of Special Education Programs, designed to improve academic outcomes for students with disabilities. If funded, the NDE Office of Special Education and the Office of Student and School Supports (which administers the state's Title I programs) will collaborate with districts and schools, the University of Nevada Reno, and Nevada PEP (Nevada's federally-funded Parent Training and Information project), to provide evidence-based professional development to (1) improve teachers' capacity to assess, plan, and teach students with IEPs; (2) increase the percent of time students with IEPs spend in the general education classroom; and ultimately, (3) increase the percent of students with IEPs scoring proficient on statewide reading and math assessments. The second GOAL proposed to achieve these outcomes is:

> *GOAL 2: The NDE will support improved performance of third grade students with disabilities on statewide assessments of reading/language arts through building LEA capacity to strengthen the skills of special education teachers in assessment, instructional planning, & teaching.*

GOAL 2 was written to align with the SIMR in this State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP). The proposal provides strategies for supporting the expansion of APT in Clark County School District and two additional districts. If funded, the Nevada SPDG will partner in the implementation of NDE's SSIP. In a similar manner, the SPDG will target priority and focus schools to receive professional development, in collaboration with the NDE Office of Student and School Supports. This will ensure the schools in greatest needs receive support to implement evidence-based strategies to improve academic outcomes for students with disabilities.

Clark County School District "Pledge of Achievement"

In 2014, the Clark County School District unveiled its Strategic Plan entitled "Pledge of Achievement – Every Student. Every Classroom. Every Community Member." The Plan includes a Strategic Imperative for academic excellence: "Literacy across all subject areas pre-k through 12th grades" which will be measured by increasing the percent of proficient students in assessed subjects and grades, and by reducing the percentage point gap between proficiency of the highest and lowest subgroups, including students with disabilities as a subgroup. In his "State of the District" speech on January 26, 2015, Superintendent Pat Skorkowsky reiterated that **increasing third-grade literacy** one of six goals set by the School Board of Trustees. The Plan also includes a Strategic Imperative for school support: "Focused support, preparation, training and resources for all staff in the schools." These "strategic imperatives" and board goals are completely aligned with the state legislative and policy priorities, and with the SIMR established in this plan.

Summary

Every one of the state-level initiatives in Nevada has a goal to improve third-grade reading proficiency and so too does the Clark County School District "Pledge of Achievement." Nevada's SIMR fits precisely within these larger goals, and it should be seen as the lynchpin for accomplishing the goal for all students. As we continue and expand stakeholder involvement, this is the message we will carry.

G. REPRESENTATIVES INVOLVED IN DEVELOPING PHASE I OF SSIP

See THEORY OF STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT section at pages 4-8 for identification of representatives (e.g., offices, agencies, positions, individuals, and other stakeholders) involved in developing Phase I of the SSIP and that will be involved in developing and implementing Phase II of the SSIP.

H. INFRASTRUCTURE OF CLARK COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Clark County School District (CCSD) encompasses 7,910 square miles, including metropolitan Las Vegas and surrounding rural areas. The CCSD is the fifth largest school district in the country. In the 2014-2015 school year, 318,040 students are enrolled in the district. As of October 1, 2014, the CCSD employed 40,118 people, including 18,090 licensed personnel, 11,247 support staff, 1,323 administrators, 142 school police, 4,611 substitute teachers, and 4,705 other temporary/substitute employees. The district operates 357 schools, including 217 elementary schools and 8 special schools.

The Board of School Trustees appointed Pat Skorkowsky as superintendent in June 2013, and he is implementing the board's vision by focusing on six key areas:

- Increasing third-grade literacy proficiency rates
- Decreasing achievement gaps
- Increasing the graduation rate
- Increasing parent participation
- Increasing student safety and happiness
- Increasing the number of students in advanced placement and career and technical courses

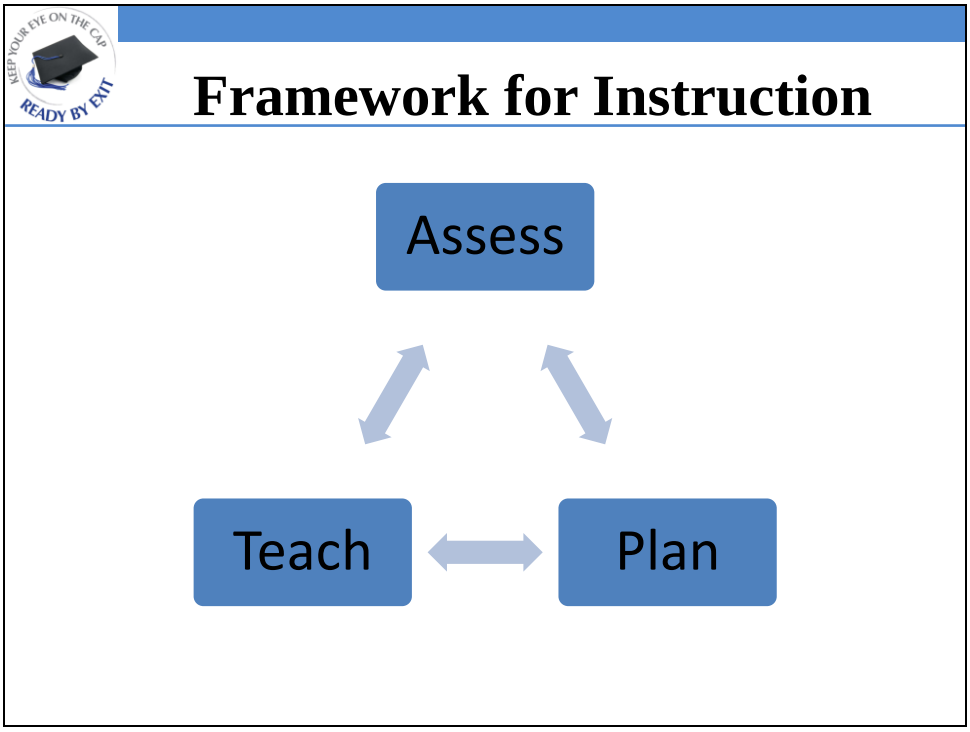
Clark County School District is divided into 16 Performance Zones (PZs). Six Directors have oversight over special education services in the PZs. Each PZ has a team of Instructional Facilitators who are responsible for overseeing the professional development activities within their PZs. The PZ Directors meet as a group on a monthly basis to review APT data, to monitor the implementation plan, and to examine progress of ongoing coaching.

Component #4:
SELECTION OF COHERENT IMPROVEMENT STRATEGIES

The urgency to ensure that all students read by third grade is well supported by research. The Annie E. Casey Foundation published a seminal report in 2011, updated in 2012, that describes the results of a longitudinal study of nearly 4,000 students (Hernandez, D. J., 2012). The researcher found that graduation rates are closely linked to third-grade reading proficiency. His findings include:

- About 16 percent of children who do not read proficiently by the end of third grade do not graduate from high school on time, a rate four times greater than that for proficient readers
- For children who were poor for at least a year and were not reading proficiently, the proportion failing to graduate rose to 26 percent
- About 31 percent of poor African-American students and 33 percent of poor Hispanic students who did not hit the third-grade proficiency mark failed to graduate. These rates are greater than those for White students with poor reading skills. But the racial and ethnic graduation gaps disappear when students master reading by the end of third grade and are not living in poverty.

Nevada selected Clark County School District's "Assess, Plan, Teach" Model as its primary coherent improvement strategy to improve reading proficiency among third-graders with disabilities. The model will be explained first, and then we will summarize why the APT Model is sound, logical and aligned, and will lead to a measurable improvement in reading performance of third-grade students with disabilities in CCSD.



Assess, Plan, Teach (APT) is an instructional intervention model adopted by Clark County School District to improve literacy outcomes for students with significant Learning Disabilities placed in self-contained classrooms. APT incorporates a structured, data-based consultation model, combined with training on research-based, explicit, systematic instruction and lesson plan development. The goal is to improve reading instruction to improve student achievement in Reading/English Language Arts.

APT is grounded in a model of professional development and materials developed by the Consortium on Reading Excellence, Inc. (CORE) (www.corelearning.com). CORE's scientifically based model supports the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts. The focus of the model is to build system-wide capacity for sustained improvement. The CORE model has been implemented in districts and schools of all sizes, from large urban districts to rural and remote schools. CORE materials help schools enhance teachers' competence and capacity to provide effective instruction through a foundation of research-based practices and tools.

The CORE model grew from the findings of the 2000 National Reading Panel that found a combination of techniques was effective for teaching children to read. These techniques focus on developing students' skills in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, oral reading, vocabulary, and comprehension (NICHHD, 2000). CORE is an evidence-based professional development framework that supports the implementation of a school's chosen reading curriculum. The framework includes the presentation of theory, modeling and demonstration, practice in workshop settings and simulated conditions, structured feedback, and coaching for classroom applications (Joyce, Calhoun, and Hopkins, 1999). Two resources guide the professional development: (1) Teaching Reading Sourcebook and (2) Assessing Reading: Multiple Measures. A variety of validated reading assessments are also used, including the CORE Phonics Survey (Reutzel, Brandt, Fawson, and Jones, 2014), MASI-R Oral Reading Fluency Measures (Howell, Hosp, M.K., Hosp, J.L., and Moreland, 2007), the San Diego Quick Assessment of Reading Ability (LaPray and Ross, 1969), the CORE Vocabulary Screening, and the CORE Reading Maze Comprehension assessment. A recent study by Reutzel et al. (2014) found strong support for the reliability and validity of the CORE Phonics Survey.

The Clark County School District will use the CORE professional development materials to ensure that teachers use a process of data-based problem solving to plan for and instruct students with disabilities. The CORE K-6 Implementation Rubric will be used to measure fidelity of implementation. This instrument has been developed by CORE to assist teachers and administrators to implement effectively research-based reading/English Language Arts programs. This instrument informs the degree of implementation, regardless of the curriculum used, which allows for widespread replication of the APT Models in schools using a variety of curricular approaches.

The APT Model uses a train, coach, assess, and train cycle with three days of full-group training in Year 1. There are three phases of APT implementation, with training focused over a three-year period on: (1) phonics, (2) reading fluency and vocabulary development, and (3) reading comprehension. Each year, there is a three-day training session combining both learning and application of skills. Between each of the full-day trainings, Instructional Facilitators visit all classrooms for observation of implementation and coaching.

In Year 1, Day 1 training focuses on instructional assessment (ASSESS) and the use of the Core Phonics Reading Survey assessment instrument. Day 2 addresses instructional planning (PLAN), including the incorporation of Nevada's Academic Common Core Standards, goal setting based on student assessment data, and lesson planning. Day 3 targets the instructional component (TEACH), providing participants with training on lesson sequencing, use of websites for lesson plan development, and the concepts of explicit and prescriptive instruction. Between each of the training days, all teachers receive individual coaching, observations from Instructional Facilitators, and opportunities to participate in roundtable nights to discuss strategies and share ideas, and to participate in online forums.

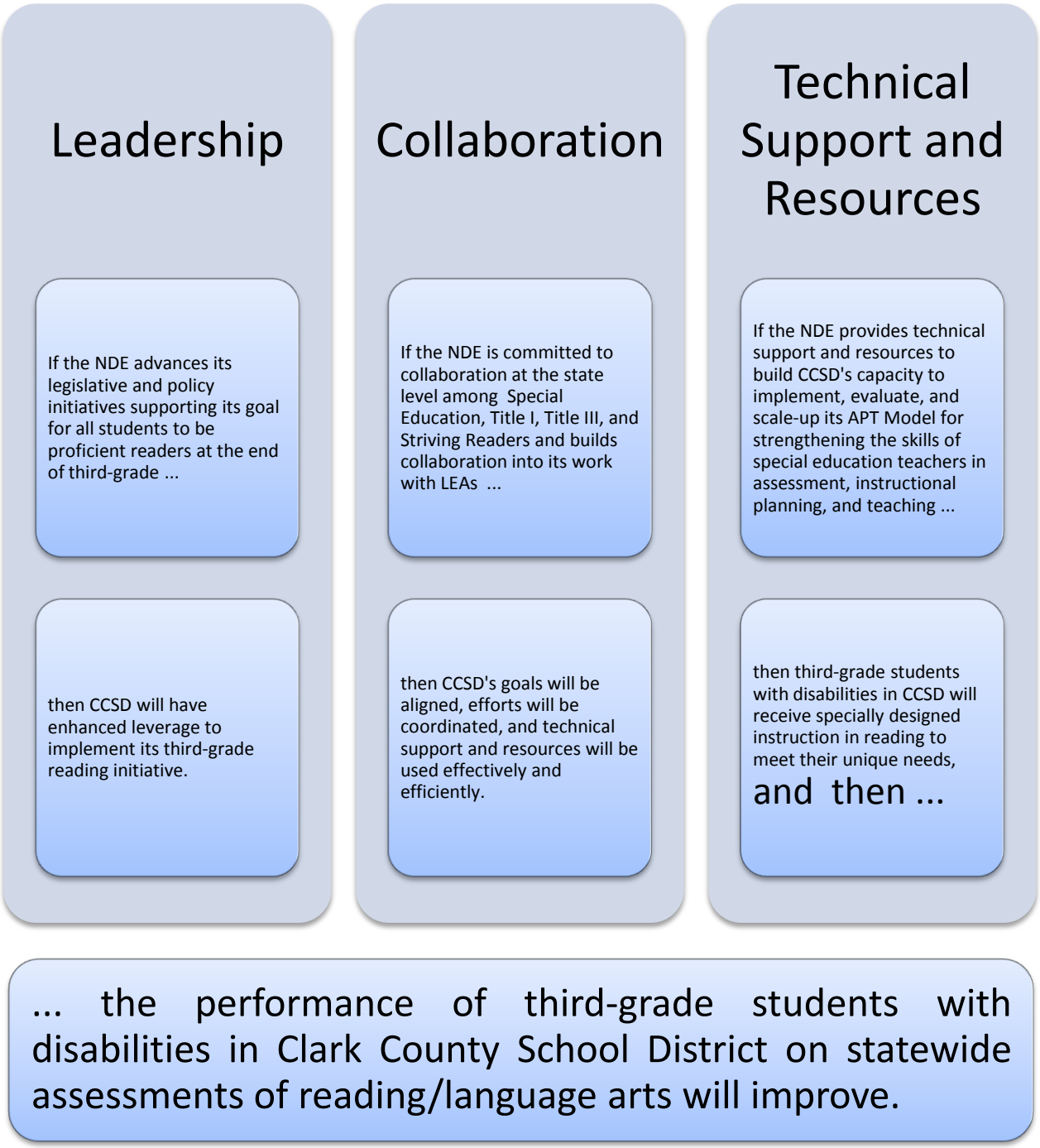
Teachers repeat the same cycle in Years 2 and 3, with the professional development focus shifting to phonics and vocabulary development (Year 2) and reading comprehension (Year 3).

As a result of APT being grounded in the tools developed by CORE, the strategies are demonstrably sound, logical and aligned, and will lead to a measurable improvement in the reading performance of third-grade students with disabilities in CCSD.

Although the APT Model is presently being implemented in approximately 48 elementary SLD classrooms in CCSD, we anticipate that during the course of the SSIP it will be implemented in the approximately 93 SLD classrooms that are in CCSD's 217 elementary schools. We also anticipate that during the course of the SSIP, the APT Model will be implemented in special education classrooms where students may be placed for one or two periods per day (the typical "resource room" configuration), as opposed to the self-contained classrooms where the APT Model is currently being implemented.

Component #5:
THEORY OF ACTION

Below is Nevada's graphic illustration that shows the rationale of how providing leadership, collaboration, and technical support and resources to implement the selected coherent set of improvement strategies will increase Nevada's capacity to lead meaningful change in LEAs, and achieve improvement in the state-identified measurable result for students with disabilities.



Component #6:
BASELINE AND TARGETS

FFY 2013 Baseline Data:

Below is Nevada's FFY 2013 baseline data, expressed as a percentage and aligned with the state-identified measurable result for students with disabilities.

Baseline Data: 2013-14 **23.1%**

FFY 2014 – FFY 2018 Targets:

Below are Nevada's measurable and rigorous targets, expressed as percentages, for each of the five years from FFY 2014 through FFY 2018. The FFY 2018 target demonstrates improvement over Nevada's FFY 2013 baseline data.

Targets: 2014-15 **24.1%** 2015-16 **25.1%** 2016-17 **26.1%** 2017-18 **27.1%** 2018-19 **28.1%**

Description of measure.

The baseline data set was established by dividing the number of third-grade IEP students who were proficient on statewide assessments of reading in 2013-2014 at 48 CCSD elementary schools where the APT project has begun to be implemented (139), by the total IEP students tested at those schools (602). The resulting % proficient for 2013-2014 = **23.1%** (139/602 = 23.1%).

Targets were established by adding 1% per year to the baseline data. At the end of the five years between 2013-2014 and 2018-2019, the targets for improvement at APT schools will have increased by nearly **22%** [(28.1% – 23.1%)/23.1 = 21.6%].

Actual data will be collected each year at the CCSD elementary schools where the APT project is being implemented, including additional schools beyond the 48 schools that exist at present. The calculation will remain the same. The number of third-grade IEP students who are proficient on statewide assessments of reading at CCSD elementary schools where the APT project is being implemented, divided by the total IEP students tested at those schools. The resulting percentage will be compared to the targets to determine whether the state met its target for each of the years from 2014-2015 through 2018-2019. Although the number of schools in the calculation will grow over these years, because the actual data will continue to be calculated at the student level, the calculation will remain valid for our purposes.

Description of stakeholder input.

Stakeholder input for establishing baseline data and setting targets required authentic engagement. Once the SIMR was focused on building capacity to improve third-grade reading scores in CCSD, it was critical to obtain specific stakeholder input from within the CCSD to ensure that the targets

were ambitious yet achievable, and that work towards the targets would receive support across the CCSD education community, including parents.

A stakeholder group was convened consisting of NDE staff, CCSD regular education principals, CCSD special education administrators, CCSD regular education administrators of the Striving Readers project, CCSD regular education Title I administrators, CCSD regular education administrators from the the Instructional Design and Professional Design Division, and parent representatives from Nevada PEP (Nevada's federally funded parent training and information project).

Several principles for target-setting were shared with the stakeholder group:

1. Baseline data must be expressed as a percentage and aligned with the state-identified measurable result (SIMR) for students with disabilities
2. Baseline data must be from 2013-2014; can be baseline data from a **subgroup** rather than from entire state of Nevada.
3. Targets must be measurable and rigorous ("ambitious as well as achievable") and expressed as a percentage for each of the five years for 2014-2015 through 2018-2019, with the 2018-2019 target reflecting measurable improvement over the 2013-2014 baseline.
4. Targets must relate closely to a performance indicator in the APR, e.g., Indicator 3C
5. Targets can be focused on a **subgroup** of districts, or students, or another grouping
6. Although the SSIP is intended to produce significant improvement in the state, the 5-year plan needs to show improvement for the **subgroup if we focus on a subgroup**

With these principles in mind, the stakeholder group reviewed 10 pages of data charts. These charts included data comparing enrollment for Nevada and CCSD student populations, disaggregated by disability and race/ethnicity categories, and comparing total student populations to the third-grade subpopulations. The group also reviewed achievement data, including presentations of Indicator 3C targets for third-grade reading and actual data for Nevada and the CCSD from 2005-2006 through 2013-2014. The proficiency data analyses were further disaggregated to the APT school level, so that the % proficient for IEP students at the APT project schools could be calculated as a subgroup within the CCSD.

The following key features of the data were identified and discussed:

- CCSD educates 67.5% of Nevada's public school children.
- CCSD educates 67.7% of Nevada's public school children with IEPs.
- CCSD educates 66.5% of Nevada's third-grade children with IEPs.
- CCSD's current 48 APT schools educate 25.3% of the district's third-grade IEP students.
- CCSD's current 48 APT schools educate 17.5% of Nevada's third-grade IEP students.
- The % proficient for third-grade IEP students the 48 APT schools (23.1%) is lower than the district-wide average % proficient for third-grade IEP students (26.1%). This fact is not unexpected, since these 48 APT schools house a number of the district's "self-contained LD" classrooms where students experiencing more academic challenges than other LD students are placed (there are approximately 93 of these classrooms in the district's 217 elementary schools).

Significance for baseline data and target setting:

1. Improving the performance of third-grade IEP students in CCSD's APT schools will improve the performance of the CCSD and of the state. The subgroup of third-grade IEP students who attend APT schools is the appropriate subgroup for establishing baseline data and setting targets.

2. Assuming the APT model will be successful in improving reading proficiency among third-grade IEP students, scaling-up the APT model to include more elementary schools will improve the performance of the CCSD and of the state.

Among the factors considered by the stakeholder group was the fact that over the next five years, the APT project will be implemented in additional schools, and that in any one year, the schools themselves will vary considerably. For example, there will be schools in the APT project that have been implementing APT since 2013-2014, and other schools who have just begun implementation. Teachers and administrators in the schools will have varying levels of both experience and expertise. Transciency rates among students vary, as well as among teachers, paraprofessionals, and other staff. There will be schools that are part of the CCSD's Striving Readers project, and schools that have been identified as Focus, Priority, or One-Star schools for purposes of Title I school improvement work. The schools also vary across socioeconomic dimensions and race/ethnicity diversity.

The critical conclusion that the stakeholder group acknowledged was this: If the APT project is to be successful, it must be successful regardless of these differences among schools. The fact that the schools are not strictly "comparable" reflects reality, and it is appropriate that the targeted measures of success reflect this reality. Good reading assessment, instructional planning, and teaching should not be good only for some students, but should be good for all students.

But the group also realized that understanding whether and how the APT project is working requires a program evaluation scheme that allows decision-makers to examine much more data than merely the third-grade IEP students' performance on statewide assessments of reading. During Phase II of the SSIP, the program evaluation will be designed to take into account all or some of these data points:

- Formative assessment data, e.g., CORE Phonics Survey, CCSD interim assessments (currently under review), AIMSweb data, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) data
- Student-level data, e.g., number of years students have been enrolled at an APT school (have they been there since kindergarten?), number of years students have been identified as having a disability and receiving IEP services
- Teacher-level data, e.g., number of years teachers have been engaged in APT implementation, including training and coaching

Based on the data analysis, the program evaluation scheme must also have the capacity to disaggregate data according to students' race/ethnicity category, disability category, placement category, English Language Learner status, and whether the student participates in the Free/Reduced Lunch Program.

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