

# Transforming State Systems to Improve Outcomes for Children with Disabilities

**Context** > Created on October 1, 2014, the NCSI builds upon the decades-long success of the Regional Resource Center Program (RRCP) and is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

## Targeted Objectives

1. Increase the capacity of State Education Agencies (SEAs) and Lead Agencies (LAs) to develop, implement, and evaluate their State Systemic Improvement Plans (SSIPs);
2. Increase SEAs' and LAs' knowledge, selection, and utilization of evidence-based practices (EBPs);
3. Improve SEA and LA infrastructure and coordination within SEAs and LAs for delivering effective TA on implementing and scaling-up effective strategies, stakeholder engagement, resource mapping and allocation, and instructional collaboration;
4. Increase the use of effective dissemination strategies by SEAs and LAs to ensure LEAs and EIS programs and providers have access to EBPs and select and implement those EBPs in a sustainable manner;
5. Increase the effectiveness of SEAs and LAs to meaningfully engage State and local stakeholders in the development and implementation of the SSIP;
6. Increase the capacity of SEAs and LAs to effectively utilize TA resources funded by the Department of Education; and
7. Increase the capacity of SEAs and LAs to implement general supervision systems that support effective implementation of the IDEA.

## Guiding Principles Established by WestEd & NCSI Partners

### **Shared leadership and authentic stakeholder engagement at national, state, and local levels**

Distributed leadership across decision-makers and stakeholders at all levels is emphasized to bridge special and general education systems, and to join state and local leaders as allies in working to improve results.

### **Customized and differentiated TA to meet unique state needs and contexts**

TA is customized and differentiated, tailored to states' unique needs, geography, scale, and priorities. Services to every state is a key priority.

### **Leveraging resources to maximize collaboration and minimize duplication**

Intentional collaboration occurs with other OSEP and ED-funded Centers to successfully support states with SSIP development and implementation, with services jointly planned and coordinated so they are integrated, coherent, and value-added for clients.

## PROJECT PARTNERS

WestEd

American Institutes for  
Research (AIR)

National Association of State  
Directors of Special Education  
(NASDSE)

Council of Chief State School  
Officers (CCSSO)

SRI International

National Parent Technical  
Assistance Centers Network

Meadows Center for Preventing  
Educational Risk at UT-Austin  
(external evaluator)

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Office of Special Education Programs  
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## Conceptual Foundation

The NCSI helps states build capacity to realize systems transformation through:

1. **Performance Management** - managing for improved outcomes while continuing to monitor IDEA compliance.
2. **System Coherence** - creating organizational unity across divisions, departments, and programs to ensure coordinated, streamlined, and intentional interactions.
3. **Adaptive Leadership** - developing leaders and organizations that are adaptable to complex and changing environments and that partner with stakeholders to develop solutions through innovation and collaborative problem solving.
4. **Evidence-Based Practices** - ensuring that children with disabilities receive developmentally appropriate, high-impact services.

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## Approach

A **Leadership Team** of nationally respected content and TA experts representing each partner organization guides the Center's vision and implementation.

A **Technical Assistance Coordination Team** coordinates provision of TA services.

**TA Facilitators** are assigned to each state/territory for both Part C and Part B to understand needs and broker resources. (Where possible, TA Facilitators who are also state liaisons assigned from other centers (e.g., IDC, DaSy) and who are also employed by this project are assigned to the same states to maximize integration and knowledge of state needs and context.)

**Content Specialists** populate four teams to develop tools, resources, and supports for delivery of TA that builds capacity in: Data Use, Knowledge Utilization, Systems Change, and Communication & Collaboration. These capacity-building teams create and implement TA Action Plans at the **Universal, Targeted, and Intensive TA Levels**. In addition to the Content Specialist role across each of the four service areas, NCSI staff also serve as TA Facilitators, working with assigned states to build and sustain relationships, identify needs, and broker TA supports.

## Data Use Team

- » **Focus:** TA related to using high-quality data as the SSIP foundation, and evaluating SSIP implementation.
- » **Members:** Content specialists in data collection, data systems, root cause analysis, selecting appropriate data sets to inform decision-making, and applying data for decision-making.

## Knowledge Utilization Team

- » **Focus:** Ensure that SEAs and Part C Lead Agencies learn about and support school districts and early intervention services programs to successfully implement evidence-based practices and develop adaptive leaders who promote knowledge use and continuous learning and adaptation.
- » **Members:** Content specialists in evidence-based practices for standards, curriculum, instruction, assessment, accountability, and meeting the needs of children with disabilities.

## Systems Change Team

- » **Focus:** SSIP development, implementation, and evaluation, as well as state infrastructure improvement, capacity for transformation, and effective general supervision systems to help states achieve systems coherence and adopt performance management structures to achieve systems change.
- » **Members:** Content specialists in systems alignment, resource analysis, and infrastructure analysis and development.

## Communication & Collaboration Team

- » **Focus:** Developing state capacity for stakeholder engagement and increasing access to quality resources from general and special education TA centers to help states select, develop, and implement proven solutions.
- » **Members:** Content specialists in building “ally relationships” and communicating with key stakeholder groups.