

Spring, 2020

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Connecting you with updates and resources
to help drive results for students with disabilities

Director's Welcome



Dear Readers,

Oh, to live in interesting times, as the expression goes. I think we would all agree, though, that the times are a bit *too* interesting right now!

Like you, at NCSI, we are worried about the impact that the COVID-19 crisis will have on our world, and we are especially tuned in about the implications for our nation's students with disabilities, their families, and the educators and systems that support them. As we work to support state education agencies and their stakeholders, the work seems to fall mostly into two overarching categories: (1) policy considerations for meeting general supervision requirements and (2) supporting quality teaching and learning through distance education and nontraditional approaches. In this newsletter, we provide information about ways we are supporting our clients in a few prioritized ways, along with additional resources NCSI has been working on unrelated to COVID-19.

As I write this message, I am wishing you all well and hoping that you and your families are surviving this chaotic time — and perhaps even finding some silver linings where you can.

Warmly, Rorie Fitzpatrick
NCSI Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Rorie Fitzpatrick'.

Featured Resources



Our Response to COVID-19 Supports

On Saturday 3/21/2020, OSERS and OCR released a [Supplemental Fact Sheet Addressing the Risk of COVID-19 in Preschool, Elementary and Secondary Schools While Serving Children with Disabilities](#) and informed stakeholders that NCSI would be a source of technical assistance for implementing IDEA Part B. We continue to mobilize quickly to meet this charge. A number of resources related to distance learning and COVID-19 policy guidance are now available in our [NCSI Resource Library](#). Users can select one or more filters from the bar at the top to select what is most relevant to specific learning needs for each individual.

In addition, NCSI has ramped up opportunities for information exchange, peer learning, and research-informed support through weekly/twice-weekly open doors associated with four established cross-state learning collaboratives. Those collaboratives include: Evidence-Based Practices for Students with Disabilities, Improving Low-Performing School Systems, Results-Based Accountability and Support, and State Education Agency Leadership (for Special Education Directors). If a state has not joined a given collaborative but wants to be part of the relevant discussions happening right now about COVID-19, short-term engagement is absolutely fine. If so, please reach out to ncsi@wested.org.

Finally, we are providing one-to-one consultation and small-group coaching to engage with state staff as they work to figure out what makes sense for students, families, and educators right now. We are here to support you as you work through this strange time in our history. Please don't hesitate to contact your assigned [state TA Facilitator](#) for anything with which we can help.

If you have questions or requests related to COVID-19, you can submit them through this [COVID-19 Information Request Form](#). If you have questions related to legal requirements for providing special education services to students with disabilities, they can be sent to COVID-19@ed.gov and officials from the U.S. Department of Education will respond.

NCSI Infographic on Experience of SWDs

NCSI recently produced a snapshot summary of the experiences from students with disabilities across the nation. Included in this new infographic is information on the distribution of students with disabilities by primary disability category, the educational environments where students with disabilities receive instruction, and the participation rate of students with disabilities on statewide assessments. The performance of students with disabilities on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), graduation rates for students with disabilities and their peers, and discipline data can also be found in this resource. NCSI anticipates the use of this infographic as an on-ramp to initiate conversations and build shared understanding about the student outcomes state education agencies are striving to improve. You can view and/or download the [NCSI Infographic on Experiences of SWDs from the NCSI resource library](#) or contact NCSI's very own TA facilitator, Susan Hayes (shayes@wested.org), with questions related to this resource!

SSIP Update

In February, NCSI provided three virtual open-door sessions to support states in writing high-quality SSIP reports for the 2020 April submission to OSEP. These open-door sessions reviewed the submission requirements and guidance documents provided by OSEP, as well as important components related to infrastructure, evaluation, changing baselines and targets, and stakeholder engagement. Individuals representing 20 states participated in these open-door sessions and discussed topics such as strategies for effectively presenting student outcome data across different assessments used by SSIP sites; reporting changes in intended coherent improvement strategies; and, methods for summarizing SSIP implementation efforts over the last three years, versus only reporting this year. NCSI looks forward to continuing to support the states' efforts to

improve outcomes for students with disabilities through the implementation and evaluation of the SSIP.

Updates from ED



MTSS for EL

Did you know that OSEP has a model demonstration project for [Multitiered Systems of Support for English Learners](#)? This project offers a tool intended to be used to assess the fidelity of implementation of school-based RTI within a multitiered system of support (MTSS). [The Culturally and Linguistically Responsive \(CLR\) Response to Intervention \(RTI\) within Multi-Tiered System of Supports: Fidelity of Implementation Rubric](#) provides the essential components necessary for developing and sustaining a successful system of supports. In addition, there are several briefs addressing effective practices for English learners (EL). These briefs address topics related to meeting the needs of EL through a MTSS framework, core and supplemental English as a second language literacy instruction, and professional development support for practitioners. There are five briefs altogether. To read them all, go to <https://www.mtss4els.org/resources/briefs>.



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