

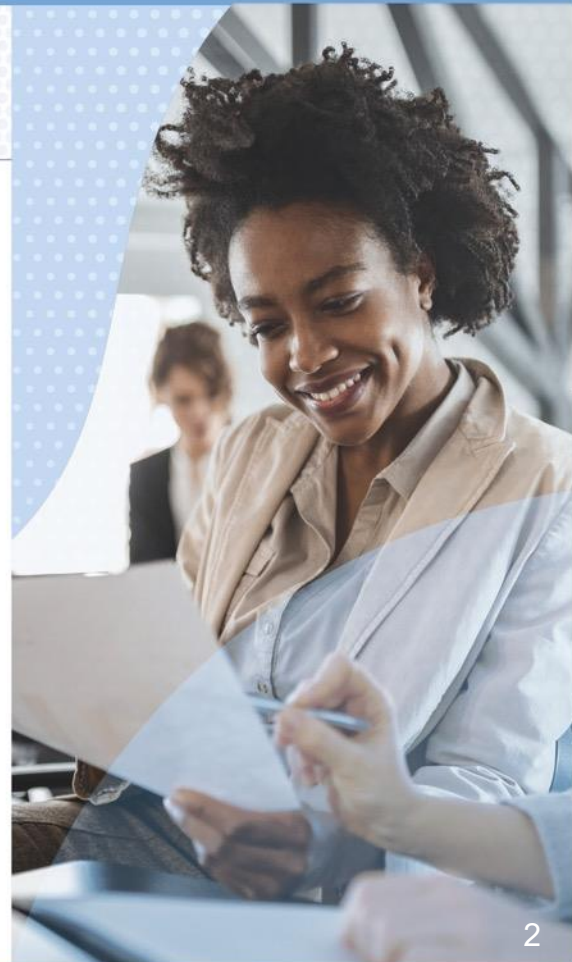
Effective Instruction Collaborative

September 23, 2025



Agenda

- New Resources
- Leadership for Effective Instruction for Students with Disabilities: Focus on Fostering Strategic Partnerships
- Leveraging Partnerships Discussion
- Partnership Resources
- Next Steps



New Resources

NCSI Coaching Briefs

- [Defining Effective Coaching Practices to Support Teachers and Improve Student Outcomes](#)
- [The Coaching Cycle: How Coaches Can Support Teachers and Improve Student Outcomes](#)





Integrating CITES and MTSS Frameworks

- [Integrating CITES and MTSS Frameworks for Inclusive Education: A Comprehensive Approach](#)

Leadership for Effective Instruction for Students with Disabilities: Fostering Strategic Partnerships

NCSI Thought Leader Forum – April 2024



Leadership for Effective Instruction for Students With Disabilities: Lessons Learned From Five State Education Agencies



In April 2024, the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) at WestEd convened a Thought Leader Forum focused on ways State Education Agencies (SEAs) can provide leadership to support effective instruction. Participants included representatives from five SEAs, school districts and schools, the U.S. Department of Education, higher education, state technical assistance partners, professional organizations, family centers, and federally funded technical assistance centers. State special education leaders and their partners from New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Texas, Utah, and Washington each shared information about their change initiatives focused on promoting effective instruction for students with disabilities at the local level. The Forum raised this important question: How were these states leading change to promote effective

instruction for students with disabilities? This brief was produced by the Utah Education Policy Center (UEPC) at the University of Utah, in partnership with NCSI, to address this question.

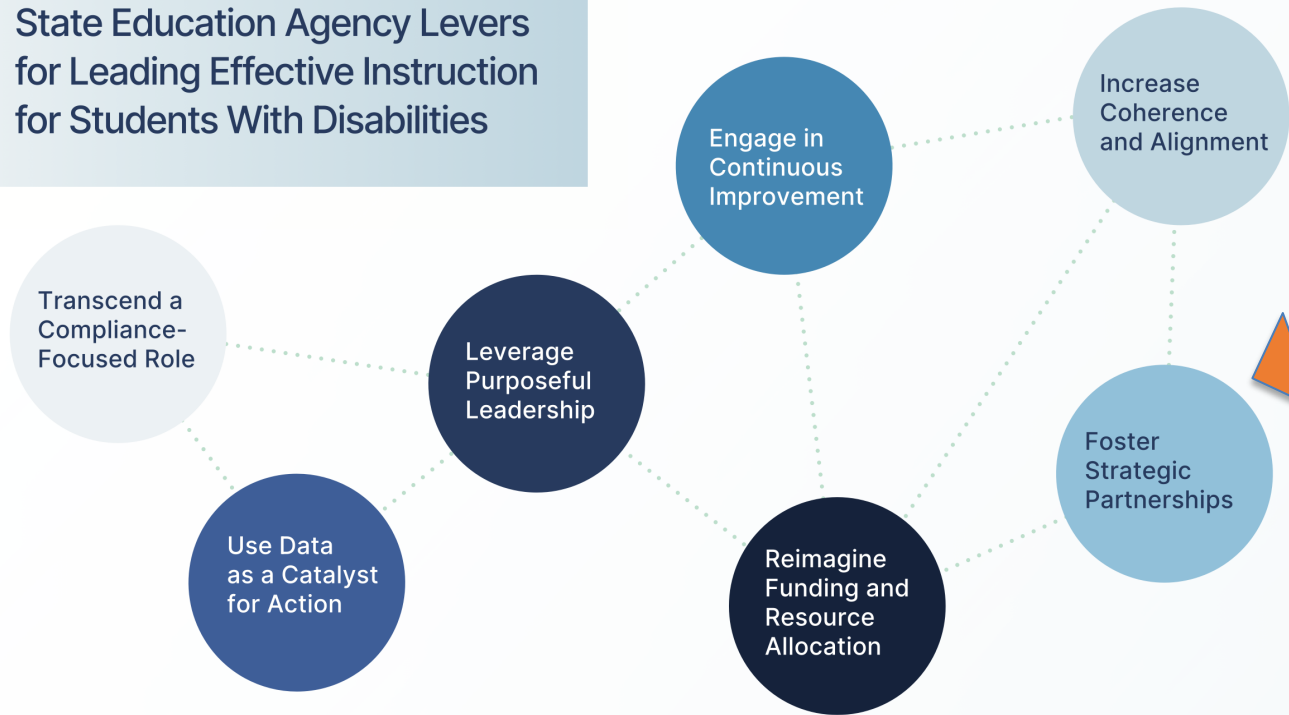
The UEPC conducted interviews and focus groups with 24 individuals across the five states. Interviews and focus groups explored how SEAs identified the need for their work, their motivations for implementation efforts and challenges, key partnerships in establishing and implementing the work, perceived impacts of the work, reflections on lessons learned, missed opportunities, and planned next steps. In addition, the UEPC reviewed and analyzed SEA documents such as strategic plans, presentation materials, improvement plans, and theories of action. This brief summarizes the primary lessons learned from this selection of five states—all of which are intentionally engaged in providing leadership that is improving instruction for students with disabilities.

NCSI | Leadership for Effective Instruction for Students With Disabilities: Lessons Learned From Five State Education Agencies 1

Leadership for Effective Instruction for Students with Disabilities: Lessons Learned from Five State Education Agencies

Seven Levers for Leading Effective Instruction

State Education Agency Levers
for Leading Effective Instruction
for Students With Disabilities



Role of Partnerships: Ensuring Relevant Participation

- **Informing:** Sharing or disseminating information with others who care about the issue.
- **Networking:** Asking others what they think about this issue and listening to what they say.
- **Collaborating:** Engaging people in trying to do something of value and working together around the issue.
- **Transforming:** Doing things the Partnership Way (leading by convening, cross-stakeholder engagement, sharing leadership, consensus building).

Potential Benefits for Partnership Engagement: Impact on Effective Instruction for Students with IEPs

- Expanding partnership networks offers broader expertise and resources to help states support LEAs in delivering effective instruction for students with IEPs.
- Building collective capacity supports coherence across general and special education and sustainable change.

Key Partner Examples

- National Centers (e.g., NCSI, NCII, RELs, CEEDAR)
- Institutes of Higher Education
- State and local technical assistance providers
- Regional education service centers
- Districts and schools
- Specialized service providers
- Student and family groups (e.g., Parent Training and Information Centers)
- Teacher/educator associations
- Other professional organizations
- Other child-serving organizations

Four Simple Questions

1. Who cares about this issue and why?
2. What work is already underway separately?
3. What shared work could unite us?
4. How can we deepen our connections?

SEA Examples in Action

SEA	What	Partners
Maine	Supporting multilingual learners with disabilities	Maine DOE special services and ESOL, University of Maine
Rhode Island	Developed online modules for tiered math intervention	AIR, West Bay Collaborative, state special education directors
Washington	Created Inclusionary Practices Technical Assistance Network	WestEd, family organizations, higher education institutions, specialized service providers, statewide technical assistance providers

**Poll: Which of these groups
does your SEA partner with?**

Follow-up Discussion

Think of one partnership that was particularly helpful.

- How would you describe the partnership? What is/was the focus of the partnership? (e.g., a specific initiative or project)
- What advice do you have for another state in developing and leveraging partnerships to promote systemic change?

Successful Partnerships Focused on IEP Development and Implementation

- Move beyond isolated changes (e.g., one specific school) to integrated support systems across a district or state.
- Align partnership efforts with broader state educational initiatives.
- Share responsibility for developing and implementing across all stakeholders to increase student outcomes.
- Build collective capacity for selecting and implementing evidence-based instructional practices.
- Focus on sustainable, locally-driven implementation of high-quality IEPs.

Leveraging Partnerships for IEPs

- Who are critical partners for increasing IEP quality and student outcomes?
- What does the partnership look like?
- What are the benefits?

Leveraging Partnerships for IEPs: Next Steps

- Which key partners are currently underutilized in your state's efforts to increase high-quality IEPs?
- What are strategies for engaging groups that you have not partnered with in the past?

Partnership Resources

- [NCSI: Leading by Convening resources](#)
- [SISEP: The Power of Partnerships post with resources](#)

Next Steps

Next Meeting

- Tuesday, October 28
- 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Eastern
- Topic: Levers for Leading Effective Instruction
 - What next? (*quick poll*)
 - Use data as a catalyst for action
 - Increase coherence and alignment
 - Transcend a compliance-focused role
- Questions or thoughts?
 - Reach out to us at ncsi-ei@wested.org



Thank You

The content of this document was developed by the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) under a grant from the US Department of Education, #H326R240001. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer: Julia Martin Eile (October 2025)

WestEd is the lead organization for NCSI. For more information about the work of WestEd, NCSI, and their partners, please visit www.ncsi.wested.org and www.wested.org

