

Effective Instruction Collaborative

December 2, 2025

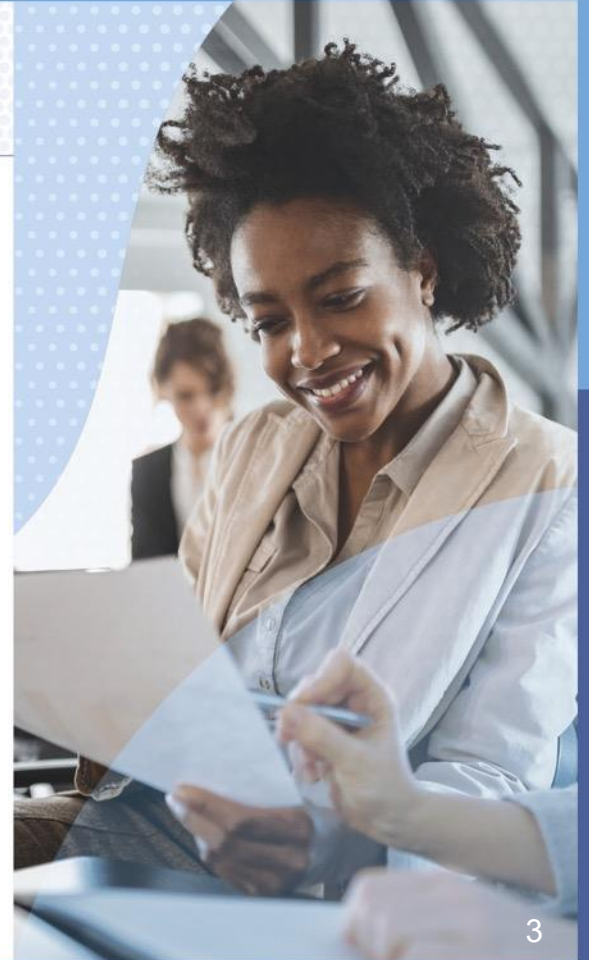


Celebrating 50 Years of the IDEA



Agenda

- New Resources
- Transcending a Compliance-Focused Role
- Next Steps (Input and Plans for 2026)



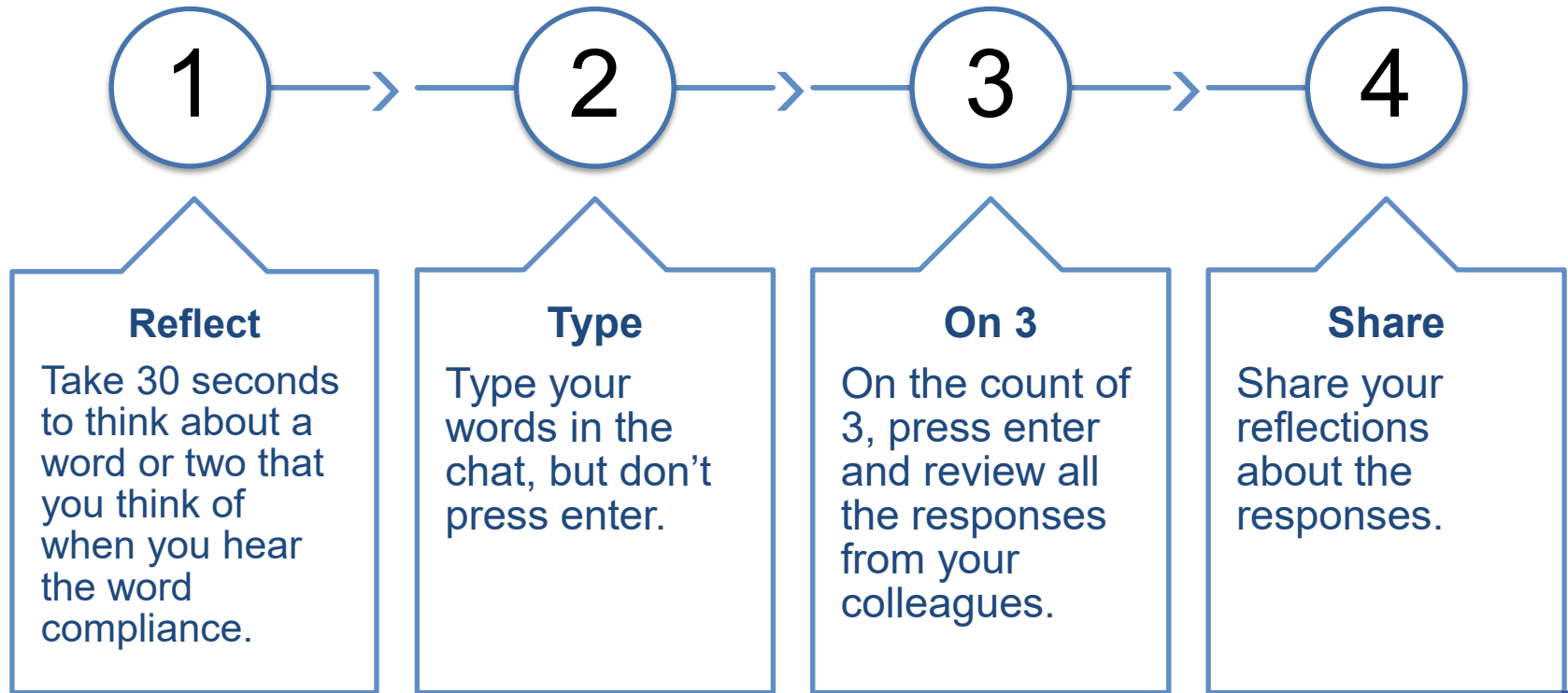
New Resources

Teacher Workforce Resources

- NEW working paper from the Special Education Workforce: A Research Collaborative (SPARC): [The Composition, Distribution, and Stability of the Special Education Teacher Workforce in Seven States](#)
- SPARC Fact Sheet: [Special Education Teacher Workforce Across Seven States: Key Insights from the SPARC Center's Multi-State Analysis](#)

Leadership for Effective Instruction for Students with Disabilities: Transcending a Compliance-Focused Role

Chatterfall: What do you think of when you think of **compliance**?





Reflections

- Do you think compliance means the same thing across different roles?
- What do you think LEA leaders think of when they hear compliance?
- What do you think educators think of when they hear compliance?
- What do you think families think of when they hear compliance?

NCSI Thought Leader Forum – April 2024



The cover of the report features the NCSI logo (National Center for Systemic Improvement) and the Utah Education Policy Center logo (The University of Utah). The title is prominently displayed in white text on a dark blue background. Below the title is a photograph of a woman with glasses leaning over a desk to assist a young girl with glasses. To the left of the photograph is a graphic of a circular flow diagram with arrows connecting five states: Utah, Texas, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Washington.

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

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

**Transcend a
Compliance-
Focused
Role**

**Leverage
Purposeful
Leadership**

**Engage in
Continuous
Improvement**

**Increase
Coherence
and
Alignment**

**Use Data for
a Catalyst for
Action**

**Reimagine
Funding and
Resource
Allocation**

**Foster
Strategic
Partnerships**

Transcending a Compliance-Focused Role

Approaches

- Reframing compliance as a baseline for improvement
- Developing strategic plans for goal attainment
- Proactively providing leadership, support, and partnership for change

Benefit

- Shifting from oversight to collaboration can drive meaningful improvements, positioning SEAs as proactive partners in fostering effective instruction for students with disabilities.

State Examples: Texas

- Engaged with stakeholders to develop a strategic plan that exceeded compliance requirements to meet the holistic needs of students with disabilities.
- Prioritized support and inclusive partnerships over regulation to improve educational access and instruction.



State Examples: Washington

- Supported systemic change by building local capacity to strengthen their inclusionary practices and better meet students' instructional needs.
- Through strategic partnerships, offered professional learning opportunities for educators and leaders on topics including
 - IEP goal writing,
 - Coteaching and collaboration, and
 - Data-informed planning and instruction.



Examples for Supporting IEPs That Transcend Compliance

- TA focused on quality of IEP components (e.g., present levels, goals) and internal alignment, not just compliance
- Consistent messaging about IEPs (e.g., monitoring, TA)

How does your SEA use compliance as a foundation for continuous improvement?

Padlet Prompts

- How have you used compliance data or monitoring to support effective instruction and improved student outcomes?
- What strategies or practices have been most effective in helping educators view the IEP as an instructional tool rather than a compliance activity?
- In what ways has your agency provided proactive leadership, support, or partnership that has influenced positive outcomes?

Supporting Resources

- [NCSI Essential Elements of Comprehensive Data Literacy](#)
- [IDEA Data Center \(IDC\) Data Meeting Toolkit](#)

Next Steps

Getting Your Input for 2026 (Polls)

- What specific topics would you like to cover? (e.g., IEPs for multilingual learners, coaching, IEP components)
- Would you be interested in diving deeper into certain topics outside of this monthly collaborative structure?
 - Shared interest group (e.g., 3-4 virtual sessions on a specific topic)
 - In-person workshops
 - Drop-in office hours
 - Other formats? (please share in chat)

2026 Coaching Shared Interest Group (SIG) Preview

- **Topic:** Coaching to support effective instruction for students with IEPs
- **What/When:** Short-term SIG (3-4 sessions) for a limited number of state teams
 - Virtual introductory session (Winter 2026)
 - In-person workshop (1-2 days in Spring 2026)
 - Virtual follow up calls (1-2 sessions in Spring 2026)
- **Interested?** Please let us know in the chat or by email if you are interested in joining.

Next Meeting

- **Tuesday, January 27**
- 11:30 AM -12:30 PM Eastern
- Topic: Michigan sharing guidance on Specially Designed Instruction
- 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

